



# *The Impact of Bharatnatyam on Tourism: Exploring Business Opportunities*

*Naavya Sharma  
Student  
Pathways School, Gurgaon*

## **Abstract**

This research paper examined how Bharatnatyam contributes to local economies and how it is better used as a tourist draw. The impact of Bharatanatyam performances, cultural festivals, and dancing schools on India's economy, labour market, and international visitors' wallets is the subject of this research. This paper used an interpretivist stance and employed an explanatory research strategy. Information is gathered from secondary sources such as governmental papers, tourist statistics, and scholarly publications. The research showed that audiences flock to Bharatanatyam shows and spend more money as a result. The Natyanjali Dance Festival in Chidambaram, which features Bharatanatyam performances, has grown in popularity among locals and tourists alike. Increased tourist expenditure on lodging, food, retail, and transportation indicates a positive effect on local economies.

## **Introduction**

The ancient Indian dance of Bharatnatyam has deep roots in the state of Tamil Nadu in the country's southeastern corner. Bharatnatyam's ability to boost the tourism sector has been more acknowledged in recent years (John, 2021). This dancing style has captivated audiences worldwide by showcasing India's rich cultural history. In modern times, Bharatanatyam has evolved into a fusion dance form incorporating religious and secular elements. This custom, characterised by sharp edges and strong body language, has entertained spectators for decades. Bharatnatyam has a considerable effect on regional economics. Bharatanatyam concerts, cultural festivals, and dance academies are economic booms for their communities (Sona, 2022). Due to the art form's widespread appeal, visitors have been reserving more hotel rooms, eating out, and shopping than ever before. Although Bharatnatyam has the potential to attract tourists, its underlying commercial prospects should be investigated.

## Problem statement

One of the most well-known forms of traditional Indian dance is Bharatanatyam. The southern Indian states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are most likely to encounter Bharatnatyam. The Bharatnatyam dance style dates back over two millennia. Around 300 BCE to 300 CE, Bharatnatyam established itself as an integral feature of South Indian temples, which had their genesis in Tamil Nadu (Forms Of Dances In Tamilnadu.wordpress.com, 2023). Although Bharatnatyam is one of the most well-known classical Indian dances, its contribution to the expansion of the tourist sector and its potential to create new economic prospects have not been sufficiently investigated. There is a shortage of studies that completely investigates the economic impact of Bharatnatyam on tourism, despite the fact that it is very popular in South Indian states like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka (Sona, 2022). Furthermore, there is a paucity of knowledge of how Bharatnatyam is successfully exploited to attract visitors and create economic development, despite its historical and cultural relevance. Bharatnatyam is a massive cultural phenomenon, and the fact that the Department of Tourism, Government of Tamilnadu, was able to set a Guinness World Record for the Largest Bharatanatyam Dance with 10,176 participants is a testament to this (Guinnessworldrecords.com, 2023). Further illustrating Bharatnatyam's potential influence on tourism, Tamil Nadu accounted for a sizable 22.9% of all visits in 2020 and ranked first in domestic tourist visits with over 140 million tourists (Timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 2022). Bharatnatyam's commercial potential as a tourist attraction is underappreciated at the present time. The cash generated, jobs created, and allied businesses stimulated by Bharatnatyam should be studied, as should its indirect impacts on local economies.

## Research aim

The research aim is to examine the economic impact of Bharatnatyam on tourism and identify business opportunities associated with leveraging Bharatnatyam as a cultural and artistic attraction, focusing on generating insights for local businesses and tourism stakeholders.

## Research objectives

- To assess the economic impact of Bharatnatyam on local economies, including revenue generation and employment opportunities.
- To evaluate the role of Bharatanatyam performances in attracting tourists and stimulating tourism expenditure.
- To analyse the economic influence of cultural festivals featuring Bharatnatyam, including visitor spending and local business revenue.
- To identify strategies to promote Bharatnatyam as a compelling tourist attraction, considering marketing approaches and infrastructure improvements.

## Literature Review

### Assess the economic impact of Bharatnatyam on local economies

The traditional Indian dance of Bharatnatyam has great aesthetic and cultural value. Income generated and new jobs created are only two examples of Bharatnatyam's positive effect on the local economy (John, 2021). It has identified the positive effects of Bharatanatyam shows, cultural celebrations, and dancing studios on the local economy. As an example of Bharatnatyam's positive effect on the economy, look no further than the annual Natyanjali Dance Festival in the Hindu pilgrimage centre of Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu, India (Tamilnadutourism.com, 2023). This event honours Lord Nataraja, the cosmic dancer, and features performances of Bharatnatyam by world-famous performers, drawing in crowds of thousands each year. In Tamilnadu, 1.23 million foreign tourists come due to this attraction (Timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 2022).

