

EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF TOURISTS'
TOWARDS TRANSPORTATION SERVICES IN
KODAIKANAL

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Abstract

Travel and Tourism are normally used interchangeably in normal conversations though the two do not mean one thing. Even though the transport industry gives the link that is amid dwelling and destination regions of tourists, but the industry's role as an agent responsible for making tourists reach these destinations has been considered as tourism. Tourism world over cannot exist in isolation from transport and therefore it can be stated in other terms that there is a strong positive correlation between tourism and transport. The improvement or modernization of transport or deterioration of the same has a direct impact on tourism. The history of tourism and that of transport provides a clear understanding of this shared relationship. Transportation can be discussed without taking tourism into consideration but clearly tourism cannot thrive without travel. Transportation is an essential part of the tourism industry and is principally due to the improvements of transportation that tourism has expanded. This paper attempts to determine the extent to which foreign and domestic tourists were satisfied on transportation services in Kodaikanal, when compared to their expectations. Satisfaction was measured by using three attributes such as, comfort, cost/fare and safety.

Key Words: Tourists, Transportation, Services, Expectation and Perception.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Transport is an inherent part of tourism; whether as a functional means of transportation, such as between origin and destination or within the destination; or as a key element of the holiday experience itself, as in cruising or traveling along scenic or historic routes. Transportation links the various destinations and ferries people, goods, and services. Tourism is all about travel; and the role of transportation in its operation is vital. It is largely due to the improvement of transportation that tourism has expanded. The advent of flight has shrunk the world, and the motor vehicle has made travel to anywhere possible. This reality coupled with changing work patterns and innovative marketing has driven international mass tourism through the years. Though careful planning of the components of the destination is done to ensure sustainability, transportation is seldom considered in the process and due to this a number of biodiversity-rich areas have been destroyed due to the easy access.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In many tourism studies, the relationship between transport and tourism is defined in terms of accessibility; that is, transport is seen as a link between tourist generating regions and tourism destination regions (Prideaux , 2000). Page and Lumsdon (2004) agrees that transportation system of a tourist destination has an impact on the tourism experience which explains how people travel, their choice on forms of holiday, destination and transport mode. The improvement of modes of transportation coupled with low fares has seen accessibility of areas once seen as off-the-beaten-path rise. Access to a specific tourism site differs according to the nature of the site, state of infrastructure, and the efficiency of public transport system. Transport policies and government decisions can make a ruling on the destinations available to tourists. Failure of public sector to cope with demand concerning transport infrastructures may mean lack of tourism development in such areas. Tourism can use different transport modes. Car travel is the most widely used and the most dominant in the world tourism notably due to its flexibility, price and independence with the availability of cars at even cheaper prices means an increase in availability of this mode of transport and hence the growth of tourist volume. Rail travel is another transport mode used by tourists. With the introduction of high speed electric trains as compared to the old locomotive steam engines transport is made faster more reliable and comfortable and this contributes positively to the tourism sector. Air transport is the most effective in terms of speed but due to the high cost only a small proportion of people worldwide

use it. Long journeys can be made in a minimal time and with this a tourist can afford to visit different places in a limited time if the cost factor is ignored. In tourism sector, transportation plays an important 'flow' function in the tourism value chain. It links tourists at their origin with appealing stocks of environmental and cultural assets at the destination (Jennifer Reilly et al. 2010).

III.OBJECTIVES

To analyze the domestic and foreign tourist's expectations and perceptions towards transportation services in Kodaikanal and to compare their expectations and perceptions on transportation services between foreign and domestic tourists.

IV.METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research instrument

The questionnaire for this study consisted of three communication attributes, for which tourists were asked to indicate the expectations attributes when they choose and their perceptions communication services. Tourists were asked to rate each of the attributes in terms of expectations and perceptions on transportation services, on a 5 - point Likert scale ranging from "Highly expected" to "Not expected" for expectations and "Highly satisfied" to "Dissatisfied" for perceptions ranging from 1, not expected to 5, highly expected, in the expectation part, and from 1, dissatisfied, to 5, highly satisfied, in the perception part.

