

Contribution of French Community to Inbound Tourism in the Union Territory of Puducherry

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ABSTRACT

After Puducherry became a Union Territory under Union of India, it inherited cultural connections with the France being ruled by it for the longest duration as compared to the Dutch and British. The resource crunch Puducherry heavily depends on tourism for revenue generation. The stay of a sizeable French population in the territory gives rise to their frequent commuting between France and India. The present study aims at analyzing the demographic characteristics and behavioral pattern of French community living in Puducherry and establishing relationship between them. Select demographic features like Sex, Number of Family members, Annual Income, Type of family and Occupation and tourist behavior patterns like Frequency, Purpose, Duration, Budget of visit and places visited other than Puducherry have been studied for their interrelation. The paper contributes to our understanding of the interrelationship between demographic characteristics and tourist behaviour patterns.

KEYWORDS : *Puducherry, French Community, Inbound Tourism*

One of the grievous challenges facing tourism policy makers or managers is to understand the factors that motivate tourists to choose a destination amongst many competitive options. Theoretically it is the core resource or attractors that prevail as the underlying factor to travel to a destination. Thus any destination trying to be competitive and sustain the growth needs to understand the core resources and augment it to a unique selling proposition that make a destination memorable. Historically Puducherry has a long duration of colonial rules. As compared to the Dutch, British and others, the French has a long lasting rule over the territory. The present union territory of Puducherry was merged with the Indian Government on 01.11.1954 and the actual transfer took place on 16.08.1962 when the citizens of the territory were given option to choose Indian/French nationality. As a result in the then Pondicherry about 50000 residents opted for French Nationality. Of these as per statistics of French Consulate in India at Puducherry, there are about 6000 French nationals of Indian origin stay in Puducherry at present. Others opted to settle in France. However their ties with their relatives and bondage with ancestral place attract them either to settle finally in Puducherry post retirement or travel frequently to Puducherry which in turn would bring lot of revenue to the territory. Their investment in entrepreneurial ventures and real estate bring about development in the region. This forms the basis for frequent travels between India and France. This cultural assimilation between two countries in addition to political diasporas in both countries whether has a positive effect on tourism and economic development is a matter of great importance. The nature, extent and trend in their commutes, need to be studied carefully to understand economic impact arising out of these travels. Further a systematic study will help in carving out strategies for strengthening trade and tourism ties between two countries. For the purpose, demographic characteristics of French community living in Puducherry and their tourist behaviour were studied.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

Researches on tourism in India so far has been concentrated into impacts, planning or customer perception. There have been very few researches on Indo-French relations in general and tourism amongst these in particular necessitates a study on international tourism between these two countries. Literary findings on cultural aspects of relations help in understanding the background of and interest of both countries behind Indo-French relationship. The cultural contacts between France and India are historical and scholars of both countries have enumerable contribution to the compendium of knowledge on the art, philosophy and literature of each other. The French archeologist Jean-Marie Casal's work on "the archeological wonders Arikamedu" praising historical and cultural achievements of India is a renowned historical note in the France (G.K. Mukharjee, 1971). Anyone who has followed the policies and programmes of both India and France would not hesitate to conclude that both the countries tried to live up to their claims. This factor makes the relations between India and France worth studying observed Krishnamurthy (2005).

Importance of Puducherry in Indo-France relations is evident from Pandit Nehru's historic post secession remark that "Pondicherry with its long past of French culture should continue its cultural attachment to France and some similar connections which would not come in the way of Pondicherry being a full member of the Indian Union" (Jawaharlal Nehru 1985). On the basis of Indo-France agreement the *Institut Francaise de Pondicherry* was set up in the year 1955 to promote indological studies and research in India by French. The Ecole Francaise d' Extreme- Orient Pondicherry Branch and the French institute promotes joint research and academic activities in Pondicherry. Treaty of cession of March 25, 1956 envisaged close cultural ties between India and France. Strong French political interest is shown from parliamentary debate in France, when Senator Jacques Baumel pleaded for a specific policy stating "nothing stops us from having a French policy on India – a policy which should be marked essentially by the development of our cultural presence". This shows French intension of having close cultural, economic and political interests towards India. KJS Chatrath(1994)

A preliminary study on Indo-French economic ties revealed that Trade and economic relations especially tourism became stronger when the French ambassador Andre Lewin hold talks with governor and the Chief minister of Puducherry to initiate French investment in tourism, dairy, sea food processing and electronics units in Puducherry. As a result the Club Mediterranean entered into a tie up with the Taj Group to promote up market tourism by way of resorts and cruises. (Ibid, February 15, 1995.) This followed a bilateral agreement on investment protection signed in 1997 and came to force in 2000 to substantiate earlier avoidance of double taxation on income to promote French investment in India. However the Indo-French economic relation is not up to mark given the level of economy and long history of cultural relations between both countries. The French investment in China is 10 times higher than the investment in India. (Francois Gautier 1999) Changing times, research and analysis induced political will power may foster closer and mutually beneficial economic relations between two countries.

