
PROMOTION OF CULTURAL TOURISM

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ABSTRACT**PURPOSE**

Promotion of cultural tourism is very important for the destinations which don't have much historical and religious significance. Government has to innovate to promote these destinations. Culture is the element which can attract numerous tourists to these destinations. Culture can be depicted and promoted in various ways in which organizing craft fairs is an unconventional promotion technique to showcase food, crafts and traditions. This article aims to give an overview of the craft fairs and discuss suitability of this marketing approach for promoting cultural tourism.

DESIGN/METHODOLOGY/APPROACH

The research presented is a exploratory and empirical study based on data collected from the participants (craft persons) with structured questionnaire. Sample size of craft persons was 200 out of 400 but only 126 respondents responded seriously.

FINDINGS

The study reveals that unconventional techniques like organizing craft fairs are very effective to promote culture. Furthermore, for promoting culture which require more demonstration and personal contact these fairs must be more frequently organized. There is a need of popularizing these fairs at those destinations which are rich in their rural heritage to attract more visitors from different places and to develop cultural tourism.

ORIGINALITY/VALUE

This is an empirical study related to the question how craft fairs can promote cultural tourism in Haryana. This is relevant for the rural craft persons, policy makers and visitors. By discussing the ways of promotion and results of using this technique, this paper provides alternative thinking to craft persons for making their product popular, to policy makers to attract more and more visitors towards these destinations and to visitors to know about the culture, traditions and to buy rare crafts which are not easily available in urban markets.

Keywords: Culture, Tourism,Crafts fairs

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INTRODUCTION

The fairs of India play an important role in attracting tourists to the country to showcase the rich Indian culture. These fairs reflect the different aspects of the life of people of the country. The craft fair is the important one amongst the other fairs organized in India to promote the concept of 'mini-India'. These are efficient ways for craftsmen to showcase their products to different markets and for visitors to interact directly with craftsmen and to get familiar with the culture of India at one place. Crafts persons are interested in participating in these fairs because it provides advantages of meeting specific target audience, personal and direct communication, the opportunity to know consumers, competitors and to meet new business partners. At these one or two weeks long fairs, skilled artists from all over the country display the rich crafts tradition of India in the typical rural setting and bring alive the age-old living crafts tradition. Culture in tourism is an important issue. The relationship between tourism and culture can take many forms and the outcome can be viewed as negative and positive when meeting of hosts and visitors occurs and possibly leads to the transformation of the hosts' culture. The destruction of local culture as a result of tourism is well documented. However, studies by researchers' consider this as a lopsided view of the impact of tourism. Studies have shown that tourism have lead to the strengthening of local culture (Yamashita, Kadir and Eades : 1997).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Among the various factors influencing tourists to visit an overseas country is that of promotion/marketing activity by tourism operators and government tourist commissions in the destination country (Dwyer, Forsyth, 1992).Communication about destination in tourism is must and it should be consumer oriented. Kreck, 1972 made an attempt to use this behavioral basis in describing a possible total communication framework for the use of a medium for mass distribution in the area of tourism promotion. Earlier traditional marketing techniques like advertising have been used to promote the products but now other media are also in practice. Costs, market fragmentation, and new media channels that let customers bypass advertisements seem to be in league against the old ways of marketing. Relying on mass media campaigns to build strong brands may be a thing of the past (Aaker, Joachimsthaler, 1997). Moreover companies should try to adopt new methods for promotion. Cultural and social trends can be used to improve communications with the customers (M. Smith, Reynolds, 2008) .Even religion can play

a significant role in influencing social and consumer behavior (Fam, Waller, B. Erdogan, 2004). Similarly pervasive environments are important for improving tourism contents communication and have positive influence on the tourists' destination choice (Pantano, Servidio, 2011).

IMPORTANT TERMS

Some important terms which will be used in study are explained below.

Craft Fairs are non conventional promotional events in which the crafts of different rural areas are exhibited by variety of craftsmen which are targeted at interested buyers. These fairs are usually organized by government, chambers, industry associations, or by specialized exhibition companies.

