

Impact of Film Induced Tourism on Malaysia. An Analysis of Tourist Experience on Destination Image, Hyper-Reality & Authenticity

N. Sriganeshvarun, and Dr. Jayaprakash D

Vels Institute of Science, Technology & Advanced studies, Chennai, India

Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education and Research (Deemed to be University), Chennai, India.

Article Info

Volume 83

Page Number: 11203 - 11208

Publication Issue:

March - April 2020

Abstract:

Indian film industry is one of the world's leading entertainment industry. It is valued at 183.2bn INR. It produced 1800 digital feature film in the year 2018 while its close competitor US produced close to 500 film.(Statistica.com) Indian films are popular all over the world as many Indian's have settled in many parts of the world. Many countries have invited Indian film producer with various tax benefits to produce film and to shoot in their respective countries. By doing so many countries have become famous tourist spot for many Indians planning for a trip outside India. This paper tries to find out the role of Tamil Films in Film induced tourism of Tourist spots in Malaysia, which in turn creates destination image, hyper-reality and authenticity. As Malaysia has strong ties with south India in terms of ethnic, cultural and spiritual connections, many films were shot in Malaysia. The researcher conducted In-depth interview with tourist prior to traveling from India to seek and understand the Malaysia that they have seen on films in comparing the reality post seeing all the tourist spots like Batu caves, Meredeka square, KLCC Suriya tower, Putra Jaya & Langkawi and compared their experience post visitation. The tourist from India were particular in visiting tourist spot which were shown in Tamil film like Batu caves, Meredeka square, KLCC suriya tower, Putra Jaya & Langkawi. The tourist cherished their travel by taking videos and pictures by recognizing the films which were shot in these tourist spots and claimed to be happy about making decisions to visit Malaysia with the help of films as the film truly depicted Malaysia in the most realistic way.

Article History

Article Received: 24 July 2019

Revised: 12 September 2019

Accepted: 15 February 2020

Publication: 15 April 2020

Keywords: Film Induced tourism, Destination Image, Hyper-reality & Authenticity.

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Films have come a long way since its invention. Thanks to the noble invention of Lumiere brothers nobody could have predicted the impact of films in every human's day to day life. Although it started as a mere form of recording events, Films have proved to be a true spectacle for everyone all around the world. A Trip to the moon directed by Georgermelies in 1902, who thought of fantasy and science fiction could be a great way to entertain people, John ford who still owns the record of Oscars who captured the real events of world wars, Charlie Chaplin and his contribution during the silent era. The First feature Film of India Dada Sahebphalke's Raja Harish chandra in the year 1913 followed by first Indian sound film ArdeshirIrani's Alam Ara 1931 were true master piece of that time which bought the spectacle of cinema to India. The first Tamil film Keechaka Vadham

made by R. Nataraja Mudhaliar in 1918 started the regional film Industry in India. It was Raj Kapoor the first Indian Director to step outside the Indian soil to direct his film Sangam in Switzerland in the year 1964. Bollywood opened its wings of imagination to have various foreign locations to be parts of its film which was a huge hit among the masses of India to see the beauties of rest of the world. Shooting outside India also reached the South Indian film Industry which constituted of four main regional languages like, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam & Kannada. Sivandha Mann directed by C.V. Sridhar Starring Sivaji Ganesan and Jayalaita was the first Tamil film to be shot outside India in the year 1969.

Since then there has been many films which were shot outside India in order to give life to the story and script as wished by the Director. The purpose of choosing Malaysia for the study is the ties between two countries. The then Malaysian Prime minister Mr. Najib visited the

Tamil Industry super star Rajinikanth in his house and welcomed the Indian film industry to make film in Malaysia. Few notable Bollywood movies shot in Malaysia were Don 1 & 2, Roy, Shaddi se Pehle, Yaddein. Some of the notable Tamil films made in Malaysia were Kabali, Aasal, Anegan, Anniyan, Irumugan. Even famous Hollywood movies were shot in Malaysia are Entrapment which featured Twin towers in its climax, Jackie Chan's Super cop, and to the latest Crazy Rich Asian are a proof of Malaysia's understanding on the importance of Film induced tourism.

