

ANALYSING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN EVALUATING TOURISM DEPARTMENT INITIATIVES TO ATTRACT VISITORS TO INDIA

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Abstract

Social media is a boundaryless mass communication platform. Social media is widely used in India as it is most affordable in India as compared to other parts of the world. Decisions of traveling carry risk. To reduce such risk traveler's use social media to collect detailed information about places to visit, stay, cost of traveling and modes of tripartition etc. Travelers examine overall traveling experience on various platforms of social media before determining destination and traveling mode. cheapest in the world. Similarly, Tour Operators, Hotel Owners, Travel Planners are using social media platforms to create demand for traveling. Social media platforms are playing an important role of influencer at pre pre-buying stage of a traveler's travel decision. Social Media generates e-word of mouth about overall travel experience. Different platforms of social media have different influence levels.

The Indian Tourism sector contributes 5.16% to the Gross Domestic Product of the Country and creates employment for 6.30 million people in the country (Annual Report, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India). Indirectly speaking, social media is playing a key role in the growing economy of the country too.

Travel agency or Travel facilitator's information in official websites has lower reliability. The credibility of the content on social media is the biggest challenge (Rathonyl). Marketers have adopted user generated content to create trust and confidence in the content available on social media. Current research paper has examined current practices of various state governments and central governments for tourism activities in the country. Effective use of social media has increased traffic at various important destinations of the country. However, it has adversely affected the environment too. It leads to over tourism (Milano, C., Cheer, J. M., & Novelli, M.) in the country and it carries every evil of over tourism.

In India every state government has its own tourism department who is working in coordination with the central tourism department. Each tourism department has its own digital presence through websites and social media presence too. In the current research paper, an attempt has been made to critically examine efforts of various State owned Tourism departments to attract tourists through social media. India is considered to be the third most preferred travel destination in the world according to the World Tourism Council report 2023.

Social media is also suffering from negative images. The critical examination of practices revealed that several tour operators and touring service providers are presenting false information and false promises on various social media platforms. Travels have faced such frauds and financial losses too.

Keywords: Social media, Tourism, Tourism Department, Travel Plan.

INTRODUCTION

The Travel & Tourism sector is undergoing a transformative shift, with social media emerging as a pivotal influencer in shaping travel decisions. The captivating audio-visual allure of social platforms has become an invaluable wellspring of inspiration for ardent travelers. A recent survey conducted by Skyscanner underscored the profound impact of social media, revealing that approximately half of the respondents crafted their travel plans based on content encountered in these virtual realms.

World Tour and Tourism council report indicates that Instagram takes the lead as the preeminent source of travel ideas, commanding the preferences of 40% of participants. Following closely are Facebook (33%) and the dynamic platform TikTok (25%). This data illustrates the dynamic role of social media platforms in steering travel aspirations.

Venturing beyond mainstream platforms, a notable trend emerges in the form of virtual travel communities, exemplified by the Trip Moments Community. This innovative space empowers travel enthusiasts to seamlessly share captivating photos, insightful tips, and boundless inspiration. Astonishingly, the report reveals that 35% of app users on Trip.com actively engaged with Trip Moments in 2022. Intriguingly, a substantial 22% of these users were motivated to actualize their travel dreams by booking a trip within a month of immersing themselves in the platform's content.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND TOURISM SECTOR AT GLOBAL LEVEL

The escalating influence of social media finds its counterpart in the widespread adoption of mobile devices for travel bookings. Trip.com, a key player in this landscape, reported a remarkable doubling of downloads for its mobile application in 2022, a surge fueled by the symbiotic relationship with social media. This confluence of digital dynamism not only amplifies the reach of travel inspiration but also propels the mobile-centric evolution of the industry.

Presently, the sway of social media on travel choices is primarily concentrated within two demographics: the younger generation and leisure travelers. A notable 40% of Generation Z ('Gen Z') travelers, typically in their mid-20s or below, utilize social media platforms as integral tools for holiday planning, a percentage surpassing that of older generations, which stands at 29%. The allure lies in the visual narratives painted by friends and family who share picturesque holiday snapshots, acting as catalysts for the adventurous spirit of these younger travelers. Interestingly, for this cohort, social media platforms surpass the influence of traditional sources such as 'information from friends and family' and 'a random online search' in decision-making processes. Moreover, almost 20% of Gen Z travelers actively follow travel influencers, with particularly heightened engagement in regions like India, Italy, and Hong Kong.