4.2. The sampling method

Data were collected from the tourists in Kodaikanal using a convenient sampling and judgment sampling approaches. The sample size was composed of 400(200 Domestic and 200 Foreign tourists) visiting Kodaikanal.

4.3. Data analysis

In this study, descriptive statistics including simple frequencies, deviations and chi – square analysis were computed on the tourists' expectations and perceptions on the 3 attributes of transportation services in Kodaikanal.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: Transport Services**DISTRIBUTION OF FOREIGN TOURISTS TO KODAIKANAL BY MODE OF TRANSPORT**

The research study indicates the mode of transport preferred by the foreign tourists visiting Kodaikanal.

TABLE 1**Distribution of Foreign Tourists by Mode of Transport**

| Sl.No. | Mode of Transport | Foreign Tourists | |
|--------|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| | | No. of Respondents | Percentage to Total |
| 1. | Luxury Coach | 62 | 31 |
| 2. | Ordinary Vehicle | 42 | 21 |
| 3. | Others(bus, cycle etc) | 96 | 48 |
| | Total | 200 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data.

From Table 1 reveals that the mode of transport preferred by more than 48 per cent foreign tourists visiting Kodaikanal is others which includes bus (private and government), two-wheelers and very few adventurous type of tourists visit Kodaikanal through bicycles and use cycles for a short distance. Another 31 per cent of them travel by Luxury coaches like Parveen, K.P.N., which are very much known for its luxury services at Kodaikanal. Only 21 per cent foreign tourists visit Kodaikanal through hired vehicles like car, van and the like.

It can be concluded that the mode of transport preferred by more than 48 per cent foreign tourists to Kodaikanal is the private or government buses.

EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF FOREIGN TOURISTS TOWARDS TRANSPORT SERVICES

Transportation in tourism is a key element. Transportation in tourism are as what veins and arteries are to human body. In order to identify the expectations of the transport services in

Kodaikanal the foreign tourists were asked to rate transport services in terms of various aspects as shown in Table 2 using a five-point scale, ranging from "highly expected" to "expected".

TABLE 2
Expectations and Perceptions of Transport Services by Foreign Tourists to Kodaikanal

| S. No. | Variables | HE | HS | E | S | ME | MS | LE | LS | NE | DS | Total Responses |
|--------|---------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Comfort | 19 (9.5%) | 26 (13%) | 99 (49.5%) | 70 (35%) | 52 (26%) | 19 (9.5%) | 12 (6%) | 61 (30.5%) | 18 (9%) | 24 (12%) | 400 |
| 2. | Cost/ Fare | 20 (10%) | 44 (22%) | 91 (45.5%) | 78 (39%) | 49 (24.5%) | 28 (14%) | 37 (18.5%) | 30 (15%) | 3 (1.5%) | 20 (10%) | 400 |
| 3. | Safety | 124 (62%) | 76 (38%) | 36 (18%) | 98 (49%) | 20 (10%) | 7 (3.5%) | 12 (6%) | 13 (6.5%) | 8 (4%) | 6 (3%) | 400 |

Source: Primary Data.

Note: Figures in bracket indicates the percentage to 200 Respondents.

5.1 Comfort

Inferences from the responses shows that a majority of 59 per cent foreign tourists expected/highly expected comfort in transport services at Kodaikanal as most of the time foreigners travel more than stay, expect much comfort in transport services. While, 26 per cent have moderate expectations and relatively low per cent is seen with less/no expectations for comfort in transport services at Kodaikanal.

Perceptions of foreign tourists with regard to comfort in transport services provided by operators in Kodaikanal has been determined which shows that 48 per cent foreign respondents are satisfied and opined their satisfaction about comfort in transportation services. Another 9.5 per cent of them were moderately satisfied. This is due to the over crowding in the bus, no proper seating arrangements, improper timings of the vehicles, etc which makes them feel inconvenient and uncomfortable. On the other hand, 42.5 per cent of them were less satisfied / dissatisfied with regard to the comfort of transport services to Kodaikanal.

