



Sustainable Event Management

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Abstract

Sustainable Event Management is the process of integrating environmental and social accountability concerns into event planning. It calls for considering the needs and values of different participants with the help of green meeting ideas and green policies to further a sustainable reach in a cost effective manner.

The Indian Event Management Industry needs to be encouraged to adopt green measures in hosting and organizing events. This is because events take a huge toll on our resources, society and the environment. Adopting Event Greening has minimum negative impact on the environment and the local economy as it avoids depletion of natural resources.

This paper is descriptive and historical in nature. It will trace the international practices in Event Greening and seek to understand its benefits. The researcher will also use the case study method to examine the current situation prevalent in India. The paper will bring out some of the ideas that can be implemented by the Event Planners.

In carrying out this research, a sample of 20 Event Management Companies situated in Pune city is considered. Data is collected with the help of a questionnaire. Secondary data is collected from published sources viz. books, journals, websites and articles.

Keywords: Event Greening, Sustainable Events, Green initiatives, Green Event, Green Festivals.

Objectives:

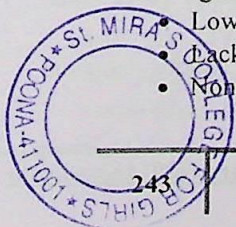
- To trace some of the International Practices in Event Greening
- To judge the level of sustainable actions by the Indian Event Management Companies
- To gauge the understanding of Sustainability in the Indian Context

Methodology:

This paper is an attempt to provide an understanding of the concept of Event Greening. It is descriptive and historical in nature and based on primary as well as secondary data. Primary Data has been collected with the help of a Questionnaire from the Event Management Companies. About 40 companies operating in and around Pune were targeted, but response was elicited from 20 companies. No statistical tools have been employed for analyzing the data. Secondary data has been gathered from various published sources viz. books, journals, websites and articles relevant to the study.

Limitations of the Study:

- Time Factor
- Ignorance about the concept in the Indian market
- Low Response Level
- Lack of Interest by the Event Management Companies
- Non-use of statistical tools for analyzing data





Introduction

Events have been with us since time immemorial and they have taken a substantial space in the world today. The Event Industry in India is witnessing a mushrooming growth and is expected to grow by leaps and bounds. But, Events also take a substantial toll on our resources, society and the environment. They generate considerable waste and are a strain on the natural resources. According to meetgreen.com the typical conference waste attendee produces 1.89 kg of waste per day. If we calculate that number for 1000 attendees over 3 days we get 5670 kg of waste, the equivalent of 4 compact cars.

Sustainable Event Management is the process used to make an event with certain concerns for environmental, economic and social issues. It integrates socially and environmentally responsible decision making into the planning, organization and execution of an Event. It aims at hosting events in a responsible way. It should start at the very initial stage of planning an event and involve major elements like clients, organizers, venues, sub-contractors, suppliers etc. If the event organizer takes into consideration the environmental and social factors, then the event can be called as a sustainable event.

Sustainable events are one of the topmost choices for Event Managers. It is the need of the hour to brainstorm and find out the ways which can make events environmentally friendly. Being sustainable means to make changes to avoid exhaustion of natural resources. It makes a responsible event planner. It can be done by: going paperless, saying 'NO' to plastic, delivering zero-waste, using renewable energy sources, pollution control checks for vehicles etc. It can be adopted in the areas of transportation, selecting location, production, purchasing, catering etc.

The obvious question to be answered is "Why become sustainable?" The answer lies in knowing the footprint we are leaving on the environment. The world is moving towards a common agreement that doing nothing about sustainability issues is no longer an option and the need to adapt our societies and economies to sustainable patterns of consumption is a pressing one (Purt 2011). Sustainability is important because all our present actions will have an impact on our future. This impact falls into the category of CO₂ emissions (from transport and power usage), waste generation (containers, food scraps, water and sewage), consumption of non-renewable resources and possible damage to the site from foot and vehicle traffic.

