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MICE TOURISM

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Abstract

MICE tourism is a perfect way of combining business with pleasure. MICE tourism presents unique opportunities for business development, be it an informal conversation with old partners and meetings with prospective investors, customers and suppliers, information exchange or introduction to new technologies. The Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) industry is extensively and rapidly growing and is largely associated with travel for business purpose. The MICE industry - a service industry combining trade, transportation, finance, and travel—has been active in Europe and America for over a century. In this paper an attempt has been made to discuss the MICE tourism and also its future and prospects in India.

Keywords: Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Expositions, Industry

1. Introduction

The term "MICE" in the context of travel is an acronym for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions. It refers to a specialized niche of group tourism dedicated to planning, booking and facilitating conferences, seminars and other events. Sometimes referred to as the meetings or events industry, MICE travel involves a number of components. They include corporate meeting planners; meetings and convention departments of hotels, conference canters or cruise ships; food and beverage managers; logistics firms; private tour operators and transfer companies; incentive houses; professional trade organizations; tourism boards, tourism trade associations and travel-selling professionals. Because of the organization and planning involved (typically, years in advance); travel sellers specializing in MICE are usually affiliated with large corporate agencies. Also Known As: Meetings Industry, Events Industry.



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Meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE, with the "E" sometimes referring to events and the "C" sometimes referring to conventions) is a type of tourism in which large groups, usually planned well in advance, are brought together for a particular purpose. Recently, there has been an industry trend towards using the term 'meetings industry' to avoid confusion from the acronym. Other industry educators are recommending the use of "events industry" to be an umbrella term for the vast scope of the meeting and events profession.



Reasons for a client choice of a MICE destination

- ❖ Cost of space
- ❖ Cost of labour
- ❖ Cost of living
- ❖ Quality of manpower
- ❖ Exhibition and conference space
- ❖ Location
- ❖ Trade visitors size
- ❖ Reputation of the destination and the conference centre
- ❖ Infrastructure
- ❖ Cost of airfare
- ❖ Climate
- ❖ IT facilities
- ❖ Safety
- ❖ Source : Dubai, Butler, Bassiouni, El-Adly and Widjaja,(2007)



Most components of MICE are well understood, perhaps with the exception of incentives. Incentive tourism is usually undertaken as a type of employee reward by a company or institution for targets met or exceeded, or a job well done. Unlike the other types of MICE tourism, incentive tourism is

usually conducted purely for entertainment, rather than professional or education purposes. MICE tourism usually includes a well-planned agenda centered on a theme or topic, such as profession trade organization, a special interest group or an education topic.



MICE event locations are normally bid on by specialized convention bureaux in particular countries and cities and established for the purpose of bidding on MICE activities. This process of marketing and bidding is normally conducted well in advance of the event, often several years, as securing major

events can benefit the local economy of the host city or country. Convention bureaux may offer financial subsidies to attract MICE events to their city. MICE tourism is known for its extensive planning and demanding clientele.

Worldwide - Top Indian MICE Destinations & Indian Visitors in 2010

Country	Best Time to Visit	Indian Visitors in 2010
Australia	Aussie winter (Summer in the northern hemisphere)	1,36,400 as on November 2010
Egypt	Mid October to April	Around 1,14,000, an increase of 31.8% since 2009
Hong Kong	365 days i.e any time	5,30,000, showing a growth of 44.8% from previous year 2009
Jordan	March to May & September to November	53,000, an increase of 71% since 2009
Macao	October to December	1,69,096, a 60% jump from 2009
Malaysia	May to September	About 17% of all tourists
Mauritius	All year round destination	An increase of 26.8% over 2009
Singapore	All year round destination	8,29,000
South Africa	Any time	65,000 as on November 2010, a 26% increase over the same period in 2009
Sri Lanka	November to April	1,11,129 as on November 2010
Thailand	November to March	3,20,000
Turkey	April to May & September to October	60,000

Source: Business India, Analysis India

Mice in India:

