

MARKETING OUTBOUND TOURISM IN INDIA BOLLYWOOD WAY, IIFA WAY!

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ABSTRACT

Enticing international visitors is one of the most significant challenges tourism marketers face, as it requires convincing people to travel great distances to experience an attraction or destination, without being there before. There has been a constant demand to invent new product or medium which can be instrumental in carting out such marketing activities.

Recent studies by established the positive influence of films, on people's travel decisions, especially to the places and locations featured on celluloid. With its glossy and larger than life portrayal in the films, these places and attractions can have a greater impact on Indian viewers and potential tourists from India. Movies have been integral part of Indian culture and one of the most common medium of entertainment for the population at large. With the success of Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara (ZNMD) and the boost it provided to Spain as a tourist destination, film boards across the globe have accepted the relevance and impact of Indian Hindi film industry or Bollywood, as popularly called.

Unlike commercials by tourism boards, both print and video, who do not carry an impartial image, Films are considered a neutral medium capturing the natural beauty and relevant offerings of a place, without being biased towards them. However, there is a limitation of product identification, especially with regards to Bollywood where Songs and Dance sequence are captured in all such beautiful and exotic locales, without any reference to the place or attraction. With the advent of internet, film goers can identify the locales where a particular movie or sequence has been shot, but there is a limitation in this process of identification.

IIFA has emerged as a great platform for global tourism marketers where Indian Oscars, as popularly called, have been travelling around the world, since its maiden appearance in UK in the year 2000. During last 15 editions, IIFA has been to Singapore, Malaysia, USA, Europe, South Africa and many more places. There been a regular demand of re-hosting the event, like Singapore, who wanted to capitalize on the positive impact of the first edition. Even Sri Lanka hosted IIFA in 2012 to showcase itself to the world, especially Indians across the globe as IIFA latest viewership command 850 million on television.

Through this study we would like to explore the journey of IIFA in last 15 years and its successful financial impact among Indian tourists, to the host cities / countries along with positive influence on destination image. Also covered the factors responsible for hindrance or limiting the impact on destination promotion.

Keywords: Cinema, Bollywood, Film-tourism, Bollywood Tourism, Tourism, Travel and IIFA

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has emerged as one of the most lucrative industry for every country and India is no exception. As per the estimation of WTTC, tourism generated approximately US\$240 billion or 9.2% of country's GDP in year 2018 which resulted in approximately 42 million jobs, 8.1% of its total employment. Tourism sector is expected to grow at an annual rate of 6.9% to \$450 billion by the year 2028, close to 10% of its GDP (Beeton, 2001).

Indian outbound travel market has grown exponentially for over two decades, where in the year 2000 we barely had 4.42 million departures, over 26.30 million Indians took off on various foreign destinations in 2018, a sixfold jump amounting to closer to 10 percent year on year growth (Beeton, 2005).

While India is still not amongst the top 10 source markets for many countries across the world, however it is already the largest market for neighboring countries like Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. For many others including Malaysia, Thailand and UAE it is emerged as one of the top five source markets globally.

Hindi film industry of India, fondly coined as Bollywood has majorly influenced Indian culture. The largest film industry in the world, in terms of number of films churns every year, follows an identical pattern of creating masala movies involving some of the world's finest locations and colorful camera work. According to an estimate, almost 14 million people in India enjoy Bollywood movies daily. Bollywood has a tremendous fan base and a fantastic mass appeal. Bollywood are affecting the common lives of Indians week in and week out (Gursahani, 2008).

Bollywood has become an integral part of Indian culture and touches the lifetime of every Indian. Tourism industry has reaped benefits from movies showcasing the beauty of the well-known as well as lesser-known tourist destinations across the globe. The influence of Bollywood in Tourism industry is prominent and can surely increase within the coming years.

THE ADVENT OF IIFA

The International Indian Film Academy Awards (also referred to as the IIFA Awards) are a group of awards presented annually by the International Indian Film Academy to honour both artistic and technical excellence in Bollywood, the Hindi language Indian film industry.