Bharatanatyam performances draw crowds and make money from ticket sales. Dancers, choreographers, musicians, costume designers, and technical crew members all stand to gain financially from these shows, as they have been shown to do so in several studies. Venue leases, sound systems, and marketing initiatives are just some of the Bharatanatyam performance logistics that have been shown to stimulate local economies (Bansal, 2020). Bharatanatyam performances during cultural events have been identified as key components in attracting visitors and generating income. Festival-goers spend money on more than just tickets, including lodging, meals, traditional clothing and accessories, and other tourism-related pursuits unique to the event. Hotels, restaurants, stores, and other service providers benefit from this spending, so it's good for the community. For example, some famous hotels in Chidambaram are Vandayar Hotel, The Grand Park and Hotel Saradharam (Indiamart.com, 2023).

### The role of Bharatanatyam performances in attracting tourists and tourism expenditure.

The role of the Bharatanatyam performances is to build the connection between Bharatanatyam and tourism and demonstrate the vital role that this ancient Indian dance style plays in attracting tourists and encouraging them to spend money while in the country. Bharatanatyam shows are a major reason why people visit certain cities and countries (Sona, 2022). Bharatanatyam cultural festivals and activities have been shown to attract large numbers of local and foreign visitors. Some festivals in Tamil Nadu, such as the Natyanjali Dance Festival in Chidambaram, have become rather popular with viewers worldwide (Tamilnadutourism.com, 2023).

Bharatanatyam performances have also been proven to increase tourism spending by introducing new activities for tourists. Visitors to a city for a Bharatanatyam performance often use other offerings, including museums, restaurants, shops selling regional wares, and taxi services (John, 2021). The lodging industry, shops, artists, and service providers all get a boost from these purchases into the local economy. Bharatnatyam's importance in fostering cultural heritage and improving the visitor experience demonstrates its value as a tourism product. The cultural richness and artistic sophistication of Bharatnatyam performances captivate and educate audiences about India and its traditions.

### **Analyse the economic influence of cultural festivals featuring Bharatnatyam**

Many people from all around the world come to see Bharatnatyam performed at cultural events. For instance, tens of thousands of people attend the Natyanjali Dance Festival in Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu, every year (Tamilnadutourism.com, 2023). Similarly, Bharatnatyam and other traditional dance styles are included during the Mamallapuram Dance Festival in Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu. From 2014 to 2017, for instance, this event drew an estimated 559 lakh visitors to Mamallapuram (India-tours.com, 2023). In many ways, these cultural celebrations benefit the local economy via the money tourists spend. Tourists attending Bharatanatyam festivals spend money at various local businesses, including hotels, restaurants, shops selling traditional clothing and souvenirs, and transportation services. Hotels, restaurants, shops, and taxi services benefit financially from these outlays, which in turn helps the local economy expand.

Tourism spending data for Bharatnatyam-popular areas like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka provides more evidence of the positive economic impact of these celebrations (Lakshmi *et al.* 2019). Cultural activities, like Bharatanatyam performances, are major draws for local and foreign visitors to these regions. Tourism and the local economy benefit from the money tourists spend at festivals, which helps to keep people employed and encourages new business ventures.

### **Identify strategies to promote Bharatnatyam as a compelling tourist attraction**

Various initiatives, including marketing methods and infrastructural enhancements, are undertaken to promote Bharatnatyam as an enticing tourist destination. These initiatives aim to raise Bharatnatyam's profile, bring in more viewers, and improve the audience's overall experience.

#### **Strategies for Marketing**

Brochures, videos, and social media posts that emphasise Bharatnatyam's unique traits and cultural significance help promote the dance form as a tourism hotspot (Jin *et al.* 2019). For instance, a pamphlet showing the grace and beauty of Bharatnatyam's positions and costumes is handed out at tourist information centres and cultural hubs. Bharatanatyam performances are included in holiday packages as a unique cultural offering by forming strategic agreements with travel businesses (Atoevna *et al.* 2020). By harnessing the reach of the internet and social media, Bharatanatyam performances, dance academy tours, and Q&As with world-renowned dancers can be broadcast live to an international audience, elevating the art form to the status of a must-see cultural spectacle.

