



Role of Airline Passengers and Catering Services in Madurai Airport

C.M. Prakash

*Guest Faculty, Ph.D. Research Scholar, Centre for Tourism and Hotel Management,
Madurai Kamaraj University, Palkalai Nagar, Madurai – 625021.*

Abstract:

Madurai Airport is a Customs Airport serving Madurai and Southern districts. In the state of Tamil Nadu, India. The airport is located about 12km from the Madurai railway junction. The Airport was established in 1957. The airport has two adjacent terminals. A 17,600 Sq.m New Integrated Terminal building was inaugurate recently which is the second largest terminal in Tamilnadu, next to Chennai. The Airports Authority of India has converted the Old Terminal into a Cargo Complex. Madurai Airport has a strong domestic network and handles 100,000+ airline passengers per month on an average. Madurai airport directly connected to Major Indian Metros such as Chennai, Mumbai, New Delhi, Hyderabad and Bangalore along with Tier II cities like Goa and Bhubaneswar. On International-side, Madurai has direct flights to Colombo, Dubai and Singapore. Madurai is a major city and cultural headquarters in the state of Tamil Nadu in India. It is the administrative headquarters of Madurai District and the 31st largest urban agglomeration in India. Madurai is the third largest city by area and third largest city by population in Tamil Nadu located on the banks of River Vaigai, Madurai has been a major settlement for two millennia and is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Even though Madurai has been referred as temple city, Madurai is an important industrial and educational hub in South Tamil Nadu. Madurai City is gearing up for Round 2 of Smart City Challenge. In Round 1 of this challenge, Madurai was ranked 28 out of 100. Madurai narrowly missed the opportunity to make it to the first list and this time the Madurai Municipal Corporation (MMC) is leaving no stone unturned to see Madurai in the next round of Smart cities. The purpose of this study was to discuss of the factors on menu design for airlines catering. The method was using in depth semi-structured interview. The result of the study showed that the airlines meal design must consider from the view of production constructs including the cost, production method, food material selects, taste and appearance, the hygienic security, the route and flying time, the tableware limitation, and the management, and consumer surface including . Production surface include eight items: Consumer constructs include fine dining, consumer recognition differences, internationalization guest level, and cabin configuration. The findings may provide the airlines company, the catering service company and the consumer as reference.

Keywords: *Madurai Airport, Airports Authority of India (AAI), Airline Passengers, Airlines Meal, Menu Design, Airlines Company, Catering Company*



INTRODUCTION:

Madurai Airport (IATA: IXM, ICAO: VOMD) is a customs airport serving Madurai and its surrounding districts in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The airport is located near State Highway 37 about 12 km (7.5 mi) from the Madurai railway station. It was established in 1957. Madurai airfield was first used by the Royal Air Force in World War II in 1942. The first passenger flight was a Fokker Friendship aircraft on the Madras – Madurai – Trivandrum – Madurai – Madras route in 1956. It was identified as one of 35 non-metro airports for modernisation, and thus the new integrated terminal building was inaugurated on 12 September 2010. The airport was notified as customs airport. The notification, issued on 31 December 2011, came into effect from 1 January 2012. In a historic event, two chartered flights from Malaysia landed at the airport on 25 August 2012, making them the first international aircraft to land in the temple city. The first commercial international flight began on 20 September 2012 by Spice Jet commencing its maiden service to Colombo. Spice jet began its second international flight operations from Madurai to Dubai on 22 November 2013. A third international flight route began on 15 September 2017 operated by Air India Express to Singapore making it as the first flight to any East Asian country and the first night flight from the Temple City. To boost exports from Madurai and its surrounding districts, the Department of Revenue under the Union Ministry of Finance issued a notification dated 28 May 2013 permitting the airport to handle cargo. The airport has two adjacent terminals, the old terminal and the new integrated terminal. Currently, the integrated terminal is used for both international and domestic purposes. The old terminal had been converted to a Cargo Terminal from 28th November 2017. Due to exponential growth of the airport in the recent years, building separate domestic and international terminals are in the plans. As a part of modernising 35 non-metro airports, AAI constructed a new, state-of-the-art, integrated passenger terminal adjacent to the old terminal. The ₹1.29 billion (US\$20 million) new terminal building was inaugurated on 12 September 2010. A total of 610 acres (250 ha) of land is under acquisition for the expansion of the runway to 12,500 ft (3,800 m) to accommodate large jet aircraft. This terminal with an area of 17,560 m² (189,000 sq ft) can handle a passenger capacity of 250 each on arrival and departure. The airport parking area has the capacity to park 375 cars and 10 buses.