Tourism, research according to Smith (1989) can be classified into various categories namely; Tourism 1. as a human experience, 2. as a social behavior, 3. as a geographical phenomena, 4. as an economic resource, 5. as an industry and 6. as a business. Effective and efficient marketing strategies through marketing research can increase international tourism in the age of competition. There has been a plenty of researches on the application of multivariate statistical analysis in the field of demand forecasting, market segmentation, positioning, product bundling, consumer behavior and economic impact of tourism. The multi variate technique can be classified into two major types i.e. dependency techniques and independency techniques. Dependency techniques refer to a technique in which a variable or a set of variables are identified as dependent those being predicted and explained

by other independent variables. Multiple regression analysis, cluster analysis are few examples of multivariate analysis. For demand forecasting Wander and Erden (1980) noted that 'the availability of accurate estimates of tourism demand' has important economic consequences for organizations involved in tourism planning. For which they suggested trend extrapolation, multiple regression, simulation, structural equation and qualitative models for forecasting international tourism demand. Witt and Witt (1995) explained in addition to traditional independent variables such as income, population, cost of travel, exchange rates etc. recent variables, such as the prices of substitutable vacation destinations, trend variables, marketing expenditure as well as qualitative variable effects expressed as dummy variables like travel restrictions, currency restrictions, political factors etc. should be used for better forecasting.

Records UNSTATS 2008, too suggest that in addition to the substantial increase in tourist arrivals the per capita tourist expenditure has also increased over the period from 1987 to 2007. With rising income levels, increased leisure time, increased life expectancy, advanced technology, and shrinking travel time international tourism has continued to grow in lips and bounds. Against this backdrop and given the strong cultural and economic relations between India and France, international tourism between two countries especially to Puducherry should have increased drastically. However there is little record to substantiate that. The future researches thus should try to examine the trend and growth of International tourism to Puducherry and suggest measures to promote tourism between two countries especially to Puducherry.

According to the French trade statistics, the Indo-France bilateral trade increased by 194% between 1997 and 2006. Indian exports to France however grew by about 164% over the same period and for the first time in the year 2006, India experienced a negative balance of trade between two countries. The major items of French exports to India comprise of aeronautical & space industry/construction products, machinery for the production and use of mechanical power, measuring and process control equipment, electrical equipment and apparatus, basic organic chemicals, etc. Indian exports to France consist of goods and services especially from the small and medium sector such as garments, textiles & leather products and non-traditional items such as refined petroleum products, food products, organic chemicals, etc. Tourism despite of having strong cultural ties has not been a significant sector of export to France. Thus need to study the problems and prospects of tourism industry in finding out ways to increase tourism between two countries become vitally important.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The study primarily focuses on International Tourism between India and France. International Tourism can broadly be divided into two categories. 1. Inbound Tourism; Tourists coming to India from France. 2. Out Bound Tourism; Indian tourists going to France. This international tourism may include Ethnic Tourists or cultural tourists. Ethnic tourism includes foreigners who visit a country to meet friends and relatives, visit buildings, synagogues, cemeteries or any other religious or socio-cultural structures. Ethnic tourism is an indigenous or traditional group of people who visit the destination environment, interact and depend upon it. Cultural tourism according to Ritchie and Zins (1978) is a broader concept of ethnic tourism and has 12 subcomponents namely traditions, gastronomy, history, architecture, handicrafts, leisure activities, art and music, language, work, dress, education and religion. In order to know the pattern of Cultural and ethnic tourism, it is necessary to the study of French communities, their pattern of visit and other related travel by both the nationals and consequence of those travels on the economy and regional development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Coverage: The universe of the study constitutes French Tourists coming to Puducherry and French nationals of Indian origin living in Puducherry which is about 6000 as per the statistics of Consular General, Govt. of France. However these French nationals stay on temporary basis as their work place remains in France and they come to India for a short period. Their purpose of travel, trend in travel and effects of travel on tourism and economic development constitute the subject matter of research. For the research 100 samples were collected. Area sampling method was employed in data collection as pilot survey suggested that the population is not equally distributed across the union territory with majority of population residing in the head quarter town. The universe is divided into various clusters of Tehsils and then samples were collected. The necessity of dividing universe into different Tehsils arise because of population from different regions tend to have different opinions about their purpose and nature of travel resulting in different trend. Secondary data related to balance of trades, trend in travels and other demographic and tourism related aspects of French community were collected from various sources like, records of French Consulate office located in Puducherry, Chennai and New Delhi, Govt. of India and Puducherry, various trade associations in India and abroad.