India is not just one of the world's oldest civilizations, it is also the world's largest democracy, and has made stupendous progress among developing nations. India's impressive variety of history and culture, from the ancient Gangetic Kingdoms to the present state, harmoniously blend to form a unique atmosphere in over a million square kilometres of scenic sights. A continent-sized country, India possesses an amazing wealth of sights and sounds, tastes and textures. From a bustling cosmopolitan city to the quiet countryside, hill station

or a beach resort, India has destinations, which offer a backdrop of unmatched beauty for a business meet. You will find a fascinating amalgam of tradition & culture, beauty & nature, style & splendour, warmth, feelings & courtesies, comfort & convenience virtually everything the modern conference organiser or delegate could expect. Conferences here bring fresh meaning of the concept of combining work with pleasure.

REQUIREMENTS

- Efficient transport network, connections and airport arrival processes
- Proximity of MICE facilities to airport and public transport facilities
- Hotels with good MICE facilities (conference and meeting rooms)
- Cultural attractions in the city (theatre, churches, museum)
- Shopping (souvenirs, fashion, local delicacies, handicrafts) ,Sightseeing and excursions in the MICE environment



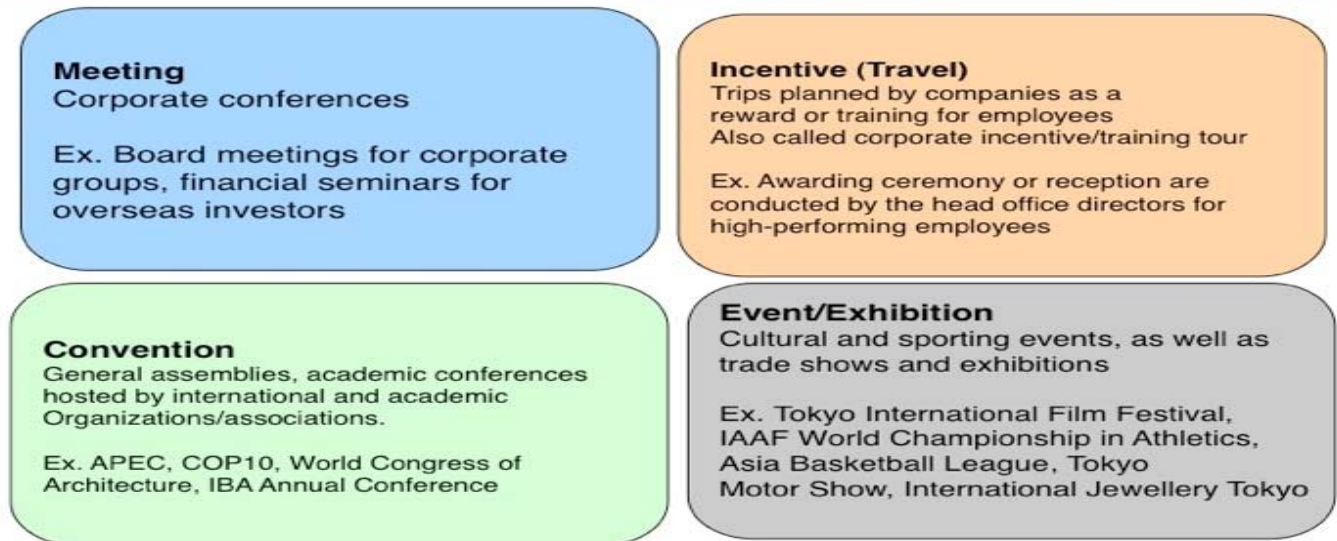
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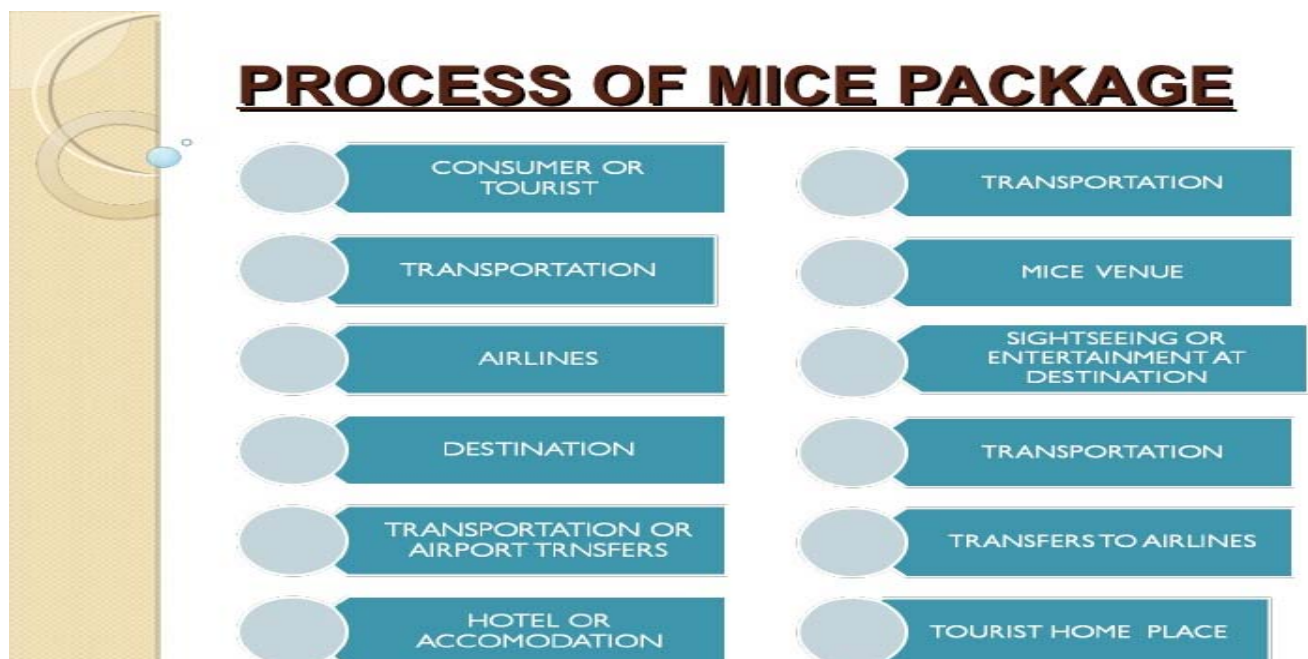
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What is MICE?



