

ROLE OF MEDIA IN TOURISM & NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

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Abstract:

*Matru Devo Bhava
Pitru Devo Bhava
Aachaarya Devo Bhava
Athithi Devo Bhavo
- Tittariya Upanishad*

Respects to Mother, Father, Guru and Guest. They are all forms of God.

The saying shows the importance and significance of "GUEST" in India. From the days of Vedas , we Indians consider 'tourist' as a welcome 'guest' and we give top priority to "Yatrik" or tourist as an important guest and treat him with all the respect and grandeur. This is the culture ...This is the tradition....This is the respect that we repose on tourists. Hence tourists from all over the world are welcome guests in India to see the splendour, beauty and magnificence of our land and go back with cherished memories. Not only tourists from abroad but also tourists from among the states and within the states of this country of rich and varied cultures often do visit various places as part of their pilgrimage and or a part of vacation etc., As media and communication go hand in hand, tourism communication opened threshold digitally to the whole world.

Key Words: *Tourism, Indian scenario, media, ICT, social media etc.,*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the last two decades has dramatically transformed the tourism industry. At the tactical level, ICTs enabled e Commerce and helped tourism organisations maximise efficiency and effectiveness whereas at the strategic level, ICTs have helped to restructure the travel and tourism value chain as well as the relationships between tourism organisations and their stakeholders. Modern travellers are exigent and constantly in need of information during the entire process of travel.

Information is the lifeblood of the tourism industry, and the uses of ICTs have always played a critical role in distribution and management (O'Connor and Frew 2004; Sheldon 1997). It's from the development of Computer Reservation Systems (CRSs) in the 1970s to the Global Distribution Systems (GDSs) in the 1980s until the advent of the Internet in early 1990s, the tourism industry has always been confronted with the rise of new developments that posed as both opportunities and challenges . The tourism industry became one of the leaders in the use of the Internet as this new tool was enabling them to communicate easily and effectively with their existing and potential customers. Every Almost all the tourism organizations have developed their own websites today, and many have gone through the evolution from a simple 'electronic brochure' to highly interactive systems that supported reservations, search and even virtual tours; importantly, the website had become the primary (and in many circumstances, the only) source of contact with potential visitors.

In the later part of the decade, the introduction of smart phones, mobile computing systems that incorporate a variety of technologies including communications, global positioning systems (GPS), photography and the Internet, enriched the social environment further such that it empowers users to substantially control their travel experience anytime, anywhere. The Internet, together with the new interactive way of communication provided by social media and with the location based browsing, fundamentally changed the nature of travel and tourism communication and marketing (Gretzel et al. 2006).

It's all an accepted fact that travel and tourism organizations rely upon the Internet to facilitate users' experience when approaching the destination in the online environment . On the other hand hospitality businesses also

put a lot of effort in creating the hotel website to be the focal point of the digital marketing and communication strategy as well as of the digital selling , thus fostering disintermediation.

Two decades of ICT development has changed the fundamental nature of tourism communication. Today's tourism businesses are engaging travellers and guests with richer content and higher level of interactivity as well as through various socially constructed media spaces. Without doubt, ICT will continue to evolve and consequently drive tourism communication and marketing.

