

Cricketainment: the new Language of Tourism in India

A report on the growing trends in Cricket-tourism in India



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Introduction:

From the beginning of the human civilization, it's a normal human tendency to explore new horizons of opportunities and happiness to satisfy their urge towards knowledge, political and economical interests etc. For this starting from Alexander the great to the Britishers to the Moughals everybody has tried their lucks in this and has become literally successful. And because of this tendency the term Tourism and travel has emerged as a breakthrough success in recent years. And to match this tendency and euphoria, countries are keeping their nerves open to capture it at the first instance.

India also, in this hyper competitive market of tourism and travel has already proved its mettle by attracting the ever increasing global traffic towards it.

Heritage, history and a huge slice of God's Own Country are India's brand images for years now. A melting pot of diverse cultures, its vibrant history and splendors of Nature have been India's USP all these years. These and many other new avenues keep competing for attention.

But with the competitions increasing day by day, and more and more countries trying their hard to attract the tourists to their places has put a great amount of pressure on India's tourist destinations promoters and Government to put their best effort to gain the ever lucrative share in the pie.

In this regard, we need to explore new avenues so that we can offer new types of products, packages and services to the consumers to differentiate our Brand India from that of others.

In this regard lets see a new phenomena that has captured the imagination of a billion person in recent times and evolved as the next best thing in India after the advent of the people's car Maruti, The Game of Cricket.

Cricket has been evolved in the southern England in the late 1500s has become the new mantra of the Entertainment World today. From the 5 days long test matches to 50 overs a side one day matches to the newest avatar, the Twenty 20 format, the game of cricket has certainly come a very long way. And in India it has taken the front line whenever it comes to the program of mass appeal and entertainment. In India, literally it has become a religion and the fans worship their favorite players as Gods.

So it's a high time for the tourism marketers to milk the cow with the help of this cricketing weapon and associate the term Tourism with the cricket game to attract more and more domestic and foreign tourists.

Cricket the Latest brand

Cricket in India as defined earlier is a new, well-defined, unique brand personality that is fast emerging, one that is certainly bound to give the tourism sector a big leap. And with the advent of the shorter form the T20, it has become a well deserved place to invest in for the tourism marketers.

We can bang upon these opportunities because of the fact that recently, when in South Africa and England where the International T20 and ODI matches were played, the no of tourists visiting those countries were increased by many folds as from the normal seasonal tourists.

In India also, during the last Wills World Cup in 1996 and the recently concluded DLF IPL Cup, the amount of tourists coming to India and the way they had enjoyed here has become phenomenal, and an achievement that we can proud of.

For the Tourists, there is no better place to tear off their shirts and get a fine sunbath than a cricket ground in the peak of summer in India Today. Of course, they will also take time after cricket to take a cruise along the scenic backwaters or walk through the antiquated streets of India's great heritage zones in the heritage cities like New Delhi, Kolkata, Cuttack, Kochi, Hyderabad, Goa, Chennai, Bangalore, Mumbai etc.

The Opportunities:

With the advent of web technologies and especially e-commerce and m-commerce the opportunities for creating and offering valuable tour packages to the tourists to attract them towards India.

Cashing in on cricket's newfound image is the Great Indian Cricketing Tours, we can create a special package aptly called Fusion, blending cricket with tourism.

In our packages, we can add the cricket as a special event. We can book some of the seats in the stadiums exclusively for the guests, which will be provided with television sets just as the press boxes, a cheering group, fooding from good and contract caterers, special security arrangements and a lot more facilities to make the tour as an unforgettable experience for them.

Apart from the main event, i.e. cricket, we can the guest's can have the particular area's performing arts, culture through special programs that is pre-planned and included in the guest's tour package.

Proposed Strategies:

1. Build customized Tour packages with cricket as the main ingredients.
2. Associate the event of cricket in association with other tourism packages like local sight seeing, adventure sports, performing arts, culinary facilities etc.
3. More and more advertisements should be there related to the cricket in association of tourism.
4. More and more stadiums need to be built along with other facilities like transportation and accommodations.
5. More PR to avoid confusion about bookings and facilities.
6. Tight safety and security measures needs to be taken.

And Finally the Conclusion:

For the time being cricket tourism is limited to the international matches that are played in the country. Maybe the next step would be to dangle cricket as a bait to attract more tourists to India.

"Certainly this is possible. Every year we have many teams visiting India and in a country which is historically famous for its hospitality services, this is a very high time for all of us to take initiative and along with the slogan of "Atithi Devo Bhaba", we can increase the popularity of both the game of cricket as well as of the place where it is been played.

This can surely be regularized with more PR, consistent advertising and promotion.

Cricket tourism has made a good start and looks set for a long, good innings in India.



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