

TOURISM MARKETING VIA SOCIAL MEDIA IN INDIA: THE MOST EFFECTIVE MARKETING STRATEGY TO EVOLVE INDIAN TOURISM

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Article Info:

Received: 22-05-2019

Revised: 26-05-2019

Accepted: 29-05-2019

Keywords:

Tourism Marketing

Social Media

Strategy

India

Abstract

Tourism is being undoubtedly a vital part of human life. Everyday a good number of people keep travelling from one place to another place for various reasons. India is one of the finest tourist destinations among the world for its rich tourism resources. Therefore it receives a huge amount of tourists every day from all over the world with the help of tourism marketing and it has helped the country to achieve a satisfactory position in the world tourism ranking. Lately the use of Social Media has proven to be a dominant force in marketing of tourism. The purpose of this research is to discuss about the social media as an effective platform of tourism marketing. This research has been done by performing a survey on 300 people; based on the effectiveness of social media in their personal travel experience. According to the findings of the survey, it has been seen that even though there is availability of various mode of tourism marketing but social media is found to be the most efficient mode.

1. INTRODUCTION

Coltman (1989) defines tourism marketing as a management philosophy that, in the light of tourist demand, makes it possible through research, forecasting and selection to place tourism products on the market in line with the origins purpose for greatest benefits. The tourism in India has been increasing gradually only because of tourism marketing. According to the report of Indian Tourism Statistics (2018) India has received a total number of

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1,00,35,803 foreign tourists in the year of 2017 which was 14 % more than the previous year and the growth rate is increasing tremendously every year. Tourists are being attracted to India because of its rich cultural diversity, geographical locations, prestigious history as well as its Authentic Cuisine. As India is a developing country; it has shown its potential in various sectors but out of those two major sectors are tourism and technology. According to the reports of Statista, India is the second largest online market with over 460 million internet users and it has been also assumed that by 2021, there will be about 635.8 million users. And out of 460 million internet users 226.06 million people used Social Media till the end of 2018 and it is assumed that the number of social media will be increased to 336.18 million by 2021. Social media has been proven to be a very beneficial platform for Marketing of Tourism as it is a cost effective way of marketing. Social media plays a major role in expanding the information regarding the tourism product of India to the people all over the world. In fact, urging the tourist to visit India resulting in contribution to the country's economy. Tourism marketing through social media creates an opportunity to grab potential customers by increasing their brand recognition and improving their brand loyalty.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are;

- To learn about tourism marketing in India,
- To measure the involvement of an individual with social media,
- To identify the relationship between tourism marketing and social media,
- To observe the necessity of social media in terms of tourism marketing in India.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Kumar (2017) tourism in India is the largest service industry and it holds deliberate significance in the Indian economy. Social media plays a big role in the development of the tourism industry in India. But due to the geographical constraints or lack of information, many tourism products are yet to be offered to the consumers. However, with the introduction and development of technologies in tourism industry (Internet and Social Media), there has been a drastic change in a positive manner. Consumers are able to update themselves through various platforms of social media like facebook, instagram, twitter, blogs, vlogs, reviews etc. of any tourism product before having a personal experience. In a country like India media are continually featuring the customers about the spots of traveler intrigue,

the travel industry, vacationer season (pinnacle and lean), picture, assets, accommodations, people groups, culture and legacy to take into account the necessities of forthcoming and genuine visitors (Kumar, 2014). Marketing plays a vital role in the expansion of the organization and to build up a name for itself in the competitive market. Marketing enables to identify the target audience in the market and accordingly develop products and offer services to the public. It is also necessary to establish good relationship among the public and the organization. Strategic marketing should directly or indirectly be connected with the general public's need. Marketing helps in understanding the customer's purchasing decisions and assists the organization to flourish for a longer term by maintaining a healthy relation. The marketing strategy of an organization should focus on customer satisfaction and well-being of the society (Kotler, 1996). Tourism means travelling from one destination to another for leisure or business; basically outside their native place. It is the standard and organized business strategy to achieve optimum delight of the requirement of consumer; be it private or state owned, national or international. The tourism marketing needs a solid marketing strategy. With increase in number of destinations, the practice of seeking attention and to attract tourists is obvious. Tourism industry has become one of the competitive industries in the market and hence, the strategy for marketing should to up to the mark. The sole purpose of the marketing in tourism is to produce right product or services to the right audience and sustain tourism growth (Krippendorf, 2016). Internet has been used as the medium for promotional activities in tourism sector. As tourism industry mostly deliver intangible products, Internet or Social media has started being used as a new marketing approach. Social Media can be a lethal weapon to build awareness about the tourism products and services, showcase the authenticity and provide general information and support to the identifiable consumer groups (Sahin, 2015). Kumar (2015) has researched that social media has turned out to be one of the quickest developing advertising apparatuses among present Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to achieve various clients and to deal with a colossal database of their inclinations, buy records. It has changed the method for visitor to seek, discover, channel the data and settle on a buy choice without investing much energy and cash. Client Generated Content settles on choices dependent on client experiences, their visits, sites, likes, photograph sharing and references. The use of internet and social media leads to a new epoch of tourism economy by making it more convenient and easy. Social media, as one of the indomitable online marketing tool, has been blended into a part of social and economic life in the modern world. In the world full of science and technology, social media has been an essential component which has completely shattered the barriers between the tourism