Film induced tourism is actually a cinema spot visit which gets marketed by the movies. Movies enthralls audience like no other medium of communication as it glues the movie goers to the edge of the seats with beautiful location along with a strong story line and heart throbbing character are a true blessing for diehard fans. It has a huge impact on the people mindset to make any picturesque location into a popular destination overnight. No one can deny the impact created by Danny Boyle with his film Beach. Rest is history both Leonardo Dicaprio and the Maya bay became the sensation of the world in many ways. No one can deny the contribution of film in improving tourism which in turns uplift the economy of the developing and the developed nations.

Many literatures are available to prove the fact that the film directly improves the tourist sector of any country. Lord of the rings is the true example for New Zealand. Thanks to the film it is commonly called as middle earth among the fans. Impact of Brave heart in bringing more tourist to the remotest destination in the wilderness of Scotland were recorded in many literature of Film Induced Tourism. Even though there are many advantage for film induced tourism, there do exist certain challenges for it. People who watch film create an artificial destination image about the place which was show cased in the film. Sometimes the director might add more visual effects in the post production to make the place spectacular which in reality might not be true resulting in unreal image which brings down the morale and the expectation of the tourist visiting the tourist spot.

Busby and Klug (2001) proved that films have immense potential to create both positive and negative impacts on tourism of a destination. As per Riley and Van Doren (1992), films can be advised as 'hallmark events' for promoting tourism. Riley and Van Doren clearly highlighted the advantages of film as it has the

capacity of long exposure and capacity to influence film viewer longer than any travel promotion campaigns or activities. They also clarified that repeated viewing and continuous watching of particular destination through various movies creates or enhances the desire of the viewers to visit the destination.

Bolan and Williams (2008) indicated films knowingly can distort the reality of the real place for various reasons such as production difficulties, political reasons and many more. That could be a reason for tourist to feel dejected once visiting the spot and not experiencing same as they watched in the films. Films like Braveheart and the last samurai had Scotland and Japan in the story line but were shot in Ireland and New Zealand respectively resulting in difficulty for the tourist to come to a conclusion for what they are expecting. He also discussed the importance of film in creating a destination image which in turn to be a disappointment once the tourist visits the place.

Hyper-reality concept in film induced tourism can be found thanks to the finding of Couldrey (1998) where it clearly states that films that are made are pre-dominantly 'hyper reality' which does not contain any reality or realism in it. In his findings he has stated that films are often examples of 'hyper reality' where the actual sense of realism is lost. His study was based on Baudrillard's theory of 'hyper reality' in which "model and reality are dazed in a world where access to mediated reality is impossible".

Beeton (2001) mentioned it was often noticed that tourist lose satisfaction when the tourist spots appears different than how it is portrayed in the film. She clarified that films have immense potential to leave a lasting images on the minds of the viewer for a very long time. The effect of these destination images prompt tourists to visit certain locations. In her findings she mentioned that only very few locations meet the authenticity as shown in the films. In many cases the film induced tourism turns out to be an unsuccessful and disappointing one failing to fulfill tourists' expectations. She mentioned that the debacles are the reasons of lack of consciousness of DMOs and insufficient co-operation among stakeholders. She listed out ways in which can benefit all the stakeholder is by having an integrated marketing strategy and creating awareness regarding portraying the destinations as true as possible to the filmmakers while projecting them on their commercial films.

II. METHODOLOGY:

Qualitative In-depth Interview was chosen for the purpose of the study. Group of 15 tourist were have planned for holiday trip to Malaysia from Chennai. The researcher conducted In-depth interview with the tourist on their itinerary such as no of days, places that they are going to visit, reasons for visiting Malaysia, reasons for visiting the tourist spot, Impact of film induced tourism, Names of film which influenced them to visit Malaysia, awareness on destination pre-visitation, expectations, understanding on Hyper-reality, understanding of authenticity of places as depicted in Tamil films were asked to gather information, analysis. After returning same questioned were used to elicit their findings to know whether the Malaysian holiday has lived up to their expectations or were they disappointed. The interviews were recorded for data collection and key words were used for interpreting data as per the content analysis technique of Miles, Huberman and saldana (2014).