From the above percentage analysis it can be concluded that majority of 59 per cent foreign tourists expected/highly expected comfort in transportation services to Kodaikanal, but only 48 per cent were found satisfied/highly satisfied with comfort in transportation services to Kodaikanal.

5.2 Cost/Fare

On exploring the expectations of foreign tourists to Kodaikanal regarding the cost/fare with transportation services it was found that more than 55.5 per cent of the foreigners had expectations/high expectations of cost/fare, followed by 24.5 per cent of them who were moderately satisfied. A lower trend was seen with less / no expectations for cost/fare of transport services at Kodaikanal.

The study on the satisfaction of foreign tourists towards cost/fare of transport services to Kodaikanal reveals that 61 per cent of the foreign tourists are highly satisfied/satisfied with the cost/fare of transport services as most of them travel in government or private buses. Another 14 per cent are moderately satisfied with the cost / fare of transport services because, hired vehicles and luxury vehicles are fare higher. Finally, 25 per cent of them are less /dissatisfied with the transport services at Kodaikanal.

Hence, it can be viewed that 55.5 per cent of foreign tourists expected / highly expected cost/fare for transport services to Kodaikanal and sixty one per cent were found satisfied/highly satisfied with the cost/fare of transportation services to Kodaikanal.

5.3 Safety

Expectations of transport services by foreign tourists to Kodaikanal with regard to safety has been identified .As a result of the expectations of foreign tourists towards safety in transportation services is more than 80 per cent and the foreigners opt for safety being away from their native soil. Only a lesser per cent are seen with moderate/ less/no expectations of safety at transport services.

The analyzed data is clear that an increased trend is found with the satisfaction of safety of transport services to Kodaikanal, as theft, threatening for money or jewel or robbery are rarely found now-a-days. Also the foreigners are very cautious in safeguarding themselves and a

decreased trend is found with the dissatisfaction / less satisfaction of safety in transport services at Kodaikanal.

It is found that the transport services provide maximum satisfaction than that of their expectation on safety. It is evidenced by more than 80 per cent of foreign tourists highly expected/expected safety in travel services and they were satisfied/highly satisfied up to 87 per cent with the safety in transportation services to Kodaikanal.

Deviation in expectations and perceptions of transportation services by foreign tourists visiting Kodaikanal has been determined positive values of deviation are considered to be more satisfied and the deviations with negative values are considered to be less satisfied.

TABLE 3
Deviation between Expectations and Perceptions of Transportation Services by Foreign Tourists Visiting Kodaikanal

