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EVENT MANAGEMENT INDUSTRY & JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO STUDENTS RESIDING IN BANGALORE URBAN)

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ABSTRACT

As the higher education environment becomes increasingly competitive, prospective students are more likely to compare graduate employability prospects of different universities and different courses. Consequently, the viability of courses is being increasingly challenged with market viability based predominately on student demand, which is often based on their perceptions of workplace requirements. Event management has emerged to become a key sector after the liberalization of the Indian Economy. Events are leisure activities and work possibilities for people. Events bring people together and make them have good time. They enhance the quality of people's life; they can provide significant economic benefits. The leading research group expects this industry to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 15.2 percent to reach INR 1,661 billion by 2017. This paper tries to analyze as to whether the sector can provide job opportunities to the under graduate students and what the skills sets required to emerge as a successful event coordinator and also the possibility of the sector to motivate the students to become entrepreneurs and initiate their own startups. To provide an indication of current employer requirements in Event Managers and whether there can be a holistic approach in training the students in Event Management through a refined curriculum. The results of this study establish a platform from which to develop a classification of event management skills required by the industry. More importantly however, it can be used as the basis for curriculum evaluation and training needs, and create a better understanding and compatibility between event management education and industry practice.

KEYWORDS

event management, industry, skills, education, job opportunities, curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO EVENTS

Events are happenings, often used to suggest that what happened was on an unusual scale, Memorable etc. The managing of the events is the difficult task to achieve. Event management involves planning, organising and execution of live events, which could include a brand/products launch, an exhibition, a concert or even a conference. It is basically an extended form of advertisement, though more interactive. As a separate industry it is projected to grow at 30 % per annum. The first impetus to event came with the liberalisation of the Indian economy in the early nineties. The explosion of satellite channels and the popularity of foreign artists have fuelled the growth in the industry in recent years. Traditionally, events were considered useful for rural markets and for products with a ban on advertising like liquor and cigarettes. Low literacy levels and limited media penetration made events a necessary exercise in rural markets. But today, events are no longer limited to a few products and markets. Event marketing is gaining popularity in long-term brand image building and humanizing of corporate. Aims of the any events are to minimize the risks and to maximize the enjoyment of events audience. In most cases careful attention must be given to transportation, technology and security and a host of other elements like venue, theme, financial consideration, timings, Events team, contractors and other stake holders etc. Event management is the application of the management practice of project management to the creation and development of festivals and events. Event Management involves studying the intricacies of the brand, identifying the target audience, devising the event concept, planning the logistics and coordinating the technical aspects before actually executing the modalities of the proposed event. Event management as a subject has attracted considerable attention of several public relation professionals, due to its being a powerful tool for communicating to the target publics. Undoubtedly, events offer a direct and quick exposure to the intended audiences. Today, special events are an important activity as the event reach out to several people and peculiarly satisfy the desire of most of the people to participate in the event, who have quite a few objectives to obtain like the special benefits offered to the visitors, to enjoy some entertainment, to gather some stimulation, to socialize, and also to become more Knowledgeable on subject, etc. To organizers also it is a specially created forum to share information, showcase achievements and products, and even to express gratitude to the public's for their supports. Organizing events has come to stay as an integral part of the PR responsibility for obvious benefits to the business organizations. Needless to say that event is not a mere show business, but an objective based activity in which the companies invest sizable amounts of money for obvious benefits and returns. Therefore, before an event is put up, it is important to determine the objectives of such an event, so that the event pays back in terms of good returns on investment. Particularly, in the market area, the measurement of the effectiveness of such events would become immediately possible in terms of the sales an event was able to generate. Therefore, the objectives of an event must be spelled out, right before starting the ground work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Events are leisure activities and work possibilities for people. Events bring people together and make them have good time. They enhance the quality of people's life; they can provide significant economic benefits and can also provide revenue for special projects. Regardless of size, events require a high degree of planning, a range of skills and a lot of energy (Hillary Commission for Sport, 1997). According to Andersson and Wesslau (2000), when using events, companies get the possibility to have their own-right to the consumer during the duration of the event. This means that if a company manages to get the consumer to attend the event, the distortion from the competitors will be gone or at least minimized during the duration of the event. Also, events contain tangible elements, such as food, beverages and other products sold or given away, but are essentially a service in that they consist of intangible experiences of finite duration within a temporary, managed atmosphere. As with all services, this experiential "product" is produced and consumed simultaneously, is highly heterogeneous and very difficult to store or control.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The event industry is one of the world's largest employers and contributes has a major positive economic impact. The event is all about people-people coming together to create, operate, and participate in an experience. It is an activity that gathers the target group in time and room, a meeting where a message is communicated and happening is created. The term event is used for describing different activities designed for different purposes. These activities can be art, sports, tourism and social activities, and can also be activities organized by giant organizers more professional and more formal. According to Getz and Goldblatt, events are 'a unique moment in time' and 'aside from everyday occurrences'. Public or private, commercial or charitable, celebratory or commemorative-events bring people together to share an experience and produce a measurable outcome. Civic events, conventions, expositions, fairs and festivals, hallmark events, hospitality, incentive travel, meetings and conferences, retail events, reunions, social life-cycle events, sport events, and tourism are the examples of subfields of events. Every event has an organization behind it; managing activities, organizing funding, administering staff and voluntary personnel, undertaking marketing and public relations, organizing security, printing leaflets and tickets, hiring performers, arranging decorations, sorting out parking and many other activities. The way in which an organization deals with events is known as event management. It may include the organization's objectives for managing events, as signed roles and

