

A STUDY ON SPIRITUAL TOURISM OF CHENNAI CITY

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ABSTRACT:

Chennai is surrounded with a number of temples; Most of the temples were built thousands of years ago. Busy streets, beaches, shopping malls, historical monuments, and skyscrapers are not a Chennai. Some spectacular heritage temples add a mention of color and attraction to the city. Chennai has rich religious history and marvelous structures; the famous temples not only attraction devotees and religious enthusiasts, but also everyone who loves to explore architectural wonders. The temples are devoted to deities of different religions and have some remarkable mythological stories to tell. Spiritual tourism is a motivated by belief or religious reasons has been in facts for centuries (Sharply and Sundram, 2005). In recent times, it has been recommended that modern tourism has become the efficient and symbolic equivalent of more traditional spiritual practices, such as festivals, pilgrimages, yoga and holy places. In this research, an effort has been made to draw the conclusion about the spiritual tourism concept with reference to temple in Chennai city that speaks about history of Chennai, Tamilnadu, and South India.

Key words: Chennai city temple, History, Tradition, culture and spirituality

1.1. INTRODUCTION

"It is certainly true that 'actions speak louder than words,' but words become as monuments to thoughts."- Anton Szandor LaVey, the Satanic Bible.

The Tamil Nadu is well known as the '*Land of Temples*' because it is home to more than 30,000 temples. These include the ancient, old and new temples that belong to vivid dynasties and are dedicated to different Hindu gods and goddesses. Most of the temples are about 600 to 800 years old. They differ in style but have some common features that are significant to South Indian temple architectural style. The rich history of Tamil Nadu has a number of monuments from early time and largest collection of tradition buildings in India. Some of the most famous historic buildings and national monuments. To understand the culture of Chennai and experience the different hues of the lives of the people of this city, one must visit these famous temples in Chennai. The temples are not just the places of worship, but are also the reflectors of Tamilian culture and beliefs. The Goddess 'Parvati' worshipped at this temple is called Karpagambal. Karpagambal is from Tamil ("Goddess of the Wish-Yielding Tree"). The Karpagambal temple is the one of the most ancient temple. It has been built around the 7th century CE in Dravidian style of architecture. God Shiva is worshiped by named as Kapaleeswarar, and is represented by the lingam.

1.2. DEFINING SPIRITUALITY

Brown (1998) defines spirituality as: "has become a kind of buzz-word of the age. An all-purpose word, but one that describes what is felt to be missing rather than specifying what

is hoped to be found . . . The spiritual search . . . has become a dominant feature of late twentieth-century life: a symptom of collective uncertainty.”

Vukonic (1996) explains that it is an opportunity for human being to recognize and support their spiritual needs, but also tourism, as a particular use of such free time has come to seen as a spiritual journey.

- Tourist feels mindcalm in spiritual tourism at the same time they are get acknowledged to various spiritual practices.
- In spiritual tourism while practicing different spiritual actions, tourists move in the direction of positivity.

Lively streets, spectacular heritage temples, shopping malls, and beaches are the elements that attraction of the travel enthusiasts to visit Chennai. Chennai is located on the coast of southeastern India and is one of the major cities in Tamil Nadu. It is also one of the largest IT parks in Asia. With Pondicherry and Mahabalipuram in its surrounding area, it is pacing up as the cultural center of India. This city has truly preserved its allure all through its journey of becoming Chennai from Madras. Chennai is widely recognized for its brave flavors, warm hospitality, and vivid culture that never fail to strike the travelers.





















1.3. TEMPLES IN CHENNAI

“There is no need for temples, no need for complicated philosophies. My brain and my heart are my temples; my philosophy is kindness”. Dalai LamaChennai or popularly known as Madras is most commonly associated in India with the Tamil film industry, its distinct food and music. Chennai is the capital city of the Southern state of Tamil Nadu. It has a rich culture, which attracts millions of tourists from India and abroad. Chennai, metropolitan city is also one of the 50 most visited cities in the world. Whether it has culture, healthcare amenities or its successful economy, Chennai is a city that people cannot look to resist. Here custom can be found in food, music and its architecture. Housing the UNESCO tradition Site of Mahabalipuram, Chennai is also home of hundred years old temples. These temples are not only the places of worship, housing certain deities, but also are a gateway to understanding the people of Chennai and their customs. A visit to this smart city is incomplete without paying a visit to the temples of Chennai. The temple is dedicated to Hindu goddess Kamakshi Amman. It is alleged that the goddess playfully closed Lord Shiva's eyes due to which the whole world fell into darkness. Lord Shiva had asked her to perform

some strict penance. This belief that Kamakshi Amman makes it one of the most famous Amman temples in Chennai, the capital city of Tamil Nadu is a center of temples of various faiths. Built in the distinctive South Indian architectural styles, these Chennai temples are a symbol of spirituality, culture and art. Here are some of the most popular and important temples in Chennai for your vacation.

