

Conservation Of Natural And Hertiage Resources In Madurai Region, Tamilnadu, India

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ABSTRACT

Madurai is a seat of learning in Tamil literature enriched with ecological traditions and great architecture marbles in south India. Heritage places and landscapes in Madurai are made up of living stories as well as connections to the past, which include nature resources, objects, customs and traditions that individuals and communities have inherited from the past. Madurai is one of the continually inhabited cities in the Indian peninsula, with a history dating all way back to the Sangam period of the pre-Christian era. It was the seat of power of the Pandian empire .Madurai was endowed with a rich cultural heritage and glorious tradition. The study of historical growth of urbanization of Madurai, has been increased and the valuable resources like rich cultural and natural/manmade resources in and around Madurai has brought the habitat to settle in Madurai. Therefore, both government and educated community have taken efforts to teach the public about importance of resources and bring awareness among the people about the quality of urban environment life in proper manner, which is the main duty of every one. The Present study focus on sustainable development approaches implies that the natural, heritage resources of tourism are conserved for continuous use in the future, while still bringing benefits to the present society.

Keywords

Heritage, Conservation, Resources, Excavation, Developmental plan

Introduction

Madurai districts geographically bounded on the North by the district of Dindigul, East by Sivagangai, West by Theni and South by Virudhunagar. Madurai covers areas of 51.55 sq. km. Madurai has several heritage monuments attracts the tourists all over the world (Ratan Deep Singh, 2004). All the monuments are found in natural rock areas and it provides additional enthusiastic and it also seen under the hovering of eco- tourism. Eco- tourism is suffering from the hands of the human beings as well as the natural calamities (Statistical Handbook of Tamilnadu, 2001). Heritage places and landscapes in Madurai are made up of living stories as well as connections to the past, which include nature resources, objects, custom and traditions that individual and communities have inherited from the past. So based on the study of Madurai city has valuable resources like rich natural and manmade resources in / around Madurai it brought the habitat to settle in Madurai (Rehana Tasiq, 2007). The Present study focus on sustainable development approaches implies that the natural, heritage resources of tourism are conserved for continuous use in the future, while still bringing benefits to the present society.

Objectives Defined and Met

- To study the historical and natural heritage sites in Madurai.
- To find out the schemes introduced by Governmental and Non-Governmental organization to conserve the resources in Madurai.

Literature Review

According to the conception, base and review of literature gave the base for the present investigation of Sustainable development. On government, orders and government schemes and programmes launched for the development of urban sectors and also collected some information regarding conservation through one of the NGO in Madurai affirmative steps to ratify the depletion of natural and heritage resources in Madurai region are also taken as a source for this study.

Sustainable and Tourism development

Rehana Tasiq, Sustainable Urbanization and Urban Development Global Scenario, New academy, 2007,p 81.Environmental consideration

in tourism development, the unprecedented and unplanned growth of these urbanization has led to the emergence of a multitude and complex level of physical, social, political and economic etc., following are the high lights of this book.

Ratan Deep Singh, Hand Book of Environmental Guidelines for Indian Tourism, Kanisha Publishers and Distributors, 2004, p 131. The author has written about the conference held by environmental protection worldwide. He given details about the types of environment and effects an environment it mainly affected human beings and living organism and he also suggest an environmental policy and fearing some planning for fiber progress.

Methodology

Historical method in this research referred to historical sites through Madurai so the researchers has historical available of the study as an original document and Survey method (Sample) to study the resources in Madurai region. Questionnaire was administered to the residents of different parts of Madurai city in the age group 45-75 years, to find out the conditions of schemes and the awareness provided by the Government. Data was collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through government orders, archival materials, policy notes, master plan, implementation of new schemes, structured questionnaire etc. Random sampling conducted from the selected respondent was evaluated with the help of a questionnaire. Structured interview schedule consisted of both open ended and close-ended questions included in the suggestions. Study was conducted mainly in /around Madurai city (Tamilnadu). The research was done by visiting various government and private organizations. Madurai corporations, Municipalities, Town Panchayats, NGO (Non-Governmental Organization), Forest Administration etc.

Area of the study

The area undertaken for the study was in and around natural & heritage resources of Madurai city.

Statement of the problem

To protect the natural and heritage resources of Madurai region, which bears the heritage of Tamilian culture. Since the local people did not have awareness about the importance of Madurai environment, both government and educated community wanted to teach the public about importance of resources and bring awareness among the people about the quality of urban environment life in proper manner, as it is the main duty of every one.

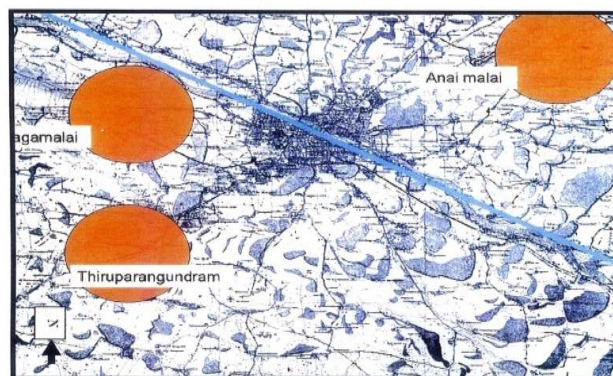


Figure 1. MapShows : Hills In And Around Madurai City(Tamilnadu State) (Sources : Detailed Development Plan for Madurai City, Madurai Corporation, 2011)

Present conditions of Natural Heritage in and around Madurai

1.1Alagarmalai



Figure 2. Hill of Alagarkovil in Madurai Region

These hills became an important sources of raw material for Ayurvedic and Siddha medicines. The taboos, rituals and belief associated with the grove, supported by mystic folklore have been the prime motivating factors for preserving the sacred groves in as pristine a condition as possible, The indigenous traditional knowledge of medicinal

plants of various ethnic communities where it has been transmitted orally for centuries is fast disappearing due to advent of modern technology, transformation of culture, and the irresponsible attitude of the tourist behavior. The environment is really deficit in this region and the biodiversity of the region has to be protected. (Heritage and Tourism Development plan)

Tourists use polythene and plastics which are non-bio degradable and they littered it on the environment. There was a Teppakulam tank in Alagar kovil but at present there is no water in this tank.