#### **Enhancing the Existing Infrastructure**

India's tourism department should improve existing theatres and auditoriums to provide state-of-the-art facilities for Bharatanatyam performances, carefully focusing on the sound system quality, lighting, and seating. It should create specific venues for Bharatanatyam classes, workshops, and performances (John, 2021). These

establishments act as meeting places for the community and provide resources for the study, documentation, and preservation of the art form. It should facilitate travel to Bharatnatyam hotspots by enhancing the availability of public transit. It should make Bharatnatyam more accessible to tourists by creating well-designed, multilingual signs and informational boards.

## **Methodology**

### **Philosophy**

#### **Interpretivism**

Interpretivism is a philosophical approach that emphasises the subjective interpretation and understanding of social phenomena, focusing on individuals' meanings and interpretations of their experiences, interactions, and behaviours (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). The researcher used interpretivism research philosophy in this methodology. In an interpretivist philosophy, the researcher emphasised understanding the subjective interpretations and experiences of individuals involved in Bharatnatyam performances, cultural festivals, and tourism. The researcher explored the meanings and perceptions of Bharatnatyam's impact on tourism and the business opportunities it presents from the perspectives of stakeholders, participants, and tourists.

#### **Design**

Explanatory research design is a research approach that aims to explain the relationships between variables, providing insights into cause-and-effect relationships (Snyder, 2019). The researcher used an explanatory research design in this methodology. In an explanatory research design, the researcher investigated and uncovered the causal relationships between Bharatanatyam performances, cultural festivals, and tourism outcomes. The researcher explained the underlying mechanisms and reasons behind the impact of Bharatnatyam on tourism, shedding light on the factors that drive business opportunities in this context.

#### **Approaches**

##### **Deductive**

Deductive research approaches refer to a systematic process where researchers start with a general theory or hypothesis and then test specific predictions or hypotheses through data collection and analysis, aiming to confirm or refute the initial theory (Newman & Gough, 2020). The researcher used deductive approaches in this methodology. In a deductive research approach, the researcher starts with a general theory or hypothesis, such as "Bharatanatyam performances positively influence tourism revenue," and tests specific predictions or hypotheses derived from this theory through data collection and analysis to confirm or refute the hypothesis.

##### **Data collection**

Data collection is the systematic process of gathering relevant and reliable information or data from various sources or participants (Pandey & Pandey, 2021). There are two types of data collection such as primary and secondary. The researcher used secondary data. Sources of data are Published research articles, market research reports, news, and journals. By secondary data collection, the researcher accessed and analysed existing data sources, such as tourism reports, cultural festival records, and economic statistics, to gather information about the

relationship between Bharatanatyam and tourism and explore potential business opportunities. The researcher used thematic data analysis in this researcher.

## **Discussion**

### **Assess the economic impact of Bharatnatyam on local economies**

The classical Indian dance art of Bharatnatyam has a large economic influence in India, helping to bring in money and providing jobs for locals. Putting on Bharatanatyam shows, hosting cultural events, and opening dance schools all have a noticeable impact on the local economy for the better. Visitors worldwide go to see Bharatanatyam performances during the annual Natyanjali Dance Festival in Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu (Tamilnadutourism.com, 2023). Thousands of people attend an annual festival in honour of Lord Nataraja that features performances by internationally renowned Bharatnatyam artists. Because of these attractions, 1.23 million international visitors travelled to Tamil Nadu, generating income for the local economy (Timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 2022).

The money made from Bharatnatyam ticket sales is substantial. Many people in the entertainment industry are paid for their work in these productions. Moreover, the venue rentals, sound systems, and promotional activities necessary for Bharatanatyam performances all help boost the local economy (Sona, 2022). Bharatanatyam performances at cultural events are important in drawing in tourists and funding local economies. Attendees invest money in the community beyond only tickets since they also need to spend money on things like hotels, food, traditional attire, and accessories. This spending at local hotels, restaurants, and shops has a beneficial economic effect on the neighbourhood. For example, some famous hotels in Chidambaram are Vandayar Hotel, The Grand Park and Hotel Saradharam (Indiamart.com, 2023).

### **The role of Bharatanatyam performances in attracting tourists and tourism expenditure.**

Bharatnatyam, a traditional Indian dance style, has a major economic influence in India, helping to generate income and providing jobs. Bharatanatyam dance performances, cultural festivals, and dancing studios all contribute to the local economy in beneficial ways.

