



A Survey of Literature Festivals Organised in the City of Nagpur from the Year 2024–2026 (March)

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Abstract

Mapping the evolution of literary festivals in the city of Nagpur as this happens to be a major trendsetter of books, authors and reading, this paper is a survey undertaken at different literature festivals which happened in the city during the year 2024-26 (in between March 24 to March 26). Working under a RDC RTM Nagpur University grant the research aims at analysing various facets related to lit fests. How the city of Nagpur is upcoming with these lit fests organised as a factor for literary tourism; how intellectual stimulation and brainstorming is inculcating a socio-cultural ethos in the city with these lit fests. This paper particularly deals with the survey undertaken while working on the aforementioned project. Data collated and analysed is used to draw certain conclusions regarding number of aspects of the lit fests.

Keywords: Lit fests, Literary tourism, socio-cultural ethos, reading, city of Nagpur.

Introduction

Event tourism is at nascent stage in India but the sprout of literary events in the country in the recent past has accelerated the idea. The Jaipur Literature Festival pioneered the burgeoning of literary festivals all across India. From metros to smaller cities, these festivals paved the way for an atmosphere of intense deliberations. Not only these fests are

humming grounds of ideas, conclaves and dialogues, but also, they have stirred up a movement wherein the upcoming budding authors are finding a platform to reach out to audiences. The connect between the author and the reader is quite palpable. Gone are the days of the reclusive authors who would shy away from the limelight; the lit fests act as a bridge between the audience and the writer.

Celebrating Indian literary titans and their works, the larger scale festivals are also commanding an international presence with the foreign authors. The Jaipur Literature Festival has become a name to reckon with and put India on the global literary map. The boom in literary festivals has also helped the Indian book market and publishing industry to flourish and grow manifolds. Recent statistics shows that India now produces about 60 literature festivals every year with new festivals been added annually. There is The Hay Festival of Literature and Arts in Kerala, Tata Literature Live! Festival in Mumbai, while Kolkata has Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival. The Winter Literary Festival at Mussoorie, the Spring Fever Festival in Delhi, Bangalore Literature Festival, The Times Literary Carnival, The Kala Ghoda Arts Festival, the largest children's book festival Bookaroo, the largest comic book and graphic novel festival Comic Con etc. are equally attracting larger audiences.

Literature festivals in Nagpur

Representation is the key for any city. IInd tier cities need to be on the global map. With literary fests acting as agents of literary tourism they make sure that the city creates its presence. The city of Nagpur has been organizing literary fests since last few years but there has been no cognizance taken about the same in the form of a literary endeavor. Ironically these lit fests have been relegated to background foreshadowed by the other populist events. The aim of this survey was to bridge this gap of knowledge by mapping the different lit fests held in the city. The literary landscape of the city would definitely flourish by such an offering which in turn would lead to serious contemplation of the lit fests as something more than entertainment. Other than few journalistic writings ensuring its occurrence these lit fests have not been actively probed. Giving it a shape by analytical enquiry would entail that more scholarly work would be followed up.

Despite their growing importance in creation of a world literature, literature festivals have driven little scholarly attention so far other than channels of cultural consumption. So, I consider here how literary festivals reflect and contribute altogether to shape the structure of the transnational literary field. This mapping out the evolution and growth of lit fests in an upcoming city (Nagpur), which according to data available claims to be the 5th fastest growing city in the world, would definitely mark its presence and have an impact.

The city of Nagpur is of utmost geographical importance as it is the center of our country India. Also, the winter capital of the state of Maharashtra, this orange city is pivotal politically as well economically. So, any study focused on the socio, political, economic, cultural inference would be a welcome addition. More so when there has been no precedence of the kind. The present paper would be first of its kind investigating the history and evolution of lit fests in the centrally located city of Nagpur. Studying the occurrence of different lit fests, across the city irrespective of the language, like The OCLF (Orange City Lit Fest), VLF (Vidarbha Lit Fest), the fest organized by VSS (Vidarbha Sahitya Sangh) are some of the highlights.

The primary aim of the study is to find the impact of these lit fests on the reading public in the city. The various socio-cultural, eco-political implications of the literature festivals will also be studied. Whether the lit fests act as catalyst in augmenting literary tourism is one most important objective of the research. The objectives of the research included investigating the impetus lit fests exert on the reading public of the city while reviewing a number of other factors like the footfall in such events, the most appreciated zone of sessions, the best liked authors to name a few.

The lit fests organized in any city becomes integral to the socio-cultural ethos construed. The nucleus of the research is to gain and nurture the socio-cultural values inculcated

in such erudite symposiums. The study works on the hypothesis that added to the entertainment value of the lit fest is the crucial aspect of the fest being a hub of intellectual stimulation; a terrain for proliferation of rational ideas. The lit fest is at the crux of the author publisher network is another assumption. The outreach these fests generate with the readers/ audiences/ viewership is another extremely pivotal point to be approached.