III. RESULTS

Pre-visitation Image perception

The respondent (tourist) have their itinerary ready as the trip was organized by Tour operator. They were offered two trip plans one was Malaysia & Singapore the other one was only Malaysia which had Langkawi as part of the itinerary. The tourist chose to go to Langkawi to see the beaches and experience the Cable car. The 15 people chose for the study are family of 3,4,4,2 & 2 respectively. In-depth interview was carried out with each family at one given time as the respondent wanted to finish the session quick. All the tourist who were part of the study were more than 16.

The entire respondent said that the infrastructure of Malaysia such as roads, trains, flight, airports and basic amenities were better in comparison with India. They did ask their friends who visited Malaysia prior and came to a conclusion of travelling to Malaysia. The families' expectation and the itinerary prepared by the travel agent matched. During the Interview the respondent had clear vision on what they wanted to see in Malaysia. The most important places that they wanted to see were Batucaves as all the participant were Hindu. They all stated that they wanted to see Batu caves as their first priority. All the respondents said they are waiting to see the temple since it featured in the film Billa 2.

There were 3 teen agers in the study said they have seen the song in many TV channels. The respondent were

sure on what they going to see and the question of authenticity does not arise as they were particular on what could be seen as the song was shot in the batu caves extensively. Five respondent out of fifteen had an idea of hanging bridge in Langkawi as it had their Hero ajith jumping from the hanging bridge of Langkawi. The respondent said they are huge fan of Ajith and wanted to see how much scary and how did their hero Ajith managed to do the jump. They also said that it will be exciting to see Asia's largest rope car. The respondents were not sure about the other places such as meredeka square, Putrajaya and KLCC tower. The responded were seen images and videos of Twin towers from the films but not sure how the building is going to be for real. They have seen many travel videos and blogs written about Twin towers. The entire respondents were excited for the holiday and had high expectation. While questioned them about Hyper-reality the respondent questioned the term, after few explanation they understood and answered that it is part of the film and everything cannot be the truth. The entire respondents were aware about the limitation of film and there are high chances of hyper-reality added to the film.

Two respondent clearly stated that the film kabali was shot in meredekasqare or at least looked like one, the climax scenes shot on top of a tower with all the sky scrapper of kualalampur in the background was good example of Hyper-reality. For the question authenticity half the respondent indicated that the decision to go to Malaysia was not only film, they said film created desire and it was not the time to think whether all the scenes seen will be authentic. That is the joy and experience of travelling. We have to go and see it. The teenager's in the study point out that based on many travel videos on YouTube Langkawi was a good place to do adventure sports but not sure whether any films were shot based on the adventure spots. They also said they have seen many YouTube videos and prepared for the trip.

Two of the respondent also pointed out the film Alithanthavanam and its songs were shot in Putrajaya& Langkawi. They clearly stated that even though film creates desire before confirming their tour plan to visit Langkawi they saw many YouTube videos to gain an understanding of the place. Respondent said there were many film which created desire over many year, The senior most person of the respondent was 62 years old said he still remember the film priya which stared Rajinikanth and Sridevi was shot in Malaysia in

Singapore, over the year many films were shot in Malaysia. He also stated Ramarajan film ooravituooruvandhu, latest movies like kabali, kadaramkondan, kuruvi, ayan, are some of the movies which were always lingering in the mind to visit destination. Batu caves desire started after seeing the song from film Billa 2. The only film which was mentioned by the entire respondent was Billa 2, Kabali and the recent release kadaramkondan. From this we can see that films over the years have created a continuous effort of desire to travel in the minds of the people.

Post visitation:

Post visiting Malaysia the respondent who were part of the study were asked to join for data collection on their free days. The respondent obliged and accepted for the interview within a week of arrival from Malaysia. All the respondent reinforced the fact that Malaysia is a safe destination for people to travel. As per the pre-visitation data all the respondent said that the infrastructure such as roads, trains, airports are far better than India and also said that it is exactly looks similar as shown in the movies. Few respondent also told that they could see palm estates as shown in the film Kabali. All the respondent agreed to the fact that visiting Batu caves was a great experience to see Lord Murugan statue and reiterated that whatever desire that the film Billa created could be seen there.

