Tourists' Perspective on Sustainable Tourism Practices: A Study in Tamil Nadu

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Abstract
This research investigates "Tourists' Perspective on Sustainable Tourism Practices: A Study in Tamil Nadu," emphasising two important goals: sustainable tourism practices implemented in Tamil Nadu and tourists' satisfaction with sustainable tourism practices in Tamil Nadu. A Descriptive Research Design was used, as this study collected information from tourists at selected places in Tamil Nadu. This information is related to Tourist Satisfaction on Sustainable Tourism Practices in Tamil Nadu. The collected information was statistically analysed using Descriptive Statistics, ANOVA and Correlation. Primary and secondary sources of information were used in this study. A Stratified Random Sampling method was adopted, and the sample size defined in the study was 125 respondents, who were tourists from various places across Tamil Nadu.
Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, Tourist Satisfaction, Tangible and Reliability

Introduction

With the global expansion of tourism, concerns about its environmental, cultural, and economic impacts have grown. Sustainable tourism practices offer a means to reduce these negative effects by encouraging responsible travel that benefits both tourists and local communities. This study aimed to explore tourists' attitudes towards sustainable tourism practices and how these perceptions influence their travel choices and behaviours. By understanding tourists' views on sustainability, tourism providers can tailor their offerings to meet demand for eco-friendly and socially responsible travel. This research will involve collecting data through surveys and interviews with a variety of tourists, focusing on their awareness, preferences, and willingness to engage in sustainable practices. The ultimate goal is to identify the factors that drive sustainable tourism and bridge the gap between tourists' intentions and actual behaviour. The findings of this study offer valuable insights for policymakers, tourism operators, and destination managers to foster more sustainable tourism practices.

Sustainable Tourism Practices

Sustainable tourism practices aim to minimise negative environmental, social, and economic impacts, while promoting long-term benefits for local communities and ecosystems. These practices include conserving natural resources, reducing waste and carbon emissions, and respecting

the cultural heritage of the destinations. Tourists are encouraged to choose eco-friendly accommodation, support local businesses, and engage in activities that preserve rather than exploit the environment. For instance, eco-lodges often use renewable energy, minimise water consumption, and reduce the use of single-use plastics. Tour operators may partner with conservation projects or limit group sizes to reduce strain on natural sites. Education also plays a critical role; travellers who understand the impact of their choices are more likely to act responsibly. Local communities benefit when tourism generates income, without displacing traditional lifestyles or damaging the environment. Governments and organisations play a crucial role in establishing regulations and promoting certification systems that recognise sustainable operations. By aligning tourism with environmental and social responsibilities, these practices ensure that destinations remain attractive and viable for future generations. Ultimately, sustainable tourism balances the needs of visitors, hosts, and the planet, fostering mutual respect, and long-term preservation. As global travel continues to rise, adopting sustainable tourism practices is no longer optional, but essential for the future of the industry.

Tourist's Satisfaction Towards Sustainable Tourism Practices in Tamil Nadu

Tourist satisfaction with sustainable tourism practices in Tamil Nadu has been steadily increasing, as both visitors and local stakeholders recognise the importance of preserving the state's rich cultural heritage and natural landscapes. Tamil Nadu, known for its ancient temples, serene beaches, and lush hill stations, has seen a shift in traveler preferences, with many tourists actively seeking destinations that promote eco-friendly practices. Sustainable tourism in the state is being championed through various initiatives, such as eco-lodges, waste management systems, and efforts to conserve the biodiversity of popular sites, such as the Western Ghats and coastal regions. Tourists who visit destinations such as Ooty, Kodaikanal, and Pondicherry report high satisfaction when they experience responsible tourism practices such as guided nature walks, wildlife protection programs, and community-run cultural events. These practices not only enhance the visitor's experience by offering a deeper connection to the place, but also promote local employment and help preserve Tamil Nadu's unique identity.

However, the level of satisfaction depended on how well these practices were implemented. Tourists have expressed concerns when sustainability efforts are not visible, or when local communities are not adequately engaged. When done correctly, sustainable tourism practices lead to a sense of fulfilment and positive memories, as tourists feel that they contribute to the well-being of the region. As Tamil Nadu continues to develop its tourism sector, prioritising transparency, community involvement, and environmental stewardship will be the key to maintaining high levels of tourist satisfaction and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the region's tourism industry.