responsibilities, ownership of tools and processes, critical success factors, standards, and event-handling procedures. The linkages between the various departments within the organization required handling events and the flow of this information between them is the focus of event management. Event management and event marketing have emerged over the past decade as a vibrant sector of the tourism and leisure industries. The number, diversity and popularity of events have also grown throughout this period. As the number of events increase, there is a growing realization about the continuing need to develop event management professionals who are able to create, organize, and manage events. Based on the above-mentioned dimensions and focusing on the event management and event marketing literatures.

DEVELOPMENT OF EVENTS INDUSTRY

Wood (1982) highlighted the birth of what is now becoming known as the events industry. She identified that commercializing popular celebrations required wealth for people to participate and therefore meant selecting suitable elements of the traditional festivities and adapting them. The purpose of fairs has changed over time to what are seen today as events that mainly operate for enjoyment, with rides, sideshows and stalls. With the increase in work through industrialization, the practicalities of celebration meant that people were too tired to celebrate as they had done previously. Thus, celebration, and commercial celebration, provided the opportunity to relax from working life and, from a government perspective; it provided the basis for ensuring that celebration and traditional pleasure culture did not interfere with work. In 1871 bank holidays were made lawful, with the days dictated by the government and the monarch. Since that time, the monarch has retained the power to proclaim additional holidays, with the approval of Parliament, as illustrated by the extra bank holidays given for the 1977 Silver Jubilee and the 2002 Golden Jubilee celebrations (Harrowven, 1980). Rogers (2003) highlights that the origins of the conference industry lies in political and religious congresses, and trade and professional association conventions in America in the late nineteenth century, though recognition of an industry itself is more recent, dating from the middle to latter half of the twentieth century. Shone (1998) supports this and notes that although the emergence of the conference industry dates from the last thirty years, and to some extent, the past 250 years; this would ignore the development that took place during the preceding thousands of years. He goes on to discuss the development of meeting places for trade, supported by the growth in appropriate facilities. These developments commenced with public halls (first century AD), churches (tenth and eleventh centuries), market towns (thirteenth century), and guildhalls (fourteenth century). In later times, inns and coffee houses (seventeenth century), assembly rooms, town halls and universities (eighteenth century) were developed. Finally, there was a growth in specialist banqueting and assembly facilities such as the Café Royal and Connaught Rooms in London, and meeting rooms within hotels (nineteenth century). Bowdin (2006) note that some of the leading exhibitions originate from the early part of the twentieth century.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This paper tries to study the how the Event Management industry is poised to generate employment opportunities for the Under Graduate students. The paper also strives to make a comparison as to the growth of the Event Industry in the near future and its ability to create Entrepreneurs. The changes that needs to be brought into the curriculum to ensure that undergraduate students are well equipped to face the challenges and make use of the opportunities created by the Event Management Industry.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to write this paper was case study analysis were a number of prior research work done in this field. The references section of this paper will provide the information regarding the paper taken as guidance. Moreover, the readings on the development of the Event Management Industry, its historical perspective and the future growth will be considered as the main focus. The paper is mainly based on the inferences drawn from these reading, dimension and perspective of the author.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. The paper looks at the pace of the growth of the Event Management Industry.
2. Whether the industry is poised to create job opportunities to the under graduate students.
3. The skill sets required for being employable in the Event Management Industry.
4. And also the opportunity to create new generation Entrepreneurs through this industry.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The identification of these gaps in our current knowledge provide opportunity for further development of a research agenda for events and festivals, which will have substantial implications both for academia and for the events and festivals industry. Although this research was carefully prepared, I am still aware of its limitations and shortcomings.

