TOURISM IMPACT MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

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Saturday, December 15, 2018
THE PROJECT TEAM

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OUTLINE

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Introduction
DEFINING TOURISM IN AUROVILLE

Casual Visitor
Day visitors that come to Auroville and view the Matrimandir

Short-term Guest
Guests staying less than 3 months for recreational purposes

Long-term Guest
Guests staying longer than 3 months for volunteering or learning purposes
TOURISM IN AUROVILLE

Popular destination for both Indian and international visitors

• 637,961 casual visitors in 2016
• 714,000 casual visitors in 2017
• 453,107 casual visitors between Jan - Aug 2018

Tourism Contribution

• Visitor Centre parking generated 2,152,050 (21.5 lakhs) INR in November 2018
• 50 guesthouses and 31 home stays generated 8,542,670 (85.4 lakhs) INR in November 2018

Kingsley, 2018
POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM

Negatives
• Disruption of daily life
• Increased traffic and congestion
• Physical development pressures
• Increased use of infrastructure and services (i.e. sanitary, water)
• Pollution and littering

Positives
• Economic benefits
• Increased employment
• Learning exchange
• Investment in infrastructure
• Potential for population growth
DEFINING THE PROBLEM

• Regional and state tourism promotion
• Surrounding villages supporting tourism in ways not done by Auroville
• Auroville has varying views on tourism
• Auroville viewed as an attraction rather than a place for learning by many outsiders
• Misrepresentation and misunderstanding of Matrimandir
**Goal 1.** Understand the social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts of tourism in Auroville and its Green Belt

**Goal 2.** Develop a framework to manage tourism impacts in Auroville and its Green Belt
Research
METHODOLOGY

• Policy and Document Review
• Tourism Impact Management Case Studies
• Tourism Impact Management Tools
• Interviews and Group Discussions in Auroville
• Kiosks
• Site Observations
CONDUCTED FIELDWORK
INTERVIEWS AND GROUP DISCUSSIONS

20 interviews and group discussions
  • 16 interviews
  • 4 group discussions

2 kiosks and 4 site observations
  • Solar Kitchen kiosk
  • Visitors Centre kiosk
  • Visitors Centre and Solar Kitchen site observations
WHAT WE HEARD
TOURISM IMPACTS

Economy

• Economic benefits
• Lack of understanding of the effect of tourism on the economy
• Visitors are using spaces dedicated to residents and guests because of lack of enforcement of Aurocard use
• Speculative land buying
• Increased employment opportunities in Auroville and Edayanchavadi
• Shift in Edayanchavadi’s economic base from agriculture to tourism
WHAT WE HEARD
TOURISM IMPACTS

Infrastructure

- Traffic congestion
- Current level and capacity of tourism infrastructure is unknown
- Pressure on Auroville systems
  - Visitors Centre
  - Auroville Security
  - Human Resources
- Increased presence of tourism development in Edayanchavadi
  - Unregistered guesthouses and homestays
WHAT WE HEARD
TOURISM IMPACTS

Natural Environment
- Noise pollution
- Air pollution
- Increased waste and litter
- Lack of understanding regarding capacity of natural resources
- Unplanned village development in Auroville’s Green Belt
WHAT WE HEARD
TOURISM IMPACTS

Social

• Disruption of daily life (i.e. safety, privacy, traffic)
• Visitors have a lack of understanding of purpose of Auroville
• Prioritization of tourism-centric development and resources
• Lack of community awareness on visitor communication and purpose
• Competition between Auroville registered and private guesthouses
• Opportunity to meet people from all over the world
• More educational opportunities
• Increased opportunities for knowledge sharing
• Increased English proficiency in Edayanchavadi
WHAT WE HEARD
TOURISM IMPACTS

External Relations

- Lack of collaboration with regional stakeholders regarding tourism
  - Increase in number of day trippers
  - Unauthorized/unwanted marketing and promotion
- Decreased quality of visitor and guest experience from visa process
  - Shift from allowing volunteering with tourist visa impacting visitors and guests
SUMMARY OF WHAT WE HEARD

- Traffic Congestion and Flow of People
- Lack of comprehensive informational resources for visitors and guests
  - Physical signage
  - Online resources
  - Educational tours
- Visitors Centre has improved flow with parking and kiosks but faces physical capacity restraints
- Lack of spaces for day visitors to participate in engaging ways
- Unplanned development in Edayanchavadi and other villages in Auroville’s Green Belt
- Need for creating community awareness and creating unity
- Need for organization and compilation of data
  - Guesthouse database
  - Economic benefits
- Continual increase in numbers without regional collaboration
UNDERSTANDING AUROVILLE’S DIRECTION OF GROWTH

Integral Sustainability Platform

Wayforward Auroville
OVERARCHING GOAL

Provide a framework that will be used to create a plan to manage the impacts of tourism to benefit Auroville and its Green Belt.
RECOMMENDATIONS – SHORT TERM

Decongest the flow of vehicular traffic entering Auroville
• Periphery parking lot and electric shuttle system
• Complete mobility plan for the International Zone and Visitors Centre

Use tourism spending to limit visitor access and provide a source of revenue
• Strengthen use of Aurocard and eliminate use of cash outside of Visitors Centre
• Implement a mandatory visitor contribution or donation

Update visitor information resources
• Implement visitor signage
• Update Auroville website with visitors tab
• Provide cellphone application
RECOMMENDATIONS – SHORT TERM

Create a certification program for guesthouses and tour guides
- Set of standards and plaque system for guesthouses in Auroville and surrounding villages
- Certification program for tour guides / operators in Auroville

Provide alternative programming in one location to facilitate knowledge sharing with day visitors
- Rotating exhibitions in or outside of the Visitors Centre
- Sustainable Model House
- Children’s playground
- Introductory tours of Auroville
- Signage at Visitors Centre to include current Auroville priorities and projects
RECOMMENDATIONS – LONG TERM

Collaborate with Edayanchavadi on tourism-related development
  • Involve key stakeholders from Edayanchavadi in a tourism working group
  • Educate villagers on sustainable development practices and environmental stewardship

Bring community together on topic of tourism
  • Run a community visioning workshop on tourism
  • Form a tourism working group
  • Undertake a community self-assessment

Establish a regional planning approach to tourism
  • Dissuade Puducherry and Tamil Nadu’s promotion of Auroville as a tourist destination
  • Form a collective agreement regarding tourism in the region and how it impacts Auroville
  • Address misuse of Auroville name
RECOMMENDATIONS – LONG TERM

Collect data related to tourism
- Visitor audits and surveys
- Economic Impact Assessment
- Guest facilities database
- Amenity Checklist

Determine Auroville’s tourism carrying capacity
- Infrastructure
- Resources
- Internal systems
IMPLEMENTATION

1. Tourism Working Group

2. Tourism Impact Management Plan
Concluding Thoughts
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

• Stakeholder opinions and perceptions collected were diverse.

• Frequently occurring opinions emphasized the need for improved communication, collaboration, knowledge sharing, and a bottom-up approach.
THANK YOU
QUESTIONS & COMMENTS