Tourism and Entertainment in Puducherry: A Staged Discourse

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Abstract. The Entertainment Industry is very vast and comprises several activity oriented components like sports, adventures, music, films, and so on. A major phenomenon which covers most of these elements of entertainment is Tourism. This paper discusses the acceptability of Tourism as an entertainment and the social and human factors that motivates the mass to take up Tourism as the means of entertainment and Puducherry, an exotic tourist destination of South India is chosen for the study. Here, these factors are applied against the available resources to see whether the Destination is providing the essential entertainment to the visiting Tourists. As such, Field study and rich theoretical inputs from various sources forms the base of this paper.

Keywords: Entertainment, Tourism, Destination, Tourists, Motivation

1. Introduction

It is imperative to understand that one of the human needs apart from the very basic needs of living is entertainment. The choice of the entertainment differs as it depends on the factors that motivates the person. An important activity that stimulates curiosity and offers excitement is entertainment [1]. The very nature of Tourism is to travel to different places other than the place of residence with the intention of enjoying varied nature and divergent cultures. This in turn, arouses curiosity and delights the tourists. Thus, Tourism can be classified as an activity that revolves around pleasure which is just a manifestation of entertainment [2]. As entertainment is more of an activity rather than mere observation, Destinations modify the Tourism products according to the needs of the Tourists, thus making Tourism and entertainment inseparable [3].

For a tourist, there are motivational factors which influence the decision to opt for touring. These are mostly classified as Social factors and Human factors of Tourism and they are here applied to bring to limelight how most of the motivational factors or needs are satisfied in the destination Puducherry.

2. The Destination Puducherry

Puducherry, one of the Union Territories of India is lying between $11^0 45'$ and $12^0 0'$ North latitude and $79^0 37'$ and $79^0 50'$ longitude and is surrounded by the state of Tamilnadu [4]. As such, presently Puducherry is located on the Coromandel Coast off the Bay of Bengal [5]. This destination can be reached by Air through Chennai which is 160 Kilometres away.

In the 1st century A.D., the Roman traders navigating between the East Indies and the Red Sea set up a trading post and a settlement here which was then referred to as *Pulichery*. Fifteen centuries later, in 1673 A.D., *Pulichery* was acquired by the French from Romans as a trading post for their French East India Company. Since it was a new settlement for them, the French coined *Pulichery* as *Puducherry*. Though there was constant rivalry between the French, the British, the Dutch and the Danes, the French could finally occupy it for an uninterrupted spell from 1816 to 1954 A.D. The French influence on the style and culture of the natives is being experienced by the tourists till date [6]. On 1st November 1954, Puducherry was merged with the Indian Union and hence it attained the status of the one and the only Union Territory of South India.

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These prominent events have infact made Puducherry as the tourist destination of historic importance. Also, the social and human factors of entertainment are applied aptly in this study to showcase Puducherry as the destination of entertainment.

3. The Social factors

The motivational factors for a tourist to choose any destination includes physical and cultural needs like relaxation, leisure, health, sightseeing, experiencing new cultures and so on [7].

3.1. Physical factors as Motivators for Tourism

The physical motivators are associated with well being of the tourists [8]. Tourism is considered as an entertainment when a tourist feels that he certainly needs a break in order to be away from his monotonous busy schedule. Such tourists choose a destination which offers them a perfect relaxation through the tourism experiences that improves their health. These parameters are now applied to the present chosen destination Puducherry, an abode of tranquillity. The first and the foremost important tourist centre which quenches the psychological thirst of the tourists is Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Sri Aurobindo was a patriot, freedom fighter and a philosopher who practiced *yoga* which is a form of exercise involving body, mind and soul. He came to Puducherry in April 1910, stayed here for a period of 40 years and devoted himself to the practice of *yoga* [9]. In 1926, Sri Aurobindo Ashram was founded by his disciple Mirah Alfassa who was later on popularly styled as *The Mother*. Even now tourists come from different parts of the world to experience the power of meditation and yoga which rewards them with the rejuvenation of body, mind and soul. Every year the Tourism Department of Puducherry celebrates International Yoga Festival from 4th to 7th January which includes talks, discussions, consultations and demonstration techniques on *Yoga*.

