



Theoretical Paradigm and Empirical Perspective of the “Slumdog Millionaire Effect”

Shamima Akthar*

Abstract

The effect of film-induced tourism has long been known. The worth of films in inducing tourism at international, domestic and regional levels to the destination featured, has been proven by researcher’s time and again. Also, the consumption of these 'screen products' by today's dynamic, curious and knowledgeable tourists has been proven to have a direct influence on his decision-making. Evaluation of specific films in various research projects has validated the existence of sustainable prosperity to the destination. These and many more of such research-based endorsements and affirmations have given an extra boost to the phenomenon of movie-induced tourism worldwide. The existence of possibly compelling economic value of this strand of tourism is known to all, and therefore, destinations are trying to understand and comprehend the drivers of this phenomenon in order to exploit its benefits. India has a negligible share of its contributions in this field. The statistics concerning directly to the impact of films on tourist numbers are limited. Even though this phenomenon has been well accepted, proclaimed and communicated in India, very few researches of it have been published and made available to the policy makers. To fill some of this void, this research work proposes to analyze the 2008 Golden Globe and Academy Awards winner movie Slumdog

* ESL Tutor, USA; shamimaakhter2@gmail.com

Millionaire with a backdrop of film-induced tourism and investigate the post-modern experience of India that has been depicted in the movie. Furthermore, through empirical observation, this work attempts to draw relationships between cause- 'Slumdog Millionaire' and effect - 'India's inbound tourism' related to this phenomenon, and maps out the interrelation of film-induced tourism with India as a destination. This movie has drawn both positive and negative reactions, therefore, an evaluation leading to conclusions and specific recommendations is yet another goal of the proposed work.

Keywords: Slumdog Millionaire, Film-induced tourism, India, Destination promotion, Effects.

Introduction

Lumsdon (1997) said, "Each well-known city in this world may be represented by a small series of iconic images or even one. Through repetition in the media, these images are widely recognized and collectively understood". Moreover, nearly, everyone is influenced to some degree by these images which are projected on different types of media viz- broadcast, print and electronic and therefore, act as strong destination promotional tools of communication systems. In other words, these media gradually build up a corpus of information and knowledge that gets stored and influence the cognition process of an individual's perception of a destination, showcased on media channels (Akhtar & Kumar, 2011). By constructing and reinforcing particular images of various travel destinations, media influences the appeal of these destinations to the targeted audiences (MacCannell, 1999).

Almost all destinations aspire to become world recognized tourist locations which represent a difficult marketing challenge (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2007). One requirement for this challenge could be a meticulous approach to creating positive and favourable images of destinations. Moreover, therefore, at the initial stages of product development, which in this case is a place, conscious strategies that aim to create positive images of the destination and imprint them in potential visitor's imaginations, are developed

(Beeton, 2005). Marketers strive hard to create such positive images of destinations through advertising and promotion on various media outlets. These images which have been found to be tourist motivator, play an important role in travel decision making (ibid, 2005). An extensive review of the literature covering place and destination marketing indicates that image and identity play an important role in differentiating amongst various competing destinations (Mc Intosh, Goeldner & Ritchie, 1995). Ritchie & Crouch (2003) said, "Promotion of destination images is an extremely complex phenomenon as its image constitutes a wide variety of sources and forms of information". Communicating information about such images to target prospective traveler becomes a task of utmost importance and immensely challenge, wherein marketers have to be thorough with the communication modes, the communication channels and the effective ways of communication.

Despite its wider coverage and more shelf life for future reference, print media, in current times has taken a somewhat archaic reputation. On the other hand, electronic and broadcast media has more comprehensive coverage providing both visual, as well as, audio messages. This characteristic in particular, is very important as it enables the intangible attributes of tourism destinations to be depicted as tangible products. From the perspective of mass communications theory and general causal models related to travel patterns, it is seen that there is an influence of screen products (films) on visitor numbers (Young & Young, 2008). Further, it has been acknowledged that movies can induce people to travel to the sites where the movies were filmed (Im and Chon, 2008). Research projects have been taken up to study the related behavioral characteristics of tourists who actually visit different movie sites. Many studies indicates that featuring a destination in any movie can increase the number of tourists to that particular destination, thereby validating the existence of phenomenon of film-induced tourism (Akhtar & Kumar, 2010).

