

Impact of Information and Communication Technology in Tourism Marketing

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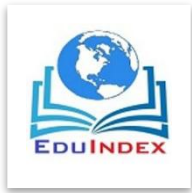
ABSTRACT

Tourism marketing is a business discipline, which employ diverse strategies to popularize the primary segments of tourism like attraction, accommodation and accessibility to tourists and creates desire in them. Tourism industry is predominantly information intensive, flourishing rapidly amidst the service sectors in India. Rivalry and intricacy in tourism industry is constantly rising and tourists are eminently in demand of legitimate, factual and localized data to plan their expedition. In order to compete and successful, tourism enterprises have to innovatively market their products or services through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools. This study analyses the issues and benefits of ICT to tourists and tour operators in Kanyakumari District. It was found that, tour operators require high speed internet facility and they can conveniently maintain customer relationship through ICT. Tourists get hasty information through ICT but they face complication in online cash transactions.

KEYWORDS: Tourism Marketing, ICT, Tour Operators, Tourists, Kanyakumari.

1. INTRODUCTION

Travel is a primitive tourists' essence, who stays outside their prevailing habitat for not less than 24 hours and not more than one successive year for business, leisure, recreational and for amusement. In India, tourism and economy is interconnected. Amidst the service sector, tourism industry is one of the key drivers of growth, largest employment generator and contributes countries GDP. In the year 2018, tourism industry contributes 9.2% of India's GDP and generated 8.1% of employment opportunities. It is foresee to flourish at an annual rate of



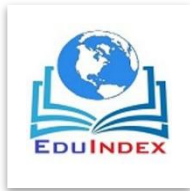
6.9% and 52.3 million employment opportunities by 2028 (IBEF, 2019). India is one of the digitally state-of-the-art traveller nations in terms of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools used for booking, planning the expedition and experiencing the excursion. Frequently rivalry and intricacy in this industry is rising because of new and present competitors. So the tour operator has to more innovatively advertise their products or services to fascinate and gratify the tourists in order to be a successful leader in this industry.

Tourists are considered as the centre of tourism, who were invariably in demand of static and dynamic information for planning their expedition. Providing legitimate, factual and localized data to tourists on 24/7 basis is the substantial challenge endured by the tour operators in Kanyakumari District. In this state-of-the-art technological era, the demand of tourists can be only gratify by the tour operators through information and communication technology tools. Using of information and communication technology tools aids the tourists to get the static or dynamic information anywhere at anytime and it aids the tour operators to supply the information to larger targeted customers, reduce the cost of production, reduces the inefficiencies and increase the competitiveness of local tourism enterprises to participate in the digital economy.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Wahab, 2017) Providing legitimate, factual and localized data to tourists is the substantial challenge endured by the tour operators daily. Tour operators' focuses on providing better services as well as correct information to the tourists to plan their expedition. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools help the tour operators to meet the demand of customers and to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the enterprise. Through proper implementation of information and communication technology tour operators can supply of information to larger customers, can reduce cost and barriers caused by the distance and time.

(Jadhav and Mundhe, 2011) Travel is a primitive tourists essence, they demand promptly available 24/7 both the static and dynamic information. This includes climate, location, available



facilities and information about the airline, train, bus and accommodation. Tourism industry has three main components, such as transport, attraction and accommodation. Using information and communication technology tools the main components of tourism industry can be improved tremendously.

(Mahajan, *et.al.*, 2011) Through information and communication technology tools the local tour operators can upsurge their competence to participate in digital economy. Traditional and modern ICT tools are used by tourists to get the required information. The traditional ICT tools are print media, courier, post, newspaper, banner, telephone, brochures and modern ICT tools are computer, internet, email, websites and mobile apps.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the issues faced by tour operators and tourists due to ICT.
2. To know the benefits of ICT to tour operators and tourists.