The other attractions which generally please the tourists of any destination are the beaches which are perfectly placid. The Promenade beach which runs to an extent of 1.5 kilometres is considered as the pride of Puducherry. This stretch houses various monuments like the War Memorial, the statue of Joan of Arc, the statue of Mahatma Gandhi, the statue of Dupleix, old Light House which speaks volumes about the history and culture of this fondly sought destination. All this makes it pertinent that the physiography of the said destination perfectly satisfies both the domestic and the international tourists.

3.2. Cultural factors as Motivators for Tourism

Many a times, tourists are deeply motivated to learn about the other countries, architectural styles, the heritage, the varied culture and so on [10]. Puducherry is one such destination which offers all these to the variegated tourists.

For instance, town planning and the housing structures are a real unique cultural attractions. The roads in the French quarter are wide, spacious and are parallel and are narrow in the Tamil quarter. The French quarter still has some roads named in French. Puducherry has two distinct parts i.e., the French and the Tamil. The French quarter has structures in the European classical style, whereas the buildings in the Tamil quarter are in the dialect style of Tamilnadu [11]. The two styles have influenced each other and as a result many buildings in both parts of the town are a harmonious merge of European and Tamil architectural prototype. Here guided heritage walks are conducted to feel the French past. Thus, the destination can satisfy a tourist who visits for the purpose of heritage and culture.

Fig. 1: Name of a street in Tamil as well as in French

Fig. 2: Well planned City with parallel streets – A Tourist Attraction

Puducherry is blessed with various other attractions like the Museums, Botanical Garden, Aaye Mandapam, Toy museum and so on. Cultural entertainments too are plenty like the fairs and festivals which includes The Harvest, Earth and Sun festival which is called as 'Pongal' in Tamil, 'Masi Magam' which is a festival of the Hindus (where the sacred images of Hindu God and Goddesses are bathed ritually), Temple Car Festival (Chariot with the image of the Hindu God is paraded around the town), Navaratri – the nine day festival of Goddess Durga, Ayudha Puja – festival of weapons, Diwali – the festival of lights, all set to amaze the tourists.

4. Human factors

Human motivational factors to tour and entertain would include Emotional, Personal Development and Status factors. Emotional factors comprise nostalgia, romance, escapism and religious fulfilment. Increased knowledge and learning a new skill are elements under Personal Development factors. Touring merely for status and prestige are also one among the human factors [12].

4.1. Emotional factors as motivators for Tourism

A successful tourism experience produces emotional response among the tourists like astonishment, stimulation to reexperience, aspiration, delight, ecstasy, excitement, wonder, surprise and so on [13]. Presently the chosen destination is apt for adventure, escapism and spiritual fulfilment. Chunnambar backwaters is one such tourist attraction, which is 8 kilometres away from the destination. It is an ideal place for water sports which is adventurous for the tourists. Spiritual needs are also meted out as the destination is gifted with plenty of churches, a few mosques and various temples .

The Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus built by the French missionaries in the 17th Century, the Church of the Capuchins built in 1761, the Notre Dame des Anges or the Church of our Lady of the Angels built in 1852 in Greeko-Roman architectural style (which has the rare oil painting of Our Lady of the Assumption gifted by the French emperor Napoleon III), the Church of the Assumption built in 1851, the Church of our Lady of Lourdes built in 1876 and Church of our Lady of Good Health built in 1690 are fine examples of churches as great architectural marvels. Recently the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church was conferred with the title of Basilica by the Vatican Pope [14].