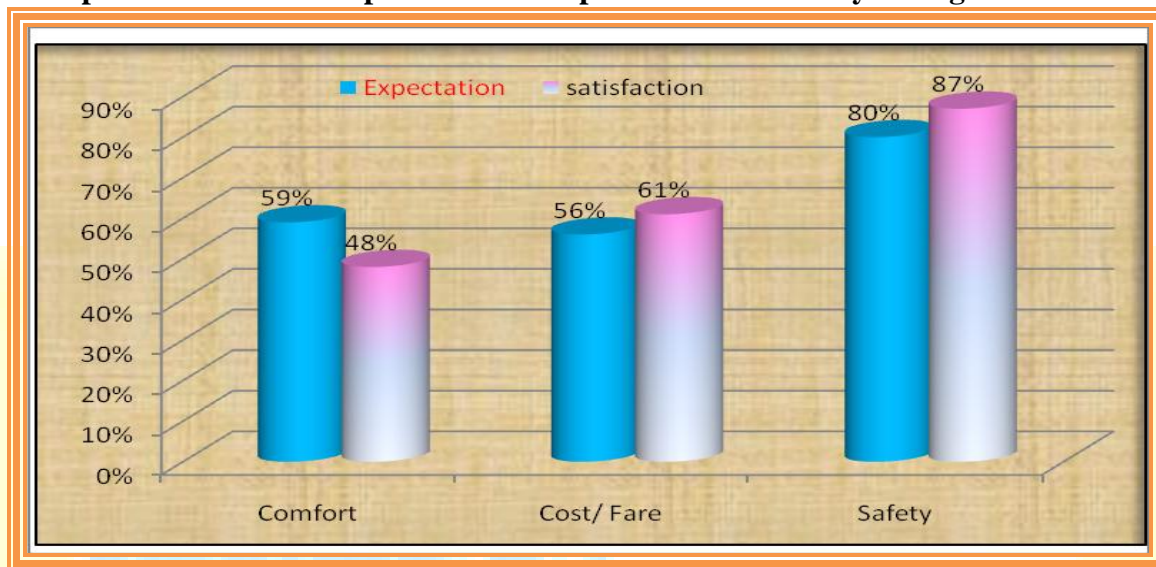
| Sl. No. | Transportation Services | Expectation of Foreign Tourists | | | Perception of Foreign Tourists | | | Deviation $n=(2-1)$ |
|---------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|-------------|--------------------------------|-------|-----------|------------------------|
| | | HE (%) | E (%) | Total (1) | HS (%) | S (%) | Total (2) | |
| 1. | Comfort | 9 | 50 | 59 | 13 | 35 | 48 | -11 |
| 2. | Cost/ Fare | 10 | 45.5 | 55.5 | 22 | 39 | 61 | +5.5 |
| 3. | Safety | 62 | 18 | 80 | 38 | 49 | 87 | +7 |

Source: Primary Data.

It is known from Table 3 that deviation analysis is performed between transportation service attributes. Cost/fare and safety were more satisfied by the foreign tourists because, these transportation services has secured a positive deviation of +5.5, and +7 respectively. The other transportation service was less satisfied by foreign tourists because it has secured a negative deviation of comfort (- 11).

FIGURE 1

Expectations and Perceptions on Transportation Services by Foreign Tourists



It can be summed that among the overall services of transportation considered for this study, the foreign tourists visiting Kodaikanal are more satisfied towards Cost/fare and safety when compared to other services because these services have secured a positive deviation and the satisfaction is also rated higher.

VI. Transport Services

DISTRIBUTION OF DOMESTIC TOURISTS TO KODAIKANAL BY MODE OF TRANSPORT

Transportation service plays a vital role in tourism and occupies an important place among tourism products. The research study indicates the mode of transport preferred by the foreign and domestic tourists visiting Kodaikanal.

TABLE 4
Distribution of Domestic Tourists by Mode of Transport

| Sl.No. | Mode of Transport | Number of Domestic Tourists | Percentage to Total |
|--------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. | Luxury Coach | 51 | 25.5 |
| 2. | Hired Vehicle | 47 | 23.5 |
| 3. | Own Vehicle | 32 | 16 |
| 4. | Others(bus, bike, cycle etc) | 70 | 35 |
| | Total | 200 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data.

The domestic tourists' mode of transport to Kodaikanal is usually bus, van, car, bike and so on. For 35 per cent of domestic tourists which is highly convenient for lower class to higher middle class people and specifically the government provides with spare/additional buses during the time of season always for the convenience of the domestic tourists during the months of April, May and June, followed by 25.5 per cent of them prefer luxury coaches which are direct buses from Chennai, Kanyakumari, Bangalore, Madurai, Trichy and the like..

On the other hand 23.5 per cent of them prefer hired vehicle for convenience. Finally, 16 per cent domestic tourists mode of transport to Kodaikanal is own vehicle and such type of tourists are of high income groups.

It can be concluded that the mode of transport preferred by more than 48 per cent foreign tourists to Kodaikanal is one which includes buses, cars, vans and for 35 per cent of domestic tourists the mode of transport are buses and bikes.

EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF DOMESTIC TOURISTS ON TRANSPORT SERVICES IN KODAIKANAL

In order to identify the expectations of the transport services in Kodaikanal the domestic tourists were asked to rate transport services in terms of various aspects as shown in Table 5 using a five-point scale, ranging from "highly expected" to "expected".

TABLE 5
Domestic Tourists Expectations and Perceptions on Transport Services

| Sl. No. | Variables | Rating | | | | | Total | |
|---------|------------|--------|-----|------|------|------|-------|-----|
| | | HE/S | E/S | ME/S | LE/S | NE/S | | |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | |
| 1. | Comfort | Exp. | 49 | 54 | 77 | 11 | 9 | 200 |
| | | Pre | 32 | 58 | 40 | 33 | 37 | |
| 2. | Cost/ Fare | Exp. | 41 | 59 | 70 | 7 | 23 | 200 |
| | | Pre | 36 | 66 | 72 | 16 | 10 | |
| 3. | Safety | Exp. | 54 | 76 | 30 | 26 | 14 | 200 |
| | | Pre | 56 | 102 | 22 | 7 | 13 | |

Source: Primary Data.

6.1 Comfort

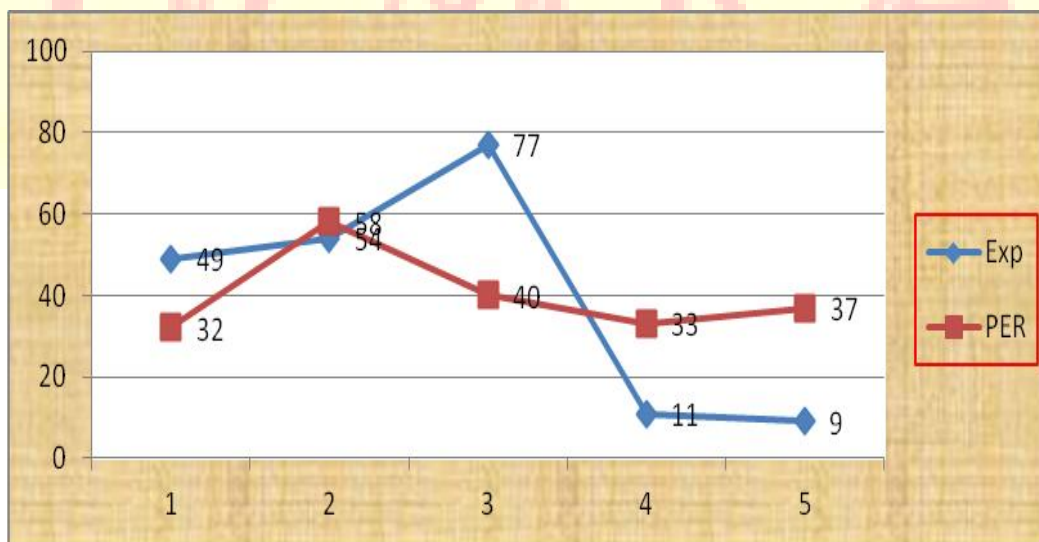
Rating of the expectations of transport services by domestic tourists to Kodaikanal with regard to comfort service has been focused in Table 5.

Responses show that a majority of 52 per cent domestic tourists expected / highly expected comfort in transport services. While, 38 per cent domestic tourists moderately expected comfort in transport services at Kodaikanal, as a most of them travelled through buses. Only 10 per cent have relatively less / no expectations for comfort in transport services at Kodaikanal.

It has been determined that the satisfaction of the domestic tourists to Kodaikanal about the transport services is up to 45 per cent. On the other hand, 35 per cent of the domestic tourists were less satisfied/dissatisfied respectively and only 20 per cent of them were moderately satisfied with regard to the comfort of transport services to Kodaikanal and it was found with oral conversation of the domestic tourists that they faced a lot of traffic problems and were unable to reach destinations on time, they were dissatisfied because of the bad road facilities in Kodaikanal.

