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## EMERGING TRENDS & INITIATIVES IN TOURISM MARKETING-AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

*Travel is one among the most ancient activities undertaken by man, the purpose of travel however has changed over the years owing to the changing demographics and needs. A traveler is one who travels far and wide in quest of finding something which is enthralling and satisfying. Tourism results in creation of multiple relationships between tourists and service providers which is considered as an important economic activity in most countries around the world. It generates revenue, creates employment opportunities, and also augments the spread of related industries. Tourism sector has certain direct as well as indirect impact on the economy of a country. Tourists across the globe do meticulous planning before venturing into places or countries not known to them. Advertising and communication plays a key role in attracting tourists to the right destination.*

*This paper aims at understanding the emerging trends in marketing of tourism product. In the past decade Eco Tourism, Agri Tourism, Wellness Tourism has cropped up as lucrative segments in the tourism sector. International tourism trade is growing faster than merchandise trade and the onus of promoting tourism lies entirely on the government. Hence, it is important to study the government initiatives in promoting India as one of the most preferred destination for global travelers. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) have named India along with China as one of the fastest growing tourism industries for the next 10 to 15 years. The potential for India to attract tourists is unlimited and tourism can play an increasingly beneficial role in the Indian economy in the years to come.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Travel & Tourism, Tourism Marketing, Emerging trends, Government initiatives*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

India is regarded as one of the popular tourist destinations in the world, the reason being the variety that it offers to a traveler. A traveler is one who travels far and wide in quest of finding something which is enthralling and satisfying. Pal (2010, p. 155) states that Tourism industry has received a positive impact of Globalization. It has resulted in international movement of people, sharing of culture and has attracted international business investment in tourism infrastructure. "Athithi Devo Bhava" the slogan of the 'Incredible India' Campaign has catapulted Indian tourism sector. The last five years have shown positive growth in terms of tourist arrivals as well as foreign exchange earnings.

A worldwide accepted definition of Tourism states that "Tourism is the totality of the relationship and phenomenon arising from the travel and stay of strangers, provided the stay does not imply the establishment of a permanent residence and is not connected with a remunerated activity"(Parineetha, 2007, p. 1). In India, tourism promotion and development is primarily the responsibility of the Government. The Government of India chalks out and implements policies and action plans for the development of the tourism sector. A successful creation and implementation of tourism marketing strategies by the Department of Tourism, tour operators as well as tourist establishments (hotels, resorts, etc.) can bring the desired results in terms of increase in the number of tourists, foreign exchange earnings, employment opportunities and growth of supporting industries.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Considerable amount of research work has been done on Tourism Industry around the world and in India. These studies cover various aspects of Travel and Tourism sector. The literature reviewed for the purpose of this research has been classified into the following sub-headings:

- ✓ Literature related to Global Tourism Industry
- ✓ Literature related to Indian Tourism Industry
- ✓ Literature related to marketing strategies adopted by Tourism industry
- ✓ Current Trends in Indian Tourism Industry

**2.1. Global Tourism Industry:** Mishra and Ojha (2014) remark that travel and tourism is considered as an important economic activity in most countries around the world. It generates revenue, creates employment opportunities, and also augments the spread of related industries. The World Travel and Tourism Council have named India along with China as one of the fastest growing tourism industries for the next 10 to 15 years.

Pal (2010, pp. 21-24) has remarked that International tourism trade is growing faster than merchandise trade and also highlights the role of government in promoting tourism. The author identifies the following reasons for the government intervention in the tourism industry: political legitimation, national economic goals, equity and social needs, regulation and negative controls, externalities and social investment, and regional development.

**2.2. Indian Tourism Industry:** The diversity of India is legendary, presenting writers, marketers and travel agencies with endless opportunities to sell its charms. But in recent years with the growth of the online travel industry, people now have a lot more information at their fingertips and the research process has become a larger, richer part of holiday planning. At the same time, travel industry providers have grown exponentially in India, so visitors now have more options than ever. In turn, this means that India has to work harder to keep up with demand and influx of visitors.

