

A Study on Tourism Positive Challenges in TamilNadu

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ABSTRACT

The tourism industry in India is substantial and vibrant, and the country is fast becoming a major global destination. The present paper has taken an in-depth review of the promotional challenges in tourism industry and focused on the entrepreneurs in tourism business. The entrepreneurs in tourism industry are facing many challenges in promotion of their services. This study made an attempt to explore the solution to these challenges. The overall objective of the study is to find the problems faced by entrepreneurs in tourism industry in promoting tourism products and suggest ways and mean, for strengthening tourism sector for better promotion. To have the statistical data for the study, the questionnaires were distributed to the target respondent firms of Tour Operator and Travel Agency, as the result, 108 respondents answered the questionnaires. The collected data are coded, tabulated and summarized. One-way ANOVA, Chi-square tests and Friedman test have been applied for analyzing the data. Findings revealed that all the tour operators and travel agents agreed that undertaking promotional activities is important. It is found that advertisement stands first in the tourism sector preferences of promotional mix followed by publicity, public relation, personal selling, referrals, and sales promotional mix followed by publicity, public relation, personal selling, referrals, and sales promotion. It was noteworthy that majority of them are strongly agreed with the statement 'Marketing helps the organization to build image'.

Key words: Promotional Activities, Tour Operator and Travel Agency, Entrepreneur, Tourism and Challenges.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1976 tourism society of England defined tourism as the "temporary, short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and do their activities during the stay at each destination. It includes movements for all purposes". The tourism industry in India is substantial and vibrant, and the country is fast becoming a major global destination. India's travel and tourism industry is one of the most profitable industries in the country, and also credited with contributing a substantial amount of foreign exchange. This is illustrated by the fact that in 2015 was Rs 1,35,193 crores and Rs 1,23,320 crores in 2014.

Several reasons are cited for the growth and prosperity of India's travel and tourism industry. Economic growth has added millions annually to the ranks of India's middle class, a group that is driving domestic tourism growth. According to data, the travel and tourism sector generated Rs 14.1 trillion (USD208.9 billion) in 2016, which is world's 7th largest in terms of absolute

size; the sum is equivalent to 9.6% of India's GDP. The tourism industry has helped growth in other sectors as diverse as horticulture, handicrafts, agriculture and even poultry.

In the year 2002, the government of India announced a New Tourism Policy to give boost to the tourism sector. The policy is built around the 7-S mantra of Swaagat (welcome), soochanaa (information), suvidhaa (facilitation), surakshaa (security), sahyog (cooperation), sanrachnaa (infrastructure) and safai (cleanliness).

PROMOTION IN TOURISM

According to Rowley (1998) promotion is one of the key 4Ps in the marketing mix and as such has a key role to play in market success. Promotion is concerned with ensuring that customers are aware of the products that the organisation makes available to those customers.

Dibbs et. al. (2001) point out that in tourism marketing, it is vital that there is more focus on promotion. Whereas the role that is played in product is one of support, influence and encouragement, however, with promotion, a destination seeks to be in control and needs to ensure the development and then communication of the most effective messages to the demand audience while taking into consideration the segmentation differences of our existing and potential customers.

Rowley (1998) emphasizes that, as an appropriate promotional mix must be created in order to meet the promotional objectives of any given promotion strategy. The promotional mix is the combination of different promotional selection from the range of tools that are available for use as part of the promotional mix. The tools in the promotional mix include Advertising, Direct marketing, sales promotion, public relations and publicity, personal selling and sponsorship. Typically, organizations will use a combination of these strategies and indeed, one promotional strategy may be used to support another promotional event. (Dibbs et. al. (2001).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Prafulla Chandra Mohanty (2004), studied the state of marketing of tourism of tourism services in India. He identified some of the problems of Indian Tourism Market and suggested some improvements. He also mentioned that since 1950, the tourism industry of India is expanding. The number of foreign tourists has been increased to more than 21 lakhs by 2001 and India has a minimum share of 0.39% of the world tourism trade. Finally, he suggested that India still hopes better to improve the tourism marketing services and to take an equal and more challenging steps with their competitors in the field more vigorously.

Hossain Jakir (2006) made an attempt to investigate how the use of promotional activities can help to develop the tourism industry by giving a special concentration to the case of Bangladesh. The investigation was conducted from both the theoretical and empirical point of views. According to his view, every destination country is trying to attract more tourists by adopting appropriate marketing techniques and strategies. As an important element of marketing mix, promotion plays the vital in marketing any product and service. By using the different tools of promotion, marketers attempt to serve this purpose and try to influence the potential tourists' attitude.