Cultural Tourism

World Tourism Organization (1985) defines cultural tourism as the movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours; travel to festivals and other related events. Essentially, cultural tourism is based on the mosaic of places, traditions, art forms, celebrations and experiences that portray ones nation and its people (National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, 2005).

OBJECTIVE

The study was conducted to identify the role of craft fairs in promoting cultural tourism in Haryana.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in Surajkund. Surajkund lies in the Faridabad district just 8 kms away from the South Delhi. The fair is hosted by the Surajkund Fair authority every year from 1st to 15th February. Folk painters, metal workers, stone and wood carvers, tie dye crafts persons, embroiders, lace makers, textiles printers, carpet and loom weavers, producers of silk fabrics, jewelers and sculptors- execute and display their skills in this fair. Food stalls are and folk dances of different states of India are being performed in this fair.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based on empirical data collected from Surajkund Crafts fair at Surajkund, Faridabad (Haryana). The information was being collected through structured questionnaire from the Craft persons. Sample size of visitors was 180 but only 126 respondents responded seriously. The questionnaires were thoroughly screened to check for errors in the responses. Questionnaires with a lot of erroneous responses were discarded. All the responses were then

coded. After that the data was tabulated in MS Excel. The data analysis was carried out using statistical software SPSS Version 14.5 point Likert scale was used to know the responses of the respondents with the help of a structured questionnaire. The responses were measured in terms of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The following techniques have been used

- Histograms and bar charts.
- Testing of Hypothesis – Chi Square and Proportion Test.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The study attempts to answer the above question by analyzing the promotion activities followed by craft fairs authority in terms of food, cultural programs and crafts.

HYPOTHESIS

- H0: There is no scope of culture promotion through these fairs
- H1: Craft fairs promote culture in various ways.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

OPINION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Stage II of the article focuses on the responses given by the participants. They also believe that these kind of craft melas help to promote culture. The findings specific to ‘Surajkund Craft Fair’ are:

Part of cultural exchange

| | % of Total |
|-----|------------|
| Yes | 81 |
| No | 19 |

This fair is considered as sources of culture exchange 81% respondents agree to this statement.

Helpful in maintaining heritage

| | % of Total |
|-----|------------|
| Yes | 95 |
| No | 5 |

95% of respondents believe that these kinds of fair are helpful to maintain our heritage. Only 5% respondents don't agree. It shows the importance of these fairs in our society.

Purpose for visiting the fair

| | % of Total |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Folk dances of different state | 43 |
| Shopping of rural crafts | 43 |
| Food | 14 |

Participants also feel that visitors visit this fair not only for shopping of rare crafts but having the experience folk dances and food of different states of India. 43% of participants feel visitors come for shopping of rural crafts and 43% respondents come for enjoying folk dances. This shows the interest of visitors in culture.

Opinion about the fair

The opinion was taken on a 5 point Likerts Scale. Please note SA-Strongly Agree, A – Agree, NAND- Neither Agree Nor Disagree, D- Disagree, SD – Strongly Disagree

| % Responses | SA | A | NAND | D | SD |
|--|----|----|------|---|----|
| Total Sample - 180 | | | | | |
| Visitors show interest in rural crafts of different states. | 4 | 86 | - | 5 | 5 |
| Visitors enjoy folk dances and food of different states. | 52 | 43 | 5 | - | - |
| Craft fairs are the proper platform to showcase our tradition and culture. | 33 | 57 | 10 | - | - |
| Craft fairs help in selling rare crafts. | 86 | 4 | 10 | - | - |
| Craft fairs make the destination popular. | 16 | 84 | | | |
| Craft fairs attract visitors from abroad also. | 33 | 43 | 19 | 5 | |

Craftsmen feel visitors ask different questions related to crafts. Most of them want to know the process of making these crafts and they make comparison among different states.

Visitors visit fair not only for crafts but to enjoy folk dances and food of the different states. That shows their inclination towards knowing the traditional living of the different states. Moreover these craft fairs provide glimpses of culture of different states at one place.