In contrast, those aged 45 and above, adhering to conventional modes of travel reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations, exhibit a lower propensity to draw travel inspiration from social media channels. Additionally, a substantial 70% of business travelers within this demographic still prefer relying on written reviews when making their travel decisions.

Recognizing the pivotal role of social media in shaping travel preferences, destination management organizations and travel marketing professionals are strategically directing their efforts. This involves heightened investments in analytics to refine targeting and personalize advertisements. Simultaneously, a growing number of these entities are forming partnerships with social media influencers, recognizing their potential in expanding outreach to a broader customer base. As the cost of high-speed, reliable internet declines and the user base on social media platforms continues to ascend, coupled with the emergence of innovative virtual interaction methods, this trend is poised to gain further momentum.

According to American Express global Travel Trends Report social media is the greatest influencer amongst world tourists. Report indicates following: (on the basis of total 2 lakh travelers of the world)

- 75% of respondents agree that they have been inspired to travel to a specific destination by social media
- 57% of respondents agree that they like to capture content for their social media accounts during their travels
- 51% of respondents say that most of their inspiration for where to dine and what to eat while traveling comes from social media
- 49% of respondents say that a top motivation for traveling in 2023 is to visit a destination that will look great in photos/videos
- 48% of respondents say they want to travel somewhere they can "show off on social media"

POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a collection of two way communication platforms used across the world to exchange information. Across the world social media is a platform at which.....a number of people interact on a daily basis on various platforms for different purposes. 470.1 million active social media users in India on a monthly basis with an annual growth rate of 4.2 % during the financial year 2021-22. It indicates that almost one third of the population of the country is using social media and it is increasing too. On an average 2.6 hours are spent

by users on social media (across all the platforms). Social media is playing a key role in communication across the world. Social media has changed the Tourism industry across the globe. Tourism is an information based industry. In a simple way we can interpret this situation in a different way. Through social media one third of the nation is communication through social media. Social media is a platform where travelers across the world are generating, editing, sharing information constantly about places, facilities, culture and overall travel experience. Social media is continuously attracting travelers across the world due to following special features.

a. Borderless Communication

One of the most important features of social media is borderless communication. One communicates from any part of the world to others. Political borders of the county cant create any type of limitations.

b. Interactive Platform

Social media is an interactive platform. Hence, it is widely used to interact with present and potential consumers across the world. Interactive communication platform creates more effective communication with instant reactions on both sides. Interactive communication platforms can be utilized for marketing communication and customer engagement to a greater extent. Equal participation of the sender and receiver is there. Such platforms are used by marketers for different purposes and similarly used by consumers for different purposes. Brand communication and corporate communication through social media is faster and more interactive too.

c. True Travel Experience

Travelers across the world would like to avoid risk and uncertainty involved in travel through interaction on social media. Travelers seek, edit, provide and generate travel related information. On social media travelers share their experience which is useful for fellow travelers for their travel. Shared travel experiences are playing a significant role in the traveling decision of travelers.

d. Fast and Furious

Social media is a collection of various internet based platforms. Information on social media is exchanged faster. Day by day traffic on various social media platforms has increased and it has engaged more and more people across the world. It spread information at remarkable speed.

e. Low Cost communication platform

For every individual and marketer social media is one of the lowest cost communication platforms. For any uploading of data, picture or any piece of information one need not require to pay anything. It's actually free. Over and above for the travel industry its travelers' content created a world. Cost of development of content is automatically shifted to the travelers by their choice. Over and above professional photographer's requirement is significantly lower in the current scenario to attract travelers under current influence of social media

f. Anytime and Anywhere

One of the unique features of social media is high flexibility to the information provider and information consumer. One can have access to selected or all platforms of social media either to consumers or to upload or provide information. Such high flexibility provides an ease to travelers to plan travel from every corner of the world.