Tarannum Husain (2007) aimed on “Promotional Strategies of Tourism Industry in Uttaranchal state of India” and its problems, in general, and Uttaranchal, in particular. In addition he suggested measures to make tourism economically viable and ecologically sustainable. He also suggested appropriate and effective promotional strategies for promoting tourism in Uttaranchal. For the purpose of study, the primary data were collected through a pre- structured questionnaire from two

respondent group—respondent group I consisting of 150 foreign tourists and 200 domestic tourists and respondent group 2 consisting of 110 hoteliers and 35 travel agent.

3. METHODOLOGY

Objectives of the Study: From above literature it is clear that the entrepreneurs in tourism industry are facing many challenges in promotion of their services. This study made an attempt to explore the solution to these challenges. The objectives of this study are:

1. To Study the problems faced by entrepreneurs in tourism industry in promoting tourism products.
2. To suggest ways and mean, if needed, for strengthening tourism sector for better promotion.

Data Sources: This study requires both primary and secondary data. The primary data has been collected from various tour operators and travel agents located in Tamil Nadu. To make the sample more representative of the entire state, it has been selected from all the districts of Tamil Nadu. Secondary data are collected from journals, publications and other reference books and are also collected from various websites on the internet.

Data collection method: For collecting Primary data, a questionnaire is used as research Instrument followed by personal interview.

Sampling: The samples were selected by using non-probability sampling procedure and Quota sampling technique has been adopted to select the sample. The questionnaires were distributed to the target respondent firms and after the scrutiny it was found that the collected questionnaires with the following numbers are valid.

Tour Operators and Travel Agents considered for the study are: 108

Date analysis: The collected date are coded, tabulated and summarized. One- way ANOVA, Chi-square tests and Freidman test have been applied for analyzing the data.

PROMOTION CHALLENGES

UNDERTAKING PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

RESPONSE	TOUR OPERATORS AND TRAVEL AGENTS (N=108)	
	f	%
YES	108	100
NO	0	0

TABLE NO 1

From the Table 1, it is understood that every entrepreneur in tourism industry is undertaking promotional activities for promoting their tourism services.

VARIOUS PROMOTION TOOLS PREFERRED FOR PROMOTION

PROMOTION TOOLS	TOUR OPERATORS AND TRAVEL AGENTS (N=108)	
	Mean	SD
Advertising	2.16	1.239
Publicity	2.17	1.037
Referrals	2.52	1.106
Public Relations	2.43	1.255
Personal Selling	2.47	1.156
Sales Promotion	2.88	1.190

TABLE NO 2

5 point scale: 1- to an extreme extent 5- Not at all

Table 2 furnishes the Mean and Standard Deviation value for each promotion tools. From the above table it can be said that all entrepreneurs are preferring promotion tools 'Advertising', 'Publicity' and 'Public Relation' to a great extent, followed by 'Referrals' to a lesser extent and 'Personal selling' and 'Sales promotion' to some extent.

VARIOUS CONTENTS OF THE ADVERTISEMENT PREFERRED

Promotion Tools	Tour Operators and Travel Agents (N=108)	
	Mean	SD
Service firm's image	1.91	.981
Staff/experts availability	2.43	1.007
Products/services offered	2.49	1.148
Sophisticated facilities/equipment	2.50	1.172
Price / Tariff structure	2.57	1.087

TABLE NO 3

5 point scale: 1-to an extreme extent 5- Not at all

Table 3 furnishes the Mean and Standard Deviation values for each content of the advertisement preferred by Tourism entrepreneurs. From the table it can be said that all are preferring all contents of the advertisement – Service firm's image, Staff / Experts availability, Products/ Services and Facilities/Equipment to great extent, followed by 'Price/Tariff' to some extent.

Table 4 furnishes the Mean and Standard Deviation value for each media for the advertisement preferred by Tourism entrepreneurs. From the table it can be said that all prefer Media of the

advertisement – Television, News paper/Magazine to a great extent, followed by Radio, Internet and Hoardings to a medium extent.

VARIOUS MEDIA OF THE ADVERTISEMENT PREFERRED FOR PROMOTION

MEDIA	TOUR OPERATORS AND TRAVEL AGENTS (N=108)	
	MEAN	SD
Television	2.33	1.360
News papers and Magazines	2.42	1.269
Radio	3.21	1.326
Internet	3.27	1.501
Hoardings	2.98	1.223

TABLE NO 4

5 point scale: 1-to an extreme extent 5- Not at all

Table 5 furnishes the Mean values (in number of times per month) and Standard Deviation value for Frequency of the advertisement given in various media. From the above description it can be said that the frequency of the advertisements given in Electronic media is 44.72 times per month in print media and only one time per month on Hoardings.