1. **TIME CONSTRAINT:** First of all, the study was conducted in a short time period which did not allow for the in depth analysis. To derive a meaningful and definite conclusion, the study should be made for a period of at least 6 months.
2. **INDIRECT METHOD:** Since it is a conceptual paper the opportunity to interact with the students and the industry people and record the qualitative aspects was not possible.
3. **FINANCIAL CONSTRAINT:** The sources and the monetary support for conducting an extensive research were not available.
4. **CAPABILITIES OF THE RESEARCHER:** The conclusion and the analysis made completely depend on the capabilities and perceptions of the author it does not reflect the opinion in the overall light.

INTRODUCTION TO EVENT MANAGEMENT

EVENT MANAGEMENT INDUSTRY – A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

India, over the past couple of decades has witnessed a phenomenal growth of the event management industry. Events have always been a part of the Indian culture and have been organized by one and all, in their amateurish way, but with the marketing pressures growing and challenges becoming tougher, the live entertainment industry or the sales promotion techniques called events, have gripped the attention of all marketing and public relations professionals. So far the function of organizing these special events was undertaken by some advertising and public relationship agencies who would consider it an offshoot of the major advertising. But realizing the complexity of this art, there have mushroomed several event management companies who specialize in this tourism business. A look at the historical perspective reveals that the event management companies are nothing new to the Indian scene. Since time immemorial, we have witnessed mega events organized for different reasons and occasions. Form the gorgeous wedding of lord Rama and Sita organized by king Janak to today's event like Miss World contests and Film fare awards evening, all are the old and new versions of the event management efforts. However, managing an event, from start to finish, has come to stay as a specialist job. The event management outfits now function on the lines of company, with plenty of professionalism in conceptualizing, planning and executing an event and even managing the aftermath of the event for corporate publicity advantage. The job not being a stereotyped effort, there is a need for every event to be distinctly different than the other. A look backwards reveals that a decade ago, the term event management which has become an integral part of the Tourism, was not heard of. Having witnessed the growth prospects and attractive returns in terms of high billings, profits, glamour and excitement, the event management art has matured enough to be a profession. So much so that event management has become an area of specialization in the management education field and some new generation professionals take lot of pride in flaunting their specialist skills in the profession.

MEANING OF EVENT

The dictionary defines an event as 'anything that happens, as distinguished from anything that exists' or 'an occurrence, especially one of great importance'.

Event is commonly understood as an occurrence or something that happens. A unique moment in time celebrated with ceremony and rituals to satisfy specific needs.

Special event in two perspectives:

- One time or infrequently occurs event outside normal programs or activities of the sponsoring or organizing body.
- To the customer or guests, it is an opportunity for Leisure, social or cultural experience outside the normal range of choices or beyond everyday experience.

An event is something that 'happens' not just 'exists', and here is the biggest issue somebody has to make it happen. Successful events only come about through action-some individual or group of individuals getting things done. This applies to all events (little or large). Every single thing that needs to happen has to be made to happen by someone initiating the action. One of the key steps is to identify all the tasks which have to be accomplished, and all of them have to be carried out for a successful event to occur.