Performances of Bharatnatyam, such as those seen at the annual Natyanjali Dance Festival in Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu, attract huge audiences, including many international visitors (Tamilnadutourism.com, 2023). Lord Nataraja is celebrated during this annual festival, which features performances by some of the best Bharatanatyam artists in the world. The fact that 1.23 million non-Indians travelled to Tamil Nadu because of tourist attractions proves that this flood of visitors helps the local economy (Timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 2022).

Bharatanatyam concerts bring quite a lot of money through ticket sales. Performers, including dancers, choreographers, musicians, customers, and technical staff, earn money from these productions. The rental of performance space, the purchase of audio equipment, and the development of promotional materials all contribute to the local economy and are necessary for a successful Bharatanatyam performance. Bharatanatyam performances at cultural events are very important for tourism and revenue generation (John, 2021). Attendees of a festival not only spend money on entry fees and hotel, food, traditional attire, accessories, and other forms of tourism connected with the event itself. This money is then spent at local hotels, restaurants, and shops, which is good for the local economy.

### **Analyse the economic influence of cultural festivals featuring Bharatnatyam**

The tourism and retail boost that comes as a result of Bharatnatyam-centric cultural events is substantial. Festivals like the Natyanjali Dance Festival in Chidambaram and the Mamallapuram Dance Festival in Tamil Nadu draw thousands of visitors from all over the globe and bring in a lot of money for the cities that host them (India-tours.com, 2023). Statistics show that Bangladesh, the United States, and the United Kingdom are the top three countries from which international visitors to India originate, accounting for 45% of all visitors from outside of India (Timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 2022). This demonstrates the wide variety of visitors attracted to Bharatnatyam from all around the world. Also, the majority of international visitors (6.6%) enter the country via the Chennai International Airport (Timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 2022).

Sri Lanka (52%), Singapore (22.5%), Malaysia (20.4%), France (18.8%), and South Korea (16.0%) account for a significant share of international visitors to Chennai, the entrance point for several Bharatanatyam events (Timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 2022). This information demonstrates Bharatnatyam's capacity to attract viewers from all around the world. Hotels, restaurants, stores and transport services all see a boost in income due to the influx of festival goers. Visitors from all over the world help boost the economy and provide new possibilities for locals. The economic effect of cultural events, including Bharatnatyam is further amplified by the spending of visitors from Bangladesh, the United States, the United Kingdom, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia, France, and South Korea.

### **Identify strategies to promote Bharatnatyam as a compelling tourist attraction**

The tourist industry in India benefits greatly from better advertising and improved facilities for Bharatnatyam. The tourism sector benefits from Bharatnatyam's promotion as a prime destination by drawing in more visitors from near and far.

Bharatnatyam can reach more people and get more exposure through engaging marketing materials and digital channels. About 470.1 million Indians would use social media monthly on average in 2022, an increase of 4.2% annually from 2021-22 (Oosga.com, 2023). More than 4.26 billion individuals used social media globally in 2021, which is expected to rise to almost six billion by 2027 (Dixon, 2023). Arts lovers and history aficionados might be enticed to include Bharatanatyam performances in their trip plans if they are made aware of the genre's distinctive traits and cultural importance using promotional materials, including brochures, documentaries, social media content, and live streaming. By forming partnerships with tour operators, Bharatnatyam is included in itineraries highlighting India's cultural history and reaching a wider audience.

Improving the setting for Bharatanatyam performances would provide visitors with a richer and more memorable cultural encounter (Bansal, 2020). The quality of performances is greatly improved by investing in state-of-the-art infrastructure upgrades for theatres and auditoriums. Cultural centres that host Bharatanatyam lessons, seminars, and performances draw visitors and residents alike. These performance spaces also help to preserve and archive the art form, which adds to India's cultural history.

## Conclusion

Bharatnatyam substantially affects India's tourist sector, helping create new markets, income streams, and job openings. The paper identified that Bharatanatyam performances and cultural events bring in much money for the local economy due to the influx of domestic and foreign visitors. These performances captivate audiences with Bharatnatyam's cultural and visual grandeur, allowing them to understand better and appreciate Indian traditions. It mentioned that Bharatnatyam has a considerable monetary impact on the communities where it is performed. Bharatanatyam festivals and performances bring in a lot of tourists, who spend money in the accommodation, food & beverage, retail and transportation industries. Hotels, restaurants, stores, and service providers benefit from this spending because of the money they bring in. Bharatnatyam also helps the economy since it provides jobs for people like dancers, choreographers, musicians, and support personnel.