industry and the tourists. Social media has influenced almost all the tourism organizations or industry to use it as a marketing tool. Hence, there is nothing wrong in saying that Social media has outplayed all the tourism marketing strategies in the market (Zeng, 2013).

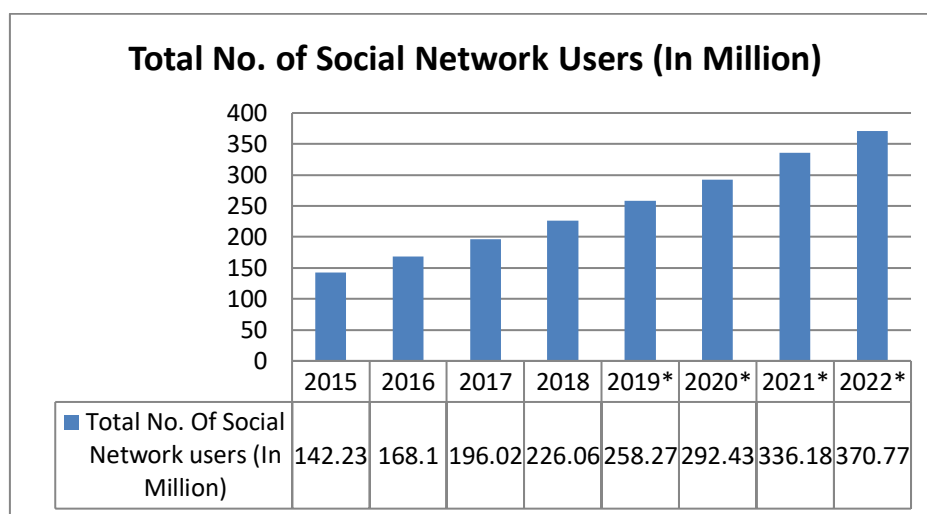
4. METHODOLOGY

The aim of this research is to discuss the efficiency of the social media in this competitive tourism marketing. For doing this research data was collected from two different sources i.e. primary and secondary. Primary data is obtained by performing a public survey of 300 people which were above the age level of 20. Secondary data is taken from various sources and those include books, journals, magazines, newspaper, articles, annual tourism report and Internet.

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The below graph has been taken from Internet usage in India - Statistics & Facts (n.d.) which shows the numerical status of total number of social network users from the year 2015 to 2022 in India. According to this graph, it has been seen that the number of social network users are rapidly increasing every year. In the year of 2015, the total numbers of social network users were 142.23 million and it has increased to 26.47 million, 27.92 million and 30.04 million in the year 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively. Statista assumed that by the end of 2019, the number of user would be 258.27 million. It has also presumed that there will be a drastic change between the years 2020 to 2021 and it may reach up to 370.77 million in 2022.

Graph 1: Number of social network users in India from 2015 to 2022 (in millions)



Source: Statista

Table 1 represents the average time period that an individual spend on social media in a day. A field survey has been performed among 300 people where 172 were male and 128 were female and their age was above 20. According to the survey, it has been seen that the 26 people (8.7%) stay active on social media for less than 1 hour, 45 people (15%) for 1-2 hours, 48 people (16%) for 2-3 hours, 33 people (11%) for 3-4 hours, 29 people (9.7%) for 4-5 hours and out of 300 people 119 people stay active in social media more than 5 hours in a day that represents 39.7% of the total number of people.