The research by Mishra & Ojha (2014) highlights the impact of tourism sector on national income. The researchers have carried out an analysis of the Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA) in India as compared to other parts of the world. The researchers have also shown a comparative analysis of contribution of Tourism to GDP and Employment generation. The researchers further add that developing a tourist destination requires an investment in terms of financial, physical as well as human resources. The return on this investment is what makes tourism an attractive proposition for investors.

Malhotra (2013) in a comparative study has come up with a SWOT analysis on the Indian and Singapore tourism industry. While India comes out strong in terms of rich cultural heritage, and more number of tourist destinations; Singapore has an edge in areas of sound infrastructure and safety of tourists. The researcher has suggested a marketing model named 'Marketing India' where the Government should formulate adequate strategies for arousing awareness about Indian destinations to the worldwide tourist community.

**2.3. Marketing strategies adopted by Tourism Industry:** Dev (2011) in her study on tourist destinations highlights the need to promote tourist destinations as an integrated package. The researcher in this study has observed that tourists have a tendency to visit

destinations which were integrated in terms of location and convenience in visit. The researcher has observed that Newspapers and Internet were the most effective medium in attracting tourists.

Tourism Marketing is defined by Parineetha (2007, p. 262) as the “Systematic and Coordinated efforts exerted by the National Tourist Organizations and / or the tourist enterprises at international, national and local levels to optimize the satisfaction of tourists, groups and individuals, in view of the sustained tourism growth”.

With an aim of exploiting the tourism potential of the country Tourism Development Corporations came into being. The activities of The Ministry of Tourism revolve around the concept of projecting the country as a 365 days’ tourist destination. Further, positioning tourism as a major engine of economic growth and harnessing its direct and multiplier effect on employment and poverty eradication in a sustainable manner by active participation of all segments of the society is the main objective of the tourism policy of Government of India. Tourism sector is one of the largest employment generators in the Country promoting inclusive growth of the less advantaged sections of the society and poverty eradication. The role of Government in tourism development has been re-defined from that of a regulator to that of a catalyst.

Kumar (2008, p. 4) states that promotion of tourism and development of tourism related infrastructure can have an impact on the economic, social, cultural, and natural environment of a country. This impact can be favorable and also unfavorable at times, hence the government should carefully evaluate the repercussions of any tourism development activity before implementing the same. Tourism promotion programs should aim at creating a positive impact and reducing the negative effect.

Haq (2014) has identified that online advertising is very effective in attracting customers in the age group of 31 – 40 years. Tourism can be effectively promoted using the worldwide web as its reachability and cost effectiveness can help in attracting tourists from all over the world. The researcher further adds that the effectiveness of online advertising depends on the brand image, perception and preferences of the target audience.

The study by Padmakar (2014) evaluates the effectiveness of web advertisements in the context of Adventure Tourism websites. The research by Mittal (2001) highlights the need to forecast tourist arrivals using statistical tools.

Proper planning and management of tourism promotion should be done based on arrival forecast rather than doing it in an adhoc and unplanned manner. The researcher further states that Tourism is a multi-dimensional activity and for its successful growth and development the Central Government, the State Government and the Private sector need to come together and work in a coordinated manner.

#### 2.4. Current Trends in Indian Tourism:

Research has also been done on various emerging types of tourism. Madhu (2014), in her study talks about the marketing of Backwater Tourism in Kerala. Ramesh (2011) has researched on developing an alternate marketing strategy for wellness tourism in Kerala. Tomar (2011) through her study evaluated the effectiveness of Pilgrimage Tourism in North India. Agarwal (2012) has studied the promotion and development of Heritage Tourism in Amritsar region. Joshi (2012) in her study has highlighted the marketing of Ellora and Ajanta as a tourism product with special emphasis on cultural aspects. Harpreet (2012) has conducted a comparative study of marketing practices of Haryana Tourism Corporation, Punjab Tourism Development Corporation, and Himachal Pradesh Development Corporation.