The first awards were presented in 2000 at The Millennium Dome in London, United Kingdom with only 450 travellers flown out by the event committee into London (Harjani, 2011). While there were initial apprehensions about the effect of first event in such a unique format, event turn out to be a mega success. From then onwards, the awards are held at locations round the world signifying the international success of Bollywood (Jha, 2005). Since 2000, the event has expanded from a one-

night event to a three-day celebration, hosting various events and activities concerning the Indian movie industry. These awards honour films from the previous year, January to December.

IIFA Awards are conceptualized and produced by Wizcraft International Entertainment Pvt. Ltd. is supported by the key members of the Indian film fraternity (Lander, 2010). IIFA Awards is India's biggest media event with a viewership of just about 600 million worldwide, the IIFAs are among the world's most-watched annual entertainment events.

In order to bring more credibility, Bollywood legend Amitabh Bachchan was roped in as brand ambassador of the IIFA for first 10 years. From a one-night celebration in 2000 at the Millennium Dome, London, the last two decades have seen the IIFA movement grow into a cine-packed weekend of film-festivals, workshops, exhibitions, film-showcases, global business forums and sporting events, all of which climaxes into the IIFA Awards. The IIFAs are celebrated in London, Sun City, Johannesburg, Singapore, Malaysia, Dubai, Amsterdam, Spain, Macau, Yorkshire and even Bangkok (Mittal, Nitin, & Anjaneyaswamy, 2013).

IIFA awards are part of an event can safely be described as Bollywood Roadshow in an international destination, captivating its fans and lovers, across the globe, who are either reached the city of event or another set of 600 million television viewers watching tis extravaganza across the globe (Roesch, 2009). Not all of them are Indians, NRIs or Indian Diaspora but a truly global audience, be it Malaysians, Egyptians, Russians, British and Americans, in addition to most of the countries part of former USSR. On the lines of Hollywood, Bollywood has turn global with a lot of talent from Europe and Asia has started making inroads, either as actors or as technical staff.

Getting so many stars and directors and other technical team members into a single city, other than their home turf, Mumbai, was never imagined before. Gaining access to film stars and personalities, and scheduling interviews and media interactions with them so as to drive coverage. IIFA awards have evolved during last two decades since inception, where originally planned as celebration of the success of Indian Hindi Film Industry in a foreign destination, it has now become a proper networking and business event showcasing Bollywood capabilities and reach to the global audience and their film industry (Ryan, 2012). Such is the power of IIFA Awards that there are repeat requests from multiple destinations for the return of IIFA to their land for the sheer boom it brings to their economy through the Star and Film continents and their followers from across the globe (Smith, 2005). IIFA Awards have also broken the typical stereotype of Hindi Cinema, which was considered only a mass production with songs and drama with no substance. However, it has been successful in promoting class and range of Hindi cinema along with the technical talent pool available.

Even IIFA's media promotion has been quite different from traditional award ceremonies taking place to recognize the talent and success of previous year's films. IIFA was one of the first Indian Film event recognized and adapted to social and digital media platform, while traditional events relied heavily on age old,

Television and Print media. IIFA promotes their annual event on digital media with an aim to enhance its reach and strengthen the brand online, which has been instrumental in reaching out to younger generations like Millennials!

For promotion of the event, IIFA just did not rely on not just red carpet and award show video, but multiple events have been included prior to the main award show night, where fans and Bollywood lovers can interact with their favorite stars and participate in various games and events with them. Conducting workshops for the film fraternity involving Bollywood, Global Tourism Boards and International Media personnel are another original format, not used in any of Indian awards before.

AWARDS CEREMONIES

The following is a listing of all International Indian Film Academy Awards ceremonies since 2000 (**Table 1,2**).

Table1. International Indian Film Academy Awards ceremonies.