FREQUENCY OF ADVERTISEMENTS IN VARIOUS MEDIA OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

MEDIA FOR THE ADVERTISEMENT	TOUR OPERATORS AND TRAVEL AGENTS (N=108)	
	MEAN	SD
Electronic media	44.72	11.312
Print Media	2.98	1.223
Hoardings	1.00	.000

TABLE NO 5

APPROXIMATE BUDGET FOR VARIOUS MEDIA OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

RESPONSE	TOUR OPERATORS AND TRAVEL AGENTS (N=108)	
	MEAN	SD
Electronic media	109138.89	108750.977
Print Media	34944.44	27209.411
Hoardings	4490.74	2297.888

TABLE NO 6

Table 6 furnishes the Mean value (in Rupee) and Standard Deviation value for approximate budget of the advertisements given in various media. From the above table it can be said that the approximate budget spent for advertisements given in Electronic media is 109138.89 per month followed 34944.44 per month in Print Media and 4490.74 per month on Hoardings.

SPONSORING PROGRAMMES IN TV CHANNELS

RESPONSE	TOUR OPERATORS AND TRAVEL AGENTS (N=108)	
	F	%
YES	48	44.4
NO	60	55.6

TABLE NO 7

It is observed from Table 7 that 44.4% of the tour operators and travel agents are sponsoring Programmes in television channels.

Table 8 reveals that 63.9% of the tourism sectors are highlighting their firm by specific services offered in the advertisement.

HIGHLIGHTING FIRM BY THE SPECIFIC SERVICES IN ADVERTISEMENT

RESPONSE	TOUR OPERATORS AND TRAVEL AGENTS (N=108)	
	f	%
YES	69	63.9
NO	39	36.1

TABLE NO 8]

With respect to opinion of the respondents word of mouth/publicity help in promotion, Mean values along with Standard Deviations are computed. Table 9 shows that the mean value is 2.41. Hence, it can be said that all tour operators and travel agents agreed to a High level regarding the word of mouth/publicity help in promotion.

WORD F MOUTH/PUBLICITY IN PROMOTION

RESPONSE	TOUR OPERATORS AND TRAVEL AGENTS (N=108)	
	Mean	SD
Level of Acceptance	2.41	1.085

TABLE NO 9

5 point scale : 1-Very High.....5 – very low

CONDUCTING CUSTOMER EXIT INTERVIEW/ TAKING FEEDBACK

RESPONSE	TOUR OPERATORS AND TRAVEL AGENTS (N=108)	
	f	%
YES	62	57.4
NO	46+	42.6

TABLE NO 10

It is observed from the Table 10 that 57.4% of the tour operators and travel agents are conducting customer exit interviews and taking feedback to rate their services.

Freidman test is conducted to study rankings for every statement by all the tour operators and travel agents and is furnished in table 11. From the table it can be inferred that for the statement 'Marketing helps the organization to build image', top priority has been given by all tour operators and travel agents. This is followed by second priority for 'Marketing can increase productivity of organization'.

APPROACH TOWARDS MARKETING PRACTICES – FRIEDMAN TEST

FRIEDMAN TEST	
Statement	Tour Operators & Travel Agents (N=108)
Marketing help the organization to build image	2.67
Marketing can increase productivity of organization	3.34
Marketing creates awareness about wellness programmes	3.68
Marketing helps to generate revenue	3.66
Marketing helps customer to select best service organization	3.78
Marketing provides scope to organization expansion	3.87

TABLE NO 11

- All tour operators and travel agents agreed that undertaking promotional activities is important. It is found that advertisement stands first in the tourism sector preferences of promotional mix followed by publicity, public relation, personal selling, referrals, and sales promotional mix followed by publicity, public relation, personal selling, referrals, and sales promotion. 'Service firm's image' is the preferred content of the advertisement by most of them followed by 'staff/experts availability' 'products/service offered', 'sophisticated facilities/equipment', and 'Price/Tariff structure'.
- The study identified the television advertising as most preferred media by the tourism sector followed by newspapers and Magazines, Hoardings, Radio and Internet. And the frequency of the advertisements in electronic media is 45 per month with approximate budget of Rs.109138.89. There advertisements per month in print media with approximate budget of Rs.34944.44 and one advertisement in Hoardings per month approximate budget of Rs.4490.74.