Alagarkovil the dilapidated Rayagopuram or tower and Thirumalai Nayak mandapam are interesting art pieces to observe but the present condition of the mandapam is in ruined stage. Due to the irresponsible attitude of the tourists / devotee, the environment is getting deteriorated. The visitors of this region litter the eatables, and the wastages. Improper disposal of plastic bags on the environment are the main reason, which has polluted this eco- friendly environment.

1.2 Yanamalai, Pasumalai, Nagamalai

At present these rock surfaces of the hill has been quarried and only a small portion of the rocks remain. In case of Nagamalai hill, quarrying can be seen at the far end of the hillock at the back of the Jain caves.

Dr. C. Santhalingam, Assistant Director, Archaeology Department, claims that the apprehensions about Quarrying are unfounded.



Figure 3. Yanamalai

Heritage sites and the earlier distance of 300 m had been increased. He said adding that in case of

any difference of opinion, the mining Department would have to undertake a joint inspection and the no objection certificate from the Archaeology Department was mandatory. Now granite quarries located near the abodes are exploiting the minerals. In the process, the historical abodes are getting completely eroded.

1.3 Thiruparankundram



Figure 4. Thiruparankundram

Thiruparankundram attracts lakhs of devotees across the country as it is one of the renowned pilgrimage destination of Tamilnadu. The department of tourism and culture is planning is to take up numerous works such as hybrid musical dancing fountain, eco- park, open air theater, land scaping, rose garden, fencing, purchase of boats, creating a boat jetty, toilets, forming water cascade, providing children play equipment and parking lot and pathways, The State Government had also provided a sum of Rs. 51.50 lakhs to build up the infrastructure and this brings in more tourists into the park. This park will facilitate the extension of the tourists stay in Thiruparankundram (Heritage and Tourism Development plan). The Eco Park will be examples of sustainable tourism development.

2.1 Heritage resources in Madurai Region

All the monuments are found in natural rock areas provide additional enthusiastic inputs and it also seen under the hovering of eco- tourism. Hence, eco- tourism is suffering from the hands of the human beings as well as the natural calamities.

The heritage monuments of the Jains in Madurai region. Jains' monuments play a vital role in the attraction of tourists. The Madurai region was once, the centre of Jainism in Ancient period. The

history of Jainism in the Pandyas kingdom can be traced and before the advent of the Christian era in Tamilnadu.(Heritage plan and Corridor for Madurai Development).The jains lived in and around of the hillock of Madurai district, like Anamalai (Fig.5), Alagarmalai, Kilakuilkudimalai, Kongarapulaiyankulam, Muthupatti, Arittapatti, Thirupparangundram and Kalugumalai(G.O.Ms.No.200 Toursim & culture(TI)). Almost all the jains settlements were declared as the protected monuments under the Archaeological and Historical Remains Act of 25/1966. The following Tabular column provides brief description about its destination and other details of these heritage sites (Ladan koil in Anaimalai G.O. MS. No. 23).



Figure 5. Anaimalai Jain Cave Temple



Figure 6. Kizha Kuyil Kudi Jain Thirthankaras



Figure 7. ThenParankundram Rock cut cave Temple: Madurai District

In all the above, Jain's cave have certain similarities, that they all possess cave beds and Tamil inscriptions, paintings and sculptures of olden days. Hence, the Department of Archaeology has declared this area as protected heritage sited in difference times. Heritage cave temples are seen in Madurai region. (Francis, w. Madura Gazetter, Delhi- 2000) Madurai has been considered as the cultural capital of Tamils and temple city of South India. It not only has number of legendary and structural temples but also many cave temples in the natural hillock, like Ladan kovil , Asthagirish waralayam and Arittapatti Sivankovil (Fig. 8) etc(G.O.Ms.No.200 Toursim & culture (TI)).



Figure 8. Shiva Linga and Ganesh and the Front Mandapa at Arittapatti

Table.1: Heritage Resources in Madurai region

S.No	Name of the monuments	Taluk	Village	Distance sited from Madurai
1.	Therthangarar sculpture	Madurai	Anamalai	Northern east 18 km
2.	Brahmi inscriptions	Madurai	Varichiyur	Northern east 18 km
3.	Jains stone beds and Brahmi inscription	Madurai	Kongara Pulinkulam	North – 12 km
4.	Jains stone beds, sculpture and Brahmi inscription	Thirumangalam	Meenakshipuram	West – 20 km
5.	Jain store beds and Tamil Brahmi inscription	Madurai	Thiruvadavur	North east – 20 km
6.	Thiruvadavur Brahmi inscription and stone beds	Madurai	Anaimalai	North east – 36 km
7.	Karnkkalakudi Brahmi inscription and stone beds	Madurai	Karunkalakudi	North east – 35 km

Source: Department of Archaeology Madurai records.