To name a few mosques that enthuse the tourists are the Jamai Mosque, the 350 year old Meeran Mosque (which exhibits the old Gothic Islam architecture), the Kutbha Mosque and the Mulla Mohammed Mosque. Their presence proves this as the destination of a spiritual hub.

Important temples to name are a few like the Manakula Vinayagar Temple, the Varadaraja Perumal Temple built in the typical Dravidian style, the Vedhapureeswarar Temple, the Kanniga Parameswari Temple (which is strongly influenced by the French architectural style), the Kamatchiamman Temple and the Gokilamabal Thirukameshwara Temple portrays this destination a spiritual centre.

4.2. Personal Development as motivators for Tourism

Personal Motivators involves learning new skills from the host community in order to increase one's own knowledge. This may also be known as Inter-personal motivator which includes Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) and meeting the new people [15]. Tourists while willing to spend huge amount in touring, are highly motivated to entertain themselves by learning something new and also by doing rather than just merely watching or observing. In order to cater to these types of tourists, Puducherry organises various workshops, which stimulates the tourists in learning activities like handicrafts, arts, pottery and so on. Recently World Bamboo Day was celebrated on 18th September 2011, where the tourists were exposed to different bamboo products of the Puducherians and a few demonstrations were also conducted, thus enriching the tourists' knowledge on bamboo skills [16].

4.3. Status as the prime motivator for Tourism

By travelling to a particular destination, the tourist attempts to mark a niche of their status in the society. Consequently, a sense of achievement is discovered by the tourist. They trust that their image is enhanced and they can occupy a creamy position in their circle because of visiting prominent destinations. Especially, if the peers have visited a destination which the tourists have not, it turns out to be a prestige issue for them. Here the tourists look for exclusivity, fashionability and grandiose spending opportunities. Puducherry, is one such destination that offers the tourists with all these opportunities.

In order to cater to the varied needs of the tourists, fine accommodation ranging from upmarket hotels, mid- range commercial hotels, beach resorts, heritage hotels, Government guest houses, Home stays and so on are available. They offer a varied cuisine like Indian, Continental, Thai, Chinese and Vietnamese which are really relishing [17].

Based on the above study, the linkage between the factors, entertainment and Tourism in the given destination can be tabled as follows .

Factors for Tourism	Choice of Tourism	Entertainment
Physical	Leisure Tourism	Beaches, Meditation & yoga
	Food Tourism	Multi cuisine–Alcoholic beverages
Cultural	Heritage & Cultural Tourism	Museums, Monuments, Archaeological sites, townscapes, Heritage walk, Fairs & Festivals
Personal Development	Skill Tourism	Learning new skills like bamboo craft
Religious	Spiritual Tourism	Visiting Churches, Mosques, Temples and participating in religious festivities
Adventure	Sports Tourism	Water Sports
Status	Historical city Tourism	Relating to the past (the French, the British, the Dutch and so on.)
	(Uniqueness of the destination)	Self actualisation

Table 1 : Linking Factors, - Tourism, Entertainment and the Destination

Thus, this study affirms that Tourism in Puducherry can be an interesting process with most of the time being entertaining. The resources of tourism are naturally designed in such a way that they would entertain the tourists. But, however the motivating factors may differ from an individual to another individual. As far as the destination Puducherry is concerned, it has all the potential to fulfil the social as well as the human needs of the tourists. The table given below shows that the destination is preferred by most of the domestic and International tourists year after year.

Table 2: Tourists arrivals in the destination

Year	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists	Total
1999	4,49,429	22,983	4,72,412
2001	4,76,804	23,878	4,98,919
2003	5,00,139	25,559	5,25,698
2005	5,74,011	36,009	6,10,020
2007	7,98,528	57,682	8,56,210

In fact, the Tourism Department of Puducherry has recorded an average growth of 16.11% in foreign tourists' arrivals in the past ten years which justifies the real potentiality of Puducherry in satisfying the socio-cultural and the psycho-physical needs of the tourists [18].

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