Table 1: Percentage of staying active on Social Media in a day by an individual

Duration	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total No. of the Respondents	Percentage of the Respondents
Below 1 hour	18	8	26	8.7%
1-2 hours	30	15	45	15%
2-3 hours	29	19	48	16%
3-4 Hours	17	16	33	11%
4-5 Hours	15	14	29	9.7%
5+ Hours	63	56	119	39.6%
Total	172	128	300	100%

Source: Field Survey

Table 2 represent the total percentage of people who checks the rating of a particular destination before visiting that place. 10 respondents (3.3%) strongly disagreed on checking the rating before visiting, 16 respondents (5.3%) disagreed, 57 respondents (19%) were neutral (sometimes they check and sometimes they don't), 94 respondents (31.3%) agreed and 123 respondents strongly agreed that they certainly check the ratings of the destination before visiting and i.e. 41% of the total number of respondents.

Table 2: Percentage of checking the ratings in social media of a particular destination before visiting by an individual

I check the ratings of any particular destination before visiting that place in social media	Remarks	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total No. of the Respondents	Percentage of the Respondents
	Strongly Agree	75	48	123	41%
	Agree	53	41	94	31.3%
	Neutral	33	24	57	19%
	Disagree	7	9	16	5.3%
	Strongly Disagree	4	6	10	3.4%
Total		172	128	300	100%

Source: Field Survey

Table 3 shows the percentage of the people about their opinion on sharing their travel experience on social media. 6 respondents (2%) strongly disagreed on sharing their travel experience in social media, 25 respondents (8.3%) disagreed, 58 respondents (19.3%) were neutral (sometimes they do share and sometimes they don't), 93 respondents (31%) agreed

and 118 respondents strongly agreed that they certainly share their travel experience in social media and i.e. 39.3% of the total number of respondents.

Table 3: Percentage of sharing travel experiences on social media by an individual

	Remarks	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total No. of the Respondents	Percentage of the Respondents
I share my travel experiences in social media	Strongly Agree	84	34	118	39.3%
	Agree	50	43	93	31%
	Neutral	24	34	58	19.3%
	Disagree	12	13	25	8.4%
	Strongly Disagree	2	4	6	2%
Total		172	128	300	100%

Source: Field Survey

Table 4 represents all about the medium of advertisement which attracts the respondent most.

Table 4: Percentage of the most attractive medium of advertisement according to the respondents

Medium of Advertisement	Male Respondents	Female Respondents	Total No. of the Respondents	Percentage of the Respondents
Social Media	121	95	216	72%
Leaflet	2	0	2	0.7%
Magazines	1	9	10	3.3%
News paper	10	7	17	5.7%
Websites	21	6	27	9%
Word of Mouth	17	11	28	9.3%
Total	172	128	300	100%

Source: Field Survey

According to the survey report it has been seen that Word of Mouth is the most attractive advertisement method for 28 respondents (9.3%), Websites attract 27 respondents (9%), Newspaper attracts 17 respondents (5.7%), Magazines attract 10 respondents (3.3%), Leaflet attracts 2 respondents (0.7%) and 216 respondents chose the Social Media as the most attractive advertisement medium i.e. 72% of the total number of respondents.

6. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This study has been led to look at the social networking use in the travel industry advertising. Online networking is progressively getting to be imperative today; this impact is likewise essentially influence the travel industry showcase. When we analyze the review results, unmistakably the travel industry inclinations of youthful age are influenced by remarks via social media networking. From Graph 1, it can be said that the number of social media user is increasing and it will keep on increasing gradually. It has been noticed that 39.7 % people stay active on social media for more than 5 hours in a day (Table 1), 41% people

strongly agreed that they check the ratings of a particular destination before visiting (Table 2), 39.3% people strongly agreed on sharing their personal travel experience (Table 3) and 72% people chose social media as the most attractive advertisement method (Table 4). By analyzing all the data, it can be determined that social media is the most effective strategy to develop the Indian Tourism Industry.

7. CONCLUSION

Tourism industry is one of the largest industries of India. Indian tourism industry is expanding rapidly only because of its quality tourism marketing and broad utilization of social media in India is also expanding step by step. So the utilization of social media can be a superior route for the height of tourism marketing and marketing through social media assumes an essential job in numerous parts of the travel industry, particularly in data hunt and basic leadership practices and the travel industry advancement concentrating on best practices for communicating with purchasers by means of social networking channels. Indeed, even the statistics of field survey propose that the promotion through social media can be guaranteed as the catchiest type of tourism marketing. The development of the social media in advancing the travel industry assets of India ought not to be neglected as it can assume a noteworthy job in boosting country's economy.

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