Ceremony	Date	Venue	City	Country	Continent
1 st IIFA Awards	24 June 2000	Millennium Dome	London	 United Kingdom	Europe
2 nd IIFA Awards	16 June 2001	<i>Superbowl Arena</i>	Sun City	 South Africa	Africa
3 rd IIFA Awards	6 April 2002	Arena of Stars	Genting Highlands	 Malaysia	Asia
4 th IIFA Awards	17 May 2003	Coca-Cola Dome	Johannesburg	 South Africa	Africa
5 th IIFA Awards	22 May 2004	Singapore Indoor Stadium	Singapore	 Singapore	Asia
6 th IIFA Awards	11 June 2005	Amsterdam Arena	Amsterdam	 Netherlands	Europe
7 th IIFA Awards	17 June 2006	Dubai International Convention Centre	Dubai	 United Arab Emirates	Asia
8 th IIFA Awards	9 June 2007	Hallam FM Arena	Sheffield	 United Kingdom	Europe
9 th IIFA Awards	8 June 2008	Siam Paragon	Bangkok	 Thailand	Asia
10 th IIFA	13 June 2009	The Venetian	Macau		

Awards		Macao		Macau, China	
11 th IIFA Awards	5 June 2010	Sugathadasa Stadium	Colombo	 Sri Lanka	
12 th IIFA Awards	25 June 2011	Rogers Centre	Toronto	 Canada	North America

Table 2. International Indian Film Academy Awards - Wikipedia.

Ceremony	Date	Venue	City	Country	Continent
13 th IIFA Awards	9 June 2012	Singapore Indoor Stadium	Singapore	 Singapore	Asia
14 th IIFA Awards	6 July 2013	The Venetian Macao	Macau	 Macau, China	
15 th IIFA Awards	26 April 2014	Raymond James Stadium	Tampa	 United States	North America
16 th IIFA Awards	7 June 2015	Putra Indoor Stadium	Kuala Lumpur	 Malaysia	Asia
17 th IIFA Awards	25 June 2016	IFEMA	Madrid	 Spain	Europe
18 th IIFA Awards	14–15 July 2017 ^[5]	MetLife Stadium	East Rutherford, New Jersey	 United States	North America
19 th IIFA Awards	22–24 June 2018	Siam Niramit Theatre	Bangkok	 Thailand	Asia
20 th IIFA Awards	18 September 2019	Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Indoor Stadium	Mumbai	 India	
21 st IIFA Awards	27-29 November 2020 (postponed until further notice due to COVID-19)	Daly College Ground	Indore	 India	

INDIAN ARMADA IN SPAIN

For its 17th edition, in the year 2016, IIFA has decided to go for one of the most popular tourist destinations across the globe, Spain against other prominent contenders like Abu Dhabi, Macau and North America (Spain wants Indian tourists film makers 2011).

With fresh success of Bollywood Blockbuster “Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara (ZNMD), released in 2011 about a road trip, Spain has caught eyes of Bollywood Viewers and Indian Outbound travellers like never before. All this while Spain was a very niche destination for Indian tourists as it was never a single destination, but part of Grand European Tour (Tagliabue, 2012). Also, in absence of a sizeable Indian Diaspora, it was not a favorite location for VFR (Visiting Family and Relatives) tourism (TNN, 2006). The rush generated post the success of film, clearly establish its impact on Indian Outbound tourists. It was easy to quantify the impact both in terms of numbers (footfalls) as well as revenue spend by Indian tourists. Some of the Indian tour operators have capitalized big time on this demand and even created special itineraries / Film Maps for taking the tourists to the locations spots where film was shot or perceived to be shot (Tooke, Baker, 1996).

The year after its release, 60,444 Indians visited Spain, nearly double the 2011 figure, consistent with the industry and tourism ministry. Following year, 85,000 Indians visited Spain. Lonely Planet in 2013 launched a guide to Spain aimed specifically at the Indian market and tour operators still advertise tours to the filming locations featured in ZNMD. As per India's ambassador to Spain, Vikram Misri, this film was singlehandedly liable for making Spain a household name in India and increasing tourism from India.

IIFA received a big support from Spain Tourism Board, Government as well as Industry since they were welcomed and hosted by the Mayor of Madrid (Tourism Australia, 2012). The new venue helped reaching out to the vast Latin American market for Indian films. Spanish is that the largest speaking language within the world. So, it could be a springboard for Indian films there as these awards brought much awareness towards Indian films.

With on the brink of 150 Bollywood celebrities attending, an audience of around 20,000, and a business forum to facilitate talks of trade and collaborations, besides attractions integrating talent from India and Spain - the International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) gala in Madrid was a great platform for celebration of 60 years of between two countries (Woodside, Lysonski, 1989).