A VARIETY OF EVENTS

- Artistic performances
- Band contests
- Pageants
- Open days
- Theatrical performances
- Caravan rallies
- Nature tours
- Boat trips
- Motoring rallies
- Historic tours
- Royal tournaments
- Museum displays
- Street parties
- Careers exhibitions
- Garden parties
- Music festivals
- Car boot sales
- Marathons
- Parades
- Educational seminars
- Town shows
- Sporting Competitions,
- Tournaments and displays
- Carnivals
- Art displays
- Festivals
- Firework displays
- Training days
- Environmental days
- Fetes
- War games
- Civic galas
- Air displays
- Celebrity appearances
- Highland games
- Agricultural shows
- Sponsored walks
- Open days
- Dog shows
- Garden displays
- Round-the-world races

THE SKILL SET REQUIRED FOR EVENT MANAGER

The field of event management not only requires a great amount of creative skills but also involves lots of discipline and meticulous planning. Planning an event is an event in itself. The job of organizing an event begins with the very basics. The client comes to the event manager with a vague idea in mind. It is entirely up to the event manager to work on the idea and turn it into a reality. Events could be anything from concerts, product launches, conferences, promotions, press conferences, jubilee celebrations and farewells to television based events, fashion shows, wedding or parties. In terms of educational qualifications, a formal education in the form of a diploma or degree in event management or in advertising or public relations with a specialization in event management should be ideal though not much stress is laid on education. But there are a host of other qualities, which are essential for a person to be well-equipped in this field. These include:

1. **Analytical/Critical thinking and problem solving** - Analytical thinking, critical thinking and problem solving are abilities that are a must in this field. You should be able to acknowledge a problem, recognize that it has to be solved then and there, and always think on how the situation could be avoided in future.
2. **Client/Customer service orientation** - Client/customer service orientation is the ability to be client focused and committed to meeting the needs of your customer. An event manager has to be client focused, he must attempt to know the client's needs, he must be able to put them at ease while interacting with them, build trust and respect with customers and clients.
3. **Good negotiation skills** - It is a general opinion that negotiating means underestimating the seller. On the contrary it is a skill in business which, when developed, makes you an astute minded businessman.
4. **Ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines** - An event manager should be able to handle pressures and deadlines at ease. In spite of meticulous planning and arrangement, a small error or miscalculation can wreak havoc and disrupt the entire schedule. At such testing times, you should be able to remain calm and cool and perform your role as though everything is under control, so that others are not adversely affected.
5. **Teamwork, facilitation and co-operation** - Needless to say, one of the most important things in event management is the ability to work as a team. You should not only know how to lead a team but also work with everyone and get the job done. You should be able to build efficient teams of people and facilitate their effectiveness. Always remember, "There is no 'I' in Team".

6. **Planning, co-ordination and organization** - This involves the ability to effectively coordinate and organize oneself, others, information and/or situations at a personal and/or organizational level.
7. **Good networking skills** - An event manager needs to build up his own network. The more number of contacts he has the more successful he will be. Any kind of business can be only expanded through contacts and you must therefore have the skill and aptitude to go out and talk to people.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