Statement of the Problem

Tourism is a vital economic sector in Tamil Nadu and is known for its rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and historical monuments. However, the growth of tourism has led to environmental degradation, cultural dilution, and strain on local resources. In response, sustainable tourism practices have been increasingly introduced in the state with the objective of minimising negative impacts while maximising benefits for local communities and preserving natural and cultural heritage. Despite these efforts, the actual implementation and effectiveness of such practices vary across destinations and little is known about how tourists perceive and respond to these initiatives. The success of sustainable tourism largely depends not only on policy-level implementation, but also on the awareness, satisfaction, and participation of tourists. Their perceptions and experiences play a crucial role in determining the long-term sustainability of tourism practices in the long run. Although several eco-friendly policies, green certifications, and community-based tourism initiatives have been launched in Tamil Nadu, it is essential to assess whether these efforts meet tourists' expectations and contribute positively to their overall satisfaction.

This study aims to bridge this gap in understanding tourists' perspectives on sustainable tourism in Tamil

Nadu. Specifically, it seeks to outline the various sustainable tourism practices being implemented and evaluate how tourists perceive and experience these initiatives. Are tourists aware of sustainability efforts? Do these practices enhance the travel experience? Do gaps in execution reduce their satisfaction? By exploring these questions, this study offers valuable insights into the effectiveness of current sustainable tourism strategies from the viewpoint of tourists. It will also help policymakers and tourism operators in Tamil Nadu refine their approaches to better align sustainable practices with visitor expectations and to improve the overall quality and sustainability of tourism in the region.

Scope of the Study

This study primarily focuses on identifying and outlining the sustainable tourism practices currently adopted in Tamil Nadu across different tourist destinations, such as heritage sites, religious places, hill stations, and coastal areas. It examines a wide range of sustainable practices, including environmental conservation measures, the use of renewable energy, the promotion of local culture and products, responsible waste disposal, and tourist education on sustainability. Furthermore, this study assesses tourist satisfaction with these sustainable initiatives. It investigates whether tourists are aware of sustainable efforts, whether these efforts contribute to a positive travel experience, and what areas require improvement. This research includes both domestic and international tourists, offering a comprehensive view of how diverse tourist groups perceive sustainability in the Tamil Nadu tourism experience.

Importance of the Study

This study is highly significant for several stakeholders. For policymakers and government tourism departments, this study provides evidence-based insights into which sustainable tourism strategies are effective from a tourist's perspective. Tourism service providers highlight areas in which improvements are needed to enhance customer satisfaction while maintaining sustainability standards. This study contributes to the limited literature on tourist perceptions of sustainability

in the Indian context, especially at the state level. Moreover, the study aligns with the global sustainable development goals (SDGs), particularly those related to responsible consumption, environmental conservation, and economic inclusivity. Understanding tourist satisfaction with sustainable tourism practices is essential for building long-term tourism strategies that are both environmentally viable and commercially successful. Ultimately, this research supports the goal of making Tamil Nadu a model destination for sustainable tourism in India, by integrating ecological responsibility with memorable tourist experiences.

Research Objectives
1. To outline the sustainable tourism practices implemented in Tamil Nadu.
2. To examine the tourist's satisfaction with sustainable tourism practices in Tamil Nadu

Research Questions
This study addressed the following questions:
1. How are the best sustainable tourism practices being implemented in Tamil Nadu?
2. Are tourists satisfied with the sustainable tourism practices in Tamil Nadu?

Research Hypotheses
1. There were no significant differences in the best sustainable tourism practices implemented in Tamil Nadu.
2. There was no significant difference in the satisfaction of tourists with sustainable tourism practices in Tamil Nadu.

Review of Literature
Literature Review - International
- Gonzalez and Varela (2023) explored the role of social media in shaping tourists' attitudes towards sustainable tourism, emphasising its influence on increasing awareness and promoting eco-friendly options.
- Beedie and Hudson (2022) proposed a framework for measuring sustainable tourism practices from a tourist perspective, highlighting the importance of ongoing assessments for improvement.