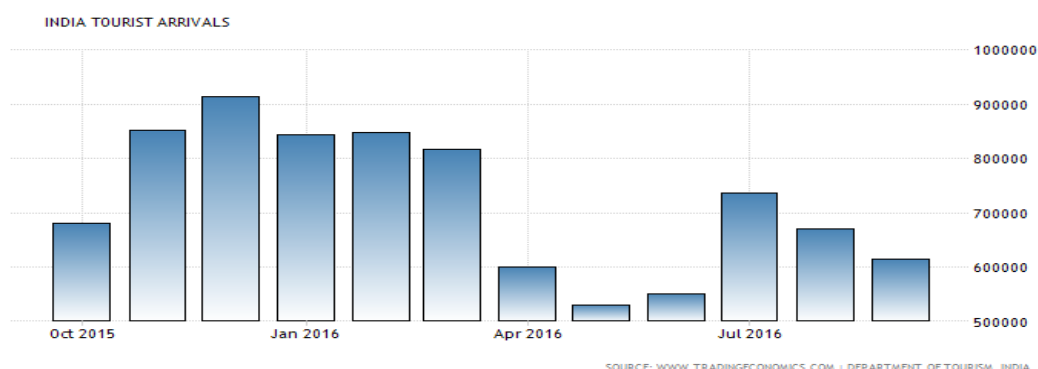
The role that the media is playing in the various aspects of life is becoming increasingly greater each day, especially in spheres like social interaction, and cultural and educational aspects of our life. As archaeological monuments can articulate the traditions, customs and heritage of the past, the media can in its turn clarify today's values and civilizations of the different countries and hence attempt to correct any widespread erroneous information. Both the media and archaeological monuments have messages and missions with various dimensions The media contributes greatly in activating tourist attractions.

When speaking of tourism policy that focuses on specific areas of tourism, the media become a mediator between tourism and society, meaning that they mediate in a process of conveying tourism products from the producers to the consumers. Media communications technologies are imperative for frontline investments for sustainable globalised tourism development indicators. The powerful effects of media communications can bring sweeping changes of attitudes and behaviour among the key actors in local, national and global tourism for peace, security and sustainable development. The social, cultural, economic, political and environmental benefits of tourism would usher in monumental and historic changes in the country. As the verdict goes, the media has a social responsibility to enhance the blending of local, national and international cultural values for enriched politics, society and economy. Public communications strategy based on access to quality information and knowledge will drive the new global tourism through partnership initiatives such as: peace and security, conflict resolutions for eco tourism, quality tourism, Joint ventures, technology transfer, etc.

The media have a crucial role to play in putting emerging destinations. The relationship between tourism and the media is vital and complex. Tourism is highly dependent on media reporting because the vast majority of travel decisions are made by people who have never seen the destination first hand for themselves. When there is bad news or a crisis the impact on tourism can be devastating. Tourists are scared away from destinations caught in the glare of round-the-clock disaster coverage, causing communities dependent on tourism to lose their source of livelihood. This has happened during terrorist and unruly incidents in different countries and Tsunami and cyclones. The tourist arrivals have drastically come down to India and Nepal after Tsunami. The situation was quite noticeable in Chennai, Visakhapatnam and Andaman and Nicobar Islands after Hudhud cyclone. The media came down with pull-outs and regular stories of Hudhud and its fury and devastation . It took four to six months time to get to normalcy in the said areas.

2. INDIA TOURIST ARRIVALS: 2000-2016 Data Chart

Tourist Arrivals in India decreased to 615000 in September from 670000 in August of 2016. Tourist Arrivals in India averaged 422849.93 from 2000 until 2016, reaching an all time high of 913000.00 in December of 2015 and a record low of 129286.00 in May of 2001.



This page provides - India Tourist Arrivals - actual values, historical data, forecast, chart, statistics, economic calendar and news. India Tourist Arrivals - actual data, historical chart and calendar of releases - was last updated on December of 2016.

Actual	Previous	Highest	Lowest	Dates	Unit	Frequency
615000.00	670000.00	913000.00	129286.00	2000 - 2016		Monthly

On the other hand, technology and social media is evolving very fast these days. Social media is growing very fast in particular. Social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and YouTube are very popular websites with a big influence on the world but out of all four, Facebook is the winner. Because these websites are very popular, there is a huge influence on Travel and Tourism industry. The travel and tourism agencies are able to make announcements about their offers and travelling destinations online.

When people search for a new travel destination they usually get recommendations from friends or family, but mostly from social ads. Because of social media websites, the travellers post their pictures and videos from their vacation. They can check-in to several locations and also post online reviews of the place they were visiting. After the vacation, people post more pictures on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube.

One may agree or disagree, but social media is definitely influencing the travel and tourism industry in a very positive manner. Exquisite destinations are now made famous by friends and family, giving tourism agencies more clients owing to free advertisement of these unexplored destinations.