From the percentage analysis it is found that a majority of 52 per cent domestic tourists expected/highly expected comfort in transport services to Kodaikanal but only 45 per cent are found satisfied/highly satisfied with comfort in transport services at Kodaikanal.

FIGURE 2
Expectations and Perceptions of Domestic Tourists on Comfort Services



6.2 Cost/Fare

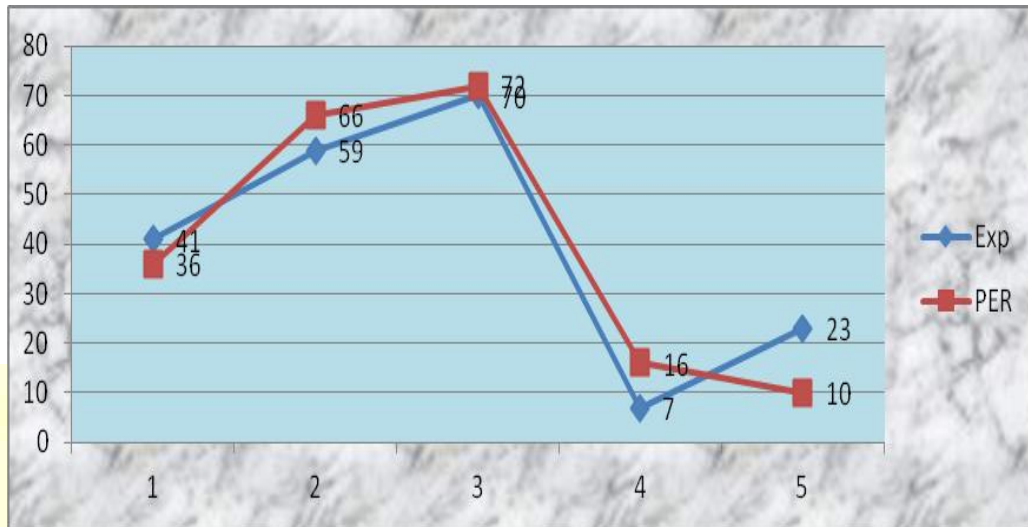
Rating of the expectations of transport services by domestic tourists to Kodaikanal with regard to cost/fare has been depicted in Table 5.

On analyzing the expectations of domestic tourists to Kodaikanal regarding the cost/fare with transport services it was found that one fourth per cent of the domestic tourists, expectations/high expectations of cost/fare as Kodaikanal being a tourism destination the cost/fare of transport services were expected to be high during the peak season as there is an increased inflow of domestic tourists during the period. On the other hand, 35 per cent of them were moderately satisfied. A lower trend was seen with less/no expectations for cost/fare of transport services at Kodaikanal because their aim was leisure and pleasure and did not expect cost/fare for transport services.

The study on the satisfaction of domestic tourists towards cost/fare of transportation services to Kodaikanal reveals that fifty one per cent of the domestic tourists are highly satisfied/satisfied with the cost /fare of transportation services as most of them travel in government or private buses. Another 36 per cent are moderately satisfied with the cost/fare of transport services because, to comfortably reach Kodaikanal they had to pay high than reasonable. Finally, 13 per cent of them are less/dissatisfied with the transportation services at Kodaikanal.

It is found that one fourth per cent of domestic tourists expected/highly expected cost/fare for transport services to Kodaikanal and 51 per cent were found satisfied/highly satisfied with the cost/fare of transport services in Kodaikanal. Hence it can be concluded that majority of the respondents expectations are satisfied by two fold.

FIGURE 3 Domestic Tourists Expectations and Perceptions on Cost/Fare Services



6.3 Safety

Expectations of transport services by domestic tourists to Kodaikanal with regard to safety has been determined in Table 5.

