

INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS PERCEPTION ABOUT FOLKLORE TOURISM IN MADURAI

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Folklore tourism is a tourism activity concerned with folklore and tourism. The tourists will visit and observe folklore activities in the destinations. The objective of folklore tourism is to make the tourists to understand the culture of the destination through folk songs, folk music, dramas and stories of community, passed through the generations by word of mouth. The city Madurai is basically rural oriented city where in one can observe lot of floating rural population and the culture also adhered with rural lifestyle. The city has more than 2000 years history and it is famous tourism destination for Temples, Palaces, and Museums. In 2017, nearly 2.17 lakhs of International Tourists visited the City Madurai and More than 1.5 crores of domestic tourists' visits every year. The folklore of this region includes Songs, music, festivals, dances etc. This research makes an attempt to find out the International Tourists perception of Folklore activities in Madurai region. Also tries to find out the profile of international tourists, their opinion about folklore activities and their satisfaction level of international tourists with respect to different folklore activities.

Folklore is the traditional beliefs, customs and stories of community passed through the generations by word of mouth (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folklore>). Folklore is verbal, non-verbal, and visual composition of human history, culture and life itself. We have rich treasures of folk tradition, which manifest many volumes of glories and agonies of our struggle, survival and existence. These practices include numerous forms, especially performances (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folklore>). Tourism is the leisure activity, in which tourists visits different destinations and observe different activities to develop their skills and knowledge pertains to their observation during their visits to particular destinations. The different motives of tourism are physical motives, pleasure, relaxation, health, curiosity and culture, ethnicity and family, participation in events and festivals and spiritual and religious motives (<https://notes.tyrocitcity.com/different-motivespurposes-of-tourism/>).

Folklore tourism is a part of cultural tourism and it is visiting the traditional areas and observing the different folklore activities in that area. In this research study, focus is given to the perception of foreign tourists visiting folklore activities in Madurai area. Located on the banks of river Vagai, Madurai is an ancient city known as cultural citadel of Tamil literature; it is among the few cities in the world that can boast of having a heritage dating back to over 2,500 years (<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Madurai/lot-more-needs-to-be-done-to-attract-foreign-tourists/article2486768.ece>).

Madurai is culturally rich with ancient traditions, historical significance and other natural beauty. The Meenatchi temple and ThirumalaiNaickar Mahal are main tourism attractions. Thirupparankundram temple, AlgarKovil, VandiyurMariammanTeppakulam, Gandhi Museum, KoodalAlagar Temple, are a few other popular places to visit in Madurai (<https://www.holidify.com/places/madurai/sightseeing-and-things-to-do.html>). Besides that, tourists used to visit folklore activities in and around Madurai. The main folklore activities are traditional dances, traditional rural music, Jallikattu, Pongal festivals etc. The number of foreign tourists visiting Madurai has gone up to 2.17 lakh in 2017, from 1.22 lakh in 2016, which is an increase by 78 percent. When compare to 2010, the number of foreign tourists in 2017 was four times higher (<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/madurai/tourism-boom-in-madurai/articleshow/63587412.cms>). The total number of domestic tourist visiting Madurai increased to more than 1.5 crore.

By observing the growth of foreign tourists visiting Madurai especially the activities related to traditional beliefs, customs passed through the generations, it is decided to make detailed study about the profile of the foreign tourists, their opinion about the facilities available and opinion about the folklore activities. Based on the observations, an attempt to provide valuable suggestions is made for overall tourism development.

Objectives of the Study

- a. To study the profile of the international tourists visiting Madurai.
- b. To find out Opinion about the various folklore activities in Madurai.
- c. To identify the opinion about the tourism facilities and services provided to international tourists.
- d. To provide better suggestions for the development of folklore tourism.

Profile of the International Tourists

The profile of the tourists is very important to take some decision like marketing, facility planning, destination management etc. The profile includes characteristics like sex, age, native country, educational level, monthly income and occupation. It also accounts for accompanies, purpose of visit, and the like. It helps the tourism planner to adopt appropriate strategies for tourism development.

