



Problems and prospects of event tourism: A case of Puducherry

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Abstract

Puducherry has undoubtedly emerging as an event tourism destination in South India. This study is majorly focussed on the problems and prospects of event tourism in Puducherry. To find out opportunities and challenges of event tourism in Puducherry. This study also aims to identify destination suitability, opportunity, tourist inflow, government involvement in promotional activities, human resource requirement for event tourism management. The research work is exploratory in nature. The findings of this work are expected to highlight the opportunities and niche areas of event tourism in Puducherry.

Keywords: prospects, challenges and event tourism

Introduction

In the present day context Event Tourism is a trillion dollar industry, growing rapidly by bounds and leaps, with mega events and shows hosted regularly across globally. Astonishingly, very little amount of formal research has been carried out in recent past. Event tourism exhibits different aspects such as MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Events), exhibitions, conferences, seminars, fairs, festivals, live music and dance concert, sporting events and so on. Puducherry is amazing tourist destination which offers mixture of French and Tamil culture, traditions, cuisine, and architecture in the form of tourism products. The opportunities of event tourism in Puducherry are not fully tapped in the lights of indigenous, cultural, leisure and recreational events.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the prospects and potentials of event tourism industry in Puducherry; and
2. To identify the challenges faced by event tourism industry in Puducherry.

Review of Literature

Harris (2004) ^[15], argues that event management existing for several thousand years but it is only come into to lime light and has gained professionalism. Abbott and Geddie (2001) ^[2]. Reveal that the growth and demand is encouraged by new millennium. According to Oxford Dictionary Event is “anything that happens, as distinguished from anything that exists” or “an occurrence, especially one of great importance”. David (1998) ^[6]. Defined special event is “a one-off happening designed to meet specific needs at any given time”.

Wilkinson (1998) ^[25], defined local community events as “an activity established to involve the local population in a shared experience to their mutual benefits”. A special event recognizes “an unique moment in time with ceremony and ritual to satisfy specific needs” (Gold blatt, 1997) ^[12]. Event management, defines special events from two perspectives, that of customer and that of the event manager as follows: “a special event is a one-time or infrequently occurring

event outside normal programs or activities of the sponsoring or organizing body” and “to the customer or guest, a special event is an opportunity for leisure, social and cultural experience outside the normal range of choices or beyond everyday experience” (Donald Getz, 1997) ^[8].

Special events, as defined “before and more common events such as sporting events, corporate meetings, conventions, expositions, festivals, carnivals and prize giving ceremonies”, which may not the definition “ outside the normal range of choices”(David C.Watt,1998) ^[6].

Event can be categorized such as by location, appeal, theme, scale or economic impact (Walsh-Heron & Stevens, 1990 ^[24]; Getz, 1991 ^[11], 2007; Hall, 1992; Richards, 1994 ^[22]; Jago & Shaw, 1998 ^[16]; Gratton, Dobson, & Shibli, 2001). Events can be classified “in terms of size of the events” such as “mega events, regional events, and major events, minor events” (Lynn Van Der Wagen & Brenda R. Carlos, 2005) ^[18]. Event can be categorized by “geographic location, size of population, age of population, organizations, affluence of the community and organizer” (David, 1998) ^[6]. Events can be classified into four broad categories based on their “purpose and objective”: They are as follows “Leisure events, Cultural events, Personal events and Organizational or Corporate events” (Joe Goldblatt & Kathleen S. Nelson, 2001) ^[9]. Event Tourism is the application of then management practice of project management to the creation and development of festivals, events and conferences. Event Tourism involves studying the intricacies of the brand, identifying the target audience, devising the event concept, planning the logistics and coordinating the technical aspects before actually executing the modalities of the proposed event. Post-event analysis and ensuring a return on investment have become significant drivers for the event industry. Event tourism destination should have a good venue, transportation facilities, hotels (accommodation), event designers, staging, trained personnel’s in event management, operations and logistics, safety and security, crowd management modules, monitoring, control and evaluation system, health and medical support, emergency services, insurance, information technology, marketing, legal personnel, financial personnel, technical expertise,

event organizers and basic facilities and amenities. (David, 1998 ^[6]; Lynn Van Der Wagen & Brenda R. Carlos, 2005 ^[18]; Joe Goldblatt & Kathleen S. Nelson, 2001) ^[9].

Research Methodology

The need of the study is to identify the suitability, opportunity, tourist inflow, government involvement in promotional activities, human resource requirement for event tourism management and future prospects of Event Management in Puducherry. Puducherry is an amazing tourist destination well connected with premier cities and towns of South India. Destination Puducherry is home to fabulous tourism products and unique feature that entices tourist- both foreign and domestic. The prospects of event tourism is not much tapped given the tremendous potential of Puducherry in the realms of indigenous events and cultural and leisure events. Hence there is ample scope of assessing the present and future trends in the area of Event Tourism in Puducherry. This research is an explorative research. In this research questionnaire tool is used to collect the primary data. Questions are framed using both close ended and open ended questions and close ended questions are framed to those relating to the objectives. In this research, non-probability sampling method adopted especially convenient sampling technique is used for collecting primary data. The sample size being used for the study is 100 respondents. Primary data collected through questionnaires to gather information from tourism officials, and promoters and to draw the opinion and views of tourist's. Secondary data is collected from books, magazines, newspapers articles, tourist literature, Internal and Journals. Collected data have been analyzed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) with help of percentage method.

Findings

Following findings are identified through this study:

- Most of the respondents were male when compared with female.
- The respondents belong to the age group of 21-30 is more compare to 31-40 age group
- The respondents those who have given their inputs were mostly Graduates.
- The respondent's annual income belongs to 3 to 5 Lakhs.
- A total of 85% of the respondents said that their organisation is conducting events at least once in a year.
- Nearly 90% of the respondents mentioned that they outsource their events to an event organiser.
- Most of the respondents accepted that Puducherry is a suitable destination for conducting events.
- A little more than 80% of the respondents said there is a huge opportunity available for event tourism business in Puducherry.
- A little less than three-fourth of the respondents said that event tourism increases tourist inflow positively to Puducherry.
- A large section of respondents said that government involvement should be increased in event tourism
- A little more than 50% of the respondents said that destination Puducherry has got the potential to conduct event.
- Nearly one-third of the respondents have said that the human resource needs to train by professionals.

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