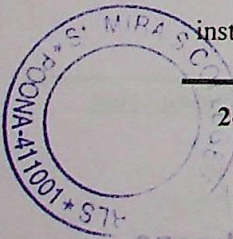
Few Sustainable Practices outside India

Coachella's energy playground, US uses brightly colored bins designed to increase recycling throughout the festival site. an energy playground to power their energy sources, VIP ticket competitions for those who car share on the way to the festival.

UK's Glastonbury music festival uses bio-diesel generators since 2014 to ensure the use of renewable energy, provides 100% stainless steel water bottles for visitors and multiple water refill points, encourages volunteers to help pick up rubbish and recyclable materials to return the site to its normal state as a working farm.

Glasgow, 2014 were the first games to secure ISO 20121 sustainability standard ensuring that the event leaves behind a "positive legacy". They ensured that all the competition venues were car-free, a modern and locally based company provided clean and efficient energy and ensured that the games HQ was on a Green Tariff energy supply.

ICCA congress in Malaysia 2016, the speakers were handed out a charity donation instead of the usual plastic or other non-biodegradable material speaker gifts.





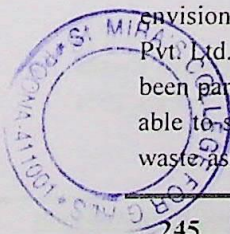
The MLB (Major League Baseball) All-Star Games, is the first professional sports league to ensure that its members are part of the Green Sports Alliance. It provides environmentally sustainable guidelines for the games. Green teams collect recyclables throughout the game, solar panel installations and red carpets are "green carpets" using recycled content, left over untouched food is donated to the needy.

A brief history of the emergence of the concept 'Sustainability' at the International Level

Event	Green Initiatives
1992 Albertville Winter Olympics, France	Environmental concerns were raised by the public
1994 Lillehammer Olympics, Norway	First 'Green Games'
1994, The Centennial Olympic Congress, Congress of Unity, Paris	Promoted sustainable development and regarded environment as the third dimension of Olympism, alongside sports and culture.
2000, Sydney Olympic Games	Facilities constructed in a more environmentally friendly manner. Organizers were honored the Global 500 Award in 2001 for organizing the greenest games ever.
2006 FIFA World Cup™, Germany	Green Goal was launched
2010 FIFA World Cup™, Cape Town, South Africa	Green Goal further implemented, awarded the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Sport and Environment Award. Efforts of this event aimed at mitigating negative environmental impacts of the FIFA World Cup and to maximize a positive environmental and social legacy
2002, <u>World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Johannesburg</u>	Discussions about sustainable developments by the United Nations. The Johannesburg Declaration was the main outcome of the Summit. It was agreed to restore the world's depleted fisheries for 2015.
UNFCCC – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate change	<u>UNCCC (United Nations Climate Change Conferences) – yearly conferences.</u> <u>To assess the progress in dealing with climate change.</u>

Sustainability in the Indian Context

A Delhi based entrepreneur Tamanna Sharma follows the principles of a circular economy and entails locally sourced, socially inclusive and environmental-friendly solutions for all the event requirements. She has come up with a sustainable model of handling waste that envisions events with zero waste contribution to the environment. Her company Earthling First Pvt. Ltd. is a sustainable events and event waste management service provider. The company has been part of Maruti Suzuki Devils Circuit and Border Security Force (BSF) events and has been able to successfully divert 75-90% of the waste generated by the clients for recycling. Careful waste assessment is done during the planning stage to bringing on board catering partners who





offer biodegradable alternatives. The housekeeping staff is also carefully selected and trained for the event. They separate and categorize waste at the venue itself before transporting it to various composting/recycling units. The company also strongly advocates the social justice policy under which the staff is ensured a dignified and safe work environment. The staff wellbeing is kept in mind and they are made to feel respected.

Bengaluru, the IT city's cultural festivals have successful public campaigns around water scarcity, solid waste management, green cover and it is encouraging the city's community of artists and event organizers to be eco-friendly and minimize wastage. The International Arts Festival that was held in Oct 2018 hosts around 1500 artists from across the world, ensures that artists are part of the green drive that involves planting over 200 saplings. They also aim at reducing plastic usage and every guest is offered a sapling as a memento. The saplings are procured from the state forest department and ensuring a healthy survival rate for the plants. According to RoshanNetalkar, director of the music festival Echoes of Earth "A sustainable event is often double the cost. Conventional options are always cheaper, but the point is to not plug and play, and be less destructive." Visitor camps, stage and stalls were made of bamboo, log wood, tyres and bottles sourced from scrap yards.