Konwar and Chakraborty (2015) in their study on the perspective of tourists visiting River Island Majuli have remarked that infrastructure development is one of the prerequisites of tourism development aspects of a tourist destination. Arrangement of tourist guides, currency exchange facility, Internet connectivity, a 24 x 7 dedicated tourism office providing tourist information were some of the suggestions made by researchers to improve tourist potential.

Paul and Nair (2014) in their study talk about the opportunities in Medical Tourism sector in India. The researchers highlight on the importance of online promotion to make India a sought after destination for Medical Tourism which is one of the dominant and emerging trends in tourism industry.

### 3. OBJECTIVES

- To understand the emerging trends in tourism with special focus on India
- To evaluate the growth in Indian tourism sector in the past five years (2011-15)
- To study the initiatives taken by the Government in promoting India as a preferred destination for foreign travelers

### 4. METHODOLOGY

This research is mainly based on secondary sources of information. Research articles



published in journals, government reports on tourism (published by Ministry of Tourism), Newspaper reports, and related websites have been referred for research inputs. The Annual Report (2015-16) of the Ministry of Tourism has been used as a base document to understand and compare the tourist inflow over the past five years. Government initiatives to promote tourism in India are drawn from current tourism policy of Government of India.

## 5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

International Tourism has recorded a positive growth in the first half of 2016. According to UNWTO report, there was a 5% increase (348 Million visitors) in International tourist arrivals between Jan – Apr '16 as compared to previous year's numbers. Asia – Pacific region dominated the International Tourism market by recording a 9% increase in tourist footfalls as compared to previous year, India and China being the largest contributors. Indian Tourism industry has been assessed from three angles, Emerging trends in Indian tourism sector, India's performance over the past five years and Government Initiatives to promote tourism.

### 5.1. Emerging Trends in Indian Tourism Sector:

In order to develop India as a 365 days tourist destination and to attract tourists all year round certain Niche Tourism Products have been identified by the Ministry of Tourism. Following are identified as emerging trends in Indian tourism sector which could provide us with a comparative advantage.

- **Cruise Tourism:** With the joint efforts of Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Shipping India's coastline and inland waterways are being developed to promote ocean and river cruises. Eight tourist circuits along Ganga and Brahmaputra rivers have been identified to promote and popularize cruise shipping and river cruises.
- **Adventure Tourism:** This involves exploration or travel to remote and exotic areas and is quite popular among the youth. Indian Institute of Skiing & Mountaineering (IISM), Gulmarg, J&K and Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF) are being funded by the government to promote Adventure tourism.
- **Medical and Wellness Tourism:** With an objective of promoting Medical Tourism, Wellness Tourism, Ayurveda Tourism and Yoga, the Ministry of Tourism has constituted a National Medical & Wellness and Tourism Board on 21<sup>st</sup> Oct 2015. The drivers of this

category of tourism are mostly private sector institutions, Government is merely a facilitator. 'Medical Visa' has been introduced for foreign travellers coming to India for medical treatment. The Ministry of Tourism is also providing financial assistance under Market Development Assistance Scheme (MDA) to approved wellness centres. The Ministry of Tourism has constituted a Wellness Tourism Providers Committee, comprising of all the stakeholders in the field of 'Wellness Tourism'.