Table No.01. List of well-known temples in Chennai city

		
1.Kapaleeshwarar Temple	2.Chennakesava Perumal	3.Kalikambal temple
		
4.Parthasarathy Temple	5.Marundeeswarar Temple	6.Ekambareswarar Temple
		
7.Vadapalani Andal Temple	8.Ashtalakshmi Temple	9.Lord Ayyappan
		
10.Thirumalai Thirupathi Devasthanam Temple	11.Shri Chandraprabhu Jain Naya Mandir	12.Shirdi Sai Baba Temple
		
13.Nine Navagraha Temple	14.Kamakshi Amman Temple	15.Adeeswar Temple
		
16 Madhya Kailash Temple	17 Anjaneya Swamy temple	18. ISKCON Temple

1.4. HISTORY OF CHENNAI CITY AND HERITAGE TOURISM ATTRACTION

“I am here tracing the History of the Earth itself, from its own Monuments.”

-J. A. de (Jean André) Luc

Chennai, with historically rich records dating from the British era, houses 2,467 heritage buildings within its metropolitan area (CMA), the highest within any Metropolitan Area limit in India. Most of these buildings are approximately 200 years old and older. The buildings are Chennai Central, Egmore, Ripon Building, Bharat Insurance Building, and so on. Chennai is the second largest collection of traditional buildings in the country, later than Kolkata. The Justice E. Padmanabhan committee compiled the official list of heritage buildings. The building structures will be categorized into three grades, namely, Grades I, II, and III. Grade I structures will be main landmarks upon which alterations will not be permitted. Under Grade II, external changes on structures will be subject to analysis. Buildings under Grade III may be changed for 'adaptive reuse' with suitable internal and external changes

Whether you are looking for spiritual happiness, party atmosphere or mind boggling fun activities Chennai has so much in store for the tourists that it offers something for everyone. You can witness an awesome sight at the beautiful expanse of the world famous Marina Beach or you can engage into the trekking activities that are organized close to the waterfalls.

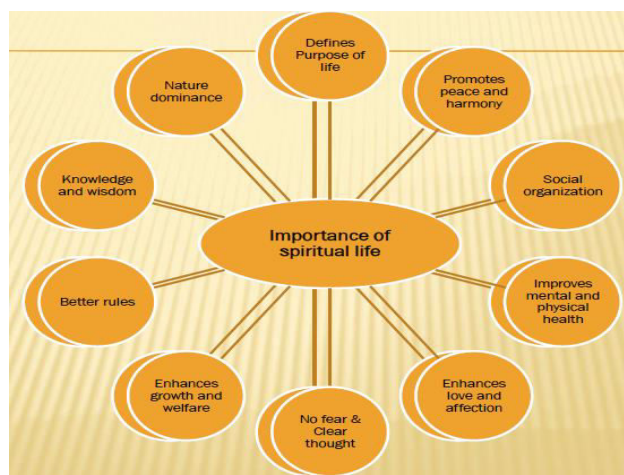
You can also buy souvenirs from the shopping malls and taste the lip smacking cuisines of Chennai to make your entire trip unforgettable. The magnificently built temples of Chennai also attract tourists to visit this city.

It is a home of magnificent temples that have remained intact exposing the spectacle and grandeur of the Dravidian culture, art, architecture and spiritual values. Tamil Nadu is a land of temples in India for its architecture of grand temples. This land has always been inherent in traditions and culture while the other states of India have been losing their cultural identity with the continued westernization of the whole nation. In totality, Tamil Nadu holds a unique position with its distinguished culture, grandeur of temples, architectural styles, arts, custom and traditions of people.

Temples are a different feature of Tamil Nadu not only in important cities and towns, but also in villages. An assertion can be made that all places inhabited by people will have at least one temple. It all began during the period of Bhakti with many of these temples owned by the kings and landlords.

There are more than 30,000 temples constructed by kings of different dynasties that ruled the land and each temple has its own religious story and cultural achievement. Each temple highlights a unique style, which was built by Chola, Pallava and Pandya dynasty rulers of the past. The temple is the important and artistic look of Hinduism producing the focus for both the social and spiritual life of the community it serves (Michell, 1977).

Over centuries, Hindu temples were built during different periods in South East Asia and nowadays it is continued in different places of the world.



Boyle's (2004) review of authority means that tourists are searching for a connection with something that is real, unsullied and fixed within the destination. Consequently, the connection to 'spiritual experience'. These visitors increasingly hark back to 'the good old days', despite the fact that the quality of life has significantly improved since the 'good old days'. Here, tourism destinations have an opportunity to create something real, what is termed a sense of place. Yeoman and Beattie state that destinations, "which have no history, have no anniversaries or festivals to celebrate. It is a destination's image that is shaped by its history, which then creates its sense of place. It is a destination's food, people and places that make up its heritage and its character" (Yeoman & McMahon- Beattie, 2006).

1.5.CONCLUSION

Indian History filledwith rise and fall of many kingdoms and empires. Monuments, built by the kings and they perform of every period throw light on the history of India. These monuments show signs of the glory of India and are element of our cultural heritage. Almost all states of India pride are historical monuments. Thousands of tourists visit India to have a glimpse of its important historical places. There are a number of such monuments that are not only historically famed but also have religious significance.Millions of tourists visit all these monumentsfrom the parts of the world throughout the year. These monuments are among the best a in the world for their archaeological value design and historical significance but it is a disturbing fact that we have no looked after these monuments properly.

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