Methodology

The present study is exploratory in nature observing the different parameters involved in the organization of literature festivals in the city of Nagpur. Both the qualitative and quantitative approach are inducted during the course of research. This paper is a comprehensive study capturing the possible dimensions promoted by these lit festivals.

This exploratory study draws on inferences from participants associated with lit festival attendance. The study presented here adopts an inductive and interpretivist approach. The present research explores the clout a city develops with a literature festival being organized; how the fest creates a lasting impression as regards to indoctrination of values amongst the participants. The reading public is the focus as the sample with the organizers of the fest. The inference drawn can be positively leading to the sprout of more such lit fests in the city and at a much wider level.

To understand the relationship between books, reading habits and lit fests, their reach and role in promoting reading and literature, a predesigned questionnaire containing multiple-choice questions was distributed to the festival visitors during the following literature festivals in Nagpur. Also different questionnaires

- Orange City Literature Festival, November 2024
- Orange City Literature Festival, November 2025

In spite of copious attempts this survey couldn't be undertaken at the lit fests in the metros during the events like Mumbai Lit Fest and Bangalore Lit Fest due to lack of support from the organizers. As Vidarbha Lit Fest was not organized during the tenure of this survey i.e. 2024-25, the number of respondents were limited. Also, National Book Trust, New Delhi had organized a National Book Fair for the very first time in Nagpur in the year 2025 November. Multiple efforts to have an outreach to the audiences visiting the fest to collect data didn't come to fruition.

The observations gathered during these events though has made way into the conclusions formed in the study. The exploratory observation method became integral leading to the final conclusions.

Analysis and Findings

A total of n 287 responses were collected from the field visits at these lit fests, which were later collated, tabulated and analysed. Majority of the responses received were complete and substantiated the hypothesis of the research confirming the positive aspects of reading. There were multiple questionnaires- for the participants, for the authors, moderators and commentators. One questionnaire focused on the visiting working professionals as well. The organisers of the OCLF were kind enough to grant us permission for this activity and the lit fest director Dr. Mrunal Naik was even interviewed. Her insights from the viewpoint of an organiser sheds invaluable light on this concept of lit fest event.

Some of the significant findings of the study are reported below:

- Among the respondents, 215 were male (75.12 per cent) and 72 were female (24.19 per cent). The acquired data showed a strong gender imbalance, with male respondents forming the majority. This slant may influence responses, particularly in areas like inclusivity and engagement.

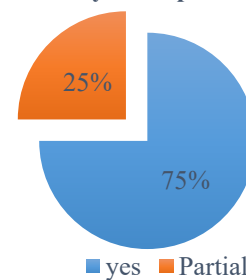
The cogency of findings is limited due to lack of diversity in respondents.

- More than two-thirds (70 per cent) of the respondents were in the age group of 18-35 years, followed by 20 per cent in the age group of 35 plus years.
- As far as the outreach of these fests is concerned a majority of participants believe the event helps them reach new audiences. This finding specifies strong perceived ROI (Return on Investment), suggesting the event is valuable for professional exposure and networking expansion.
- Analysing the ratio of participation in the lit fests in the city of Nagpur it can be clearly deduced that there is an extremely high proportion of returning participants. This echoes strong participant retention and satisfaction, indicating brand loyalty and positive past experiences. Coupled with the fact that there's a serious dearth of like-minded activities in the city. The upcoming metro city Nagpur is revolving into; citizens definitely look forward to have spaces of intellectual stimulation.
- Event organization in the lit fests witnessed by the city of Nagpur in the year 2024-25 is rated highly by most participants. While overall functioning of the fest is remarkable, the presence of mid-level ratings suggests inconsistencies in delivery across sessions. Another question analysis reflects that the participants are divided on the session's structure and duration. This reveals a mismatch between content, depth or intensity and time allocation of the sessions held, indicating the need for better scheduling and session design.
- The key enquiry into diversity and representation shows a poor picture as most

respondents are unsure about diversity representation. This suggests a visibility problem rather than absence of diversity – representation may exist but is not clearly communicated or perceived.

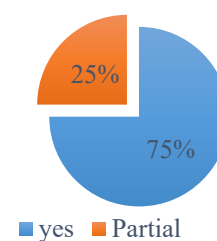
- The overall audience engagement during the festival was well above average, 75% to be exact. However, this engagement is influenced by location and audience familiarity, indicating varying intellectual participation levels. Readers who were well versed with the framework of the fest found it easy to have an enriching experience as compared to the amateurs. It didn't deter the enthusiasm of the first-time visitors.