There was FICCI-IIFA Global Business Forum - a platform for international business and networking where global dignitaries and business leaders discussed and connected to create opportunities for India and the host country. Bollywood actors Anil Kapoor, Sonakshi Sinha and Hrithik Roshan went there prior to the event, to create awareness about Indian cinema by performing a huge flash mob on their popular songs (Golden Decade Honours to be given at IIFA, 2009).

Tourism is a particularly important industry for the Spanish economy, accounting for 11 percent of gross domestic product and one in nine jobs, according

to the tourism ministry. As per an estimate by The United Nations World Tourism Organization, India will account for 50 million outbound tourists by 2020, up from just 18 million in 2014, a real opportunity for global tourism boards.

Tour Operators and Spanish Tourism Boards have exploited the success of the IIFA event by creating advertising campaigns to appeal to this rising tide of tourists using images of Bollywood celebrities enjoying themselves in Madrid during the awards show. Spanish tourism is hoping that first success of ZNMD, (ZINDAGI NA MILEGI DOBARA, 2011) followed by IIFA event would help in establishing Spain a primary destination for Indian Tourists, including Bollywood Fans, in the years to come as films are expected to have much longer shelf life as compared to official promotional materials.

Spain is coaxing Indian moviemakers to use its colorful fiestas and historic monuments as settings for his or her films, during a move to grab a much bigger share of India's fast-growing overseas tourism market. Hosting of IIFA Awards, dubbed as "Bollywood Oscars" was part of its bid to lure visitors from India (Indo Asian News Service, 2011).

In global tourism, Spain ranks because the third most visited country, but it now wants to diversify its tourism base beyond the normal northern European sunseekers that account for the bulk of its visitors. Indian tourists travel long distance to reach Spain and like to stay in star hotels unlike their European counterparts (Srivastava, Shruti, 2018). Indians are not great walkers and spend considerable amount in their local travel as well as crave for Indian Cuisine, especially when out of India, much expensive than locally available dishes. Additionally, Indians are compulsive shopper, especially for branded expensive goods, hence a further delight for local economy for any country.

IIFA TAMPA BAY

15th edition of annual IIFA awards generates an estimated \$26.4 Million impact in Hillsborough County TAMPA, Florida (June 1, 2014) in total visitor spending, giving an immediate financial boost to Hillsborough County and making a positive, long-term impact on the destination's brand (Zoya Akhtar, 2017). The multi-day event attracted an estimated 30,000 visitors who generated \$19.9 million in direct spending and \$26.4 million in total spending. Related media coverage generated 13.2 billion media impressions across TV, radio, print and online outlets. On the final night of the IIFA Awards alone (April 26), Hillsborough County hotels experienced double digit growth across all indices, including a 21.1 percent increase in occupancy rate, 34.7 percent increase in average daily rate and an astonishing 62.1 percent increase in room revenue compared to same period last year (Menon, Neelima, 2011). These remarkable increases helped bring April's hotel metrics and bed tax collections to one of the highest levels in Hillsborough County's history. Based on these numbers, it's safe to say the IIFA celebrations were a tremendous success for the city and the region as per president and CEO of Visit Tampa Bay (Singh, Mauli, 2011). During the June television broadcast of the IIFA Awards, more than 800 million viewers worldwide heard the Tampa Bay name, experienced its rich

authentic culture and see the many treasures this city had to offer. It was an extremely proud moment to organizers for the impact the 2014 IIFA Weekend & Awards had in the Tampa Bay region (Indo-Asian News Service, 2009). Being their premiere event in USA, and every day of the weekend was an astounding success – from the IIFA Stomp event, which started the weekend and drew a record-breaking crowd of more than 8,000 people to Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, to the IIFA Awards finale which more than 24,000 people watched live at Raymond James Stadium. Beyond the positive short-term impact of the weekend, it left a legacy with the town, developing business, trade and film production relations between India and Tampa Bay, with an estimated economic impact of roughly \$56 million within 12 months. IIFA provided Tampa Bay with the chance to enter into a novel market, host a number of Bollywood's biggest stars and events, allow residents and visitors to experience the universal passion for Indian Cinema, all while creating a lasting economic impact on Tampa Bay (Bollywood Hungama News Network, 2010). Visit Tampa Bay led the effort of economic development through tourism. The mission of Visit Tampa Bay was to create vibrant economic growth for the Tampa Bay area by selling and promoting the Tampa Bay as a destination (Nimisha Tiwari, 2011). The independent not-for-profit organization represents close to 700 businesses throughout the world and works to ignite interest for visiting Tampa Bay.