Vani Murthy, founder member, Solid Waste Management Round Table (SWMRT), opines "Cultural Events have the potential to make people ecologically-aware. When something is unconventional, it gets noticed. People are gradually realizing the importance of going back to basics, which is also leading to trends like green weddings and green marathons."

ISO 20121 – Event Sustainability Management System

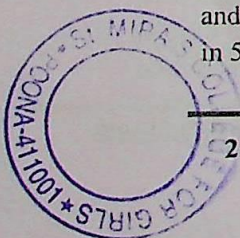
ISO 20121 was published on 15th June 2012. It is a management system standard that has been intended to help organizations in the events industry improve the sustainability of their event related activities, products and services. It is based on the earlier British Standard called BS 8901 Specification for a Sustainability Management System for Events' which was first developed in 2007. It is a practical tool for organizing and managing events so that the events contribute to the three dimensions of sustainability – economic, environmental and social. ISO 20121 helps the event related organization to continue to be financially successful, become more socially responsible as well as reduce its environmental footprint. It applies to all types and sizes of organizations from caterers, lighting, sound engineers, security companies, venues etc.

Sample

Primary data was collected with the help of a questionnaire to know about the awareness level and actions taken by Event Management Companies for having Sustainable Events. Questionnaire was sent through online resources, whatsapp and emails. Response level being low, personal calls were made and the survey was completed with a sample size of 20 Event Management Companies operating mainly in Pune city. The criteria for selection of the companies was the rating given by the customers and the popularity of the company. The Companies which were surveyed: Pros, Finer moments, J & R Events, AnandUdaye, Lifetym Creations, Make magic events, Amazing Eventz, Pratisad Event Management, Perfect Events, Prism Events, Fovero Events, Zeal biz media, The Grand Feast, Mulberry Media, Jayas Events, Silver Bells, Sanskruti Events, Urban Events, Sarika Events and Freedom Events.

Findings

The sample size consisted of Event Management Companies mainly into Personal Events and Corporate Events. 30% of the Companies have been in operation for less than 5 years, 25% in 5 to 8 years category and 45% have been in operation for more than 8 years.





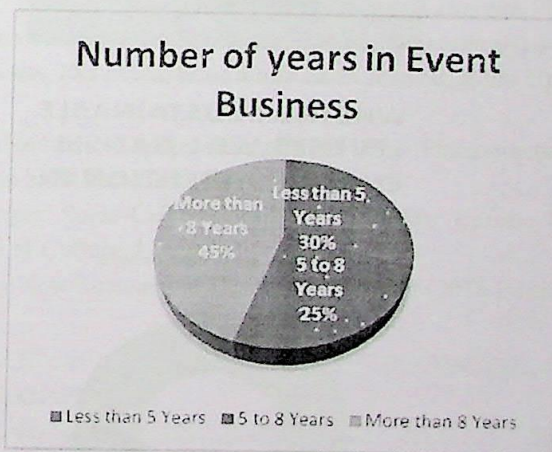
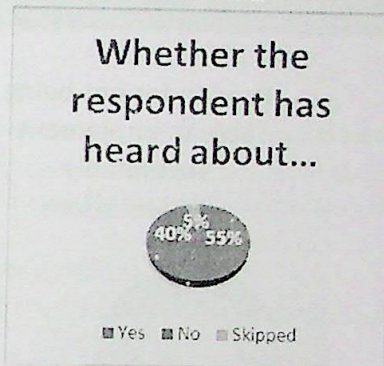
Interestingly 55% of the companies said that they have heard about the concept sustainability and 40% were not aware about the concept, 5% skipped this question.

