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ABSTRACT

This research paper seeks to study the status of tourism promotion of Thirparappu waterfalls where domestic as well as foreign tourist visits during peak season, especially from June to November in particular. The paper discusses the amenities near to the waterfalls such as medical facilities, boarding, quality food and unavailability of qualified tourist guides. Moreover, based on the average tourists arrival at the waterfalls a graphic representation has been devised and



calculated on the basis of data gleaned from on-site survey. The importance of this waterfall to the localities in terms of its economic value has been analyzed and formulated.

KEYWORDS : *Tourism promotion, infrastructural necessities, qualified tourist guides, the findings of the study and formulation of graphs.*

INTRODUCTION :

The Thirparappu waterfalls (Pl.1) located of about 20 kms from the nearby Marthandam town (closest rail head). It is a well known tourist spot surrounded by picturesque and natural scenes. The waterfalls are located near to the low foothills of the western ghats, bordering the States of Tamilnadu and Kerala. The waterfalls are shed by the river Kodaiyar, a tributary of main river Thamirabharani. Geographically, Thirparappu is located to the southeast of Trivandrum city, that is the nearest accessible airport of about 56 kms via Devicode, Cheriakollai, Karakonam, Neyyatinkara, Balaramapuram route. It enjoys a tropical weather with widespread rainfall and high humidity upto 70%.

SCENIC BEAUTY

The south-west monsoon and north-east monsoon ensure moderate temperatures, throughout the year. The temperature varies between an average level of 33° C in summer and a low of 20° C in winters. Sunny mornings and evening showers are common. Nick named as 'Kumari kuttalam' the waterfall is about 15 meters in length and has rocky-river beds (Pl.2). It falls from a height of about 49 ft. The waterfall is located on the downstream and one has to climb down about 46 steps to get

TOURISM PROMOTION OF THIRPARAPPU WATERFALLS

nearer to it. It has a children's park and a swimming pool. Also, two seater pedaling boats are available adjacent to the falls. The impact of tourist arrival during peak season (Fig.1) represented in the graph shows per day about 1,050 domestic tourists and four foreign tourists visit this scenic spot as the data gleaned from on-site survey. The conditions of the roads from Marthandam to Thirparappu are quite bad due to the fact that the incessant rains erodes the surface course layer. Further, the accommodation facilities in Thirparappu were not up to the standards of foreigners as they depart to the nearby Trivandrum city in the State of Kerala for night stay.

KUMARI KUTTALAM

The region enjoys a tropical weather with widespread rain and high humidity upto 75%. The south-west monsoon and northeast monsoon ensure moderate temperatures, throughout the year. The temperature varies between an average level of 33° C in summer and a low of 20° C in winters. Sunny mornings and evening showers are common.



Plate. 1 - General view of Thirparappu waterfalls (Source info: Original)

The conditions of the roads from Marthandam to Thirparappu are quite bad due to the fact incessant rains erode the surface course layer. Further, the accommodation facilities in Thirparappu were not up to the standards of foreigners as they depart to the nearby Trivandrum city in the State of Kerala for night stay.



Plate. 2 - Water flow during peak season (Source info: Original)

The Tamilnadu State Transport Corporation is the only major operator renders bus service to Thirparappu waterfalls from the nearest main junction Marthandam.

TOURISM PROMOTION

The nearby junction is Arumanai where the local Police station is housed which has a small number of normal hotels and budgetary lodges available for accommodation. It is to be noted that due to the absence of proper name boards in Arumanai and Marthandam junction, the tourists find it difficult to access the Thirparappu waterfalls. To substantiate this if a fairly big name board has been put up at Marthandam junction, that too near to Kulasekaram road and nearer to Marthandam Police station road, then there is more possibility of domestic as well as foreign tourists will visit this waterfall, which in turn enhance the tourism promotion of this place. It is to be noted that Thirparappu waterfalls is located near to westernghats especially closer to Kodaiyar. In lieu of its continuous water flow during the months of October to November, the average tourist arrival perday has been increased significantly as evinced from the graph (Fig.1). But, contrary to the number of domestic tourist data of 1,050 (perday) the average foreign tourist data shows only few tourist visits this waterfall. This is due to the fact that many foreigners during their journey from Kanyakumari to Trivandrum will not take a diversion from Marthandam and Thuckalay junction. Foreigners used to travel via National Highway (No.47) enroute to Trivandrum which is a more prominent tourist destination.

