



# Pilgrims' Perceptions of Secular Services Provided by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams-A Study

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## Abstract:

*The concept of "service" is as old as humankind and it began when man started serving himself. When a part of the society became affluent, it started utilizing the services of others at a price. Then services became a business proposition. However, until the beginning of the twentieth century, the focus of economies was on producing more and more tangible goods and sell agricultural and manufactured products. Services such as accounting, banking, insurance and transportation were considered to be supportive to manufacturing units. But now-a-days, services influence people's lifestyle and the quality of their life significantly. All human beings have become service producers as well as consumers. Transportation, education, communication, healthcare, hospitality, entertainment, banking, information technology, electricity and a host of other such services have become a part of life, for a modern man. the pilgrim customers' perceptions of TTD provided services like amenities along footpath, accommodation at Tirumala and Tirupati, quality of kalyanakatta services, free darshan, arjitha sevas, laddu prasadam, waiting time of pilgrim customers in the queues in availing TTD services and so on.*

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**Keywords:** *Humankind, Pilgrim, Service Producers, Customers' Perceptions*

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism sector has become the most powerful growth engine now-a-days. This sector contributes over 13 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP). Many countries in the world have recognized the importance of this sector and are trying to strengthen this industry. Both developed and developing countries are making vigorous efforts to reshape the tourism industry. The main reason behind this attitudinal change in the policy makers is tourism's capacity to generate foreign exchange. This is mainly because almost all countries have realized the need to develop this industry, to keep pace with the changing tastes of potential tourists. Qualitative improvement in managing the tourism industry became possible when some of the leading global organizations such as World Tourism Organization (WTO), Pacific Area Travel Association, and International Union of Official Travel Organization evinced interest in promoting the tourism industry, especially in the developing countries where tourism industry is in a bad condition. Tourism as an industry operates on a massive scale and it embraces activities ranging from the smallest seaside hotel to airlines, multinational hotel chains and major international tour operators.

## 2. Objective

The main objective of this paper is Pilgrims' Perceptions of Secular Services provided by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams - A Study

## 3. Methodology

### Sampling design and selection of sampling units

In the present research study, the selection of sample pilgrims has been made by using "Simple Random

Sampling without Replacement Technique". The sample number of pilgrims has been determined by using the following formula.

$$n = t^2 \cdot p \cdot (1-p) / m^2$$

Where n = required sample

t = Table value of t-test statistic at 1% level of significance (2.58)

p = Response from the pilgrims visited at Tirumala in the pilot survey (Assumed as 1%)

m = Margin error at 1% (0.01)

By considering m = 0.01, p = 0.01 and t = 2.58 the sample size is given by

$$n = (2.58)^2 (0.01) (1-0.01) / (0.01)^2 = 659$$

For the field survey, due to design effect (D) of 2%, the sample size has been multiplied by 2 which results the sample size

(n) as

$$n \times D = 659 \times 2 = 1318$$

The sample size has been further increased by 5 % due to certain contingencies such as non-response and recording error.

Now, the actual size of sample has been determined as n\*

$$= n + (5\% \text{ of } n)$$

$$= 1318 + (1318 \times 0.05)$$

$$= 1384$$

i.e. Actual size sample size (n)\* = 1384

Therefore, the sample size for the present study is 1384 pilgrim customers in Tirumala temple. The sample distribution of TTD pilgrim customers is presented in the following table.1.

**Table 1: Service-wise distribution of pilgrim customers in Tirumala during January 2018 to December 2018**

Sr.	Services Categories of TTD	Total Population of Pilgrims visited *	Average no. of pilgrims per day	1% of Average no. of Pilgrims per day	Sample of Pilgrims
1	Transport	2721600	7456	75	55
2	Accommodation	178200	488	5	4
3	Kalyana Katta	210200	576	6	4
4	Free Darshan	12600000	34520	345	253
5	Arjita Sevas	12600000	34520	345	253
6	Free Meals	12000000	32877	329	241
7	Laddu Prasadam	25920000	71013	710	520
8	Complaint Handling and Information Distribution	150000	411	4	3
9	Others (Cloak Rooms, Locker Facility, Medical Facilities, etc.)	2550000	6986	70	51
<b>Total</b>		<b>68930000</b>	<b>188847</b>	<b>1889</b>	<b>1384</b>