The impact of the IIFA Awards stretched beyond tourism. A business symposium and networking events connecting local and Indian businesses were among the more than 30 events planned for the weekend (Bollywood Hungama, 2011). Economic development leaders are just beginning to explore the opportunities as it was predicted that these awards are going to open up a market for both Bollywood and Florida region (Gillette India, 2011).

CONCLUSION

As per the definition of Cinema Tourism, given by Producers Guild of India Website, "Bollywood plays an important contributory role to the growth of Indian entertainment industry as it has been churning out more than 1200 films year after year (Country roadish, 2011). With the rapid growth of Indian economy, primary through its middle class, now being acknowledged as the fastest growing economy across the globe, one of the sectors which must flourish is the tourism industry and Bollywood can essay the role of a catalyst to unravel the untapped potentialities of virgin tourist locales (Bhat, Varada, 2011). Bollywood showcases destinations & locations from various countries on celluloid and their remarkable outreach across the world brings these breathtaking locales to life for global audiences (Steven Baker, 2012). This triggers off as a sense of curiosity, craving and temptation in the minds of the viewers to visit these tourist locations and is popular acclaimed worldwide as Film Tourism.

In essence, Film Tourism is a concept which captures and explores the synchronous symmetry & proportionately positive connect between film and tourism industries whereby films depict tourist locations in their full flow, ebb and glory & have a lasting impact & mark on the viewers to virtually drive them to the said

destinations thereby spurring a rejuvenation and encouraging progress in the tourism sector (Rajeev Masand, 2011; Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara, 2011).

This phenomenon has been witnessed in a number of Hindi films in particular since the turn of the century and detailed introspective studies & researches have conclusively proven that the tourism sector of the respective locale which was shown prominently within these movies witnessed sustained and radiant growth in the succeeding period post theatrical release (BOI Trade Network, 2011). The film and tourism fraternities have also acknowledged the fruitful benefits and advantages of 'Cinema Tourism' which has paved the way for an extended, healthy and mutually conducive relationship between them".

IIFA is a global platform that gives the Bollywood an opportunity to reach international audiences. The alliances made by IIFA aim to determine a system of mutual benefit to India, also because the host destination by boosting tourism, economic development, trade, culture, cross-border investments and film co-productions (Rajesh Bhatia, 2011). The IIFA Awards are among the world's most-watched entertainment events with a viewership of just about 600 million (Namya Sinha, 2011).

IIFA is not just an award but an event for networking, business-to-business activities, road shows to connect Bollywood with the global film and tourism market. The aim of the event has always been to popularize India and its talent globally.

India is the home to the world's largest film industry, producing nearly 2000 films annually. A significant number of those films-estimated over 200 annually-are shot in foreign locations in over 65 countries, thus creating a huge market for international tourism boards to direct a significant portion towards their country's tourist destinations and attractions by motivating Indian production houses to plan and shoot the films in their respective countries.

The IIFA awards are an opportunity to increase both tourism and trade ties with India, especially Indian Film Industry. With a viewership of 600 to 800m million, previous host cities of the International Indian Film Academy Weekend & Awards have included London, Johannesburg, Toronto, Tampa Bay, Bangkok and Macau. The year after a city hosts the event, most see an average increase of 45% in tourism from India. To capitalize on that potential, most of the tourism boards position an international tourism sales resource exclusively dealing with Indian Film Industry (IIFA, 2016). There have been hardcore lobbying from international tourism boards to entice the Indian Film Makers to shoot their next film in the respective country or location, clearly acknowledging the ever growing interest in the spending power of Indian Outbound Tourists and establish role of Indian Films in influencing the choice of destination of its viewers, for their next holiday (Iyengar, Aarti. Karan Johar to cohost IIFA, 2017).

IIFA has truly become a big brand, someone who has dared to make a Bollywood show surpass international events. And succeeded big time.

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