Amidst the countless ways that India can capture world attention as a tourist paradise, there also exists a dynamic business opportunity as a splendid venue for international conferences and conventions of no less than global standards. India is undoubtedly a unique Conference Destination as it offers cultural and heritage sites, the exotic and mystical, excellent facilities of beach and adventure holidays which can be combined as pre and post conference tours. Enchanting India's image as a conference destination is also projected through the chains of hotels, providing international standards in facilities and services. Exclusive business hotels and exotic resorts, with meeting rooms of distinction, spacious convention facilities, modern business canters and a wide range of conference facilities, the different cities and places across the length and breadth of the country.

India is in a continual process of upgrading its MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions) facilities. There are multiple plans on the anvil for more world-class convention canters, airports that contest with the best in the world and efforts to team the famous Indian hospitality with customisation as per a visitor's requirement. You could also offer the credit to the world class incentive programs, her ability to heal spiritually, her unmatched offering as a health destination or continually improved infrastructure facilities that over 25 million foreign tourists thronged her this year generating over US \$200 billion as revenue, even as most other preferred hotspots marked a decline in their tourist graphs.



The Infrastructure - India provides an impressive combination of accommodation and other conference support facilities to hold a successful Conference. To mention a few; Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi, Centre Point, Renaissance Hotel and Convention Centre in Mumbai, the BM Birla Science and Technology Centre in Jaipur, the Jaypee Hotels & International Convention Centre, Agra and the Cochin

Convention Centre, Kochi etc. together with facilities in the business hotels and resorts at various canter's in the country. India is going the global way and MICE is fast becoming a major part of its travel and promotional budgets. In the Indian context, incentives is at present the largest component of MICE but in a maturing market, it's only a matter of time before the entire gamut of MICE activities are undertaken by the Indian corporate world.