**Source:** From the official records of TTD, Tirupati. (\*Rounded off figures)

#### 4. Source of Data

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was culled out from the TTD

records pertaining to pilgrim flows to Tirumala for the past ten years and pilgrims utilization of tonsure, darshan and free meals services provided by TTD. In order to supplement the secondary data, primary data has been collected through sample survey. The necessary data was collected through a scheduled questionnaire designed for this purpose. In this study the Pilgrim customers perceptions of TTD provided services like amenities along foothpath, accommodation, Free meals, Information dissemination at Tirumala and Tirupati, pilgrim customers in the queues in availity TTD services had been studied. Overall pilgrim customers satisfaction with the TTD services is presented in the table 2.

**Table 2: Overall Pilgrim customers Satisfaction with the TTD Services**

Sr.	Level of Satisfaction	No. of Respondents	Percentages
1	Extremely Dissatisfied	48	3.47
2	Very Dissatisfied	52	3.76
3	Somewhat Dissatisfied	17	1.22
4	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	156	11.28
5	Somewhat Satisfied	265	19.14
6	Very Satisfied	560	40.46
7	Extremely Satisfied	286	20.67
<b>Total</b>		<b>1384</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 2 depicts the overall satisfaction levels of pilgrim customers with the TTD services. It can be observed that 80.27per cent of the 1384 respondents were either somewhat satisfied, very satisfied or extremely satisfied with the services, and 8.45 per cent of them were extremely dissatisfied, very dissatisfied, or somewhat dissatisfied with the services. It can be further observed that the mean score of satisfaction 197.71. It tends towards high end of the scale. Thus, it can be inferred that the pilgrim customers' satisfaction with the TTD services was above somewhat satisfaction level and below very satisfied level. Perception of attributes of amenities along foothpath is presented in table 3.

**Table 3: Perception of Attributes of Amenities along Footpath**

S. No	Attributes	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neither Dissatisfied Nor Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Total
1	Minimum convenience like food, water and shelter on Footpath	95 (26.76)	80 (22.53)	15 (4.23)	77 (21.69)	88 (24.79)	<b>355</b> <b>(100.00)</b>
2	Cleanliness along the Footpath	28 (12.33)	65 (28.63)	11 (4.85)	65 (28.63)	58 (25.56)	<b>227</b> <b>(100.00)</b>
3	Security against wild animals and antisocial elements along Footpath	29 (24.57)	34 (28.82)	10 (8.48)	26 (22.03)	19 (16.10)	<b>118</b> <b>(100.00)</b>
4	Religious ambiance along Footpath	56 (17.83)	88 (28.02)	12 (3.82)	80 (25.47)	78 (24.86)	<b>314</b> <b>(100.00)</b>
5	Medical care in case of ill health or injury along Footpath	72 (19.45)	93 (25.13)	21 (5.68)	96 (25.95)	88 (23.79)	<b>370</b> <b>(100.00)</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>280</b> <b>(20.23)</b>	<b>360</b> <b>(26.01)</b>	<b>69</b> <b>(4.98)</b>	<b>344</b> <b>(24.86)</b>	<b>331</b> <b>(23.92)</b>	<b>1384</b> <b>(100.00)</b>

Source: Field survey

Table 3 shows the pilgrim customers perceptions of quality of attributes of amenities provided by TTD along the foothpath for pedestrians climbing up the Hills. Among 355 sample pilgrim customers majority i.e., 26.76 per cent were very dissatisfied with minimum facilities like food, water and shelter along

footpath, followed by 24.79 per cent being very satisfied, 22.53 per cent somewhat dissatisfied, 21.69 per cent somewhat satisfied and 4.23 per cent neither dissatisfied nor satisfied. Regarding the cleanliness along the footpath, majority i.e., 28.63 per cent opined that they were somewhat dissatisfied and the same number somewhat satisfied 4.85 per cent said they were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied. Majority i.e., 28.82 per cent among 118 sample pilgrim customers said that the security against wild animals and antisocial elements along footpath was somewhat dissatisfying. Among 314 sample pilgrim customers highest i.e., 28.02 per cent opined that the religious ambiance along footpath was somewhat dissatisfying and lowest of 3.82 per cent opined they were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied. Majority i.e., 25.95 per cent among 370 pilgrim customers said that the medical care in of case of ill health or injury along footpath was somewhat satisfying and lowest 5.68 per cent said they were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied. Among all 1384 sample pilgrim customers majority i.e., 360 pilgrim customers stated that they were somewhat dissatisfied on all attributes and lowest i.e., 69 persons were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied on all attributes. Perception of attributes of TTD provided accommodation at Tirumala and Tirupati are presented in table 4.