Sex

The study reveals that majority (80 percent) of the international tourists are male. It is inferred that male tourists are more interested in international tourism.

Age of the Tourists

The study indicates that majority (60 percent) of the international tourists are in the age group of 50 - 60 years. So it inferred that most of the tourists prefer to travel after retirement.

Native Country

Out of 100 international tourists surveyed, 25 percent are coming from Germany, 22 percent from France, 20 percent from Malaysia, 15 percent from UK, 11 percent from USA and remaining are from other countries like Australia, New Zealand, Brazil and Argentina. The study indicates that most of the tourists are from European continent.

Education

The study shows that majority (60 percent) are graduates. It is inferred that educated persons are better interest in visiting international destinations.

Occupation

Occupation decides the economic status of a person which in turn decides the quality and cost of the tourism service offered. It is inferred that most (63 percent) of the international tourists are professionals or retired community.

Monthly Income of Foreign Tourists

Earning capacity of the international tourists is one of the important factors to travel to tourism destination. The length of the stay and duration of the travel depends upon the income of the visitors. The study reveals that majority (55 percent) of the international tourist visited Madurai have monthly income US \$ 6000 to 10000.

Accompanying Persons

The study reveals that majority (75 percent) of the tourists accompanied by mixed group and spouse.

Period of Stay

The period of stay is one of the most important yard stick for tourism promotion of any country. The longer the duration of the stay of international tourists in India, the grater will be the foreign exchange earnings from tourism. From the study it is observed that majority (78 percent) of the tourists stayed two to three nights in the Madurai city.

Opinion about Folklore activities in Madurai

Opinion about Folklore activities includes Jallikattu, Pongal festival, Karagattam, Kummiyattam, Oyilattam, Kolattam, Folk music and Folk Drama. Out of 100 respondents surveyed, Pongal festival attracts much and scored 410 points and stood first rank, followed by Karakattam (382 points), Jallikattu (379 points), Folk Drama (375 points), Kolattam (369 points), Kummiyattam (368 points), Oyilattam (363 points) and Folk Music (360 points).

OPINION ABOUT FOLKLORE ACTIVITIES

Folklore activities	Opinion											Total	Rank
	Very Good		Good		Moderate		Poor		Very Poor				
	Number	Score	Number	Score	Number	Score	Number	Score	Number	Score			
Jallikattu	25	125	33	132	38	114	4	8	0	0	379	3	
Pongal Festivals	34	170	42	168	24	72	0	0	0	0	410	1	
Karagattam	24	120	34	136	42	126	0	0	0	0	382	2	
Kummiyattam	20	100	28	112	52	156	0	0	0	0	368	6	
Oyilattam	18	90	32	128	45	135	5	10	0	0	363	7	
Kolattam	19	95	31	124	50	150	0	0	0	0	369	5	
Folk Music	12	60	36	144	52	156	0	0	0	0	360	8	
Folk Drama	15	75	45	180	40	120	0	0	0	0	375	4	

Kumaran. S., *Folklore Activity Survey*

From the above table, it is observed that Pongal festival, Karakattam and Jallikattu are attracted by majority of the International Tourists.

Opinion about the Tourism Facilities in Madurai

Opinion about tourism facilities includes Accommodation, Food, Local Transport and Tourist guide. Out of 100 international tourists surveyed, Accommodation scored highest points (314) and stood first rank followed by Food (302 points), Local Transport (292 points) and Tourist Guide (278 points).

OPINION ABOUT THE TOURISM FACILITIES

Facilities	Opinion											Total	Rank
	Very Good		Good		Moderate		Poor		Very Poor				
	Number	Score	Number	Score	Number	Score	Number	Score	Number	Score			
Accommodation	12	60	28	112	32	96	18	36	10	10	314	1	
Food	9	45	27	108	31	93	23	46	10	10	302	2	
Local Transport	5	25	22	88	42	126	22	44	09	9	292	3	
Tourist Guide	3	15	21	84	39	117	25	50	12	12	278	4	

Kumaran. S., *Tourism Facilities Survey*

The above table indicates that food and accommodation facilities provided to International Tourists are good.