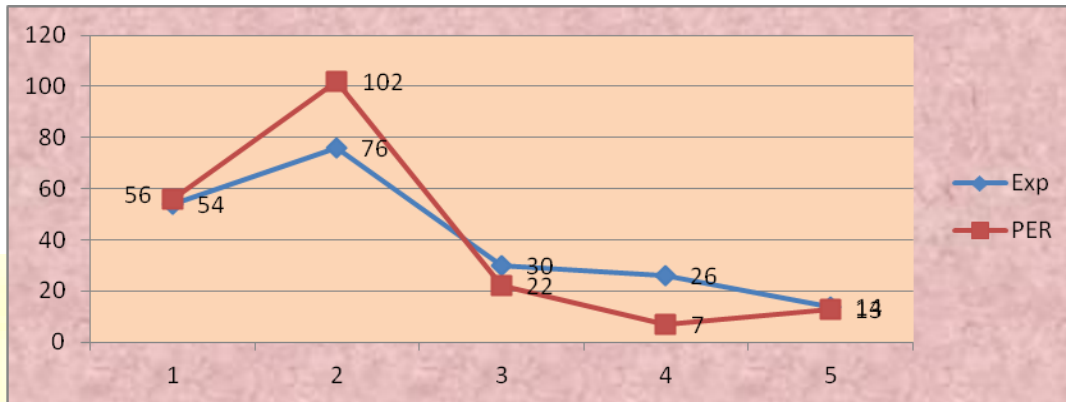
As a result of the expectations of domestic tourists towards safety in transport services 65 per cent of them were highly expected/expected safety for their people and property. While 15 per cent of them moderately expected safety and the remaining per cent had less / no expectations of safety at transport services at Kodaikanal.

The data analyzed clearly determines from Table 5 that an increased trend is found with the satisfaction of safety of transport services to Kodaikanal. Another 11 per cent of them were moderately satisfied and a decreased trend is found with the dissatisfaction/less satisfaction of safety in transport services in Kodaikanal.

It is observed that majority of more than 65 per cent of domestic tourists were highly expected /expected their safety in travel services but only 51 per cent of the respondents were satisfied/highly satisfied with the safety in transport services to Kodaikanal. Hence the domestic respondents are not satisfied with safety aspects in transport services.

It is concluded that among the overall services of transportation considered for this study, the domestic tourists visiting Kodaikanal are more satisfied towards Cost/ fare and safety when compared to other services because these services have secured a positive deviation and the satisfaction is also rated higher.

FIGURE 4
Expectations and Perceptions of Domestic Tourists on Safety Services



Deviation

Deviation in expectation and perception of transportation services by domestic tourists visiting Kodaikanal has been determined in Table 6.

TABLE 6
Deviation in Domestic Tourists Expectations and Perceptions on Transportation Services

| Sl. No. | Transportation Services | Expectation of Foreign Tourists | | | Perception of Foreign Tourists | | | Deviation $n=(2-1)$ |
|---------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|-----------|--------------------------------|-------|-----------|---------------------|
| | | HE (%) | E (%) | Total (1) | HS (%) | S (%) | Total (2) | |
| 1. | Comfort | 25 | 27 | 52 | 16 | 29 | 45 | -7 |
| 2. | Cost/ Fare | 20 | 30 | 50 | 18 | 33 | 51 | +1 |
| 3. | Safety | 27 | 38 | 65 | 28 | 51 | 79 | +14 |

Source: Primary Data.

Positive values of deviation are considered to be more satisfied and the deviations with negative values are considered to be less satisfied.

It is known from Table 6 that deviation analysis is performed between transportation service attributes. Cost/ Fare and Safety were more satisfied by the foreign tourists because, these transportation services has secured a positive deviation of +1, and +14 respectively. The

other transportation service was less satisfied by foreign tourists because it has secured a negative deviation of Comfort (- 7)

FIGURE 5
Overall Expectations and Perceptions of Domestic Tourists on Transportation Services



Ho1: There is no significant difference between the expectations and perceptions of foreign tourists and domestic tourists on the transport services in Kodaikanal.