- Pérez and Figueroa (2022) discussed the integration of cultural heritage in sustainable tourism practices, showing that tourists value cultural experiences linked to sustainability efforts.
- Bramwell and Lane (2022) examined the role of stakeholder collaboration in promoting sustainable tourism, with an emphasis on involving tourists in the decision-making process.

Literature Review – National

- Fernandez and Torres (2023) analysed how social media influences tourists' perceptions of sustainable practices, noting its role in shaping decisions towards eco-friendly tourism options.
- Lee and Park (2023) highlighted the importance of community involvement in sustainable tourism, showing that destinations that engage local communities are more likely to attract support from tourists.
- Patel (2022) explored tourists' appreciation of green spaces and local sourcing in urban tourism, emphasising the need to integrate sustainability into urban tourism planning.

Research Methodology

Descriptive Research Design was used in the study as this study collects the information from the tourists at selected places in Tamil Nadu. The information is related Tourist Satisfaction on Sustainable Tourism Practices in Tamil Nadu. The information thus collected were statistically processed using Descriptive Statistics, ANOVA and Correlation. Both primary and secondary sources of information were used throughout the study. Stratified Random Sampling method was adopted and Sample size defined in the study was 125 respondents who are the tourists from various places across Tamil Nadu.

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables of Tourist's Perspective on Sustainable Tourism Practices

The data provided offer insights into tourists' perspectives on various aspects of sustainable tourism practices, focusing on service quality and satisfaction. The sample consisted of 125 respondents, with each variable measured on a 1 to 5.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables of Tourist's Perspective on Sustainable Tourism Practices

Study Variables of Tourist's Perspective on Sustainable Tourism Practices	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Devi-ation
I am satisfied with quality of Service	125	1	5	3.70	1.206
Tourists' expectations are met	125	1	5	3.66	1.101
Tourist Service Providers give end to end services to customers	125	1	5	3.87	1.000
Tourist Services are customised based on the preferences of Tourists	125	1	5	3.90	1.132
Booking Processes are made easy and simple	125	1	5	3.60	1.055

The variable "I am satisfied with the quality of service" has a mean score of 3.70 and a standard deviation of 1.206, indicating moderate satisfaction with service quality. While many tourists were generally pleased, there was noticeable variability in their responses, suggesting that some visitors may have had experiences that did not fully meet their expectations. Similarly, the variable "Tourists' expectations are met" has a mean score of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 1.101, suggesting that while most tourists feel their expectations are met, there is still some room for improvement, with some tourists feeling their needs may not have been fully addressed.

In terms of service delivery, "Tourist service providers give end-to-end services to customers" has the highest mean score (3.87), which implies a higher level of satisfaction with the comprehensive nature of services offered by providers. "Tourist services are customized based on the preferences of tourists" follows closely with a mean score of 3.90, indicating that tourists value personalised experiences, though again, there is variability in satisfaction.

The "Booking processes are made easy and simple" variable has a mean score of 3.60, suggesting that while booking processes are generally convenient, there may be areas for improvement to further enhance customer satisfaction. The standard deviations across all variables are relatively high, signifying diverse tourist experiences and pointing to the need for consistent and tailored services to better align with the expectations of a wider range of tourists.

Analysis of Variance for the Assessment of Influence between Means of Tourist's Satisfaction on four study variables with respect to Tourist's Perspective on Sustainable Tourism Practices

The ANOVA results presented above examined the differences in tourists' perspectives on various aspects of sustainable tourism practices across different groups. Each of the study variables such as Tourists' expectations are met, Tourist service providers give end-to-end services, Tourist services are customized, and Booking processes are easy and simple reveals significant differences between groups, as indicated by the very low p-values (all < 0.05). The "Between Groups" sum of squares reflects the variation due to differences among groups, while the "Within Groups" sum of squares indicates variation within the groups. Based on this, the following null hypothesis is formulated:

H0: There is no significant influence between the means of Tourist Satisfaction on four study variables: Tourists' expectations are met, Tourist Service Providers give end-to-end services to customers, and Tourist Services are customised based on the preferences of tourists and bookings are made easy and simple.