Structured questionnaire has mainly two parts. First set of questions will include demographic data of respondents and second set has questions related to their activities pertaining to travel and tourism. There were both open and close ended questions. Close ended questions had Likert type scale as well as simple multiple choice. The data collected through the interview schedules from the respondent were scrutinized, edited and classified.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The study primarily is exploratory by nature. At first the correlation between demographic characteristics and tourist behaviour was examined to find out for these having any mutual relationship. Coded data were entered into the SPSS for analyses.

Correlation between demographic characteristics and the different components of tourist behavior

Select demographic characteristics like sex, number of family members annual income type of family and occupation are compared with select tourist behaviour patterns like frequency of visit, purpose of visit, duration of visit, budget for each visit and places visited other than Puducherry. As shown in the table-1, sex is positively and significantly correlated with frequency of visit, purpose of visit and duration of visit. Sex has negative though significant correlation with places of visit other than Puducherry. However there seems to be insignificant correlation with budget for each visit. Number of family members found to be positively and significantly correlated with frequency and purpose of visit. However, the correlation of number of family members with duration, budget of the tour and places visited other than Puducherry were found insignificant. Annual income of respondents has positive and significant correlation with frequency and duration of visit. At the same time annual income was found to have insignificant correlation with purpose, budget and places of visit. Type of family whether nuclear or joint bears positive and significant correlation with budget and places of visit and bears negative but significant correlation with duration of visit. However, the correlations with frequency and purpose of visit were found to be insignificant. Similarly, occupation was positively and significantly correlated with budget and places of visit but did not have significant correlations with frequency, purpose and duration of visit. The result illustrated that the frequency of visit is positively and significantly correlated with sex, number of family members and annual income. Male members were found to visit Puducherry frequently as compared to female members. Similarly the significant correlations between number of family members and frequency of visit is seconded by cross tabulation that indicates the shorter the family size, more frequent their visit to India.

Table – 1: Correlation between demographic characteristics and select tourist behaviour pattern

TB \ DC	Sex	Number of Family members	Annual Income	Type of family	Occupation
Frequency of visit	1.0000	.1798	.2495	-.1276	-.1673
	(0)	(93)	(93)	(93)	(93)
	P= .	P= .081	P= .015	P= .218	P= .105
Purpose of visit	.1798	1.0000	.0434	.0489	-.1021
	(93)	(0)	(93)	(93)	(93)
	P= .081	P= .	P= .677	P= .638	P= .325
Duration of visit	.2495	.0434	1.0000	-.2609	.0211
	(93)	(93)	(0)	(93)	(93)
	P= .015	P= .677	P= .	P= .011	P= .839
Budget for each visit	-.1276	.0489	-.2609	1.0000	.4086
	(93)	(93)	(93)	(0)	(93)
	P= .218	P= .638	P= .011	P= .	P= .000
Places visited other than Puducherry	-.1673	-.1021	.0211	.4086	1.0000
	(93)	(93)	(93)	(93)	(0)
	P= .105	P= .325	P= .839	P= .000	P= .

(Coefficient / (D.F.) / 2-tailed Significance)

". " is printed where a coefficient could not be computed

TEST OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following are hypotheses for carrying out the research.

1. There is exists no significant relationship between level of income and duration of stay of French tourists in India
2. Occupation and income have no bearing on the duration of stay of French tourists in India

First Hypothesis: **H₀**: There is exists no significant relationship between level of income and duration of stay of French tourists in India

Table – 2: Cross Tabulation Annual Income and Duration of Stay

			What is your duration of stay in Puducherry					Total
			More than 6 months	3-6 months	1 – 3 months	15-30 days	7-14 days	
Annual income	1 lakh to 5 lakhs	Count	0	0	2	1	1	4
		Expected Count	.2	.3	.7	2.4	.4	4.0
	5 lakhs to 10 lakhs	Count	1	1	4	12	1	19
		Expected Count	.8	1.3	3.4	11.6	1.9	19.0
	10 lakhs to 15 lakhs	Count	1	3	8	36	7	55
		Expected Count	2.2	3.9	9.9	33.6	5.5	55.0
	15 lakhs and above	Count	2	3	4	12	1	22
		Expected Count	.9	1.5	4.0	13.4	2.2	22.0
	Total	Count	4	7	18	61	10	100
		Expected Count	4.0	7.0	18.0	61.0	10.0	100.0

