

50% bookings for The Golden Chariot received at WTM for 2014 and 2015

The Golden Chariot has grown into a popular product, and the manner in which enquiries keep coming in from various markets is an indication of its popularity in the market.

Being South India's only luxury tourist train, it has easily gained recognition with the travel trade community across markets. After the first two years, a steady occupancy rate of 40% has been clocked. In between there have been fully booked charters too, like the trip slated for 25th November 2013, which has been chartered by a Japanese group.

Tour Operators from the UK, USA, Canada, Germany and even South America approached The Golden Chariot and bookings for up to 50% of the train's capacity for the years 2014 and 2015 have been made. An increasing number of agents have shown interest to market the luxury train exclusively (as luxury train products) in respective markets. Enquiries to charter the train trips and also for special events (incentives, marriages, conferences) aboard The Golden Chariot were also received.

Mr. Arvind Jadhav, Additional Chief Secretary-Tourism, Govt. of Karnataka who led the Karnataka Tourism delegation at the World Travel Market this year, says that a certain amount of destination branding took place as a result of marketing The Golden Chariot. Mr. Jadhav says, "I've heard people say, 'oh, this is the place where The Golden Chariot runs'. In today's competitive world of travel, it pays a lot to get branded in a particular way, or known for a particular distinguishing product. The Golden Chariot has done just that."

"We've had many fruitful discussions with members of the travel trade community to look at ways to increase footfalls and also look into suggestions in product upgrades and modifications. For instance, there's been considerable demand about including Hyderabad, which only recently added. But now, we are trying to see how we can integrate the region to the product. Several rounds of discussions have taken place and I believe we are near a solution. There are demands from certain operators like Eurasia to include more States in the itinerary, especially for Charters', said Mr. Jadhav.

The Golden Chariot, despite the adverse market conditions where most Indian luxury trains are seeing a slump of more than 30% compared to last year, certainly looks to emerge even stronger.