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

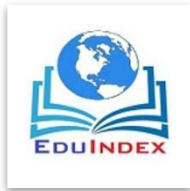
For this study descriptive research design was chosen by the researcher, which aimed to look into the impact of Information and Communication Technology in tourism marketing. The primary data was collected through well structured questionnaire from tourists and tour operators in Kanyakumari District, the secondary data collected from journals, books and websites. The sampling technique used in this study was convenient sampling and the sample size was 160 respondents amidst them 110 tourists and 50 tour operators. Friedman test is used to analysis the data.

5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

FRIEDMAN TEST

Table: 1 Issues faced by tourists due to ICT

Problems due to ICT	Mean Rank	Rank	P Value
Online transaction of cash	7.41	1	
Booking of tickets	7.14	2	
Security issues	7.03	3	



Finding of route	6.91	4	<0.001**
Service quality	6.74	5	
Factual information	6.70	6	
Booking for accommodation	6.62	7	
Catering facility details	6.33	8	
Requirement of high speed internet	6.18	9	
Travel related content	5.94	10	
Functionality of website	5.82	11	
Fake tourism agent sites	5.18	12	

Source: Primary data computed through SPSS

H0: There is no significance difference among the issues faced by tourists due to ICT.

Interpretation

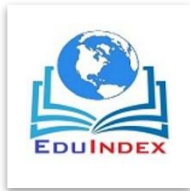
From the table: 1 using Friedman test it was found that P value is less than 0.01 the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance. Hence it is concluded that there is a significance difference among the issues faced by tourists due to ICT. Based on the mean rank value online transaction of cash (7.41) ranks tops and it is the major issue faced by tourists due to ICT, followed by booking of tickets (7.14), security issues (7.08), finding of route (6.91), service quality (6.74), factual information (6.70), booking for accommodation (6.62), catering facility details (6.33), requirement of high speed internet (6.18), travel related content (5.94), functionality of website (5.82), fake tourism agents site (5.18) respectively.

Table: 2 Issues faced by Tour operators due to ICT

Problems due to ICT	Mean Rank	Rank	P Value
Requirement of high speed internet	9.88	1	<0.001**
Requirement of skilled employees	8.50	2	
Up gradation of new technology	8.08	3	
Health related issues	6.68	4	
Maintenance of ICT equipment	6.24	5	
Negative opinion of tourists	5.80	6	
Lack of privacy issues	5.58	7	
Expensive technology	5.42	8	
Security issues in online transactions	5.40	9	
Viruses	2.36	10	

Source: Primary data computed through SPSS

H0: There is no significance difference between mean rank towards issues to tour operators due to ICT



From the Table: 2 using Friedman test it was found that P value is less than 0.01 the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance. Hence concluded that there is a significance difference between mean rank towards issues faced by tour operators due to ICT. Based on the mean rank value requirement of high speed internet (9.88) ranks tops and it is the major issues faced by tour operators due to ICT in Kanyakumari District, followed by requirement of skilled employees (8.50), up gradation of new technology (8.08), health related issues (6.68), maintenance of ICT equipment (6.24), negative opinion of tourists (5.80), lack of privacy issues (5.58), expensive technology (5.42), security issues in online transactions (5.40) and viruses (2.36) respectively.

Table: 3 Benefits of ICT to tourists

Benefits of ICT	Mean Rank	Rank	P Value
Hasty information	8.30	1	<0.001**
Easy payment	7.18	2	
Planning expedition	6.78	3	
Easier communication	6.73	4	
Information during expedition	6.72	5	
Tourism product selection	6.70	6	
Tracking the tourist spots	6.27	7	
Details of hotel	6.11	8	
Cost calculating	6.11	8	
Viewing ratings and reviews of sites	5.82	9	
Online booking of transport	5.78	10	
Higher transaction security	5.50	11	

Source: Primary data computed through SPSS

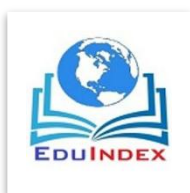
H₀: There is no significance difference among the benefits of ICT to tourists.