- It is found that much of the tour operators and travel agents are sponsoring some programmes in television channels and most of them are highlighting their firm by specific services offered in the advertisements. Majority of them have public Relations department and most of them have marketing department separately for the promotion of their services and image. It is observed that in majority of tourism firm PR department work in coordination with marketing department to archive goals of the organization. All the tour operators and travel agents agreed that word of mouth/publicity helps in promotion.
- All respondent agreed that they are facing medium level of competition. All tourism firms have medium level of satisfaction on their promotional activities majority of them are accepting that there is scope for improving the promotional programme with current budget. Majority of them are strongly agreed with the statement 'Marketing helps the organization to build image'.

4. SUGGESTIONS

Preference of promotion mix: Preference should be given to sales promotion programmes like exhibiting at travel trade shows, distributing brochures, display of posters and banners near elevators and in the lobby of hotels. Also offering Coupons, price-offs contest and games for tourists should be organized to attract tourist. Public relation programmes like involving with local communities and industry communities, releasing newsletter, writing article in newspaper/magazines, publishing good photographs in print media, maintaining relationship with hotel, sponsoring conference, ceremonies and events should be organized to generate position result and for effective word of mouth communication.

Coordination among the different related service sectors: As tourism is a multi-faceted industry, there should have some coordination, formal interaction, understanding and appreciation among the other related tourism and non- tourism business sectors like transportation, hotels, etc. tourist information centres, hotels etc., to avoid misguidance by the touts or other local population and to give right information.

Enhancing local awareness: the majority of tourists to India are visiting friend or relatives who live here. The local population has on important role to play in ensuring the events, facilities and attraction in the country that promotes the arrival of these tourists currently; there is a perception amongst stakeholders that residents lack awareness or have negative perceptions of what is available in the country. One aspect of the tourism marketing campaign should be aimed at enhancing pride, appreciation and awareness of India's cultural offerings, locally in order to ensure participate in Indian attributes to visitors.

Follow – ups and feedbacks for improvement: Follow- ups and feedback should be taken care in the tourism sector and with the growing competition, the customer satisfaction should be given utmost priority. After execution of service he has rendered so that any improvement required in the future can be attended too.

Finally the following model is suggested for entrepreneurs in tourism industry of Tamil Nadu

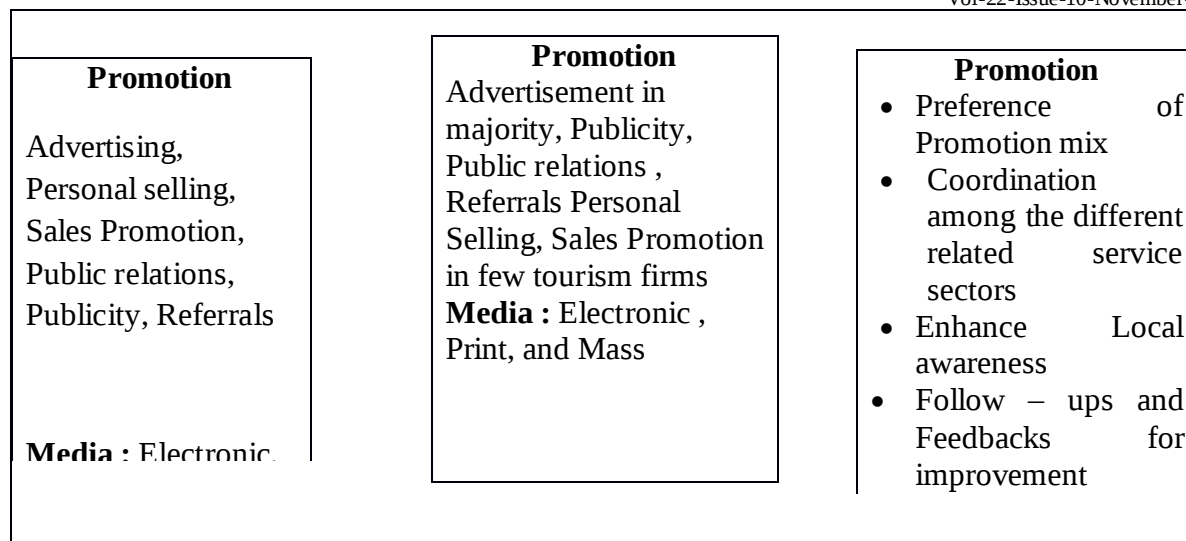


FIGURE 1 MODEL OF PROMOTION PRACTICES IN TOURISM INDUSTRY

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