Craft persons are involved in making these crafts from generations. But they don't get proper platforms to showcase their art. These fairs provide them opportunity to interact with visitors and to tell them about the process of making these crafts.

While participants feel the international presence in the form of foreign tourists, majority of them disagree that the international stalls are giving any kind of tough competition to the local stalls. Thus 76% of the respondents feel that international stalls do not come close to the local arts, artifacts and handlooms offered by the artisans.

FINDINGS IN NUTSHELL

The findings of the paper are summarized as follows.

- ❖ These fairs are gaining recognition for promoting rural crafts in urban areas.
- ❖ These fairs create awareness among consumers of all age groups specially youngsters.
- ❖ These fairs help the rural craftsmen to mark their presence in the urban market.
- ❖ These fairs help rural entrepreneurs to understand the need of urban consumers.
- ❖ The participants participate not only to sell the product but for the promotion of rural crafts and culture also. The customers visit fair to buy best, exclusive and rare products at reasonable price.
- ❖ The customers belong to different sections of the society. Youngsters visit for enjoying the local food and folk programs while adults visit to purchase rural products. Female visitors are more in number. They like bargaining.
- ❖ Majority of the customers are satisfied with the quality and price of the products.
- ❖ The participants are from all over the states, from India and foreign neighboring countries like Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- ❖ These fairs help participants to understand the marketing techniques.
- ❖ By participating in these fairs the rural craftsmen gain knowledge about demand of their products. They can improve their products accordingly.

SUGGESTIONS

Some suggestions on the basis of study are quoted here.

- ❖ The participation in these fair require regress groundwork. That means choosing appropriate quality products, presenting them correctly by using appropriate packaging and providing adequate promotional material.

- ❖ These fairs should be organized at different places in the country so that art of craftsmen should be more recognized. This will help to spread their art in different parts of the country.
- ❖ These fairs can be an appropriate platform for craftsmen to start their businesses. Policy makers should take initiative in terms of putting their stalls to guide them how to start small business enterprises. Duties can be assigned to the experts of these areas.
- ❖ Rural craftsmen should be provided the financial information and the related schemes from different banks in the fair. Loans should be sanctioned immediately to them at cheaper rates.
- ❖ These fairs should be organized more frequently to establish a smooth link between the rural participants and urban consumers. It will generate double benefit in terms of more profit to participants and more availability of crafts to urban consumers.
- ❖ Fixed margins on crafts should be decided by the govt. Bargaining should not be allowed in the fair so that participants could get reasonable prices and visitors quality products with a sense of satisfaction.
- ❖ Various training programs and workshops must be conducted for teaching these crafts to increase the involvement of consumers.
- ❖ Various training programs by professionally trained experts to teach participants how to analyze the consumers' behaviour, how to make marketing strategies and marketing programs. That will help them to run their businesses successfully.
- ❖ More promotional efforts are required to promote these fairs. More coverage by audio-visual media at national level is required because this is the media of masses. That will attract visitors as well as participants.
- ❖ Interaction between craftsmen and fashion designers (for clothes), who use and value this art in their designs, should be made possible. This process will help the craftsmen to get orders and designers will get suppliers.
- ❖ Trade support institutions can do much to organize and coordinate these types of fairs.
- ❖ B-Schools must involve themselves in these kinds of projects so that these projects could be converted into a successful business proposition.
- ❖ More facilities are required for the participants.

❖ Priority should be given to hygiene and quality in providing space to food stalls. However, it is important to understand the long term objective of participating in crafts fair. It should not be merely participation for displaying and disposing of stock but a comprehensive business plan. This business plan should include the objectives, methods of approaching the consumers, packaging, sales literature, contact numbers. It is clear that participation in fairs can have enormous benefits for craftsmen. However, these benefits will be reaped only by doing good preparation and commitment. The craftsmen also have to ensure the strength of their businesses. They should identify a potential target market through inquiries and local investigation. They should adopt long term strategy to build their credibility.

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