

## AN OVERVIEW OF PILGRIM ACTIVITIES IN CHITTOOR DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH: A SURVEY

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### ABSTRACT

In this study pilgrims buying products at pilgrim places are examined, besides motives of pilgrims visiting, economic activities at these pilgrim centers, specifically available products at these centers, and existent shops in the pilgrim locations.

**KEYWORDS:** Pilgrim Motives, Pilgrim Tourism, Pilgrimage Economic Activities, Benefits to Manufacturers of Various Secular, Sacred Andnon-Ubiquitous Products, Purpose of Pilgrim Purchases, and to Stakeholders

### INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose of Visiting Pilgrim Places (Motives)

"Purification of the mind and body is a specific goal of the pilgrimage of high order "said ShriJagadguruShankracharya. Since time immemorial, people have been visiting the pilgrim places for various purposes and beliefs. A few of them are:

- To have a peaceful darshan of God or and Goddess, (presiding deity)
- To take a holy dip in the sacred waters of revers/temple tanks to clean the impurities of the mind and soul. (Like in Ganges, Yamuna, Swarnamukhi, Godavari rivers etc.,)
- To redeem the spiritual vows, worship and make devotional prayers (offerings promised)
- To attend fairs and festivals during the seasons in the pilgrim places. (Bramhotshavas)
- To perform sacred activities like sevas, pooja, kalyanotshavam etc.
- To visit places of historical and artistic significance (Fort, museums, etc).
- To see sights of material beauty (Waterfalls, decorations, Natural formations).
- To perform the last rites of deceased family persons (as dharma and karma).
- To see the deity at least once in the life timeas religious sentiment etc.

The history of Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh has been shaped by several Dravidian rulers. The early settlers of the district were the Kurumbas. After Kurumbas the Ballal dynasty had taken the reigns of the Chittoor district in hand. Then it was the Vijaynagara dynasty that rose to prominence and had started controlling the Chittoor district. It can be said that Chittoor was primarily occupied by the Dravidians and had witnessed the reigns of several dynasties.

There are many pilgrim places in Chittoor District. Only five places are examined for writing this article which are Tirumala, Tirupati, Tiruchanur, Srikalashthi and Kanipakam. They attract pilgrims across the country and world.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Pilgrim/Pilgrimage-Definition

- A person who makes a journey, often a long and difficult one, to a special place for religious reasons [1].
- A religious devotee who journeys to a shrine or sacred place [2].
- A person who travels, especially to foreign lands or to a place of great personal
- Importance [3].

Pilgrimage to any sacred or divine place is of great importance to express the socio- cultural sentiments of a person or society.

The spiritual journey of pilgrimage is in fact often structured around God - Devotee relations.

The offerings that are most frequently associated with pilgrimage center on the relationship between the pilgrim and the deity.

### Activities Involved In a Pilgrimage

- Planning the visit and ticket booking (to and fro)
- On way journey expenses (to and fro)
- Lodging at temple location (if free choultries are not available)
- Spending on deity used products such as tooth paste and brush, soaps, hair oil and other toilet goods
- Food expenses - breakfast, lunch, snacks, dinner and other enjoyable eatables in the location
- Darshan arrangements and arjitaseva tickets.
- Offerings, Pooja performances, Rituals, Pooja materials and entry tickets
- Buying of Prasadams (apart from free prasadams)
- Visiting local temple complex/ shops and buying the goods as per traditions and customs
- Local sight seeing
- Visiting friends and relatives and
- Returning to native place.

### Economic Activities at Pilgrim Place

Pilgrims willingly spend money to visit their favorite and most valued deity. This visit may take place frequently, yearly, as and when they find convenient or at least once in their lifetime. Pilgrims save money based on their practices called (mudupulu = pay for promises) traditions as a percent of their earnings in a donation pot.

They make gifts, donations and offerings, and sometimes even promise to pay for a special service over a fixed period. These expenses are planned to meet from savings. Offerings are dropped in donation or box maintained in the temple for this purpose in a secured place.

They pray for “moksham” or Good life the next life (reincarnation).