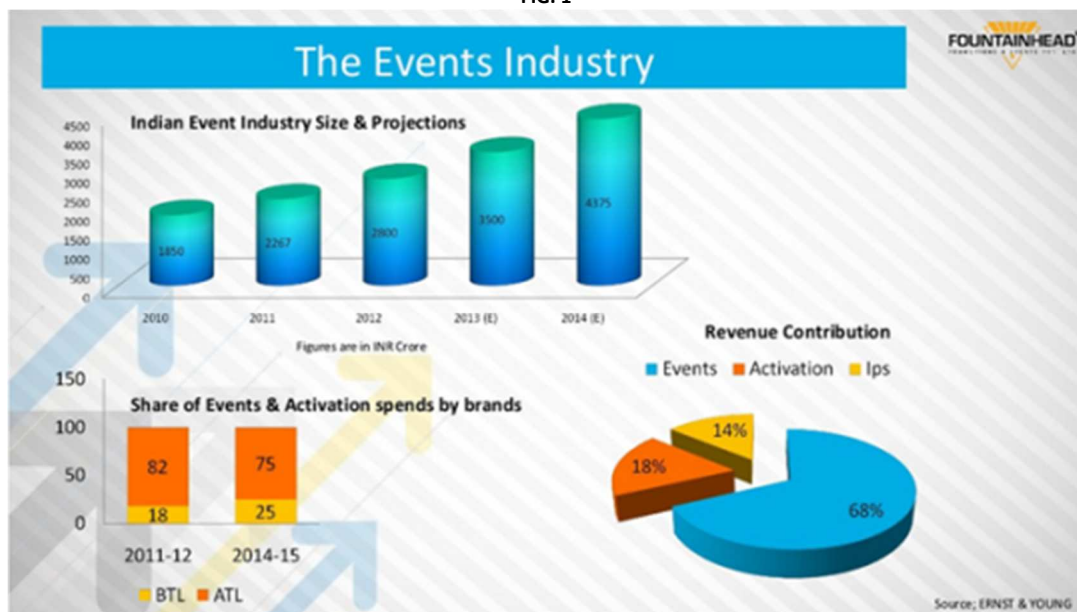
GROWTH OF EVENT MANAGEMENT INDUSTRY

Backed by an increased marketing spend by top companies, industry stalwarts anticipate the event management industry to be on a robust growth trajectory in the coming years. This growth will be led by personal events, MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions), activations and sports. While managed events continue to remain a major part of the service offering, digital events and activation are not far behind, thanks to the Smartphone penetration, low cost of efficiency for such campaigns and internet availability. From film awards, to road shows and from product launches to theme parties, the breadth and depth of the event industry has indeed become very diverse. Event Management is looked upon as a sunrise industry in the service sector. The word ‘Event’ now needs to be re-defined in view of the manifold growth of the various ‘happenings’ in the ‘commercial’ as well as in the non-commercial world. Be it private happenings or public events, everything now is done on ‘big scale’. ‘Image’ is the key word today. This ‘image’ building exercise today needs a professional manager, either an individual or an organization, depending on the size of the exercise. Live Entertainment shows, Corporate events, MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions), and large scale Weddings have led to several work profiles and job opportunities. Individuals, Corporate houses and the Society have recognized the need for hiring professionals for handling events.

THE OVERALL EVENT INDUSTRY STATISTICS IN INDIA

The past decade of the Indian economy has witnessed an alarming growth in the size of Event Management Industry. It has grown by leaps and bounds in the recent past and most of the experts in the industry strongly believe that this is just the beginning of a new era. According to the survey done by some leading Research agencies, the organized Event Industry in India is poised to grow by at least by 25% annually and is estimated to reach INR 5500 crores by 2014-15.

FIG. 1



The scope of Events has been widening day by day and the Events & Entertainment Industry today encompasses events like Fashion & Celebrity shows, Film awards, Celebrity promotions, Road shows, Musical concerts, Bollywood-shows, T.V. Reality shows Company conferences, Banqueting facilities, Tourist attractions, Sports, Culture, Corporate seminars, Workshops, Exhibitions, Wedding celebrations, Birthday parties, Theme parties & Product launch. The continuous rise in the number and the scale of all such events has emerged as the main growth drivers in the sector.

FIG. 2

Overall industry size and projections												
Overall industry size (₹100 cr) (For calendar years)	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Growth in 2012 over 2011	2013p	2014p	2015p	2016p	2017p	CAGR (2012-17)
TV	241	257	297	329	3701	125%	4199	5014	6074	725	847.6	18%
Print	172	175.2	192.9	208.8	224.1	7.3%	241.1	261.4	285.6	311.2	340.2	8.7%
Films	104.4	89.3	83.3	92.9	112.4	21%	122.4	138.3	153.6	171.7	193.3	11.5%
Radio	8.4	8.3	10	11.5	12.7	10.4%	14	15.4	18.7	22.7	27.4	16.6%
Music	7.4	7.8	8.6	9	10.6	18.1%	11.6	13.1	15.3	18.3	22.5	16.2%
OOH*	16.1	13.7	16.5	17.8	18.2	2.4%	19.3	21.1	23	25	27.3	8.4%
Animation and VFX	17.5	20.1	23.7	31	35.3	13.9%	40.5	46.8	54.3	63.1	73.4	15.8%
Gaming	7	8	10	13	15.3	17.7%	20.1	23.8	30.9	36.2	42.1	22.4%
Digital advertising	6	8	10	15.4	21.7	40.9%	28.3	37.1	48.9	65.1	87.2	32.1%
Total	580	587	652	728	821	12.6%	917	1059	1,238	1,438	1,661	15.2%