Some of the features of the new terminal include:

- 16 check-in counters
- 12 immigration counters
- 2 security counters
- 5 customs counters
- 3 conveyor belts (47 m (154 ft) each)
- 2 X-ray scanners for baggage
- 7 aircraft parking top stands

The new terminal has two lounges: a VIP lounge managed by AAI and a Commercial Important Persons (CIP) lounge managed by Tamil Nadu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TNCC-Madurai). Considering the growing cargo potential in Madurai Airport, AAI has decided to modify the old terminal into a full-fledged cargo complex. To start with, the Union finance ministry issued customs notification dated May 28, 2013 to



handle cargo at Madurai Airport. Works were going on a fast pace to start cargo lifting in the end of March 2014. A cold storage facility is being established for perishable cargo which is expected to dominate the export from this region. The International Cargo Terminal was inaugurated by Shri. Guruprasad Mohapatra I.A.S, Chairman of Airport Authority of India on 28 November 2017. International Cargo Service started on 15 December 2017 with 300 kg of Flowers including famous Madurai Malli (Jasmine). The first consignment was lifted by Spice jet to Dubai. Airports Authority of India (AAI) is considering to provide a new terminal building for Madurai airport in view of increased passenger traffic. Airports Authority of India, Regional Executive Director said that performance of the airport on all fronts was good, especially the 35% growth in passenger movement reported in the last one year (2016-2017). The feasibility of expanding the terminal building is being studied. If that is not possible, new building will be constructed, which is already in the airport master plan. The number of international passengers handled at the airport would decide on having a separate international terminal or an integrated terminal. At present, the airport could handle 250 passengers each at arrival and departure halls. To cater the immediate requirement, 7 new aprons are being added to the airport.

Objectives of the Study:

- To Maximize the contributions of airports to maintaining and developing a safe, secure, environmentally compatible and efficient air transport system
- To achieve cooperation among all segments of the aviation industry and their stakeholders as well as with governments and international organizations
- To Maximize cooperation and mutual assistance among airports
- Provide members with industry knowledge, advice and assistance, and foster professional excellence in airport management and operations
- Advance the development of the aviation system by enhancing public awareness of the economic and social importance of airport development
- To study the menu designing services provided by the Flight Catering Services
- To assess the customer's satisfaction towards the Flight Catering Services
- To measure the service quality standards of Flight Catering Services
- To suggest suitable measures for the improvement of Flight Catering Services

Methodology:

The study on research is to be recognized as valid or true, it must be done in systematic and scientific manner. The methodology used for carrying out the present study, aims and objectives of the study, research hypothesis, research design, and pilot study, sampling design, sources of data, tools for data collection, method of data collection, statistical analysis and limitations of the study.



Madurai Airport: Statistical Report:

Madurai International Airport (IXM) has handled close to 6.40 lakh passengers in the year 2013. Out of them, around 5.38 lakh were domestic passengers and 1.02 lakh were international passengers. It is an increase of 19.65% compare to the last year. This is the first for IXM to handle more than 6 lakh passengers in a year and more than 60,000 passengers in a single month. On average, 53326 passengers used IXM each month. IXM also recorded a load of 75% overall for the year 2013. Madurai International Airport (IXM) has handled 7.16 lakh passengers in the year 2014. Out of them, around 5.22 lakh were domestic passengers and 1.94 lakh were international passengers. It is an increase of 11.96% compare to the last year. This is the first for IXM to handle more than 7 lakh passengers in a year and more than 65,000 passengers in a single month. On average, 59700 passengers used IXM each month. IXM also recorded a load of 76% overall for the year 2014. Madurai International Airport (IXM) has handled 7.59 lakh passengers in the year 2015. Out of them, around 5.15 lakh were domestic passengers and 2.44 lakh were international passengers. It is an increase of 6% compare to the last year. This is the first for IXM to handle more than 7.5 lakh passengers in a year and more than 70,000 passengers in a single month. On average, 63278 passengers used IXM each month. IXM also recorded an impressive load of 84% overall for the year 2015. Madurai International Airport (IXM) has handled 9.69 lakh passengers in the year 2016. Out of them, around 6.97 lakh were domestic passengers and 2.72 lakh were international passengers. It is record increase of 28% compare to the last year. This is the first for IXM to handle more than 9 lakh passengers in a year and more than 85,000 passengers in a single month. On average, 80788 passengers used IXM each month. IXM also recorded an impressive load of 86% overall for the year 2016.