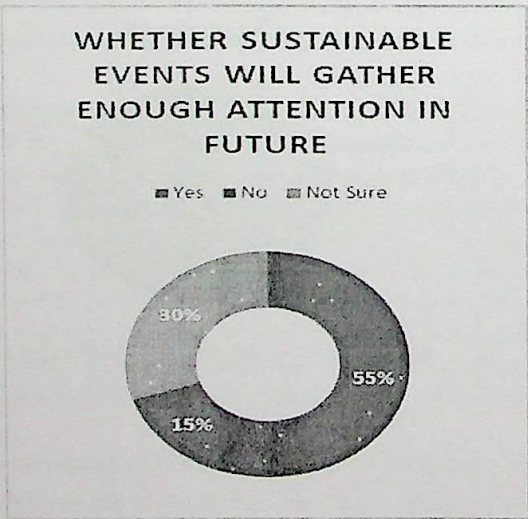
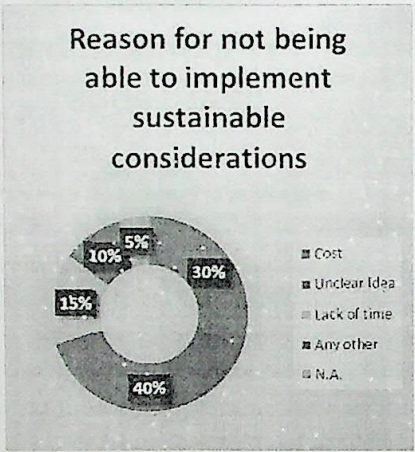
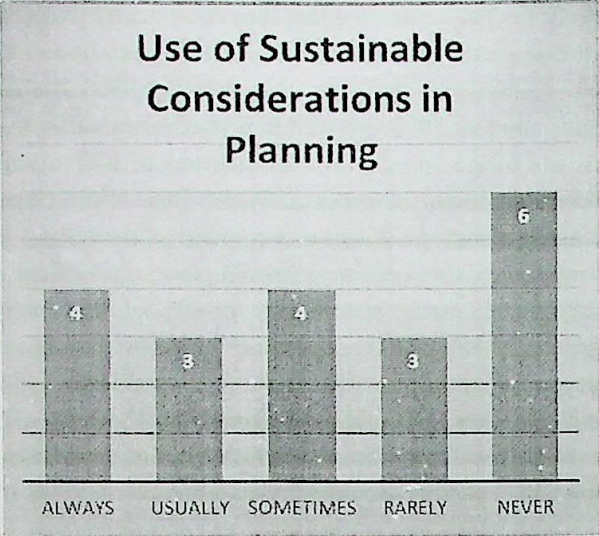
20% of the companies said that they always used sustainable considerations while planning their events, another 20% also said they used it sometimes.

However, 30% of the companies said they never used sustainable considerations due to the cost and unclear idea about the concept. While 30% of the companies were in the 'usually' and 'rarely' response category. Cost factor accounted as the reason for 30% of the companies to not being able to use sustainable considerations in planning, unclear ideas was the cause for 40% companies, lack of time and other reasons were for 30% of the companies.

Surprisingly, only 55% of the companies were of the view that sustainable events will gather enough attention in future, 15% of the respondents felt otherwise and 30% of the respondents were not sure about the future for sustainable events.

Of the companies who have been in event business for more than 8 years, 75% of them are always using sustainable considerations in their events







Conclusion:

In the present day, where environment is a serious concern and the number of threats are looming large over the Indian economy, sustainability is the required tool that will salvage the future and not compromise on the well-being of the future generation and the society at large. The Event Industry should do its part and contribute to the efforts being made by other sectors of the economy in this direction. There needs to be more awareness among the Event Management Companies about this issue and they need to be made sensitive towards the same. While 55% of the companies felt that sustainable events will gather enough attention in future, only 20% of the companies are actually using these considerations in their events. Companies who have been in operation for more than 8 years i.e. a long time period are able to think and make efforts for Event Sustainability. The efforts by the Indian Event Management Companies are seen mainly towards waste management and non-use of plastic. Another major factor in not using sustainable considerations by the companies is the lack of interest as the Events Industry is glamorous in nature and the cost is ultimately borne by the Client. The Event Organizer has a minor role as the requirements are given by the Clients.

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