Interpretation

From the Table: 3 using Friedman test, it was found that P value is less than 0.01 the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance. Hence concluded that there is a significance difference among the benefits of ICT to tourists. Based on the mean rank value hasty information (8.30) ranks tops and it is the most important benefit of ICT experienced by tourists, followed by easy payment (7.18), planning expedition (6.78), easier communication (6.73), information during expedition (6.72), tourism product selection (6.70), tracking the tourists spot (6.27), details of hotel and cost calculating (6.11), viewing ratings and reviews of sites (5.82), online booking of transport (5.78) and higher transaction security (5.50) respectively.

Table: 4 Benefits of ICT to tour operators

Benefits of ICT	Mean Rank	Rank	P Value
Maintaining customer relationship	12.78	1	



online transactions	11.86	2	<0.001**
Effective promotion of business	11.82	3	
Knowing customer service ratings	11.32	4	
Decreases delay of work	11.06	5	
Easily communicate the customers	10.90	6	
Low operation and distribution cost	9.20	7	
Increases job performance	9.12	8	
Hasty responses to customers	9.06	9	
Knowing customer reviews	8.84	10	

Source: Primary data computed through SPSS

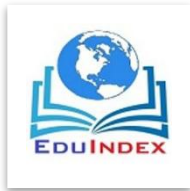
H₀: There is no significance difference between mean rank towards benefits of ICT to tour operators

From the Table: 4 using Friedman test, it was found that P value is less than 0.01 the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance. Hence concluded that there is a significance difference between mean rank towards the benefits of ICT to tour operators. Based on the mean rank value maintaining customer relationship (12.78) ranks tops and it is the most important benefit of ICT experienced by tour operators in Kanyakumari District, followed by online transactions (11.86), effective promotion of business (11.82), knowing customer services ratings (11.32), decreases delay of work (11.06), easily communicate the customer (10.90), low operation and distribution cost (9.20), increases job performance (9.12), hasty responses to customers (9.06) and knowing customer reviews (8.84) respectively.

6. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- The major issue faced by tourists in Information and Communication Technology is delayed cash transfer in necessity situation due to internet problem and server error.
- Requirement of high speed internet facility is the major issue faced in Information and Communication Technology by the tour operators in Kanyakumari District.
- The most important benefit of Information and Communication Technology to tourists is getting hasty information.
- Customer relationship is the most important benefit enjoyed through Information and Communication Technology by the tour operators in Kanyakumari District.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMODATIONS



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In this technological state-of-the-art era, Information and Communication Technology set up a coup in tourism industry. Through Information and Communication Technology tools, tour operators can more innovatively market their tourism products or services to diversified class of people. Tourists major demand in expedition is the key element of tourism called information, the tour operators has to meet the demand of tourists at right time to fascinate and gratify them to increase their competitiveness. So it is crucial to select the appropriate information and communication technology tools in tourism marketing. Information and Communication Technology infrastructure in Kanyakumari District is not properly implemented by the tour operators, due to the requirement of high speed internet facilities and skilled employees to operate continuously. Due to the poor ICT infrastructure, the tour operators in Kanyakumari District are not competent to provide legitimate, factual and localized data to the tourists. So the tourists visiting Kanyakumari District are not gratified with the current ICT infrastructure. This creates a gap between tourists and tour operators, but proper ICT implementation, updating and up-gradation of technology can bridges the gaps. This study suggests that, tour operators in Kanyakumari District has to accordingly implement ICT in tourism marketing, because information and communication technology tools helps to advertise, bolster and increase competitiveness of local enterprises to participate in digital economy. Also the tourists can get the required static and dynamic information for their expedition, so that their arrival to the tourist spots in Kanyakumari District upsurges. So Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools are an irreplaceable one to tourists and tour operators in tourism industry.

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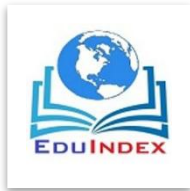
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