- **Sports Tourism:** With a surge in sport enthusiasts, Ministry of Tourism has taken initiatives to promote India as a Sport Tourism destination. The Ministry of Tourism has constituted the India Golf Tourism Committee (IGTC) which has approved 08 golf events during the year 2015-16, and provided them with financial assistance. Polo one of India's ancient sports is also being put on the tourism radar and being promoted as a "Heritage sport".
- **Film Tourism:** In an endeavour to establish India as a filming destination, the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (I&B) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to hold Film Festivals in India and also participate in International Film Festivals. The intention is to promote partnerships between Indian and Global film industry.
- **Agri Tourism:** Agritourism is a form of niche tourism which is growing all over the world. It involves activities like buying produce direct from a farm stand, navigating a corn maze, slopping hogs, picking fruit, feeding animals, or staying at a bed and breakfast (B&B) on a farm. In India Agriculture Tourism started in Baramati Agri Tourism Center under the guidance of Pandurang Taware in 2004. He received the National Tourism Award from the President of India, for the most innovative Tourism Product. Ministry of Tourism has constituted Agriculture Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) for development and marketing of agri tourism concept in India.

### 5.2. India's performance in the Tourism sector:

Tourism sector is one of the largest employment generators in India and plays an important role in the economic growth of the country in the form of foreign exchange earnings. The Market Research Division of the Ministry of Tourism is responsible for collection, compilation and dissemination of information on various aspects of inbound, outbound and domestic tourism in India. The following data

explains the growth taking place in the Indian Tourism sector and the road ahead.

**Table 1 – Performance of Indian Tourism industry in the year 2015**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals in India & Annual Growth Rate         | 8.03 Million; 4.5%                      |
| Number of Indian tourists traveling abroad & Annual Growth Rate          | 20.38 Million; 11.1%                    |
| Number of Domestic Tourist Visits to all States/Uts & Annual Growth Rate | 1432 Million; 11.6%                     |
| Foreign Exchange Earnings from Tourism                                   | 135193 Crore (INR) / US\$ 21.07 Billion |
| Annual Growth Rate   | 9.6% / 4.1%                             |

Source: India Tourism Statistics at a Glance, 2015

- India’s share in International Tourist Arrivals during the year 2015 was 0.68% which amounts to 1184 Million tourists. In the year 2015 India stood at 40<sup>th</sup> rank in World Tourist Arrivals.

**Table 2: Top 5 states in Domestic & Foreign Tourist inflow during the year 2015**

| Rank | Domestic Tourists | Percentage Share (%) | Growth Rate (%) | Foreign Tourists | Percentage Share (%) | Growth Rate (%) |
|------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1    | Tamil Nadu        | 23.3                 | 1.80            | Tamil Nadu       | 20.1                 | 0.58            |
| 2    | Uttar Pradesh     | 14.3                 | 12.07           | Maharashtra      | 18.9                 | 0.45            |
| 3    | Andhra Pradesh    | 8.5                  | 30.31           | Uttar Pradesh    | 13.3                 | 6.68            |
| 4    | Karnataka         | 8.4                  | 1.34            | Delhi            | 10.2                 | 2.59            |
| 5    | Maharashtra       | 7.2                  | 11.63           | West Bengal      | 6.4                  | 8.27            |

Source: India Tourism Statistics at a Glance, 2015

- Tamil Nadu dominates the tourism sector in India both in terms of domestic and foreign tourist inflow.
- Maharashtra which was in a dominant position in the past in terms of domestic tourist inflow has fallen into fifth position, however it is still holding ground in foreign tourist inflow.

**Table 3 – Top 10 countries in Tourist Arrivals in 2015**

| Rank | Country | International Tourist Arrivals (P) in million | Percentage (%) Share | Rank | Country | International Tourist Arrivals (P) in million | Percentage (%) Share |
|------|---------|---|----------------------|------|---------|---|----------------------|
| 1    | France  | 84.5  | 7.14                 | 6    | Turkey  | 36.2  | 3.06                 |
| 2    | USA     | 77.5  | 6.55                 | 7    | UK      | 36.1  | 3.05                 |
| 3    | Spain   | 68.2  | 5.76                 | 8    | Germany | 35.0  | 2.96                 |
| 4    | China   | 56.9  | 4.81                 | 9    | Mexico  | 32.1  | 2.71                 |
| 5    | Italy   | 50.7  | 4.28                 | 10   | Russia  | 31.3  | 2.64                 |

Source: India Tourism Statistics at a Glance, 2015

- Seven European countries have made to the top 10 in terms of tourist arrivals in the year 2015. China is the only Asian country to feature in the top 10 list.
- India ranks at 40<sup>th</sup> position with a percentage share of 0.68% of world tourist arrivals.