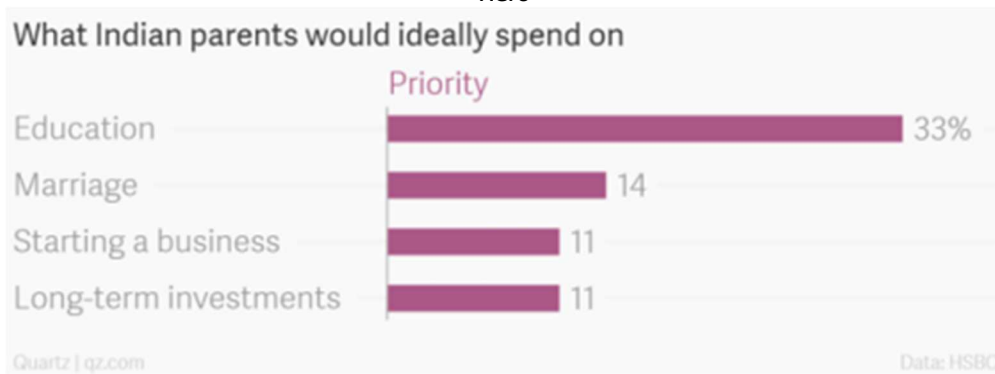
Events are playing an increasingly important role in the Marketing and Communications mix for all companies. Today, Event Management has become an integral part of any Marketing plan. A large number of companies have already recognized the benefits of Direct Marketing through events. Events are considered as a means to Launch, Advertise or Build a brand.

Weddings are very expensive in India. A recent survey has revealed that an average amount of \$31,213 is spent by an Indian for his wedding. This number has observed a 4.5% than the previous year. The same survey has revealed that an average amount of \$27,000 is spent by a U.S Citizen for his wedding. As the \$38-billion Indian wedding market continues to grow bigger in size, the bridal brigade – brides, grooms and their respective families – across the country seems to have embraced the spending frenzy with open arms. About a decade ago, the most talked about society weddings were generally limited to familial lineages. Things, however, are changing now and anyone who has the required finances can surely have a grand wedding of their dreams.

The number is definitely going to increase in the coming years. The latest trend witnessed in Event Management sector is the popular demand for wedding planners. This industry thrives largely on the Indian notion of characterizing marriage as a singular high-point in one’s life. In a bid to make one’s wedding unique, the wedding planning industry derives a reasonable demand owing to their professionalism and touch of precision to make the entire process smooth.

Rise in disposable income coupled with time constraints that people face has led to the development of the wedding planning sector in our country. A wedding planner becomes imperative to streamline the entire process and attention to the minutest detail. An Indian wedding definitely needs a lot of time and effort towards planning and implementation.