g. Different platform different class of consumers

Social media is a collection of platforms which works with the help of the internet and users of such platforms generate content through sharing information, photographs, feelings and experiences too. Each platform of social media is used by different classes of consumers. Hence, through social media one can make proper segmentation of travelers. Hence, marketers can get an ease of sharing information to their respective target audience. More engagement of service or communication can be done through Instagram and more mid aged and senior citizens have access to Facebook. through appropriate means to consume information. For more serious and official news and information to the outside world and events to the government, Twitter is used by people, organizations and travelers too.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Alghizzawi, M., Salloum, S. A., & Habes, M. (2018) has examined the influence of social media amongst the tourists in Jordan. Researchers are of the opinion that Social media networks affect information efficiency, information accuracy, and ease of use at the interest stage in encouraging tourism in Jordan. Researchers observed that communicative language in social communication sites had a significant effect on the touristic attraction process

Alghizzawi, M., Salloum, S. A., & Habes, M. (2018) has examined various functions of marketing which can be executed effectively through social media. Researchers are of the opinion that Social media, in particular, stands out as a pivotal instrument for deciphering tourists' attitudes, a fact substantiated by the observable surge in purchases and recommendations disseminated to fellow users. In an era where uncertainty prevails, tourists seek assurance and expectations through reliable sources, underscoring the significance of social media in providing a transparent and insightful preview of the destination experience. In essence, the symbiotic relationship between technology and tourism elucidates the profound impact of digital platforms in

shaping the contemporary tourist landscape. In the pivotal moment of destination decision-making, online relational influence, particularly through online word-of-mouth (eWOM), emerges as the primary source of crucial information for the discerning traveler. Scholars specializing in tourism market segmentation acknowledge the escalating reliance of modern tourists on digital media.

Gohil, N. (2015) has evaluated the tourism sector and has traced out that the sector is strategically positioned to leverage the pervasive influence of social media platforms, recognizing its historical dependence on factors such as destination reputation, consumer opinions, information dissemination, and positive word-of-mouth promotion. In acknowledgment of the pivotal role played by marketing and advertising in capturing the attention of tourists, the government of Madhya Pradesh has astutely engaged the services of a renowned brand and advertising agency to cultivate a tourism-friendly image. Cognizant of the predominant proportion of domestic tourists in India, the Madhya Pradesh state has adopted a strategic approach, employing television commercials as a primary promotional tool. This discerning move has yielded commendable results, contributing substantively to Madhya Pradesh's ascent in the hierarchy of states, as evidenced by an increased share of tourists choosing the state as their preferred destination.

Gururaja (2015) has opined that the leveraging of social media to the tourism products has proved to be a good strategy in improving not only the quality of the business but also the revenues of the tourism industry at large. Such income at macro level contributes to the income of the nation too.

Leung, D., Law, R., Van Hoof, H., & Buhalis, D. (2013) have noted various papers in the area of social media in the hospitality and traveling industry. Researchers conclude that consumers generally used social media during the research phase of their travel planning process; and trustworthiness is a key antecedent in determining their decision on using information on social media. Social media appears to be a strategic tool that plays an important role in tourism and hospitality management—particularly in promotion, business management, and research functions. It has been further noticed that the potentiality of social media has not been encashed by marketers at its lowest level even.

Liu, X., Mehraliyev, F., Liu, C., & Schuckert, M. (2020) has examined the impact of social media on tourist choices becoming particularly evident when considering the direct influence these platforms exert on decision-making. Researchers have further investigated that travelers encounter compelling content that aligns with their preferences, social media contributes to shaping their perceptions and inclinations. Moreover, this influence extends to the actual selection of attractions or restaurants, provided that all other logistical conditions are conducive to a visit.

Xiang, Z., & Gretzel, U. (2010) has depicted the role of social media for online travel information. Researchers are of the opinion that social media, indeed, constitute a substantial part of the online tourism domain and, thus, play an important role within the context of trip planning using a search engine. Social media include a variety of Websites that allow consumers to share their experiences in different ways, ranging from posting their stories, their comments, to even their pictures and movie clips. Digital information distribution platforms are highly influencing online travel information searchers.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

In the rapidly evolving landscape of social media, a critical aspect is its profound impact on individuals' lives, particularly in influencing travel decisions. Travelers, in their quest for accurate information, heavily rely on social media platforms to shape their travel plans. India, being a prominent destination for global travelers, offers a myriad of opportunities for both domestic and international exploration. Despite the substantial potential, there is a dearth of comprehensive research evaluating the communication strategies employed by different states in India through various social media channels to attract tourists.