It described that Bharatnatyam has the potential to be a fascinating tourist attraction, and steps are taken to maximise this potential. Bharatnatyam gets exposure and reaches a broader audience via strategic marketing strategies, including developing engaging advertising materials and partnerships with travel firms. Tourists will have a more memorable and fulfilling experience if the infrastructure is upgraded to include better performance venues and designated areas for Bharatnatyam activities.

## References

- Atoevna, T. S., Kodirovna, B. S., & Oktyamovna, A. S. (2020). Features and methods of formation of the cost of tour packages. *Academy*, (12 (63)), 49-51. <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/features-and-methods-of-formation-of-the-cost-of-tour-packages>
- Bansal, A. (2020). Past, Present, and Future of Women in Bharatanatyam. Available at SSRN 3683980. [https://www.academia.edu/download/64686959/SSRN\\_id3683980\\_25 .pdf](https://www.academia.edu/download/64686959/SSRN_id3683980_25.pdf)
- Dixon, S. (2023). Number of global social network users 2017-2027. Retrieved on 30 June 2023, from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-worldwide-social-networkusers/#:~:text=How%20many%20people%20use%20social,almost%20six%20billion%20in%202027.>
- Formsofdancesintamilnadu.wordpress.com (2023). Formes of dances in Tamilnadu. Retrieved on 30 June 2023, from: <https://formsofdancesintamilnadu.wordpress.com/bharathanatiyam/#:~:text=Bharatnatyam%20was%20perform ed%20by%20certain,of%20Tamil%20Nadu%20and%20Karnataka.>
- ge=22
- Guinnessworldrecords.com (2023). Largest Bharatanatyam dance. Retrieved on 30 June 2023, from: <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/117047-largest-bharatha-natyam-dance>

Indiamart.com (2023). Vandayar Hotel. Retrieved on 30 June 2023, from: <https://www.indiamart.com/vandayar-hotel/aboutus.html>

India-tours.com (2023). MAMALLAPURAM DANCE FESTIVAL. Retrieved on 30 June 2023, from: <https://www.india-tours.com/fairs-and-festivals/mamallapuram-dance-festival.html#:~:text=The%20important%20folk%20dance%20forms,years%20of%202014%20to%202017.>

Jin, S. V., Muqaddam, A., & Ryu, E. (2019). Instafamous and social media influencer marketing. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 37(5), 567-579. <https://farapaper.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Fardapaper-Instafamous-and-social-media-influencer-marketing.pdf>

John, A. N. (2021). Progressive Growth of Bharatanatyam in Sri Lanka. *Asian Journal of Arts, Culture and Tourism*, 3(3), 9-18. <https://myjms.mohe.gov.my/index.php/ajact/article/download/15059/7714>

Journal of business research, 104, 333-339. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0148296319304564>

Lakshmi, S. S., & Gayatri, M. (2019). Analysing The Potential For Epicurean Tourism In Tamil Nadu. *Think India Journal*, 22(10), 8294-8305. <https://thinkindiaquarterly.org/index.php/think-india/article/download/13535/8787>

Newman, M., & Gough, D. (2020). Systematic reviews in educational research: Methodology, perspectives and application. *Systematic reviews in educational research*, 3-22. <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/23142/1007012.pdf?sequence=1#page=1>  
ODOLOGY%20TOOLS%20AND%20TECHNIQUES.pdf

Oosga.com (2023). Social Media in India - 2023 Stats & Platform Trends. Retrieved on 30 June 2023, from: <https://oosga.com/social-media/ind/#:~:text=How%20are%20users%20distributed%20in,4.2%20%25%20in%202021%2D22%20.>

Pandey, P., & Pandey, M. M. (2021). Research methodology tools and techniques. Bridge Center. <http://dspace.vnbrims.org:13000/jspui/bitstream/123456789/4666/1/RESEARCH%20METH>

Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines.

Sona, M. (2022). Preservation of Cultural Heritage of Thanjavur–The Cultural Hub of Tamil Nadu. <https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-1744027/latest.pdf>

Tamilnadutourism.com (2023). Natyanjali Dance Festival. Retrieved on 30 June 2023, from: <https://www.tamilnadutourism.com/festivals/natyanjali-dance-festival.php>

Timesofindia.indiatimes.com (2022). Tamil Nadu tops in tourist arrivals in 2020. Retrieved on 30 June 2023, from: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/tamil-nadu-tops-in-tourist-arrivals-in-2020/articleshow/91824558.cms>