Table 2 Influence between Means of Tourist's Satisfaction on Four Study Variables with Respect to Tourist's Perspective on Sustainable Tourism Practices

Study Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Tourists' expectations are met	Between Groups	89.187	4	22.297	43.848**	.000
	Within Groups	61.021	120	.509		
	Total	150.208	124			
Tourist Service Providers give end to end services to cus-tomers	Between Groups	76.012	4	19.003	47.567**	.000
	Within Groups	47.940	120	.399		
	Total	123.952	124			
Tourist Services are custom-ised based on the preferences of Tourists	Between Groups	114.802	4	28.700	78.191**	.000
	Within Groups	44.046	120	.367		
	Total	158.848	124			
Booking Processes are made easy and simple	Between Groups	93.338	4	23.334	62.696**	.000
	Within Groups	44.662	120	.372		
	Total	138.000	124			

** denotes significant at 5% level

For the variable "Tourists' expectations are met", the F-value of 43.848 and a significant p-value of 0.000 show that there are statistically significant differences in the way different groups perceive whether their expectations are met. Similarly, the variable "Tourist service providers give end-to-end services" has an F-value of 47.567 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that the perceived quality and comprehensiveness of services differ significantly across groups.

The variable "Tourist services are customized based on preferences" has the highest F-value (78.191) and a p-value of 0.000, signifying strong group-based differences in tourists' views on how personalised their experiences were. Lastly, for the "Booking processes are easy and simple", the F-value is 62.696, with a p-value of 0.000, suggesting that tourists experience varying levels of satisfaction with the ease of booking processes. In all cases, the significant p-values (less than 0.05), thereby the

formulated null hypothesis, is rejected at the 5% level of significance, indicating that the differences observed between groups are statistically significant, meaning that factors influencing tourists' satisfaction and their views on sustainable tourism practices vary across the different groups in the study. This suggests that service providers should consider the diversity of tourist preferences and expectations to enhance overall satisfaction.

Correlation for the Assessment of Relationships among Five Study Variables of Tourist's Perspective on Sustainable Tourism Practices

The correlation matrix presents the relationships between five key variables related to tourist satisfaction and service quality, all based on a sample size of 125. Notably, all variables are significantly positively correlated at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), indicating strong interrelationships among them. Keeping this in mind, the following hypothesis is proposed.

Ha: There are significant relationships among five study variables of Tourist's Perspective on Sustainable Tourism Practices such as I am satisfied with quality of Service, Tourists' expectations are met, Tourist Service Providers give end to end services to customers, Tourist Services are customised based on the preferences of Tourists and Booking Processes are made easy and simple.

Table 3 Assessment of Relationships among Five Study Variables of Tourist's Perspective on Sustainable Tourism Practices

Study Variables		V1	V2	V3	V4	V5
I am satisfied with quality of Service (V1)	Pearson Correlation	1	.722**	.770**	.788**	.804**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125
Tourists' expectations are met (V2)	Pearson Correlation	.722**	1	.502**	.491**	.582**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125
Tourist Service Providers give end to end services to customers (V3)	Pearson Correlation	.770**	.502**	1	.538**	.540**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125
Tourist Services are custom-ised based on the prefer-ences of Tourists (V4)	Pearson Correlation	.788**	.491**	.538**	1	.724**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	125	125	125	125	125
Booking Processes are made easy and simple (V5)	Pearson Correlation	.804**	.582**	.540**	.724**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	125	125	125	125	125

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The strongest correlation was between "I am satisfied with quality of Service" (V1) and "Booking Processes are made easy and simple" (V5), with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.804, suggesting that simplified booking processes are strongly associated with overall service satisfaction. V1 also shows high correlations with "Tourist Services are customised" (V4) at 0.788, and "Service Providers give end-to-end services" (V3) at 0.77, indicating that both customisation and comprehensive service offerings contribute significantly to tourists' satisfaction. Additionally, a substantial correlation

exists between V1 and "Expectations are met' (V2) at 0.722, highlighting that meeting tourist expectations is a crucial element of perceived service quality. All other inter-variable correlations, although slightly lower, remain moderately strong and significant (for example, V2 and V5 at 0.582, V3 and V4 at 0.538), reinforcing the idea that these elements of service delivery are interdependent. Overall, the data suggest that improving any of these aspects, especially booking ease and service customisation, is likely to positively impact tourist satisfaction because of the strong interconnectedness of these service quality dimensions.