This research endeavors to fill this gap by scrutinizing the diverse communication efforts initiated by the states of India on social media platforms. The focus is not only on understanding how states utilize these platforms but also on evaluating the effectiveness of these initiatives in attracting both domestic and international tourists. Remarkably, there exists limited scholarly investigation into the assessment of government-led endeavors aimed at enticing tourists, both within the country and from abroad. Consequently, this study aims to delve into the multifaceted dimensions of social media communication strategies employed by Indian states, with a particular emphasis on the evaluation of government initiatives to draw tourists, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of social media in the tourism sector."

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Objective

Current research work is carried out with only one agenda of critical evaluation of use of social media platforms by various state government departments and agencies of the Central Government to increase inbound and foreign travelers in the country. Each and every state of the country has its own state governed Tourism Department. The objective of all such agencies is to promote tourism in the state and facilitate tourism in the state. ITDC was established by the government of India and is working as one of the leading players in the market. An attempt has been made by researchers to evaluate deliberations of attracting tourism through social media platforms.

Each state of the country is promoting tourism by celebrating specific events or festivals in the state in a particular area or city. Marketing communication to promote such events/ festivals has been examined. Each efforts of state or central run agency has been evaluated with reference to relevancy of data, consistency of availability of relevant information about travel plan, updating of various social media platform and agility in answering any inquiry or quest generated by travelers.

Research Design

Explorative research design has been adopted for the current research work. An attempt has been made to examine current practices of Tourism departments of different states and Central governments by examining their various social media platforms.

Data collection tools and techniques

We have collected data from all social media platforms utilized by the tourism department of selected states and the central government. We have examined all social media platforms through the official website of the State's tourism departments only. We have examined photographs, comments, tweets, reels, videos and other forms of communication on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and other social media platforms.

Scope of further study

In the current research work we have examined marketing communication of various Tourism Department of selected states of India and Central Government of India. Such research work has examined only communication practices on social media platforms. One can carry out further research to measure the impact of such communication on travelers of the country. Explorative research validation needs conclusive research.

FINDINGS

Use of different social media platforms.

Different use of different social media platforms by tour operators. (Customer Engagement to Customer Loyalty) (Tourist Experiences) (Travel Information Search to Travel Experience Sharing)

Search Engines:

Search Engine optimize to select travel places across the world. Search engines are used by travelers and traveling service provides both, Perspective of usage of both parties are different but interesting. Travelers always seek online information about specific destinations before determining a travel plan. Travel plan guidance is not possible without searching information on search engines. Search engines are the primary platform of general information about destinations to be traveled. Over and above search engines provided specific information about destinations with the health of other searchers too. Search engines enable information to be edited on the basis of the experience of travelers.

Search engines compile information from various platforms and present to the information seeker on the internet. However, such compiled information also contains user generated or traveler's generated information. Information provided by search engines is also based on traveler's information uploaded or shared or edited.

Travel Applications:

Traveling is an activity which requires multifaceted services to make it enjoyable. It includes commute, stay, food and other aspects. After the arrival of Web 2.0 there had been revolutionary change in the travel industry. One point or one application solution to the problem of Train or Air or Bus Booking along with hotel booking had been started successfully by Trip Adviser in the USA. India is a huge market for travelers.

Hence, various applications entered into the Indian market to capture the opportunity of business and change the travel experience. In India start up- Make my trip to facilitate Indian travelers who have earned great market share. Air B & B and Booking.com are foreign players who facilitate travelers. On all the platforms traveler's created contents are used by such applications to gain trust. Applications are quickly adopted by

travelers as it provides multi facilities to travelers for almost the entire country. The concept of staying with local residents is relatively new and may create doubt about service quality of service providers. However, a search engine's role is very crucial in this case. Very strong concept selling process has been carried out through search engine optimization by such players in the country. Search engine provides holistic view of information about place, stay facilities and nearby tourist attractions on the map as well as on the location based information support display. Comparative analysis of hotel rent, ratings by users or travelers and other aspects can provide very good information to the traveler to develop a travel plan.