**Table 4 – India’s performance in Tourism sector (2011 – 2015)**

| Year | FTA’s in India (In Millions) | Percentage Share (%) | Rank in the World | FEE in India (In US\$ Million) | Percentage Share (%) | Rank in the World |
|------|------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| 2011 | 6.31                         | 0.63                 | 38 <sup>th</sup>  | 16564                          | 1.59                 | 18 <sup>th</sup>  |
| 2012 | 6.58                         | 0.63                 | 41 <sup>st</sup>  | 17737                          | 1.59                 | 16 <sup>th</sup>  |
| 2013 | 6.97                         | 0.64                 | 41 <sup>st</sup>  | 18445                          | 1.54                 | 16 <sup>th</sup>  |
| 2014 | 7.68                         | 0.68                 | 41 <sup>st</sup>  | 20236                          | 1.56                 | 15 <sup>th</sup>  |
| 2015 | 8.03                         | 0.68                 | 40 <sup>th</sup>  | 21071                          | 1.71                 | 14 <sup>th</sup>  |

Source: India Tourism Statistics at a Glance, 2015

**5.3. Government Initiatives to promote tourism:**

The role of Government in tourism development has transformed over the years, it has changed from being a regulator to playing the role of a catalyst. With an objective of increasing tourism potential, the Ministry of Tourism has taken the following initiatives.

- ✓ **Swadesh Darshan Scheme:** Under this scheme the government has identified theme based tourism circuits and is working towards integrated development of infrastructure in these circuits. These 13 tourism circuits are North-East India Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, and Heritage Circuit.
- ✓ **National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD):** This scheme aims at an integrated development of pilgrimage destinations in a planned, prioritized and sustainable manner to provide complete religious tourism experience. This scheme will help in enhancing the tourist attractiveness in a sustainable manner by developing world class infrastructure in the religious destinations. The 13 cities identified under PRASAD Scheme are Ajmer, Amritsar, Amaravati, Dwarka, Gaya, Kamakhya, Kanchipuram, Kedarnath, Mathura, Patna, Puri, Varanasi and Vellankanni.
- ✓ **E-Tourist Visa:** The Government of India launched the e-Tourist Visa on 27.11.2014. During January to December, 2015 a total of 4,45,300 tourist arrived on e-Tourist Visa. This facility is available for tourists of 150 countries and is available in 16 airports.
- ✓ **Tourist Helpline:** The Ministry of Tourism has launched the 24x7 Toll Free Multi-Lingual Tourist Help Line (1800111363) in 12

International Languages including Hindi and English on 8 Feb 2016. This will be operational on all days in a year providing information relating to Travel & Tourism in India to the domestic and International tourists/visitors and to assist the callers with advice on action to be taken during times of distress while travelling in India.