Annual income is entered in rows and duration of stay is entered in columns. The actual frequency expressed in count reveals respondents of annual income between 1 lakh and five lakhs don't stay at all for a period of more than three months. It was also found that income group '10 to 15 lakhs' constitute the biggest population to travel in total followed by the top income group i.e. '15 lakhs and above' (22) and '5 lakhs to 10 lakhs' (19). Expected Count in the above table gives expected frequency for each cell assuming no association. The value on each row reveals information related to each level of column variable. Similarly the values on each column give information about each level of row variable.

Table – 3: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.572	12	.566
Likelihood Ratio	9.990	12	.617
Linear-by-Linear Association	.974	1	.324
N of Valid Cases	100		

a 15 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .16.

The Chi-square test result gives the p-value of 0.552 is much higher than the commonly accepted levels of either 0.05 or 0.10. So we can not reject the null hypothesis. Thus it is established that "There is exists no significant relationship between level of income and duration of stay of French tourists in India".

Second hypothesis: **H₀**: Occupation and income have no bearing on the duration of stay of French tourists in India

Table - 4: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (ANOVA)

Dependent Variable: Duration of stay in Puducherry

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	17.604	19	.927	1.180	.296	.219
Intercept	452.994	1	452.994	576.734	.000	.878
Income	.490	3	.163	.208	.891	.008
Occupation	4.537	6	.756	.963	.456	.067
Income * Occupation	8.271	10	.827	1.053	.408	.116
Error	62.836	80	.785			
Total	1420.000	100				
Corrected Total	80.440	99				

a R Squared = .219 (Adjusted R Squared = .033)

The table of tests of between-subjects effects gives ANOVA results. It can be observed from the table that F-statistic corresponding to Income is 0.208 less than the p-value 0.891 thus is insignificant. On the contrary, F-statistic corresponding to Occupation and interaction between income and occupation are significant. (F-statistic > p-value). Therefore the null hypothesis is partially supported as income doesn't affect the duration of stay significantly where as occupation has a significant effect on duration of stay. It indicates that respondents are eager to stay in Puducherry irrespective of their pocket size. Occupation though influences their decision to stay longer at the decision.

CONCLUSION

The study focused on finding the relationship between demographic characteristics and the behavioral pattern of tourists. Select demographic characteristics like sex, number of family members annual income type of family and occupation are compared with select tourist behaviour patterns like frequency of visit, purpose of visit, duration of visit, budget for each visit and places visited other than Puducherry. Sex was found to be positively and significantly correlated with frequency of visit, purpose of visit and duration of visit. Sex has negative though significant correlation with places of visit other than Puducherry. Number of family members found to be positively and significantly correlated with frequency and purpose of visit. Annual income of respondents has positive and significant correlation with frequency and duration of visit. Type of family whether nuclear or joint bears positive and significant correlation with budget and places of visit and bears negative but significant correlation with duration of visit. Similarly, occupation was positively and significantly correlated with budget and places of visit. The result illustrated that the frequency of visit is positively and significantly correlated with sex, number of family members and annual income. Male members were found to visit Puducherry frequently as compared to female members. Similarly the significant correlations between number of family members and frequency of visit is seconded by cross tabulation that indicates the shorter the family size, more frequent their visit to India. Select hypothesis testing also seconds the correlation test as it revealed has significant effect on duration of stay where the income doesn't have significant effect on the duration of stay.

As a former French colony, Puducherry is known for French ethnicity. France is thus a natural potential market for Puducherry Tourism. The nostalgic visit by French nationals to Puducherry is a trend that has far reaching impact on tourism and over all economy. This as an area of research has rarely been given due weightage by researchers and policy makers. Such researches would bring findings which would be helpful for the Government of the Union Territory for better decision making. As an interdisciplinary research this will also

help in broadening horizon of knowledge in tourism education. Demands and requirements of French nationals in the territory can also be analysed to facilitate their travel to and from France. Further the French culture which is a unique feature of Puducherry is believed to be degrading day by day due to multiple reasons. An in-depth study would analyse the problems and try finding strategies to upkeep the uniqueness of the region.

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