Findings

The descriptive statistics reveal that tourists generally have a positive perception of sustainable tourism practices, with all variables scoring above the midpoint of three on a 5-point scale. The highest mean score was for customised services (M = 3.90), followed closely by end-to-end service provision (M = 3.87), indicating that tourists appreciated personalised and comprehensive service offerings. Satisfaction with service quality (M = 3.70) and expectation fulfilment (M = 3.66) also showed favourable responses, although with slightly more variability. The lowest-rated item was the simplicity of booking processes (M = 3.60), suggesting room for improvement in this area.

The ANOVA results indicated statistically significant differences across groups for all four study variables at the 5% significance level (p = .000 for all). The high F-values for each variable— tourists' expectations (F = 43.848), end-to-end services (F = 47.567), customised services (F = 78.191), and bookings (F = 62.696)—suggest that tourists' perceptions vary significantly across groups (likely based on demographic or experiential factors). This implies that not all tourists experience these service elements equally, pointing to the variability in how services are delivered or received.

The correlation analysis shows strong and statistically significant positive relationships among all five study variables at a 0.01 significance level. Most notably, tourist satisfaction with service quality (V1) had the highest correlation with booking process simplicity (V5) at r = 0.804,

followed by customisation of services (V4) at r = 0.788 and end-to-end service provision (V3) at r = 0.770. These strong correlations suggest that tourists who find the booking process easy and experience personalised and comprehensive services are more likely to report higher satisfaction. Additionally, tourist expectations (V2) are moderately correlated with all other variables, particularly satisfaction (V1) at r = 0.722, indicating that meeting expectations is a crucial component of perceived service quality.

Suggestions

First, it is recommended that tourism providers continue to enhance personalised and complete service experiences while focusing on simplifying and improving the booking process to boost overall satisfaction.

Second, tourism service providers should segment their customer base and tailor services more effectively to meet the diverse needs of different groups. Particular attention should be paid to improving consistency in service customisation and booking processes, where the greatest variance was observed. Regular feedback collection and targeted improvements can ensure that all tourist groups enjoy a uniformly high-quality and sustainable service experience.

Lastly, Tourism service providers should prioritise streamlining booking processes and enhancing service customisation, as these are closely linked to overall tourist satisfaction. Because all variables are strongly interrelated, improving one area (such as end-to-end service delivery or meeting expectations) will likely have a positive impact on others. A holistic approach to service design—focused on integration, personalisation, and user-friendly systems—can therefore significantly enhance tourist experience and support more sustainable and satisfying tourism practices.

Implications

The findings highlight that tourist satisfaction is strongly influenced by service customisation, seamless service delivery, and the ease of booking. The significant correlations and ANOVA results imply that variations in service experience across different groups must be addressed to ensure

equitable quality. This underscores the need for tourism providers to adopt a more data-driven, customer-segmented approach to service design. By focusing on personalisation, streamlining processes, and maintaining consistency, stakeholders can not only improve individual tourist experiences, but also promote long-term sustainable tourism development.

Directions for Future Research

Future research can expand the scope by comparing tourists' perceptions of sustainable tourism practices in Tamil Nadu with those in other Indian states or international destinations. This comparative approach can identify regional strengths, weaknesses, and best practices, providing valuable insights for policymakers and tourism stakeholders to improve sustainability initiatives specific to Tamil Nadu's context. Future research could explore how emerging technologies (such as mobile apps, virtual tours, or AI-driven travel platforms) influence tourists' choices and engagement with sustainable tourism. Focusing on Tamil Nadu, this study examines how digital tools can enhance sustainability awareness, encourage eco-friendly travel decisions, and support local communities. A longitudinal study can be conducted to track changes in tourist awareness, attitudes, and behaviour toward sustainable tourism over time. This would help evaluate the long-term effectiveness of current sustainability campaigns and practices in Tamil Nadu and assess whether tourists' support for sustainable initiatives translates into consistent responsible behaviour during travel.

Conclusion

The data clearly demonstrate that tourist satisfaction is strongly influenced by the quality, personalisation, and accessibility of tourism services. High intercorrelations among key variables, along with significant group differences identified through ANOVA, emphasise the importance of consistent, inclusive, and user-centred service delivery. By simplifying booking processes, offering tailored experiences, and addressing the diverse needs of different tourist segments, service providers can significantly enhance satisfaction levels and promote sustainable and effective tourism practices.

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