3. BLOGGING AND TRAVELLING:

Blogging is the new communication technology. The new trend in today's society is blogging. A blog is a website that is more personal. There are a lot of people that have a blog on tourism. These blogs describe locations vividly starting from the hotel that they stayed at to the travel agency they used. This is again free advertising which helps the travel and tourism companies a lot. A survey showed that companies with a travel blog generated 88% more inbound leads than those who did not have one.

4. SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACTING TRAVEL AND TOURISM:

With today's technology, there is an app for almost everything, especially for hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions and museums. A lot of different surveys showed that a significant amount of people use apps for travel information and to have a better knowledge about a certain place. They may ask a friend, a forum, a family member, or look through different travelling and tourism apps. Owing to these different apps and because of social media, more and more people will find out about a different location. They can read some reviews about the place, or read some blog posts. Moreover, some special offers like honeymoon packages for the newly married couples which includes airfare, accommodation and/or food has become popular among salaried new generation couples.

Tourism is the biggest industry in the world from the point of view of turnover. The capital investment in this industry is now even more than oil-industry. Many countries in Europe and Asia now completely depend on the income coming from tourism. Again being labour oriented industry, tourism generates maximum employment directly or indirectly.

5. INDIAN SCENARIO:

In India, tourism is a late started industry though it is far rich in potentiality of tourism compared to many other countries in the world. After the independence, the Govt. started taking plans to organize and develop the tourism destinations scattered all over the country. Now tourism in India is in such a position which is desirable in country's economy. From the civil aviation to hotel industry, everywhere the infrastructural development is

remarkable. After the reformation of Indian economy in 1990 with the open policy taken by the then Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is now increasing gradually.

The steps taken by Govt. –

- 1} Plans for regional development with the help of tourism where other industries are not in their best.
- 2} Started one – window policy to boost the direct and as well as indirect investment in tourism.
- 3} Plans preservation of cultural, heritage and environment at tourist destinations to attract more tourists.
- 4} Development of infrastructure to meet the present and future needs of tourist.
- 5} Started different types of luxurious trains like Palace on Wheels, Royal Orient or Deccan Queens.
- 6} Developing basic infrastructure.
- 7} Started overseas offices at different countries to promote India as a tourism destination.
- 8} Proper coordination between the states and central tourism departments been ordered to develop the destinations.
- 9} Started different packages to attract for those destinations attracting more tourists.
- 10} Developed different Tourism Circuits like Golden Triangle or Buddhist Circuit to attract more tourists.
- 11} ITDC is now taking part in different tourism fairs all over the world.
- 12} Trying to provide best of the services in Air India and in Indian Rail.
- 13} Building accommodation in Govt. level and encouraging the private companies to invest in accommodation sector by giving them different tax benefits

6. MEDIA'S ROLE AND IMPACT:

Media should play a crucial role at such times. The role of media should be to inform and to educate. At the same time, media should get restrain itself while writing certain things , like publishing bloodshed pictures, publishing accidents on their front pages (colour pullouts). No doubt, media should project and write, news and happenings. There is no question about this. The moot question is that, “How far and at what velocity the daily or media hub comes out with the story is all the important..Due to hectic competition in the media houses and media channels, they compete each other, forgetting ‘ethics ‘ in journalism.

Tourism is a very sensitive area. Both foreign tourists and domestic tourists do visit places. Better project, smooth news , instead of highlighting ‘hard news’ every now and then...Media should give some space and time to highlight the Tourist places and mode of travel to reach the destinations. This kind of information not much available from the media, both print and electronic media as most the channels and dailies are busy in projecting mostly politics. If media can reach the much unexplored regions and publicise, the tourism potentiality of that place increases, hence increasing the state's finances. There are many such areas too.

CONCLUSION:

This is high time that, media should realize the saying, “*ATHIDHI DEVO BHAVA*” and rise to the occasion in attracting the tourists and also in their receiving end and travelling and transportation.All these precautions would attract tourists and thus help to enhance our economy and showcase our tradition and culture to the outside world.

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