Few respondent said that they got goosebumps to see the magnificent statue of Lord Murugan. Some of the respondent said if it was not for the film in the early 2000's we wouldn't have known such a magnificent statute was setup in Malaysia during those times. They also said they could see Chinese temples along the tour which were not shown in any movies. Meredeka square which they saw during the tour where only few respondent could recollect that it was shown in the film Kabali. The entire respondent told that Twin Towers was a wonderful architecture both from the inside and the outside. Half of the respondent even went to the sky bridge to view the city scape of Malaysia. KLCC Aquarium caught their attention and said how come such a beautiful aquarium was no part of any film as they were not sure in which film that it was showcased. They all went for a stroll across Brickfields the little India were they pointed that they could not recognize whether it was part of any film. Majority of the respondent could identify Putrajaya as it was showcased in many films.

One of the respondent even could pin point songs which were shot in Putrajaya. He also stated that the song had Dhanush and Tamannah as the lead for the song. They also said that many vijay film were shot in Malaysia. They pointed out Ayan and Kuruvi had Malaysia as part of the story line. All the respondent said that Putrajaya looked as beautiful as it was shown in the film. The river cruise of Putrajaya and the entire planning of the city was spectacular which needs a film for itself said one of the respondent. The teenagers were excited when questions were asked about Langkawi. They told that they tried all the adventure water sports such as Jetskie, Banana boat, Parasailing, Snorkeling and the flying fox which was zepline. The said these adventure sports were not part of any film or they might have shown which we could not recognize.

All the respondent said their experience with cable car was an experience to cherish. The entire respondent experienced the hanging bridge by standing on top of glass and taking selfies. The teenagers who were fans of Ajith said Thala is great as he did the Jumping from the hanging bridge by himself which they felt it would have been scary experience and they wouldn't dare to do it.

Majority of the respondent told that the impression that they had prior visiting Malaysia and after visiting Malaysia lived upto their expectation. The response from the respondent proves that the image perception created by films has created a positive image and the destination image lived upto their expectation. Thanks to DMO (Destination Marketing Organization) of Malaysian government and the tourism department that their tieup with various producer and director.

The respondent were happy that their decision to visit Malaysia and the desire created by films over the years live to be true as many of the places shown were authentic. They did not have seen many un-real images in their trip. The respondent pointed out there are many other things and places which can be part of the films such as adventure sports, zepline, Chinese temples, Aquarium in KLCC. The teenagers were quick to point out that the Aquarium in Langkawi was also good which could be part of some films. The said many places which they saw enroute to Langkawi by road such as Genting Highland could not be seen in many movies. All the responded had a positive image about Malaysia before and after visiting Malaysia. Majority of the respondent told that Malaysia has got many places which can be shown in the film which are good to be seen.

On questioning of Hyper-reality the respondent said that film have their draw back and cannot show everything realistically so that freedom can be given to the directors and producer. On question for reality all the respondent said that whatever place were shown in the film were seen while they visited the place. They said that the film maker have tried their best to show authentic and real Malaysia. Few of the respondent said they will cherish their holiday with their families and friends whenever they see the songs in film while watching television.

The films have proved to be a successful factor to promote tourism, which is otherwise called as film induced tourism provided they work in close with the DMO of the Malaysian government and the tourism department to make sure that Malaysia has a better destination Image. The film portrayed the most realistic and authentic way and not having many hyper-realistic scenes and shot which might be a deterrent for tourist planning to visit Malaysia. A case of point to be highlighted in this study is that positive portrayal of Malaysia's and Malaysian people also plays an important role in destination image.

The recent Tamil film KadaramKondan which was shot extensively in Malaysia was banned for release in Malaysia as it portrayed the Malaysian police force in negative way. The film producer and director have to be careful in creating stories that might end up being a bad publicity for the entire country and also end up with huge financial loss for the film as it lost potential revenue due to the ban.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

Films as pointed out by many research and literature proved to be a successful tool for all developing and developed countries to promote tourism in their respective countries. Countries such as Mexico and many Latin American countries suffer due to the negative portrayal of drugs and poverty by Hollywood films. From this study the researcher could conclude that Malaysia had better destination image and the portrayal of Malaysia in the Tamil films were authentic enough.