Total Pax and Load Factor

Madurai Airport (IXM)		
Load Factor Report for the year 2013		
Service	Movement	Total Seats
Domestic		
Domestic	6197	7,19,005
	# of passengers	5,37,572
	Load Factor	75%
International		
International	1167	1,37,271
	# of passengers	1,02,334
	Load Factor	75%
Domestic + International	7364	8,56,276
	# of passengers	6,39,906
	Overall Load Factor	75%

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Madurai Airport (IXM)		
Load Factor Report for the year 2014		
Service	Movement	Total Seats
Domestic		
Domestic	6254	6,85,601
	# of passengers	5,21,929
	Load Factor	76%
International		
International	1776	2,52,423
	# of passengers	1,94,487
	Load Factor	77%
Domestic + International	8030	9,38,024
	# of passengers	7,16,416
	Overall Load Factor	76%

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Madurai Airport (IXM)
Load Factor Report for the Year 2015

Carrier	Movement	Total Seats
Domestic		
	6747	6,06,368
Domestic	# of Passengers	5,15,217
	Load Factor	85%
International		
	628	2,93,378
International	# of Passengers	2,44,118
	Load Factor	83%
Domestic + International		
	7375	8,99,746
Domestic + International	# of Passengers	7,59,335
	Load Factor	84%

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Madurai Airport (IXM)
Load Factor Report for the Year 2016

Service	Movement	Total Seats
Domestic		
	8870	8,10,788
Domestic	# of Passengers	6,96,932
	Load Factor	86%
International		
	2190	3,18,456
International	# of Passengers	2,72,530
	Load Factor	86%
Domestic + International		
	11060	11,29,244
Domestic + International	# of Passengers	9,69,462
	Load Factor	86%

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Menu Design and Airline Meals:

The characteristics of airline meals are non-freshly cooked foods that have to undergo 5 steps, including rapid freezing & reheating, special airline specifications, supplying passengers according to their needs, stricter hygiene and safety requirements, and diversified catering cross-industry co-operation.

Catering and Food and Beverage Processes:

‘Meal Design’:

This deals with the design of the meal, its constituents and components, the recipe and menu planning. This is a long term process as sometimes it takes months to finalize a menu and the recipe for the same. This is also a collaborative process where they have to interact with the caterers for the feasibility and pricing and also possibly the expert chefs that many network carriers may have to create attractive food items for the customers.

‘Meal Planning’:

This is at an operational level where, based on the passengers in the flight, the meal counts are decided and then ordered to the catering section. Catering division then will do the necessary procurements of raw material to ensure the meals are prepared and packaged and delivered to the aircraft as per the orders.

Recipe and Meal Planning:

This is typically done by airlines in collaboration with Caterers in advance. Here, the airlines will finalize the menus and the ingredients to be used and agree on the costs with caterers.

Meal Forecast:

This may include basic forecasting based on the aircraft configuration and the aircraft capacity on which the meal policy will be applied to get the number of meals for a particular flight. Some airlines may have advanced forecasting capabilities that is based on passenger count forecasts based on historical data.

Gallery Planning:

The Airline F&B division is responsible to design the layout of the carts and plates in the carts and the way the carts are to be placed in the galleys of the aircraft. This information is passed on the caterers who will ensure the appropriate loading of the carts and later the same information is passed on the cabin attendants so that they are aware of the layout of meal placements in the aircrafts.



Key sub processes of Catering:

- Catering Requirement planning
- Meal Production (Forecast to Produce)
- Procurement (Procure to Pay)

Create Meal Policy:

The F&B department establishes the meal policy for various regions, flights, aircrafts, etc. This will decide if the flight will have only breakfast or breakfast and lunch. Here all other rules including the meal rotation policy is decided.

Meal Schedule Creation and Meal Orders:

The number of meals and the types of meals for each of the flights is established based on the Meal policy and meal forecast and this information is used to create the orders for meals for various caterers across the globe including the airlines own caterers, if the airline has one.