Practices may vary temple to temple. Devotees in major temples may bring in symbolic offerings for the worship. This includes fruits, flowers, coconuts, pan, betel nuts, sweets, clothes, ornaments and parts of body made of silver, gold or with any material in discharge of the natural world. Temples in India are usually surrounded with small shops selling these offerings.

Visitors and worshipers to temples are required to deposit outside the temple compound their mobile phones, cameras, video recorders, shoes, footwear and other prohibited belongings before getting inside the temple. Where this is expected, the temple authorities provide an area and staff to store the above deposited items suitably either on payment or free of cost.

Dress codes vary temple to temple and based on the type of pooja performances. It is customary in temples for men to enter with a traditional cloth known as dhovathi and Uttariyam for men and saree or chudidar for women. If by chance, pilgrims not having the above formal dress, they can buy from the temple complex shops.

These spiritual relationships dynamic in the temple areas are in the form of money and goods. Utsavas and local festivals in temple towns are generally sensational events (called tirunallu or Brmhothsavalu) that also benefit the business.

### **Available Products in Pilgrim Shopping Complex**

The study covers the Temple Complex shopping shops and available products in it only. There are sacred, secular and place specific products.

#### **Sacred Products**

These are meant for holy, religious, dedicated, divine, rites, rituals, and other performances filled with symbolic meaning for deity (No one criticize them).

#### **Secular Products**

These are concerned with traditions but non-religious matters.

#### **Place Specific Products**

These are originated from a particular place. Not normally available at all places. (Not ubiquitous). Table 1. shows the prominent products available at the pilgrim centre.

#### **Trading Enterprise**

Shopping complexes were built in the vicinity of the temple and leased to private parties. In some areas, shops are privately owned and operated. These shops exclusively deal with pilgrim customers. They generate employment opportunities to shopkeepers, others indirectly linked to these enterprises.

Pilgrims return from the pilgrim place to their homes after the purpose is fulfilled. While returning they buy sacred, secular and place specific products from shops in the sacred places. The replicas of God and Goddess are safely

carried along with other items as a mark of respect.

### **Purpose of Items Purchased By Offerings to Presiding Deity**

- Benefiting spiritual actions
- Gifts giving purposes.
- For exhibiting and decorations at home
- As nostalgia of their spiritual visit etc
- Place specific special items
- For worship at home.

### **Temple Locations**

- Sri VarasiddiVinayakaSwamy Temple, at Kanipakam is 15 km. from Chittoor, 69Km from Tirupati. It is in the small gram panchayat of Kanipakam in Iralamandal is gaining popularity with every passing year by attracting a large number of pilgrims from across the country.
- Sri kalahasthieswara temple is about 39 km from Tirupati Railway station.3 km from Srikalahasthi railway Station.
- Sri Padmavathi temple is about 4km away from Tirupati Railway station
- Sri Govindarajaswamy temple is about five minutes' walk from Tirupati Railway station.
- Tirumala temple is about 18km by road and about 9km on footway from Alipiri, Tirupati.

### **Connectivity**

- **Road:** All the above five places are well connected by road.
- **Rail:** Tirupati and srikalahasthi are well connected by rail.
- **Air:** Tirupati is having international airport
- Both Tiruchanoor and Govindarajaswamy temples are part of Tirupati.

### **Tourism**

Temple administrators are primarily concerned with both secular and sacred services/goods needed by pilgrimage. Establishing a shopping complex by the temple administration and private owners take care of pilgrims and contribute to the local economy.

### **Facilities at Pilgrim/Tourist Places**

- All modes of Improved transport facilities
- Boarding and lodging facilities
- Shopping areas selling sacred and secular products

- Possible infrastructure facilities such as banking, ATM and internet centers
- Visits to other known pilgrim complexes in nearby places.

### **Cultural Organizations/Events**

Pilgrimage tourism has been on ascendancy in the recent years due to well developed transport facilities. Pilgrims of different socio economic groups spend a lot at pilgrim centers on products and services. (Which are either sacred or secular). Besides temple deity, private enterprises also derive their incomes from the pilgrim activities.

### **Corresponding Benefits to Stakeholders**

#### **Suppliers of Goods/Products**

- There are suppliers of flowers, fruits, coconuts, pan, garlands and other pooja items, baskets,
- potters, carpenters, blacksmiths, leather-workers, bamboo workers, painters and cooks of
- food items. They get source for their livelihood.