Table 4 furnishes the pilgrim customers' perceptions of quality of attributes of TTD provided accommodation at Tirupati and Tirumala. Among 117 pilgrim customers, majority i.e., 28 respondents said that they were somewhat satisfied with the waiting time for allotment of rooms and least of 21 respondents were very dissatisfied and another 21 respondents were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied. Among 105 pilgrim customers highest i.e., 31 respondents said that they were somewhat satisfied with the behaviour of employees in reception and lowest i.e., 18 respondents said that they were somewhat dissatisfied and another 18 respondents said that they were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied. Highest number i.e., 32 pilgrim customers among 111 persons said that they were somewhat satisfied towards the replies of employees for the queries posed by pilgrim customers. Among 109 pilgrim customers majority i.e., 22.94 per cent said that they were somewhat satisfied regarding guidance provided by the employees in showing the location of the room. Among 111 pilgrim customers, highest i.e., 25.23 per cent said that they were somewhat satisfied regarding location of room from different service points and lowest of 17.11 per cent were very dissatisfied. Among 117 pilgrim customers highest number i.e., 21.37 per cent said that they were very dissatisfied regarding cleanliness in the rooms and lowest 17.94 per cent said that they were very satisfied. Among 117 pilgrim customers majority i.e., 29.91 per cent said they were somewhat dissatisfied with the insufficient lighting and passage of air in the room and lowest 15.39 per cent opined that they were very satisfied on the same. Among 115 sample pilgrim customers highest i.e., 22.61 per cent said that the odour in the room was somewhat dissatisfying and another 22.61 per cent said that they were very satisfied, whereas least number i.e., 16.52 per cent were very dissatisfied. Among 121 sample pilgrim respondents 25.62 per cent said that the supply of water / hot water in the room was somewhat dissatisfying, whereas least of 14.04 per cent respondents said that they are neither dissatisfied nor satisfied. Highest i.e., 23.48 per cent in 115 sample pilgrim customers were somewhat satisfied regarding the rent for the room, whereas least of 12.17 per cent opined that they were very dissatisfied. Among 121 pilgrim customers, highest 26.45 per cent said that they were somewhat dissatisfied with the procedure of vacating and renewal of rooms, whereas least number i.e., 14.88 per cent said that they were very dissatisfied regarding the same attributes. Among 125 pilgrim customers highest 26.40 per cent opined that they were somewhat dissatisfied with the procedure of refund of deposit for the rooms, whereas least of 15.20 per cent said that they were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied on the same attributes. Among all 1384 sample pilgrim customers, highest i.e., 22.84 per cent opined that they were somewhat satisfied with all attributes, whereas least 17.05 per cent were very dissatisfied.

## 5. Pilgrim customers' perceptions about Free Meals

This section presents the pilgrim customers' perceptions of quality of attributes of free meals at Tirumala, waiting time in the queue for having free meals, and problems with free meals. Perceptions of pilgrim customers of free meals services are presented in table 5.

Table 5: Perceptions of Pilgrim Customers about Free Meals Services

Sr.	Attributes	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neither Dissatisfied nor satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Total
1	Display of free meals time outside the NAC	22 (16.05)	31 (22.64)	18 (13.13)	25 (18.25)	41 (29.93)	137 (100.00)
2	Waiting time in the queue	24 (15.79)	36 (23.69)	29 (19.07)	29 (19.08)	34 (22.37)	152 (100.00)
3	Systematic movement of the queue	25 (15.83)	28 (17.72)	37 (23.41)	36 (22.78)	32 (20.26)	158 (100.00)
4	Cleanliness of the dining hall	27 (17.65)	27 (17.65)	30 (19.61)	32 (20.91)	37 (24.18)	153 (100.00)
5	Neatness of employees servicing the food	26 (18.05)	33 (22.92)	23 (15.97)	31 (21.53)	31 (21.53)	144 (100.00)
6	Courteous behavior of employees serving the food	31 (20.81)	26 (17.45)	21 (14.09)	33 (22.14)	38 (25.51)	149 (100.00)
7	Taste and hygiene of the food served	23 (15.14)	25 (16.44)	25 (16.44)	38 (25.00)	41 (26.98)	152 (100.00)
8	Quality of food served	21 (13.04)	29 (18.01)	35 (21.74)	34 (21.12)	42 (26.09)	161 (100.00)
9	Cleanliness at the wash basins	26 (14.61)	32 (17.98)	38 (21.34)	37 (20.78)	45 (25.29)	178 (100.00)
<b>Total</b>		<b>225</b> <b>(16.26)</b>	<b>267</b> <b>(19.29)</b>	<b>256</b> <b>(18.49)</b>	<b>295</b> <b>(21.32)</b>	<b>341</b> <b>(24.64)</b>	<b>1384</b> <b>(100.00)</b>