- ✓ **Visa on arrival:** This facility began in 2014 and has helped in increasing the number of tourist footfalls into India. Visitors from select countries can obtain visa on arrival into India.
- ✓ **Incredible India Bed & Breakfast / Homestay Scheme:** The scheme offers foreign and domestic tourists an opportunity to stay with an Indian family and enjoy the warm hospitality and a taste of Indian culture and cuisine in a clean and affordable place. This concept is very well received by foreign travelers and has gained immense popularity in Kerala, Karnataka and Goa.
- ✓ **TV Campaigns:** Extensive promotional activities have been conducted to promote and popularize Indian destinations among both domestic and foreign tourists. Advertising campaigns of tourist destinations in Kerala, North East, Jammu & Kashmir, Gujarat, Karnataka and Maharashtra have paid off in terms of tourist inflow.
- ✓ **Social Awareness Campaigns:** With an aim of making India a tourist friendly destination, advertising campaigns on the theme of ‘Atithi Devo Bhava’ has been brought in. This has helped to promote concepts of ‘Cleanliness’, ‘Hospitality’, ‘Civic Responsibilities’, and ‘Good Behaviour Towards Tourists’.
- ✓ **“Swachh Paryatan” Mobile Application:** As a part of ongoing “Swachh Bharat Campaign’ the Ministry of Tourism launched a mobile application called ‘Swachh Paryatan’ on 22 February 2016. This application will allow

citizens to report unattended garbage piles at various tourist destinations across the country. In the pilot phase, 25 monuments identified as ‘Adarsh Smarak’ by ASI have been taken up.

- ✓ **Road Shows and Know India Seminars:** As part of the promotional initiatives undertaken, Road Shows were organized in important tourist generating markets overseas with participation of different segments of the travel industry. These Know India Seminars and Road Shows were organized by Overseas India Tourism Offices in cities of Australia, Canada, France, Germany, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Japan, Prague, Czech Republic, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Taiwan, Korea, UAE etc.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS

Tourism has evolved as a lucrative investment option for developing countries. It is an option which is more of a cash generator and less of a cash absorber. Hence, all the countries are making travel easier and cheaper with an intention of promoting tourist inflow. The tourism statistics of last five years indicate an upward trend for Indian tourism industry. There has been a nominal rise in both domestic and foreign tourists in India.

Present day travelers are very demanding and well informed. Tourism service providers have to adopt new and modern techniques like social media tools, mobile tourism, eco-friendly travel, attractive deals and discounts, and personalized service to attract tourists. The ministry of tourism has also got to look at emerging and innovative trends in global tourism industry to remain competitive and attractive as a tourist destination.

Emergence of Hostels and B&B (Bed & Breakfast) concept for backpackers and adventure travelers is fast catching up globally. Modern concepts of Eco-tourism, Rural Tourism, Literary Tourism, Culinary or Food Tourism, Slum Tourism, Cultural or Ethnic Tourism and Space Tourism are giving the tourism sector a new dimension. India needs to develop innovative tourism products based on our culture and legacy. The conversion of palaces and havelis into hotels, Pushkar fair, Rann of Kutch festival, Tiger Safaris, Literature and Film Festivals, all these are efforts which will lead positive results for the tourism industry.

One of the main problems faced by a traveler in India is commuting and connectivity. The government has realized that augmentation of infrastructure is the key to the expansion of tourism sector. The major portion of tourism ministry’s expenditure on planned schemes go

into the development of quality infrastructure relating to tourism at various tourist destinations and circuits spread around the States/UTs. Ultra modern and world class airports at major Indian cities, metro rail connectivity, online bus and train bookings, tourist assistance centres and tourist helpline have been some initiatives which have paved way for growth in tourist arrivals into India.

## 7. LIMITATIONS

This research has been based on secondary sources of information, hence it has limitation in ability and validity. The source of data is authentic as only the government reports have been referred to and analysed. The schemes and initiatives have been introduced in the year 2015, hence their success cannot be assessed in the short run. Further researches could be undertaken to test the influence of these schemes and initiatives on the tourist inflow.

## 8. CONCLUSION

In spite of rigorous progressive methods and schemes adopted by Government of India and Ministry of Tourism to promote India as a preferred destination on the world tourist map, we still have a long way to go. India and Indians have to take pride in our history and heritage and make the experience of visitors memorable and enchanting. Indians by nature are hospitable, generous and tolerant, which is a supporting factor for growth of tourism. India has immense tourist potential as it offers wide variety to a traveler, if this potential is channelized effectively, India could dominate the world tourism industry in the years to come.

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