Movies, which constitute an integral part of electronic and broadcast media, have a profound effect on audiences and thus can be considered impeccable in carrying out destination promotional messages. According to MacCannell (1999), "Motion pictures act as

'markers' that give both real and imagined meaning to a tourist attraction and are effective ways of motivating and driving tourists to the locations they view in a movie". Realizing the potential of 'screen power', many nations, consider films as a dependable marketing tool and thus, have put in a lot of research in this area. Through empirical researches, countries like New Zealand, Australia, Britain, Switzerland and USA, have developed models and deduced relationships between films and destination promotion. India's research in this area is at its infancy stage (Kumar, 2008), though last decade has seen some substantial work related to this field. This research work is an attempt in adding to the pool of knowledge in this field of film induced tourism in India, with a special focus on the 2008 Golden Globe and Academy Awards winner movie *Slumdog Millionaire*. This article proposes to delve into the theoretical aspects of 'Slumdog Millionaire Effect' in the light of film induced tourism and draw a positive/negative *Slumdog Millionaire* relationship of the phenomenon through empirical experimentation.

Methodology

This study incorporates both theoretical as well as empirical aspects of the phenomenon of film-induced tourism. In one portion of this research paper, conjectural aspects of movie-induced travel were taken up using theoretical frameworks. And in the other portion, both exploratory as well as descriptive structure has been utilized which shows the empirical nature of the study. Different concepts, approaches and philosophies were thoroughly analyzed from the theoretical viewpoint. Primary data was collected from journals, books, websites and other printed sources. Structured survey instrument was used for secondary data collection. And this data was collected from international tourists (mostly American citizens) visiting India, using self-administered structured survey instrument (Questionnaire). Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample and the sample size was 108. To analyze the data, appropriate statistical techniques such as frequencies, percentages, chi-square tests, and contingency coefficient values were used. Cronbach's alpha scale was conducted to create as a measure of reliability. These statistical

analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

Film-induced Tourism: Conjecture

Many destinations have seen an increase in number of tourists visiting, when these destinations were featured through films and television series. This phenomenon called film-induced tourism or movie-induced tourism was well recognized by Evans in 1997. He defined film-induced tourism as "tourist visits to a destination or attraction as a result of the destination being featured on television, video or the cinema screen". Riley, Baker and van Doren (1998), who can also be seen as pioneers of the field, described movie-induced tourism as the travel of people who are sometimes induced to visit what they have seen on the silver screen through movies. Likewise, in the international literature, tourism which grows due to films or movies is referred to as film-tourism, screen tourism, film-induced tourism, media-induced tourism, movie-induced tourism, or cinematographic tourism (Vogionis & Lumiotie, 2011). These terms used by different authors may be different, however, the underlying phenomenon and meaning described is the same.

Films do provide a significant exposure to a particular tourist attraction, town or region (Tooke & Baker, 1996). They also, have an effect on human behaviour and very often they serve as an agent of social control and change (Slocum, 2000). This control and change can get translated into travel behaviour leading to either a positive or negative decision about visiting the featured destination. Therefore, film-induced tourism can be regarded as a tourist motivator as it helps in the development of a destination's identity and image (Riley, Baker & van Doren, 1998). In fact, it is generally accepted that 'movie induced tourism' relates to an increased level of on-location tourism that follows the success of a movie made or set in a particular region (Beeton, 2005). According to Riley, Baker and van Doren (1998) and Hudson & Ritchie (2006) films are very powerful promotional tool for any destination. They surpass any type of media advertising as they can have long term effect on their audiences. The long lasting impression of films is the result of longer hours of exposure to images in movies than in the case of regular advertising. These effects of film-induced tourism is

backed by various research studies conducted worldwide. One of the most astonishing studies was taken up by Tooke and Baker in 1996, which showed an increase of 93% in tourist arrivals in Northamptonshire (UK) after the release of “By The Sword Divided” over a period of two years. This stunning effect of movies on locations can be seen even years after their first screening. Table-I shows the impact of film tourism on destination promotion through an increase in visitors' numbers. This table cited by Hudson and Ritchie (2006) is only demonstrating of a few cases, whereas there may be many more such destinations world over.