Source: Field Survey

Table 5 shows the perceptions of the sample pilgrim respondents on free meals services. Among 1384 sample pilgrim respondents, highest 341 respondents were very satisfied in all the attributes, followed by 295 respondents who were somewhat satisfied, 267 respondents were somewhat dissatisfied, 256 respondents were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied and 225 respondents were very dissatisfied. Among 137 sample pilgrim respondents, majority i.e., 41 respondents opined that they were very satisfied with the display of free meals time outside the NAC, followed by 31 respondents who were somewhat dissatisfied, 25 respondents somewhat satisfied, 22 respondents very dissatisfied and 18 respondents were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied. Among 152 sample pilgrim respondents, majority i.e., 36 respondents expressed that they were somewhat dissatisfied about the waiting in the queue, followed by 34 respondents who were very satisfied, 29 respondents neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, 29 respondents somewhat satisfied and 24 respondents very dissatisfied. One can observe that among 158 sample pilgrim respondents, majority i.e., 37 respondents said that they were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied with the systematic movement of the queue, followed by 36 respondents who were somewhat satisfied 32 respondents very satisfied, 28 respondents somewhat dissatisfied and 25 respondents stated that they were very dissatisfied. Highest 37 sample pilgrim respondents among 153 respondents were very satisfied about the cleanliness in the dining hall, followed by 32 respondents who were somewhat satisfied, 30 respondents neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, 27 respondents somewhat dissatisfied and 27 respondents very dissatisfied. Among 144 sample pilgrim respondents, majority i.e., 33 respondents were somewhat dissatisfied with the neatness of the employees who were serving the food, followed by 31 respondents who were somewhat satisfied, 31 respondents very satisfied, 26 respondents very dissatisfied and 23 respondents neither dissatisfied nor satisfied. Among 149 sample pilgrim respondents, majority i.e., 38 respondents opined that they were very satisfied with the courteous behaviour of the employees in serving food, followed by 33 respondents who were somewhat satisfied, 31 respondents very dissatisfied, 26 respondents somewhat dissatisfied and 21 respondents neither dissatisfied nor satisfied. A maximum of 41 sample pilgrim respondents among 152 sample pilgrim respondents, said that they were very satisfied with the taste and hygiene of food served in free meals followed by 38 respondents who said that they were somewhat satisfied, 25 respondents somewhat dissatisfied, 25 respondents neither dissatisfied nor satisfied and 23 respondents very dissatisfied. One can notice that amongst 161 sample pilgrim respondents highest of 42 respondents opined that they were very satisfied with the quality of the food served in free meals, followed by 35 respondents who were

neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, 34 respondents somewhat satisfied, 29 respondents somewhat dissatisfied and 21 respondents very dissatisfied. Among 178 respondents majority i.e., 45 respondents said that they were very satisfied about the cleanliness at the wash basins in free meals hall, followed by 38 respondents who were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, 37 respondents somewhat satisfied, 32 respondents somewhat dissatisfied and 26 respondents very dissatisfied.

### 6. Pilgrim customers’ perceptions about Information Dissemination

This section presents the pilgrim customers’ perceptions of attributes of information about TTD services dissemination by TTD at Tirupati and Tirumala as well as, through Sri Venkateswara Bakthi Channel. Pilgrim customers’ perceptions about the quality of information dissemination at Tirupati and Tirumala by TTD are presented in the table 6.