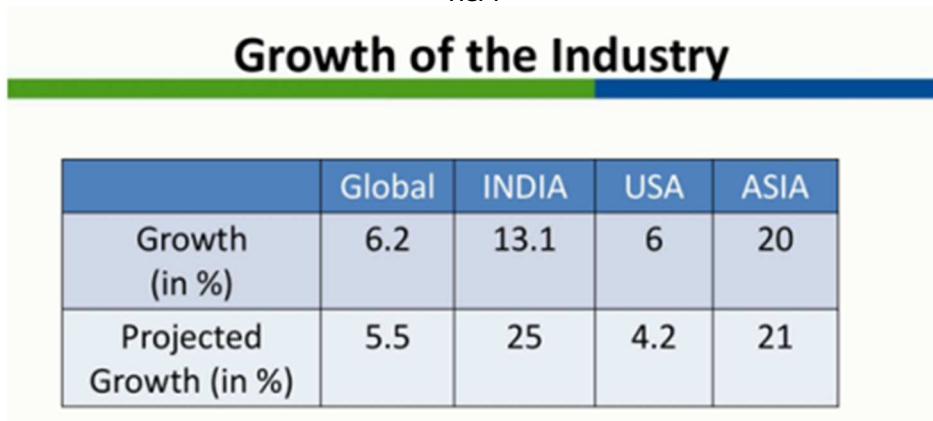
FIG. 3



The situation is not different when it comes to spending on Birthday Parties, Meetings and other corporate Events. A survey has stated that, around 15% of an organization’s collective time is spent in meetings. The number has kept on increasing since 2008. This fact is enough to give you an idea on much an organization spends on arranging meetings.

The following figure explains about the rate at which the event management industry is going to rise in India, when compared with other nations.

FIG. 4



The Indian Media and Entertainment (M&E) industry grew from INR 728 billion in 2011 to INR 821 billion in 2012, registering an overall growth of 12.6 percent. The industry has achieved a growth of 11.8 percent in 2013 to touch INR 917 billion. The sector is projected to grow at a CAGR of 15.2 percent to reach INR 1,661 billion by 2017.

More than a quarter of advertisements were advertised in the event sector, the main employment stronghold of the event management industry. Event management companies that advertised included conference and banqueting production companies, event coordinators, sporting event companies and corporate entertainment and functions companies. Thirteen percent of advertisements were contained in the hotel and resort industry and a similar percentage of advertisements did not specify the industry or name of an organization. Non-profit organizations contained 8% of the job advertisements, representing charity organizations in general or specific non-profit organizations such as hospital foundations, youth networks, religious and environmental organizations. Financial and management companies such as insurance and fund management companies contained 6% of the advertisements and government agencies including regional and city councils and territory tourism promotion agencies 5%.

GENERAL SKILL SPECIFICATION IN EVENT MANAGEMENT

- Organizational and Planning Communication.
- Leadership and Decision-making.
- Budget and Financial Management.
- Marketing.
- Team.
- Customer Service.
- Building Relationships.
- Problem Solving and Analytical.
- Funding and Sponsorship.

FINDINGS

1. The event management industry is one of the fast growing industries in India with an expected to grow by 25.0 percent annually.
2. The Media and Entertainment (M&E) sector is projected to grow at a Compounded annual growth rate of CAGR of 15.2 percent to reach INR 1,661 billion by 2017.
3. The segment can create immense employment opportunities for the undergraduate students.
4. The segment is construed to be very challenging to the young minds with creative ideas.
5. The curriculum should include subjects like Event Management at the undergraduate level to educate the students about the job opportunities in this sector.
6. The topic should be taught through case studies and motivate the students in the entrepreneur capabilities.
7. The study should also enable the students to think in the lines of developing their own business in event organizing.
8. The event management job opportunities can help the students to earn while learning (part time).

CONCLUSION

Event management is emerging as a key sector of the tourism industry. As universities develop appropriate curriculum to respond to these needs, it is useful to investigate the skills and attributes that the industry requires. This is especially important as universities around the world are facing dynamic change and they need to seek creative solutions in response to a number of educational and structural issues. To be effective, educational methodologies need to be anchored to the diverse material circumstances characterising different groups of learners and industries. The challenge for universities offering programs of study in event management is to provide avenues for learning that are reflective of the needs of industry and yet still satisfy the need for higher learning. This study has indicated that the tracking of web-based job advertisements provides a potentially useful means to gain timely insight into industry competency requirements, especially as the popularity of web-based advertising and recruitment rises. The employability skills and attributes results mirror previous findings for the Australian event management sector and provide additional information. This information can then be utilised in numerous ways by universities. Feeding this back into course curriculum design and marketing strategies will help to attract potential students to courses by satisfying their vocational aspirations. In turn, by making courses more applicable to industry needs will likely result in industry increasing its understanding and value of tertiary education, mutually enforcing features that are important in this increasingly market dominated educational environment.

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