Table-1: Film Tourism Impacts

Name of the film	Location	Impact on visitor numbers or tourist revenue
Braveheart	Wallace Monument, Scotland	300 % increase in visitors year after release
The Lord of the Rings	New Zealand	10 % increase every year 1998 to 2003 from the UK
The Fugitive	Dillsboro, North Carolina	11 % increase year after release
Harry Potter	Various locations in the UK	All locations an increase of 50 % or more
Mission: Impossible- 2	National parks in Sydney	200 % increase in 2000
Crocodile Dundee	Australia	20.5 % increase in US visitors 1981 to 1988
The Beach	Thailand	22 % increase in youth market in 2000
Four Weddings and a Funeral	The Crown Hotel, Amersham, England	Fully booked for at least three years
Notting Hill	Kenwood House, England	10 % increase in 1 month
Forrest Gump	Savannah, Georgia	7 % increase in tourism
Troy	Canakkale, Turkey	73 % increase in tourism

Name of the film	Location	Impact on visitor numbers or tourist revenue
Deliverance	Rayburn County, Georgia	20,000 film tourists a year Gross revenues \$2 to 3m
Close Encounters of the third kind	Devils Tower, Wyoming	75 % increase in 1975 20 % visit in 2006 because of the film
Thelma and Louise	Arches National Monument in Moab, Utah	19.1 % increase in 1991
Field of Dreams	Iowa	35,000 visits in 1991 Steady increase every year
Bull Durham	Durham, North Carolina	25 % in the attendance year after release
Gorillas in the Mist	Rwanda	20 % increase in 1998
Mrs Brown	Osborne House, Isle of Wight, UK	25 % increase
Saving Private Ryan	Normandy, France	40 % in American Tourists
Sense and Sensibility	Saltram House, England	39 % increase
Pride and Prejudice	Lyme Park in Cheshire, UK	150 % increase in visitors
Miami Vice	Miami	150 % increase in German visitors 1985 to 1988

Source: Hudson and Ritchie, 2006

Slumdog Millionaire and the three Cardinal Es (Evidence, Effect and Expectation)

Slumdog Millionaire is a movie, which is set and filmed in India. This 2008 British drama, which is directed by Danny Boyle, has been adapted from a 2005 novel Q & A by Indian author Vikas Swarup (Wiki, 2016) This movie was extensively recognized, acclaimed and appreciated for its screenplay, music and overall direction. Winner of eight Academy Awards, seven BAFTA Awards and four Golden Globes, the plot of the movie surrounds the slums of Mumbai - India. Though internationally praised and

lauded, this movie received criticism by Indians, notably regarding how it portrays Indian society and alleged exploitation of some of the actors. Some of India's elite population felt that this movie was cinematic representations of Indian poverty and deprivations (Singh, 2009). Amongst Indian diaspora, the similar reaction of lukewarm to disgusted dismissal existed. "The existence of slums is an image that Mumbai residents want to forget. The upwardly mobile middle class sees itself as being from an India that is economically vibrant, young, and powerful on the global stage." The movie was not taken very well by India's globalized rich.

Having mentioned the above, it becomes imperative to put across some facts which depict the brighter side of the movie both economically as well as socio-culturally. Being a huge success, *Slumdog Millionaire* took more than 141,319,928 USD at the domestic box office and 236,590,616 USD at the foreign market since its release (Daily Box Office, 2016). The movie brought in optimism and enthusiasm to struggling middle-class society of India. People who live in slums got a representation in the movie (MacInnes, 2009). The reality of the existence of slums caught the attention of many organizations which worked in favour of slum dwellers, details of which are discussed below in this article. To sum up, the movie has done stupendously and has benefited all the industries it has had an interface with.

Down below is given a list (Table-2) of notable Hollywood movies which featured different Indian locations. Like *Slumdog Millionaire*, these movies might have impacted Indian tourism in a positive way as already discussed in film-induced tourism paradigms.

Table-2 Hollywood movies shot at different locations in India

Name of the Movie	Year of Release	Name of the Movie	Year of Release
Jobs	2015	A Mighty Heart	2007
Hundred Foot Journey	2014	The Bourne Supremacy	2004
Million Dollar Arm	2014	In The Shadow of the Cobra	2004

Name of the Movie	Year of Release	Name of the Movie	Year of Release
Best Exotic Marigold Hotel	2012	Jungle Book	1994
Life of Pi	2012	City of Joy	1992
Eat Pray love	2010	Octopussy	1983
Slumdog Millionaire	2008	Close Encounters of the Third Kind	1977
The Darjeeling Limited	2007	Tarzan goes to India	1962
The Pool	2007	The Drum	1938