Opinion about Cost of Facilities

Opinion about cost of facilities includes Food cost, Beverage Cost, Accommodation, Transportation and Entry fee. Among the 100 respondents, Food cost scored high points (283 points) and stood first rank, followed by Beverages (276 points), Accommodation (267 points), Entry Fee (265 points) and Transportation cost (258 points).

OPINION ABOUT COST OF FACILITIES

Facilities	Opinion										Total	Rank
	Very High		High		Moderate		Low		Very Low			
	Nos.	Score	Nos.	Score	Nos.	Score	Nos.	Score	Nos.	Score		
Food	5	25	18	72	42	126	25	50	10	10	283	1
Beverages	4	20	16	64	45	135	22	44	13	13	276	2
Accommodation	3	15	13	52	46	138	24	48	14	14	267	3
Transport	1	5	4	16	55	165	32	64	08	08	258	5
Entry fee	0	0	0	0	75	225	15	30	10	10	265	4

Kumaran. S., *Cost of Facilities Survey*

The above table indicates that the cost of food, accommodation, and transport and entry fee is moderate. Less than five percent of the tourists felt the cost of facilities is high.

Satisfaction on Pongal Festival

Regarding the satisfaction on Pongal Festival, 31 percent of the international tourists are highly satisfied, 48 per cent are satisfied, twelve per cent are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 9 percent were dissatisfied nor no one is highly dissatisfied.

SATISFACTION ON PONGAL FESTIVAL

Level of satisfaction	Number	Percentage
Highly satisfied	31	31
Satisfied	48	48
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	12	12
Dissatisfied	9	9
Highly Dissatisfied	0	0
Total	100	100

Kumaran. S., *Survey on Tourists Satisfactory level*

From the above given table, it is understood that majority of the international tourists are satisfied.



Delightful Foreign and Indian Tourists

Satisfaction on Jallikattu:

Regarding the Jallikattu, 39 percent were highly satisfied, 51 per cent were satisfied, 10 percent were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and no has indicated dissatisfaction.

SATISFACTION ON JALLIKATTU FESTIVAL



Alanganallur Jallikattu

Level of Satisfaction	Number	Percent
Highly Satisfied	39	39
Satisfied	51	51
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	10	10
Dissatisfied	0	0
Highly Dissatisfied	0	0
Total	100	100

Kumaran. S., Jallikattu Survey

The above table indicates that majority of the international tourists are satisfied with Jallikattu event organized at Madurai.

Satisfaction on Folk Dance, Music and Events:

Regarding the Folk Dance , out of 100 international Tourists, 32 per cent are highly satisfied, 54 are satisfied, 14 are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and no one is dissatisfied with Folk Dance.

SATISFACTION ON FOLK DANCE, MUSIC AND EVENTS

Level of Satisfaction	Number	Percent
Highly Satisfied	32	32
Satisfied	54	54
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	14	14
Dissatisfied	0	0
Highly Dissatisfied	0	0
Total	100	100



Kumaran. S., Survey on Folk Dance, Music and other Events Satisfactory level

The above table indicates that majority of the international tourists are satisfied with Folk Dance organized during Pongal Festival.

Findings and Observation

- The study shows that majority (80 percent) of the tourists are Male. It is inferred that Male are interested International Tourism.
- The study indicates that majority (60 percent) of the International tourists are having age ranging between 50 and 60 years.
- The study reveals that majority (62 percent) of the International Tourists are from European countries like United Kingdom, France and German. International Tourists from Malaysia also visiting Madurai every year.