#### **Manufacturers**

There are manufacturers of bangles, idols made of jilledu, glass-frames, snuff boxes, toys, Kalamkari, dolls, laminated photos, bags and many other items

#### **Professionals Attached To Temples**

Temple oriented specialists in the field of music, dance, drama, painting, calligraphy, pottery, cottage industries such as enameling, dyeing, and embroidery.

#### **Service Providers**

Transport operators like auto and taxi drivers, motor mechanics, work for pilgrimages. Sweepers, washers, tailors, painters and others play important role in rendering services. Suitable boarding and lodging arrangements for pilgrims are made by both temple administration and others. Photographers and laundry also exist in the complex.

#### **Pilgrim Place Specific Products**

There are varieties of products made available for pilgrims at one place. Rare artifacts are sold in the temple complex in the respective pilgrim places. These are the best places to buy items in their pilgrim visit.

Two such products are

#### **Idols of Lord Vinayaka (At Kanipakam, Shown In Figures 1 And 2)**

The ancient Hindu texts make mentions that a house where the Swetark Ganesh is worshiped becomes free from poverty, obstacles, quarrels, horror and all sorts of negative things. While Worshipping Swetark Ganapati, the essential mantras to be chanted are – Om Vakratundaya Namaha, and Om Shree Ganeshay Namah. These are prepared only at Kanipakam and made available (Jilledu) [4].

### **Kalamkari Clothes (At Srikalahasthi, As Shown In Figures 3, 4 and 5)**

The subject matter of the painting mostly concentrates on Hindu religious themes as well as secular themes such as flora and fauna, through which the artist depicts concepts of creation and eternity through images like the 'tree of life'.

Kalamkari (Telugu: కలంకారి) or Qalamkari is a type of hand-painted or block printed cotton textile, produced in parts of India and in Iran. The word is derived from the Persian words ghalam (pen) and kari (craftsmanship), meaning drawing with a pen (Ghalamkar).

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Pilgrim activities in Pilgrim places in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh are studied. Temples are usually surrounded with small shops in India. Temple complex shops and available sacred, secular and place specific products in it only are examined. Pilgrims make gifts, donations, and offerings, and sometimes even promise to pay for a special service over a fixed period. While returning, pilgrims buy the available products from the temple complex shops according to the motives.

Pilgrim tourism has been on ascendancy in the recent years. Infrastructure improvement and prospective expansion will contribute for further growth of pilgrim shopping complexes. This directly will ignite the fuel for sustaining the temple complex shops.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The literacy rate is positively increasing. Still better transport facilities are need to these renowned pilgrim places. Pilgrims respectfully paying their visits also is ever increasing. The above are motivating the shopkeepers to continuously upgrade the knowledge on secular and sacred products for exhibition and consequent sale. It is also evident that the kind of rise will be a good sign for the future too. Such activities are laying strong foundation for the survival of pilgrim shopping complexes in unorganized sector. It is also evident that this kind of rise in demand augurs well to the unorganized marketing.

Therefore, the infrastructure improvement and prospective expansion will contribute for the further growth of this unorganized sector of pilgrim shopping.