Catering Requirement Planning :

Primary task of this department is to take the requirements from the Customers (Airline) about the menus that will be delivered to different flight. This exercise starts approximately 3 months before the actual meal is delivered to a flight. Although every airline has its own strategy of introducing new menu, generally on International flights, new menus are introduced every 6 months and on domestic, it is introduced every 3 months.

This division performs following tasks:-

Provide Quotation:

Catering Requirement planning division receives new menu from the customers and they need to provide a quote for this menu. Catering division enters this information in their system and creates a Bill of Material (BOM) along with pricing. There might be few changes in the recipe from customer before the final price is agreed with customer.

Source Supplier (P2P) – Procurement:

While creating the BOM if a new item is required, a tender is given to its existing or new supplier. The tender is evaluated from different suppliers. Negotiation is done with the supplier. Selected supplier is setup in the catering system and the item cost is entered into the catering system

Provision of Costs and Pricing:

- *Finance* Catering Finance department does the costing of the new menu and provides pricing to the customer for the new Menu. Final pricing is agreed with the customer either on the Day or a few days later.
- *Meal Presentation* Once the quote is finalized, customer also provides information to Catering about how the meal should be presented. Catering Requirement planning division invites the Customers (Airline) on a meal presentation day where the new menu is served. During the meal presentation, catering also provide some variance of the menu. During the meal presentation Customer finalizes the menu which then goes into production.



- Setup Meal Policy Customer also sends meal policy information to Catering division, which primarily includes meal rotation in different sectors. This contains the information that how one menu will be rotated in different flights and on different days. Catering Requirement planning division enters this data into the catering system.

In-flight Catering Airline Meal Design Errors and Misconceptions:

Sourcing catering internationally involves more considerations and flexibility than local catering. You may be securing catering from non-traditional sources, available packaging may not be appropriate for your gallery, and certain brands and specific cuisines may not be available. Ordering catering worldwide can be a successful and rewarding experience, as long as you plan adequately for each location and work within the limitations of what may or may not be available particularly at smaller and more remote locations.

In-flight catering should be requested when travelling internationally:

The main things to keep in mind when ordering are portion size and measurement, packaging style and availability, and cultural food terminology. When placing the order, it is best to be specific with portion sizes and have an understanding of metric and imperial equivalences. For example, in most of the world, a typical protein portion is 4-6 ounces, while a U.S.-sized portion is 8 ounces. You should be prepared to translate your specific requests into the local units of measurement, such as grams or litres. Also, food presentation in other countries may vary from what you're accustomed to. You will be most successful if you are very specific in your catering requests, while being flexible about any substitutions that might need to be made.

Do in advance to help the process:

Looking at online menus pre-trip for all the international locations you'll be visiting is an important step, but keep in mind that only about 25% of international in-flight catering orders are directly from menus. Use in-flight catering menus as guidelines for determining the best options for that location. Talk with your caterers and take into consideration what's available and in season and what local chefs prepare particularly well. Knowing individual passenger preferences is critical to giving them a memorable onboard experience. Also, you should consider the purpose of the catering. Is it a full meal or just a snack? It is generally accepted standard practice to give crewmembers different meals from the passengers, and that should be followed. In ordering, be specific and detailed but also somewhat flexible so you can respond quickly to caterer substitution recommendations. You should ask questions not just related to the catering itself, but also to the caterer's service policies. Examples include the notice required to change orders, cancellation policies and payment terms. You should clarify that for safety reasons, if catering is cooked, it should be cooled down, kept refrigerated and chilled until ready to be re-heated or consumed.

Quality differences and ingredient availability overseas:

The size of the market you're flying to will have the most impact in terms of catering quality and availability. Larger markets will typically have more catering options compared to smaller, more remote destinations. Many countries won't carry produce year-round if it's not in season. That's why it's best to talk to your caterer, as he or she will understand local availabilities and seasonality.



In-flight catering for remote locations:

Use local knowledge and ground handler expertise in sourcing catering at more remote locations. At some locations, there may not be any aviation caterers. You'll be dealing with hotels and local chefs, instead of dedicated in-flight kitchens. In such cases, we suggest providing a minimum of 48 hours' notice for your local handler to coordinate catering. Also, it's a good idea to carry extra packaging onboard to provide to local restaurants. This helps ensure your order will be packaged and delivered appropriately for re-heating at altitude.