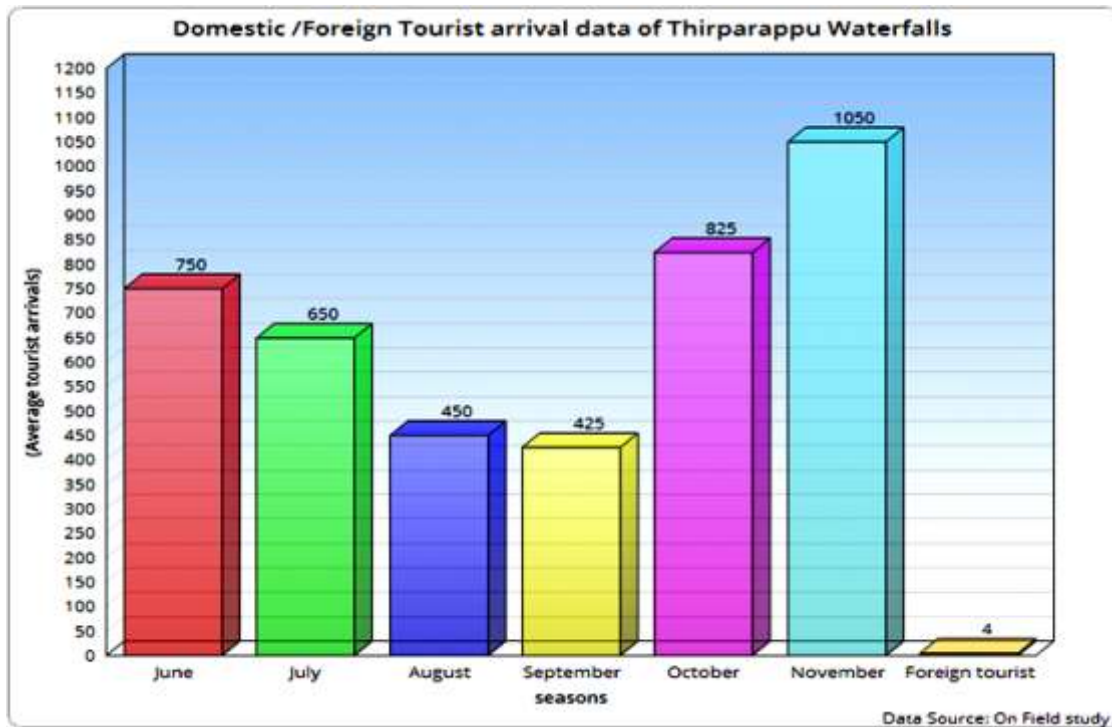


Fig. 1. Average tourist visits at Thirparappu Waterfalls (Domestic / Foreign)

IMPACT OF TOURIST VISITS

The impact of the tourist arrival shows per day on an average 1,050 domestic tourists and four foreign tourists visit this scenic spot as the data gleaned from the on-site study. The impact of Domestic and Foreign tourist arrivals in different months has been tabulated in the graphic representation (Fig. 1). It is gleaned that during the onset of the southeast monsoon western ghats receive copious amount of rainfall every year.

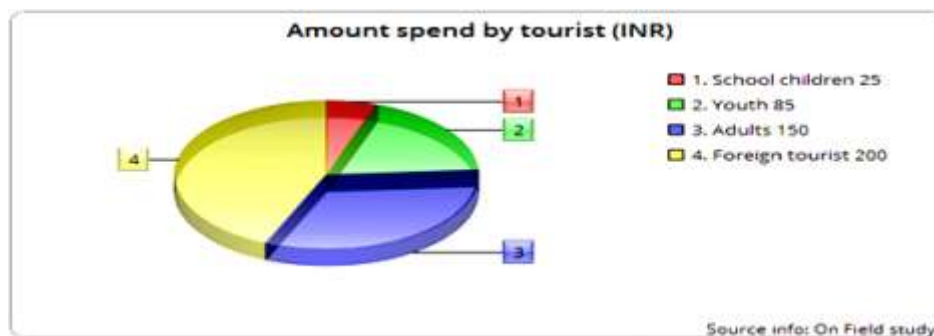


Fig. 2. Amount spend by tourist at Thirparappu Waterfalls (INR)

ECONOMIC VIABILITY

The amount spend by the foreign and domestic tourist has been shown in a pie chart (Fig.2) has been enlisted. The capacity to spend by purchasing tapioca chips, tea and snacks varies from school children, youth and foreign tourist as shown in it. But considering the frequency of amount spend then the domestic youths used to pay Rs. 150 (INR) perday as compared to the others. Further, the arrival of foreign tourist perday averaging only four in number.

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CONCLUSION

To further promote Thirparappu waterfalls it is necessary for the State Tourism Development Corporation to launch at least one regular tourist circuit bus from Marthandam junction to Thirparappu waterfalls and its adjoining places of tourist significance. To cite a few nearby tourist places such as Pechiparai dam, Perunchani dam, Chittar-1 and Chittar -2 reservoirs Chitalar Jain temple, Mathur hanging bridge all located near to the vicinity of this waterfall. In addition, if the Tamilnadu State Government issues limited paid permit passes for School Children as well as tourists then Kodayar hydroelectric power plant located along the edge of westernghats will be an important tourist place. All these will further enhance and identified as the most effective action for improving the tourism economy near to this waterfall.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- 1.Fig – Figure
- 2.INR – Indian National Rupee.
- 3.Pl. – Plate
- 4.Source info – Original (Meaning – The Photographs represented in this article has been taken by the author Dr. D. Charlson during on-site study at the Thirparappu waterfalls and not copied from elsewhere).

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