source: Author's compilation

The effects of Slumdog Millionaire movie have been substantial in a way that its popularity has resulted in financial and cultural impacts positively. This effect sometimes, casually referred to as Slumdog Millionaire effect, has increased private and public aid to India particularly from those who viewed the film (Giridharadas, 2009). Non-profit organizations around the world, which work for humanitarian causes, have shown more interest in India and its slum dwellers particularly focusing on children. According to Richard Turner, Director Fundraising- Action Aid- a charity organisation, "On average, Action Aid fields just over 500 enquiries a week for child sponsorship. But in the week following the film's (Slumdog Millionaire) success, the number of enquires rocketed to 1,400, with many specifically asking about children in India (Slumdog Millionaire, 2009)." The makers of the movie donated £500,000 to Mumbai charity for a project to improve the living standards for slum children living in the India (Brooks, 2009). Further, to help slum children specifically, some of the members of the cast and the crew held an auction and received 747,500 USD from it (Singla, 2009). Following is a brief list of important international charities which have experienced increased interest in Indian homeless/slum children after Slumdog Millionaire release (Nonprofiters, 2009):

Railway Children (<http://www.railwaychildren.org.uk/>)

SOS Children's Villages of India

(<http://www.soscvindia.org/soswebsite/index.php>)

Save the Children, India

(<http://www.savethechildren.in/index.html>)

CAFamerica charities

(<http://www.cafamerica.org/cafa/SearchModule/NpPublicProfileSearch.aspx>)

Similarly, there has been an impact on tourist numbers visiting the destination which was featured in the movie. Various articles have mentioned that the number of tourists visiting Mumbai slums has increased after the worldwide release of the movie. Indian travel agents and tour operators are taking more and more Westerners for sight-seeing rides through Mumbai's main slums like Dharavi (Howard, 2010). Reality tours, which conducted tours through slums, much before the release of the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*, has seen a surge in demand for such tours and the demand has a steady growth (Thangaperakasam, 2009). Reality Tours co-founder Chris Way estimates that sales have been up by about 25% since *Slumdog Millionaire's* release (Bly, 2010). Moreover, this can be directly attributed to the existence of film-induced tourism phenomenon.

In a review of the outcomes mentioned above the study anticipates the following hypotheses:

H1: Awareness brought by the movie *Slumdog Millionaire* about India, has a positive impact on Indian inbound tourism

H2: Information about India in the movie *Slumdog Millionaire* is the main source of information used by a prospective tourist to visit India.

Analysis and Interpretation

The effects of *Slumdog Millionaire* movie have been exemplary and commendable because a significant number of charities and other humanitarian organizations showed their interest in helping Indian slum dwellers after watching the movie. However, the effect of the

movie in terms of inbounds tourist arrivals to India, exclusively or in part because of Slumdog Millionaire screen effect is not known. Only a few articles mention about the growth of tourism because of the movie Slumdog Millionaire. There has been little research into the effect of films on the popularity of locations as a visitor destination in India. Moreover, when it comes to the movie Slumdog Millionaire, nothing substantial in terms of research work has been accomplished as far as film tourism is concerned. As discussed earlier, this paper is an endeavor in this direction of gathering substantial data which analyses specific facets of Slumdog Millionaire effect. These specific observations which are directly related to promoting destination India to the outside world, are detailed out in the next section.

Table-3

		Slumdog Millionaire an important factor in decision-making to visit India				Total	chi-square	p- value	Contingency coefficient
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree				
Awareness about India through Slumdog Millionaire	Yes	30	32	14	11	87	14.326	0.002	0.179
	No	9	7	5	0	21			
Total		39	39	19	11	108			

Interpretation: Table-3 provides a multitude of results which could be well understood through following points

- out of 108 respondents, a whopping 87 (80%) accept the fact that the movie Slumdog Millionaire brought awareness about destination India, That means, India gets more recognition

through Slumdog Millionaire, which can prove beneficial for India.

- 78 respondents (72%) opted for the options 'strongly agree' and 'agree' (50/50) to the statement that Slumdog Millionaire was an important factor in decision-making to visit India, which indicates that the effect of the movie was profound and significant in terms of attracting tourism to India.
- A chi-square value of 14.326 with a p- value of 0.002, indicates a significant association between an awareness brought about by movie Slumdog Millionaire and the movie's role as an important element in decision-making to visit India. This relationship is further attested by a contingency coefficient value of 0.179. In common parlance, these values imply that the movie Slumdog Millionaire has positive and strong connection with a tourist's decision of choosing India to visit.