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**FIGURE LEGENDS**



**Figure 1: Idol of Lord Vinayaka at Kanipakam**



**Figure 2: Idol of Lord Vinayaka at Kanipakam**



**Figure 3: Kalamkari Cloth at Sri Kalahasti**



**Figure 4: Kalamkari Cloth at Sri Kalahasti**



**Figure 5: Kalamkari Cloth at Sri Kalahasti**

**Table 1: Prominent Products Available at the Pilgrim Centres**

| S.No | Product             | Boys | Girls | Male / Female |   |
|------|---------------------|------|-------|---------------|---|
| 1    | Turmeric powder     | N    | Y     | N             | Y |
| 2    | Sindhur powder      | N    | Y     | N             | Y |
| 3    | Tikkies/bindus      | N    | Y     | N             | Y |
| 4    | Hair dressing items | N    | Y     | N             | Y |
| 5    | Ear rings           | N    | Y     | N             | Y |
| 6    | Nose rods           | N    | Y     | N             | Y |
| 7    | Lipstick            | N    | Y     | N             | Y |
| 8    | Eye liner           | N    | Y     | N             | Y |
| 9    | Necklace            | N    | Y     | N             | Y |
| 10   | Toe rings           | N    | N     | N             | Y |
| 11   | Bangles             | N    | Y     | N             | Y |
| 12   | Clothes             | Y    | Y     | Y             | Y |
| 13   | Ready-mades         | y    | Y     | Y             | Y |
| 14   | Ribbons             | N    | Y     | N             | Y |
| 15   | Dolls –copper       | Y    | Y     | Y             | Y |
| 16   | Dolls-mud           | Y    | Y     | Y             | Y |
| 17   | Dolls-ceramic       | Y    | Y     | Y             | Y |
| 18   | Dolls –plastic      | Y    | Y     | N             | N |
| 19   | Bat and balls       | Y    | Y     | N             | N |
| 20   | Bags-travel         | N    | N     | Y             | Y |
| 21   | Bags-school         | Y    | Y     | N             | N |
| 22   | Photos              | N    | N     | Y             | Y |
| 23   | Photo frames        | N    | N     | Y             | Y |
| 24   | Laminated photos    | N    | N     | Y             | Y |
| 25   | Locketts            | Y    | Y     | Y             | Y |
| 26   | Calendars           | N    | N     | Y             | Y |



|    |                              |   |   |   |   |
|----|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 27 | Devotional Books             | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 28 | Posters                      | N | N | Y | Y |
| 29 | Idols                        | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 30 | Coconuts                     | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 31 | Pan                          | N | N | Y | Y |
| 32 | Incense Sticks               | N | N | Y | Y |
| 33 | Flowers                      | N | Y | N | Y |
| 34 | Steel cooking articles       | N | N | N | Y |
| 35 | Brass cooking articles       | N | N | N | Y |
| 30 | Ceramic vessels              | N | N | N | Y |
| 31 | Kitchen utensils             | N | N | Y | Y |
| 32 | Vibhuthi=Bhasma<br>(ash)     | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 33 | Dosa pans                    | N | N | Y | Y |
| 34 | Ponganalu=Filled cake<br>pan | N | N | Y | Y |
| 35 | Kavvam=Evil Engulfs          | N | N | Y | Y |
| 36 | Lattanika= Rolling Pin       | N | N | Y | Y |
| 37 | Borugulu=Rice flowers        | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 28 | Sugar candy                  | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 29 | Terracotta dolls             | N | N | Y | Y |
| 30 | Fancy                        | N | N | Y | Y |
| 31 | Door hangings                | N | N | N | Y |
| 32 | Wall hangings                | N | N | Y | N |
| 33 | Carry bags                   | N | N | Y | Y |
| 34 | Big shoppers=bags            | N | N | Y | Y |
| 35 | Brass items for deity        | N | N | Y | Y |
| 36 | Sacred threads               | Y | Y | Y | Y |

|    |  |   |   |   |   |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|
| 37 | Wood carving items                     | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 38 | Leather goods                          | N | N | Y | Y |
| 39 | Painting works                         | N | N | Y | Y |
| 40 | Potteries                              | N | N | Y | Y |
| 41 | Toys                                   | Y | Y | N | N |
| 42 | Electronic playing items               | Y | Y | N | N |
| 43 | Dollars- varieties                     | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 44 | Prasadams                              | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 45 | Souvenirs related to religious deities | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 46 | Parts of the body                      | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 47 | Caps / hats                            | Y | Y | Y | N |
| 48 | Rings(finger/ear)                      | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 49 | Vegetables                             | N | N | Y | Y |
| 50 | Cool and hot drinks                    | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 51 | Snacks                                 | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 52 | Various beads                          | N | Y | N | Y |
| 53 | Jilledu dolls (Calotropis )            | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 54 | Kalankari clothes                      | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| 55 | Stone pounder                          | N | N | Y | Y |
| 56 | Evil dolls                             | N | N | Y | Y |

**Legend:** (1) Y: Related to this segment.(2) N: Not related to this segment.