**Table 6: Pilgrim Customers’ Perceptions about the Quality of Information Dissemination at Tirupati and Tirumala by TTD**

Sr.	Attributes	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neither Dissatisfied Nor satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Total
1	Information about time and place at which Sudarshan tokens and seva tickets were available	47 (18.22)	49 (18.99)	68 (26.36)	42 (16.28)	52 (20.15)	258 (100.00)
2	Information about the route for Tirumala bus stand	39 (14.61)	42 (15.74)	62 (23.22)	59 (22.09)	65 (24.34)	267 (100.00)
3	Information about availability of various types of accommodation in Tirupati and Tirumala	46 (18.63)	51 (20.65)	47 (19.02)	48 (19.43)	55 (22.27)	247 (100.00)
4	Sign boards indicating the routes for different places of importance at Tirupati and Tirumala	48 (17.46)	59 (21.46)	57 (20.72)	53 (19.27)	58 (21.09)	275 (100.00)
5	Information Provided at MAY I HELP YOU counters and TTD stall on enquiry by pilgrims	71 (21.06)	66 (19.59)	62 (18.39)	69 (20.48)	69 (20.48)	337 (100.00)
<b>Total</b>		<b>251 (18.14)</b>	<b>267 (19.30)</b>	<b>296 (21.38)</b>	<b>271 (19.58)</b>	<b>299 (21.60)</b>	<b>1384 (100.00)</b>

Source: Field Survey

Table 6 portrays the perceptions of the sample pilgrim respondents on the quality of information dissemination at Tirupati and Tirumala by TTD. Among 1384 sample pilgrim respondents, majority i.e., 299 respondents said that they were very satisfied with the attributes on the quality of information dissemination at Tirupati and Tirumala by TTD, followed by 296 respondents who were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, 271 respondents somewhat satisfied, 267 respondents somewhat dissatisfied and 251 respondents were very dissatisfied. Highest of 68 amongst 258 sample pilgrim respondents stated that they were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied with regard to the information about time and place at which Sudarshan tokens and seva tickets were available whereas lowest of 42 respondents said they were somewhat satisfied in this regard. Among 267 sample pilgrim respondents, majority of 65 respondents opined that they were very satisfied with the information about the route for Tirumala bus-stand, whereas the lowest of 39 respondents said that they were very dissatisfied. Among 247 sample pilgrim respondents, highest of 55 respondents said that they were very satisfied with the information about the availability of various types of accommodation in Tirupati and Tirumala and least of 46 respondents said that they were very dissatisfied in this regard. Among 275 sample pilgrim respondents, majority of 59 respondents said that they were somewhat dissatisfied with the sign boards indicating the route for different places of importance at Tirupati and Tirumala, whereas least of 48 respondents were very dissatisfied. Among 337 sample pilgrim respondents highest of 71 respondents were very dissatisfied with the information provided at “May I Help You desks” and TTD stalls on enquiry by pilgrims, whereas least of 62 respondents said that they were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied in this regard.

### 7. Conclusion

In this paper the perceptions of pilgrims about secular services provided by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, viz., amenities along footpath, accommodation at Tirumala and Tirupati, free meals

services and quality of information dissemination at Tirumala and Tirupati by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams were presented with their respective services. While pilgrims reported high satisfaction levels with some of the attributes, they reported moderate satisfaction for some attributes and dissatisfaction for the rest.

Among 1384 pilgrim sample respondents with regard to amenities along footpath 331 (23.82%) respondents were very satisfied, 69 ( 4.98%) respondents were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, in case of accommodation provided by TTD at Tirumala and Tirupati 266 (19.21%) respondents were very satisfied, 314 (22.69%) respondents were somewhat dissatisfied, it is observed that with regard to free meals services 341 (24.64%) respondents were very satisfied and 256 (18.49%) respondents were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied and about the quality of information dissemination at Tirumala and Tirupati by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams 299 (21.60%) respondents were very satisfied and 267 (19.30%) were somewhat satisfied..

Evaluation of service quality is usually made at two levels, transaction level and cumulative level. With regard to pilgrim satisfaction, transaction specific service quality is a post experience evaluative judgement of specific transaction the pilgrim would have encountered with each of the attributes of the services provided by the organisation. Cumulative satisfaction, on the other hand, is the overall evaluation, based on the entire experience of the pilgrim with respect to all the services provided by the organisation.

#### Reference

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