From the above interpretation, it can be deduced that as hypothesized in H1, awareness brought by the movie Slumdog Millionaire about India, has a positive impact on Indian inbound tourism

Table 4

		Main source of information when planning to visit India					Total	Chi-square	P-value	Contingency coefficient
		Films shot at Indian locations	Publicity programs on broadcast media	Different websites on the internet	TV commercials	Indian embassy printed material				
Information provided by Slumdog Millionaire about India	Excellent	3	0	4	0	0	7	54.241	0.000	0.333
	Good	7	1	30	1	0	39			
	Average	6	3	32	1	1	43			
	Fair	5	0	14	0	0	19			
	Poor	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Total		21	4	80	2	1	108			

Interpretation: Table-4 puts together 108 responses which are clustered together in categories both horizontally as well as vertically. For better understanding, let's break it up into following points:

- Internet has been favorite of all. This can be substantiated by numbers crunched up above in the table which shows that out of 108 respondents, 80 (74%) chose internet websites as being the main source of information when planning to visit India. Thus, stakeholders in Indian tourism industry have to ensure robust internet. However, 20 respondents (18%) did say that films shot at Indian location was their main information source, which does imply the significance of the phenomenon of film-induced tourism. TV commercials and embassy brochures were considered insignificant sources of information about India.
- Most of the respondents felt that the information provided in the movie *Slumdog Millionaire* about India was average. Very few thought that the information was excellent, which signifies an improvisation on destination exposure and image in movies featuring India, in order to reap the benefits of movie-induced tourism.
- While looking for associations, a high chi-square value of 54.241 and contingency coefficient value of 0.333 stipulates that a significant and strong relationship exist between sources of information prospective tourist seeks and the quality of information perceived by him in the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*. This means that the source of information about India by a prospective tourist works in close association with their grading of movies shot in India like *Slumdog Millionaire*. In other words, it could mean that higher the ratings about a movie featuring India, more likely the movie could be the main source of information, which means free of cost advertisement for destination India.

From the above interpretation, it is clear that different websites on the internet have dominated the source of information about destination India. Further, the average grading's of the movie

Slumdog Millionaire about showcasing India, dismisses it being the main source of information as opposed to what has been hypothesized in H2.

Discussion

One of the main purposes of this study was to explore various approaches proceeding paradigms of film-induced tourism, with an insightful focus on the 2008 Golden Globe and Academy Awards winner movie *Slumdog Millionaire*. It was clearly understood that the effects of a movie on a destination, which the movie features are subliminal. Working on the psychology of a prospective tourist, films can be considered powerful destination promotional tool. While taking up the individual characteristics of the movie *Slumdog Millionaire*, it was found that there existed some disapproving statements about the movie. Despite these contradictions, the study validated the existence of film-induced tourism incorporations in the movie. Furthermore, the scrutiny of the movie revealed that apart from having entertainment and film-induced tourism elements, the movie put across a strong social message which worked in favor of the underprivileged society.

The descriptive examination of the study divulged that the movie was an important tool of information and awareness about destination India. This information has helped the prospective tourist in decision-making to visit India, indicating a significant effect of the movie in attracting tourists. An existence of a positive and significant relation between the awareness about India that was created by the movie, and decision about visiting India, has also been revealed through this study. However, it was also found out that the movie had a narrow window on destination exposure and hence could not become the most important factor or main source of information about destination India for most of the sample population. Also, featuring of India in the movie did not fully unearth India as one of the prime tourist destinations. This indicates an integrated approach between film producers and destination marketing organizations (DMOs) to receive the rewards of film-induced tourism.

Conclusion

Long before the term 'film-induced tourism' was coined, Cohen (1986) had mooted 'media fiction' as tourism promotional tool. The impact of movies in promoting a destination has been confirmed the world over. Noted researchers in the field like Riley, Tooke, Baker and Van Doren have verified a positive correlation between films induced tourism and destination marketing. The benefits of film tourism and the role of films in destination promotion have been barely acknowledged in India. India lacks in systematic research and development in relation to the use of films for tourism promotion. This study, through scientific experimentation, has proclaimed a strong link between destination India and the 2008 Golden Globe and Academy Awards winner movie *Slumdog Millionaire*, emphasizing the importance of film-induced tourism in India. Through theoretical paradigms, associations related to the movie with film-induced tourism were discussed to reveal the pull factor of films in attracting tourists. In other words, it can be concluded that the movie *Slumdog Millionaire* has had a positive impact on the viewers in a way that these viewers could become a part of inbound tourist flow to India. The movie has fair components of the phenomenon of film-induced tourism and has created favourable images in the minds of audiences. This type of study can be projected on other movies which have featured India in order to know the overall impact of such movies. The topic being under-researched in India can become the basis for future research, the results of which could be used by all stakeholders which include film producers, DMOs, policy planners and others, to their benefits in a sustainable way.

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