- The study presents that majority (60 percent) of the international tourists are graduates.
- The study indicates that majority (63 percent) of the tourists are Professionals or retired community.
- The study shows that majority (55 percent) of the tourist's monthly income is between US\$ 6000 and 10000.
- The study indicates that majority (69 percent) of the tourists are accompanied by friends and relatives and spouse.
- The study shows that majority (55 percent) of the tourists period of stay is between 2 and three nights.
- Opinion about Folklore activities includes Jallikattu, Pongal festival, Karagattam, Kummiyattam, Oyilattam, Kolattam, Folk music and Folk Drama. Out of 100 respondents surveyed, Pongal festival attracts much and scored 410 points and stood first rank, followed by Karakattam (382 points), Jallikattu (379 points), Folk Drama (375 points), Kolattam (369 points), Kummiyattam (368 points), Oyilattam (363 points) and Folk Music (360 points). The study indicates that Pongal festival, Karakattam and Jallikattu are attracted by majority of the International Tourists.
- Opinion about tourism facilities includes Accommodation, Food, Local Transport and Tourist guide. Out of 100 international tourists surveyed, Accommodation scored highest points (314) and stood first rank followed by Food (302 points), Local Transport (292 points) and Tourist Guide (278 points). The study indicates that majority of the tourists felt good about food and accommodation facilities provided to International Tourists are good.
- Opinion about cost of facilities includes Food cost, Beverage Cost, Accommodation, Transportation and Entry fee. Among the 100 respondents, Food cost scored high points (283 points) and stood first rank, followed by Beverages (276 points), Accommodation (267 points), Entry Fee (265 points) and Transportation cost (258 points). The study indicates that the cost of food, accommodation, and transport and entry fee is moderate. Less than five percent of the tourists felt the cost of facilities is high.
- Regarding the satisfaction on Pongal Festival, 31 percent of the international tourists are highly satisfied, 48 per cent are satisfied, twelve per cent are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 9 percent were dissatisfied nor no one is highly dissatisfied. The study indicates that majority of the international tourists are satisfied with the Pongal festival of Madurai.
- Regarding the Jallikattu, 39 percent were highly satisfied, 51 per cent were satisfied, 10 percent were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and no has indicated dissatisfaction. The study indicates that majority of the international tourists are satisfied with Jallikattu event organized at Madurai.
- Regarding the Folk Dance, out of 100 international Tourists, 32 per cent are highly satisfied, 54 are satisfied, 14 are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and no one is dissatisfied with Folk Dance. The study indicates that majority of the international tourists are satisfied with Folk Dance organized during Pongal Festival.

Suggestions

- ❖ Formulate strategy to attract more number of international tourists by conducting promotional programmes at countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and other Asian countries.

- ❖ An exclusive website may get created and important information pertains to Folklore activities in Madurai region.
- ❖ Maintaining cleanliness is the essential part of healthy living because it is the cleanliness only which helps to improve our personality by clean externally and internally. In Hospitality industry it is essential to keep environment clean to attract tourists. The tourism hotels focus more attention on Cleanliness and hygiene and hotel staff should get trained in maintaining the environment properly.
- ❖ The tourist guide should improve the efficiency in communicating information to the international tourists. They should learn required foreign languages to improve the satisfaction level of tourists.
- ❖ The Folklore activities should be getting organized exclusively for International Tourists and a prelude has to be provided to the tourists in the form of video or documentary. By creating more number of interesting folklore activities, the length of the stay can be get increased.
- ❖ Tourism facilities like Accommodation, Food, and Local transport facilities have to be improved.
- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation and Tourism operators organize Pongal festival programme organized jointly at different villages for the International programme.
- ❖ An interactive session should be organized between International Tourists and villagers. This will help the visitors to understand the local culture of the peoples.

Conclusion

The Folklore activities become familiar among tourists. Folklore is an integral part of human-life. This heritage of folklore naturally passes from one generation to another. Folklore is significant in human life because it ties the social, cultural, religious and psychological worlds of human beings. The Folklore becomes an important activity in the tourism industry. This research study made an attempt to find out the profile of International Tourists and their opinion about the folklore activities, Tourism facilities, cost of facilities and finally their satisfaction towards different activities of folklore. Based on the findings of the research, few suggestions are provided for the improvement of tourism business using folklore activities. By effectively implementing the cited suggestions, the international tourists' inflow will be increased and there by demand for folklore activities will be improved.

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