In terms of Hyper-reality the respondent told that the creative liberty of the directors could not be suitable for production due to various reasons and that could be ignored since it is just part of one film. Since Malaysia is a preferred shooting spot of many Tamil films the hyper-reality does not stand chance as it may not be repeated in

other Tamil films. The destination image of Malaysia before and after visiting has lived up to the expectation of the tourist and they have told that they will advise their friends and family to visit during their holidays.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

The Researcher would like to thank all the 15 participants who were part of the study who were true contributors to the study.

VI. AUTHOR'S DISCLOSURE:

There are no possible conflicts of interest.

VII. REFERENCES

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/235837/value-of-the-film-industry-in-india/>

1. Beeton, S. (2005). Aspects of Tourism: Film-Induced Tourism. (C. Cooper, M. Hall, & D. Timothy, Eds.). Channel View Publications, Frankfurt Lodge, Clevedon Hall, Victoria Road, Clevedon, BS21 7HH, England.
2. Bolan, Peter & Williams, Lindsay. (2008). The role of image in service promotion: Focusing on the influence of film on consumer choice within tourism. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*. 32. 382 - 390. 10.1111/j.1470-6431.2008.00672.x.
3. Busby, G., Klug, J. (2001). Movie-induced tourism: The challenge of measurement and other issues. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Vol. 7(4), p. 316-332
4. Couldry, N. (1998) The View from Inside the 'Simulacrum': Visitors' Tales from the Set of Coronation Street. *Leisure Studies*, 17: 94-107.
5. Chandra, Geetanjali Ramesh. "Halal tourism; a new goldmine for tourism." *International Journal of Business Management & Research* 4.6 (2014): 45-62.
6. Chilembwe, JAMES MALITONI, and V. I. C. T. O. R. Mweiwa. "Tour guides: Are they tourism promoters and developers? Case study of Malawi." *International Journal of Research in Business Management* 2.9 (2014): 29-46.

7. Miles, M., Huberman, A.m., & Saldana, J. (2014). Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA:Sage
8. Mishra, Smrutisikta. "Travelogues: an innovative and creative genre of literature." International Journal of English and Literature 4.4 (2014): 45-50.
9. Rao, V., and R. Choudhury."A study of the factors influencing customer satisfaction in medical tourism in India." International Journal of Business and General Management 6.5 (2017): 7-22.
10. Riley, Roger & Baker, Dwayne &S.VanDoren, Carlton. (1998). Movie Induced Tourism. Annals of Tourism Research. 25. 919-935. 10.1016/S0160-7383(98)00045-0.
11. Sindhu, Devender, and Dalbir Singh."Ecotourism and Local Perception about its Impacts a Study of Village Sam, Jaisalmer, Rajasthan." International Journal of Environment, Ecology, Family and Urban Studies (IJEEFUS) 4.6 (2014): 1-6.
12. Khan, Omar Fayaz, And Mohammad Sajid Kirmani."Seven Key Factors of 2002 National Tourism Policy-An Empirical Study of Kashmir." International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Research, 8 (3) (2018): 1-8.

About the Authors

Sriganeshvarun N , Ph.D. Research Scholar Department of Visual Communication, School of Mass Communication, Vels Institute of Science Technology and Advanced Studies (Deemed to be University), Chennai, India. Received his Masters in Mass Communication & Journalism from University of madras. Chennai. He is currently working as Creative director at Woodsdeck.com. He has more than 5 years teaching experience in teaching Mass Communication subjects in Chennai. He has published several research papers in UGC Journals. His area of interest are in the field of Photography, Film, Short film/ Documentary production and Tourism & Public Relations

Dr. Jayaprakash D , Associate Professor & Head at Department of Visual Communication, Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education and Research (Deemed to

be University), Chennai, India.He has done his PhD from Department of Media Sciences, Anna University, Chennai, India. He has published several research papers, a book chapter and book on various aspects of Media Studies. He specializes in Digital Cultures, Film Cultures, Broadcast Media and Communication for Development.