TABLE 7
Chi-square -Test Static on the Expectations and Perceptions of Foreign Tourists and Domestic Tourists on the Transport Services

| Sl.No. | Calculated Value | Table Value at 5% Level | d.f. | Inference |
|--------|------------------|-------------------------|------|-----------|
| 1. | 118.9 | 21.0 | 12 | Rejected |

Source: Primary Data.

The calculated Chi-square Value is 118.9 which is more than the table value 21.0 at 5% significance with degree of freedom is 12. The null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it is concluded that there is significant difference between the perception of foreign tourists and domestic tourists on the transport services in Kodaikanal. Hence the foreign tourists and domestic tourist expectations and perception on the transport services is significantly different.

The perceptions of the foreign tourists compared to the domestic tourists is significantly different as the former were more inclined to the elements of cost efficiency, safety and comfort in and punctual in services, while the latter is mere accommodation in their acceptance of shortcoming in their services, being accustomed to the inconveniences.

VII. FINDINGS

Expectations and Perceptions of Foreign and Domestic Tourists on Transportation Services

- ✿ It is found that the mode of transport preferred by more than 48 per cent foreign tourists are buses, cars and vans, for 35 per cent of domestic tourists the mode of transport are buses and bikes.
- ✿ The percentile analysis proved that a majority of 59 per cent foreign tourists expected/highly expected comfort in transportation services, but only 48 per cent were found satisfied/highly satisfied with comfort in transportation services. It is found that a majority of 52 per cent domestic tourists expected / highly expected comfort in transport services but only 45 per cent are found satisfied/highly satisfied with comfort in transport services in Kodaikanal.
- ✿ The percentile analysis represents that 55.5 per cent of foreign tourists expected/highly expected cost/fare for transport services and sixty one per cent were found satisfied/highly satisfied with the cost/fare of transportation services. It is found that one fourth per cent of domestic tourists expected/highly expected cost/fare for transport services and 51 per cent were found satisfied / highly satisfied with the cost/fare of transport services in Kodaikanal. It is found that majority of the respondents expectations are satisfied by two fold.
- ✿ The transportation services provide maximum satisfaction than that of their expectation on safety. It is evidenced by more than 80 per cent of foreign tourists have high expectations on safety in travel services and the foreigners were satisfied/highly satisfied up to 87 per cent with the safety in transportation services. It is observed that majority of more than 65 per cent of domestic tourists were highly expected /expected their safety in travel services but only 51 per cent of the respondents were satisfied/highly satisfied with the safety in transport services to Kodaikanal. Hence the domestic respondents are not satisfied with safety aspects in transport services.
- ✿ Deviations among the overall services of transportation considered for this study, the foreign and domestic tourists visiting Kodaikanal are more satisfied towards Cost/fare and safety when compared to other services because these services have secured a

positive deviation and the satisfaction is also rated higher.

- ✿ The calculated Chi-square value is more than the table value at 5% significance. It is found that, there is significant difference between the perception of foreign tourist and domestic tourist about the transport services in Kodaikanal. The expectations and perceptions of foreign and domestic tourists on the transport services is significantly different.

VIII. SUGESSTIONS

❖ **Transportation Services:** Steps may be taken to facilitate the transportation services like widening and developing of roads so as to systemize the traffic which is the major problem faced by the tourists. Due to overcrowding at the site seeing spots the police pit may be situated in order to avoid unnecessary traffic, robbery and indecent activities. Two – wheeler and four – wheeler for rent can be made affordable to all category tourists to allow the tourists to enjoy the tour even better. Cable car implementation may be brought to existence in order to make the tourist experience the charm of Kodaikanal and admire her scenic attractions and make their visit a memorable one. Efforts must be stepped up towards the establishment of helipad and railway facilities which may increase the tourism potential of Kodaikanal. Lack of car parking facilities for the tourists dissatisfies them in experiencing the services of hotels, restaurants, site-seeing spots etc which may be concentrated on.

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