Basically, traveling is a bit of a complex activity. Traveling is not only traveling through selective modes of transportation but it also includes staying, knowing the culture of the place, enjoying and relaxing with dear ones. Hence, from a traveler's perspective information about stay, local transportation, connectivity with various modes of transportation, best season to travel, avoid season to travel, basic information about places to see, cost and optimum duration of stay etc are on the priority. Travel applications are providing all such crucial information to the travelers. Traveler's applications provide one point solution to the travelers. Travel apps are providing all precise information about hotels (with prices, ratings and reviews) Facilities provided at respective hotels, connectivity between different tripartition models,

Almost all the major tourist apps have not provided any information about stay at state owned Tourism department's property. Hence, it can be concluded that government owned Organisation would not like to take any benefit from such applications.

Facebook:

Most widely used by individuals to share their travel experience at length. Mostly used by individuals to virtually socialize amongst their virtual group. This platform is working as a travel experience amongst friends and family members at a time. It creates temptation amongst the non-travelers to travel places and enjoy different cultures around the globe. Various tour operators are also using this platform to be in touch with prospective consumers.

Attraction towards place or destination marketing or festival or event marketing is carried out on this platform with effectiveness by all the state's tourism department. Still this platform is widely used amongst travelers. Likes given by followers on this platform may be lower but for gathering information this platform is playing a significant role.

Instagram:

Its most flashy and catchy platform of social media amongst all. Traveler's express their feelings, experiences and brand promotion information. Youngsters across the world and all international travel service providers and hoteliers are on Instagram. This platform is used to attract travelers for short period of time. Some time story options have been utilized for the development of a sense of urgency. Online sales promotion has been practiced by various travel service providers through this platform.

Twitter:

A platform started a journey with short expressions in words. Now this platform is widely used by celebrities and organizations mainly for announcements. Users can use short broadcasts in the form of tweets. However, the platform is now allowing using photographs, videos and links. However, users use such platforms for short presentations. Travel celebrities regularly travel and keep posting on this platform. In India this platform is gaining more importance as compared to other platforms of social media. More official news or achievements are declared from this platform by various government agencies.

You tube Channels:

Widely used and widely influenced platform of social media is YouTube. Different traveler's and individuals post their videos on their respective YouTube channels. Level of transparency is significantly higher on this platform. Short videos are prepared and uploaded on the channel or various travel service providers which depicts service experiences. On each video viewer can comment and viewers can send links relating to such videos also. Hence, this platform can easily make videos viral. It can be positive as well as negative. Real travel experience can be shared through this platform effectively and efficiently. Reliability of this platform is higher as compared to others. There are various

Use of Facebook and other platforms by State Government and Central Government

i. Poor usage of social media platforms

All social media platforms are poorly used by state and central b=govenrt's travel agencies. On the basis of examining all platforms of the social media following observations have been noted.

o Irregular posting of information, photographs, videos and other user generated information. Daily posting is done by only a few states only.

- o More information about religious places and their daily activities over there has been covered on Facebook and Instagram and You tube also. Such information is not useful for the potential traveler's in developing travel plans at all.
- o Information about celebration of various government sponsored (by tourism department) programmes of tourism is shared on social media.
- o Various important information like best season to visit, connectivity or nearest commute place, internal travel facilities or suitability for senior citizens or kids is not provided at all. Prospective travelers remain uninformed on all such sensitive issues throughout the country.
- o Reply to the traveler's questions on all the platforms except twitter is significantly lower. It indirectly indicates that the respective state's tourism department is not traveler friendly on social media.

ii. Very Poor Traveler's connect

- o Poor communication frequency and inadequate information about tourist places, stay and other aspects leads to very poor travelers connect. Traveler's experience of usage of social media platforms is not considered while using the platform for the different class of consumers.
- o Sensitivity towards Brand image of the state or nation on social media by all the state and central run Tourism departments is very negligible.
- o Every traveler of the state of the world will check social media platforms first. Such pre pre-search information stage creates a first impression about the nation and state respectively.
- o Insufficient and improper information on social media can't generate travelers connect with the place or national through respective social media.
- o Only occasional posting on social media. All the state run agencies are reminding tourists only on special occasions.
- o Very poor and irregular customer connection.