Summary of respondents perception



- What can be perceived from the analysed data is that the content largely meets participant expectations. The variety, structure and modules of the fest align well with audience interests, signifying efficacy of the event planning.

Summary of respondents perception



- The most imperative finding of the research in the form of the social, economic networking has been proved true without a doubt. Most participants find networking extremely beneficial. In fact, these lit fest act as the hub of the nexus between author, publisher and the reader. The assumed hypothesis comes true in favour of the fests acting as the literary space creating multiple networking sites. The event functions as a social capital hub, facilitating professional and intellectual exchange.
- Regarding the logistics of the event overall there is evenly split feedback. Rather than one major flaw, multiple minor inefficiencies emerged through logistics, validating a gap for improvement.
- Analysing the participation in the fest as participants mostly all were local. This does direct limited geographic reach which is ironic as the city of Nagpur is centrally located in India and is well connected as regards to transportation. The imbalance is the outreach of the fest which at times could be limited only to a certain kind of academically, intellectual audience. Inculcating reading amongst the young generation is affected due to this.

The authors mostly and few moderators did travel to the city for the fest exclusively. Other than these people the audience was limited to the city which was also observed during the visits to different lit fests like MLF in Mumbai and BLF in Bangalore. As part of the survey the various conversations/ observations explored at these fests, which were definitely organised on a larger scale, it was deduced that the participants/ audience generally is from the city. Travelling to these cities as a participant audience wasn't the norm. Again, the authors, moderators travelled from all over the world for ex. Kiran Desai, Amit Chaudhari or Quey Mai (Vietnamese author) visiting BLF IN December 2024 to name a few. These fests actually added to the literary travel concept developed on the lines of Jaipur lit fest which

has become central to the narrative of literary tourism.

- Nagpur as a city is yet to come on the front lines as far as the aspect of lit tourism is concerned but one can't deny the gathering of authors and moderators to the city for the same. As seen in the investigation during the survey there's evidence that 75% of the respondents are affirmative in their belief that these fests promote the city. The event contributes to cultural positioning, helping establish the city as a literary hub. It can be fairly concluded that there's huge potential for expansion to attract a wider audience at these fests leading to the city.
- One most insightful and much required query was analysed that the book sales and the consumer behaviour were definitely influenced by these fests. The sessions, discussions and the interactions witnessed at the different lit fests of MLF and BLF had paved the way for the assumption and later the survey cemented the stance that purchasing decisions are highly influenced. These fests create a positive curiosity for the work discussed and the authors participating leading to very favourable economy for the organiser. To conclude, it can be justly said that consumer behavior is driven by discounts and exclusivity (e.g., signed copies), reflecting principles of behavioral economics. The queues observed at the bookstores with the luminaries like Shashi Tharoor, Just. D.Y. Chandrachud, Jerry Pinto at MLF or William Dalrymple, Sudha Murthy, Chetan Bhagat at BLF spoke volumes about the audience outlook.
- Finally reflecting on the overall experience of the fest for the participants the event's satisfaction levels are high. 75% of the participants favoured the fest's conceptualisation indicating an elevated perceived value. Notwithstanding few minor organisational, structural concerns, these lit fests guarantee and deliver a

resilient, holistic and comprehensive experience.

Conclusion

Mapping the lit fests organised in the city of Nagpur in the year 2024-25, certain conclusions were reached at the end of the survey. The observance of the publisher and the author network, the celebrity status accorded to writers, the interactions between the audiences and the attending authors are the highlight of these fests. These lit fests create a narrative which is effectively considering all the major stakeholders of the fest, right from the authors/moderators, to publishers and most importantly audiences.

The literary platform these fests provide to existing and more so budding authors is undeniable. The number of authors attending the fest are all from different branches of learning which cements the interdisciplinary nature of the fest. Lit fests are not limited to any one subject area; the dialogues happening in are varied with multi-lingual, multi-dimensional, multi-area of studies being interrogated. The creation of a transnational literary space during the fests is the foremost outcome of these events. The intellectual stimulation, coming together of like-minded people with the aim of inculcating reading habits amongst the young generation is the upshot of the fests. This space nurtures the young minds to think and grow. Also, there's a strong presence of socio-cultural ethos evolving at this kind of events.

Literary tourism in the city of Nagpur definitely is on the rise, but not at par with other metros. Nagpur as a city is inching ahead with the organisation of literature festivals happening at different levels. What can be easily deduced is a huge gap in terms of organisation, flawless execution of sessions, dearth of big, celebrity authors and an inhibited audience response. With a positive attempt by lit fests like OCLF, it can be assumed as paving the way for future literary endeavours.

A cultural ecosystem is being set with the organisation of such lit fests which definitely have socio, cultural, political and economic implications.

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