MICE Tourism – Overview

- MICE – meetings, incentives, conferences & exhibitions
- New & Rapidly growing concept
- Fastest growing sectors of the tourism & hospitality industry
- Caters – business travelers
- Also caters forms of businesses – conferences, conventions, exhibitions & product launches.
- India Occupies – 27th position Global MICE

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With the expansion in the network of airlines operation on the domestic routes, better tourist surface transport systems including the Indian Railways, new centers of information technology, many new convention centres, hotels and meeting facilities, India is now an important MICE destination. The Indian sub-continent is emerging as one of the finest Incentive destinations in the world owing to the diverse culture and geography. From the icy Himalayas to the tropical islands and from citadels in the desert to verdant jungles it is a world in itself. With the emergence of exciting new destinations every year one has unparalleled choices for the incentive operator here. The incentive programmes are a combination of old world charm and tradition interlaced with modern cosmopolitan sophistication. Today, there are distinct travel divisions within tour companies and airlines that exclusively target MICE movement. Destinations have also begun to market MICE products to specialised agencies and the corporate world at large. The business of MICE holds enormous potential for any country. It is estimated that a person travelling to a country for a conference or convention spends anywhere four to eight times more than a normal leisure traveller. They spend more on food, more on business centre services. India is globally connected to a network of over 50 international airlines and several domestic airlines, which provide convenient connectivity within India.

Added to this is an elaborate network of surface transportation system. There is an excellent Railway system running through the entire country. All-important cities are connected with state-of-the-art 'Shatabdi & Rajdhani' Express trains. Special trains like Palace on Wheels and Royal Orient Express, comprising of air-conditioned saloons decorated in the old Maharaja style offer guests a chance to stay on the train and

visit colourful Rajasthan and fascinating Gujarat. An excellent network of roads, national and state highways, luxury coaches, Indian & foreign-made vehicles add to the convenience and comfort of surface travel.

And, to add to this, India offers an educated manpower base where fluency in English and other official international languages can be expected. A large number of Convention Centres are available in India with a seating capacity of up to 1700 persons. The important conference centres in the country are at New Delhi, Mumbai, Agra, Bangalore, Chennai, Cochin, Goa, Hyderabad, Jaipur & Kolkata. Some important hotel chains like the Taj Group, ITC-Welcomgroup, the Oberoi's, Meridien Hotels, Marriott Hotels etc. also have excellent conference facilities.

The exhibition industry has also gained fresh impetus with exhibition centres like Pragati Maidan in New Delhi, the Nehru Centre in Mumbai and the Chennai Trade Centre in Chennai amongst several other options.

Facilities available at all the Recommended Venues:

- Convention Centres, Conference & Banquet Halls
- Exhibition Centres.
- Auditoriums & Stadiums for hosting opening/closing ceremonies & other events.
- Accommodation in good 5-star and 4-star hotels.
- Restaurants & Bars.
- Recreation activities like Golf Course, Yoga & Ayurveda Centre, Discotheque, Sports like Tennis, Squash, Badminton, Health Club with Spa facilities.
- Easy accessibility in terms of domestic and international flights.

Conclusion:

MICE is the buzzword for tourism development today. It is something that every destination is trying to develop. Almost every country in the world has recognised the importance of MICE monetarily as well as impact wise. MICE generate a considerable amount of revenue that stands more than ordinary tourism. It is also seen that comparatively MICE leaves lesser impacts on the hosts and the host destination than an every touristic activity. In this regard almost every country in the world is trying to project itself as a destination that can give the business travellers the best. More and more countries are trying to hold exhibitions and events the year round to offset the seasonality of tourism. In this way MICE is an activity that every country should try and develop in order to generate revenue the year round and leave lesser impacts. India has a huge potential for MICE tourism, the only thing is to promote and develop its MICE destinations.

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