iii. Non availability of information about stays and internal transportation

- o One of the most important information travelers are seeking is information about stay. None of the platforms of social media except Travel Applications provides information about faculty of stay across all the state's social media platforms.
- o International traveler's need to know the facility at the stay for senior citizens, kids and physically challenged people. However, none of the travel departures of the country had considered this information on the social media as well as on the official website too.
- o Social media platforms are used by hotel service providers and local tour operators to connect with the customers. Such connections provide better.
- o User generated content is playing a significant role in creating trust amongst travelers. Marketers of various tourist related services are using content developed by travelers. Traveler's experiences about staying at a particular place is influencing other fellow travelers.
- o Many travel applications are using photographs of hotel rooms, washrooms and other facilities. Such third party or actual user's information is playing a significant role in the travel plan and decision of stay.
- o Information provided by travelers in the form of stay experience and staff behaviour of hotels is also used by Search engines. Hence user generated information has been utilized multiple times through various social media platforms too.
- o Over and above experience given in the digital form with comments and photographs creates more traffic on the platform as its credibility is higher. Judgment of traveler's is highly based on such information.

iv. Not promoting all the services

- o All the state owned Tourism departments are providing various services like Hotel, Local Transportation, Local Guide for heritage places, Local products through state owned outlets of merchandise etc. However, none of the state governments is promoting any of the above mentioned services to the world through social media.
- o Tourism corporations of all the states own very valuable and prime location based properties in terms of Hotel Stay, Heritage Stay, Forest Stay and many more options. None of such alternatives are promoted through social media. In many states hotels or stays facilities are provided just near the railway station which is state of art work but none of the state government is promoting such lifetime experience providing stay facility.
- o All the hotels run, owned and controlled by state or central tourism departments offer local cuisines. Local cuisines are considered to be one of the attractions for the traveler. However, none of the state is promoting such cuisines through social media on any platform.
- o Rich cultural heritage of the state or destination promoted by the respective state is not promoted properly. It has been observed that if some of the states like Gujarat, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh etc are promoting it then such promotion is not equally on all the platforms. Such imbalance creates confusion.
- o There is a clear cut lack of consumer centric approach on all the platforms of social media by all the states of the country. Social media needs to be developed with the intention to give different experiences to search for information too. If a prospective traveler has decent experience at time of information search then only such a person can be converted into an actual traveler.

- v. *Lack of synchronization amongst other departments*
 - o Each state has its own transportation corporation. It provides transportation facilities to various classes of consumers. State run tourism department should synchronize various traveling activities. There is no synchronization of all such required sub services.
 - o There is almost no public transportation on social media. Such inactiveness creates inconvenience to the travelers and for travelers is not at all.
 - o Local transportation facility is also important for travelers to visit local places. However, there is no information about local city tours or tour packages to cover nearby areas either.
- vi. Only Religion and Pilgrimage base information. Every traveler is not seeking religious activities across the state.
- vii. Promotion of various Government schemes through the official website of the tourism department is absolutely irrelevant.
- h. Travel facilitator's use of social media is playing an important role.
 - i. Travel facilitators are very active on social media platforms. They provide relevant information to the tourist on time. Such activeness attracts travelers to specific destinations through their own vehicles.
 - ii. There are several agencies appointed by various state governments and central governments to work as travel facilitators. Such agencies are not active and not agile enough to provide all necessary information about stay, nearby places to visit, connectivity of the important destinations etc.
 - iii. Spontaneous response to the application visitor by private players influences better to the foreign and domestic travelers better as compared to government's travel facilitators.
- i. Other Observations
 - i. Government has not developed any application to facilitate tourists from the country or from outside the country.
 - ii. Application can be considered to be a one point solution for booking, staying and connecting with local people and culture.
 - iii. Application for tourists may change the entire customer experience.
 - iv. User Generated Contents is playing a significant role. However, tourism departments are very lethargic in using content by tourists. Even the good experiences of services enjoyed by them have not been promoted on social media too.
 - v. Customers are true Brand Ambassadors but the majority of tourism departments of the country are ignoring this matter.
 - vi. Twitter is a tool to connect globally but only a few state governments are active on twitter.
 - vii. Several places are promoted through social media very effectively. Such activity creates temptation amongst travelers and eventually it turns into a heavy rush at selected travel destinations. Such activity results in disturbance to locals and haphazard use of scarce natural resources too. Sensible tourism had been ignored.
 - viii. False information on social media may lead to fraudulent activities. Proper evaluation or check and balance at the social media posting at social media platforms is missing in current evaluation by researchers.
 - ix. Role of State Government's Social media cell for tourism
 - x. One mobile application needs an hour to provide some basic information to all present and potential tourists.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Utilization of social media for Customer Engagement:

Marketing managers should strategically leverage social media platforms as two-way interactive channels to actively engage with potential travelers. By creating targeted content and fostering interaction, these platforms can serve as effective tools to convert potential travelers into actual customers.

Nation Branding and Economic Boost through Data Analysis:

Harnessing data generated across various social media platforms allows for effective Nation Branding. Analyzing this data enables marketing managers to attract global attention, promote destination branding, and subsequently boost the country's economy through increased tourism and foreign exchange.

Tailored Marketing Communication Strategies:

Designing marketing communication strategies tailored to specific traveler categories enhances the effectiveness of promotional efforts. Furthermore, developing platform-specific strategies for different social media channels can be instrumental in attracting diverse types of travelers, contributing to business growth.

Proactive Social Media Reputation Management:

Given the uncontrollable nature of social media, it is imperative to deploy dedicated teams to address negative comments promptly. Proactive reputation management on social platforms is essential to prevent potential damage to the brand image and maintain a positive online presence.

Transforming Tourism Departments into Revenue Centers:

Recognizing tourism departments as revenue centers, states should deploy social media experts to maximize revenue generation through effective use of social media platforms. This approach can enhance the visibility of each state's tourism offerings and attract a wider audience.

Enhancing Awareness of Tourism Services through IRCTC:

Indian Railways, particularly through IRCTC, can capitalize on India's appeal to international tourists. Leveraging professionalism and using social media platforms can significantly enhance awareness about the diverse multimodal tours offered, attracting both foreign and domestic tourists.

Specialized social media Teams for Competitive Advantage:

Building specialized teams for different social media platforms creates a competitive edge. Super-specialists can tailor content and engagement strategies to maximize the impact of the brand on each platform, reaching a wider audience.

Digital Marketing Impact through Social Media Campaigns:

The integration of digital marketing, coupled with impactful social media campaigns, can effectively raise awareness about various tourism services. Sharing authentic tourist experiences worldwide through social platforms can contribute to building a positive brand image.

Building Relationships through Business Analytics:

The combination of business analytics and an active social media presence is pivotal in maintaining strong relationships with tourists. This approach not only fosters brand preference but also establishes a positive nation preference through transparent communication.

Ensuring Long-term Sustainability through Continuous Growth:

Long-term sustainability in the tourism industry hinges on consistently adding new travelers to an organization's portfolio. Social media serves as a powerful tool for achieving this by regularly expanding the customer base and ensuring continuous growth.

Appointment of Trained Professionals for each platform separately.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research underscores the pivotal role of social media as a potent and borderless tool for global communication. Travelers worldwide actively contribute content across diverse social media platforms, effectively raising awareness and enhancing the allure of various destinations. The expansive reach of social media makes it a powerful instrument for engaging a large number of travelers, each platform catering to different audiences.

While both state and central governments have established a presence on numerous social media platforms, the effectiveness of traveler engagement remains suboptimal due to insufficient efforts. This gap is notable and requires immediate attention to fully harness the potential of social media in promoting tourism.

Private entities within the industry have demonstrated adept utilization of social media, setting a precedent for effective engagement. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, there is a compelling need to employ social media as a strategic tool for attracting tourists. This can be achieved through the development of compelling and attractive content that resonates with the intended audience, ultimately driving increased footfall at various destinations.

Furthermore, the implementation of such initiatives not only serves the purpose of boosting tourism but also acts as a catalyst for economic growth. Increased visitor numbers create employment opportunities and contribute to the overall development of the economy.

In light of these findings, it is strongly recommended that both state and central governments formulate and implement policies in this realm. Collaborating with skilled social media professionals is essential to execute these policies effectively, ensuring a comprehensive and strategic approach to leveraging the power of social media for the benefit of the tourism industry and the broader economy. Economy of the country needs to be boosted through social media.

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