To keep in mind regarding last-minute catering changes:

Being flexible and aware of local limitations is important when revising catering orders. Calling in changes at midnight before a 6 a.m. departure may have little success – particularly at smaller locations (but even larger ones, too). Most catering prep work and shopping are done the day before the order is delivered. You should take into consideration local limitations. Some places may be unable to meet last-minute change requests. Also, be aware of local time zones when calling the location. Even caterers that advertise 24/7 coverage may not have kitchen staff round-the-clock. Also, remember: It's usually easier to make quantity changes than to change items all together.

Research Suggestions for Airline Companies:

Among the operating value activities of airline companies, the need for airline meals is the largest. If airline companies invest in the establishment of airline kitchens, they can fully control menus and cooking. In addition, the supply line of airline kitchens can be extended to various waypoints abroad to significantly reduce costs. Moreover, the on-time delivery, accuracy, hygiene, and safety of airline meals can be controlled and taken into account.

- Cost consideration
- Production method
- Selection and procurement of ingredients
- Taste and appearance
- Hygiene and safety
- Routes and departure time
- Limitations on tableware
- Management institutionalization

Design factors:

- Eating full and eating well
- Consumers cognitive differences
- Internationalization of customer source
- Differences in cabin classes, Consumer dimension Production, Dimension Features of airline catering.

Furthermore, the airline kitchens affiliated to airline companies can enter airline kitchen markets of other regions through airline companies and alliance with foreign airline companies or further obtain technical



transfer to reduce Research & Development (R&D) cost and improve their own competitiveness. For example, Swire Group invests in China.

Suggestions for Airline Kitchen Companies:

The research results showed that, the subjects suggested that there is a lack of pipeline for training professional airline meal chefs. The current personnel designing and planning airline meals in airline kitchen companies in aviation market all are chefs from 5-star hotels. Airline kitchen companies are advised to increase future training of aviation professional knowledge, such as airplane model, waypoints, routes, and service procedures, for their chefs, and engage in the investigation of relevant issues to improve the profession of airline meal design. Airline kitchen companies are advised to increase the exchanges with cross industry and relevant airline kitchen companies to increase innovative vision, control popular trend, and connect with fashion to improve the quality and evaluation of airline meals to attract more different customer sources. Due to the limitations of changes in aviation market, airline kitchens should increase the attention to future development of airline companies and more aggressively overcome the difficulties in catering design, instead of taking a passive stance, in order to achieve the win-win situation between airline companies and airline kitchens

Suggestions:

Future studies may include consumer testing and combine quantitative studies of large sample size to further probe into the characteristics of airline meals. 102 Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Vol. 4(2), December 2016 Future studies are also advised to use both qualitative and quantitative methods to develop model for airline meal design to increase the extensive of similar relevant studies. This study performed qualitative interviews, and mainly enrolled personnel producing, planning, and designing airline meals as the subjects. The subjects answered the questions according to their personal willingness and openness. This study analyzed the answer content according to the perspectives expressed by the subjects' actual experiences, and failed to take into account other personnel producing, planning, and designing airline meals. Therefore, the research results cannot be fully extended. This qualitative study used triangulation to verify the validity. Due to the limitations on time and manpower, this study did not use different methods to test the validity, and only focused on the authenticity of interview transcripts of subjects and rigor of interview process to make up the completeness.

Conclusion:

The fourth busiest airport in the state of Tamil Nadu, Madurai Airport is majorly a customs airport situated 12 km from the Madurai Railway station. Madurai Airport is well-equipped to handle the needs of the passengers like food court, duty-free, lounges, ATM, medical care and much more. To Maximize the contributions of airports to maintaining and developing a safe, secure, environmentally compatible and efficient air transport system. "Service to man is service to God" As the proverb says the Hotel Owners and the managers provide good service to their customers, which in turn will increase the profitability of the Hotels. In the Hotel Industry, service quality, as an extremely subjective category, is crucial to the satisfaction of the customers. If they increase the quality of service it will attract more customers at the same time they can expand the business, and

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it will lead to more employment opportunities. But also helps the Hotel Owners to discover the needs, tastes, preferences and expectations of the guests. It also lists out various facilities provided by the Hotels to their customers and also various services mixes provided. We can say that it helps managers in setting the standards for the provision of services in the Hospitality Industry.

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Webliography:

www.davidscottdesign.com

inflightcateringbydebbie@gmail.com

www.121inflight.com

www.davidscottdesign.com

www.maduraairport.com