

Role Of Information And Communication Technology (ICT) Tools In Tourism Marketing

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Abstract

The Indian tourism industry is one of the key drivers of growth among the service sectors of India. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) acts as a powerful tool in promoting the tourism industry. The data for the study was collected from the Government offices and private tourism stakeholders of Kerala State using a structured questionnaire. A total of 314 tourism stakeholders are selected on the basis of both quota and purposive sampling methods. The most common ICT tools used by tourism stakeholders for tourism marketing are tourism information systems, automation, and internet of things. The usage of ICT tools by organisations helps to increase the tourist inflow.

Keywords: Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Tourism Marketing, ICT and Tourism Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian tourism industry is one of the key drivers of growth among the service sectors of India. India is a digitally advanced country in tourism due to the digital tools used for planning, booking, and experiencing a holiday (IBEF, 2023). Kerala's tradition and cultural diversity attract tourists from around the world. According to the Travel World (2023), the State made a notable (1.88 crore) increase in domestic tourists in 2022. Kerala Tourism Newsletter (2022) mentions that the State's tourism shows a 120 per cent growth and a 12.07 per cent increase in State's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2021-22. Kerala tourism sector received Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Gold Award for 2022 in recognition of a printed marketing campaign (The Hindu, 2022).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) offer a powerful tool that brings benefits for promoting and strengthening the tourism industry (Bethapudi, 2013). With the help of ICT, the capability to reach global travellers, acquire prompt market information and perform electronic business transactions has increased economic efficacy and opened new markets for services (Farkhondehzadesh et al., 2013). ICT facilitate tourists to explore new opportunities, cost comparisons, selecting the best accommodation, finest restaurant, and favourite attraction (Gossling, 2021).

The advantage of using ICT tools in tourism marketing is Customer Relationship Management (CRM), online transactions, promotion of various services, and communication with the consumer

(Houssien et al., 2021). ICT tools facilitate business operations in the tourism industry by linking with trading partners, distributing of products and services, and supplying information to tourists (Shanker, 2008).

OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

- (1) To identify the ICT tools used for tourism marketing.
- (2) To study the role of ICT tools in tourism marketing.

METHODOLOGY

The data for the study was collected from the Government offices and private tourism stakeholders of Kerala State using a structured questionnaire. A total of 314 tourism stakeholders are selected on the basis of both quota and purposive sampling methods. Out of the total 314 stakeholders, 163 (52 per cent) are Government officers and 151 (48 per cent) are private stakeholders. The quota per cent 52 and 48 were decided based on the total population of Government officers (750) and private stakeholders (700).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics of the Tourism Stakeholders

Out of the 314 tourism stakeholders, 65 per cent are in the age group of 35–49 years, 22.3 per cent belongs to the age group 50–64 years, and 12.7 per cent belongs to the age group 20–34 years. The majority (81.2 per cent) of the stakeholders are male and 18.8 per cent are female. When education is concerned, 45.8 per cent of tourism stakeholders are postgraduates, 34.1 per cent are graduates, 18.2 per cent completed advanced degrees, and merely 1.9 per cent finished high school. Nearly half of the stakeholders belong to the Government office and the rest half of the stakeholders belong to the private sector. More than half (52.2 per cent) of the stakeholders are into the business for more than 15 years, more than a quarter (26.1 per cent) of the respondents have 11–15 years of experience in the business, and the rest (21.7 per cent) of the stakeholders are into the business for less than 10 years.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of the Tourism Stakeholders

Demographic characteristics	n	%
Age		
20 - 34 years	40	12.7
35 - 49 years	204	65.0
50 - 64 years	70	22.3
Gender		
Male	255	81.2
Female	59	18.8
Education		
High school	6	1.9
Graduate	107	34.1
Postgraduate	144	45.8
Advanced degree	57	18.2
Type of organisation		
Government office	163	51.9
Private stakeholder	151	48.1
Experience		
Less than one year	14	4.5
1 – 5 years	22	7.0
6 – 10 years	32	10.2
11 – 15 years	82	26.1
More than 15 years	164	52.2

Note. n = 314

ICT Tools Used for Tourism Marketing

The tourism stakeholders were asked to rate the ICT tools used in the organisation for tourism marketing on a five-point scale ranging from 1 being never and 5 being always. The opinion of the stakeholders regarding the ICT tools used for tourism marketing is ranked according to the mean values.

Table 2 Mean and Rank for the ICT Tools Used for Tourism Marketing

ICT Tools	Mean	Rank
Tourism Information System	3.68	I
Automation	3.59	II
Internet of Things	3.56	III
Global Positioning System	3.53	IV
Virtual-augmented realities	3.36	V
Big data	3.32	VI
Artificial Intelligence	2.97	VII
Robotics	2.35	VIII

The results reveal that the Tourism information system (3.68) has been ranked as the topmost ICT tool used in tourism organisations for tourism marketing followed by automation (3.59), and the internet of things (3.56). Tourism information system helps tourists to access information about travel, accommodation, destination, and other services easily. The tourism information system aid to reach a large number of travellers within a short time. It also facilitates attracting the attention of tourists to a particular location.

Regression of Impact of ICT Tools (IT) on Tourist Inflow (TI)

The influence of ICT tools used by the tourism stakeholders on the tourist inflow was studied with the help of a regression model.

H₀₁: There is no influence of ICT tools used in the organisation on tourist inflow.

Table 3 Regression Model Summary of Impact of IT on TI

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	p
.52 ^a	.27	.27	.89	114.55	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), IT

The R square value .27 implies that the model accounts for 27 per cent of the variance in the impact of ICT tools on tourist inflow $F(1,312) = 114.55$, $p < .001$. The regression coefficient (b) indicates that s ICT Tools (IT) increases by one unit, the Tourist Inflow (TI) increases by 2.04.

Table 4 Regression Coefficients of Impact of IT on TI

Variable	B	SE B	β	t	p
Constant	2.04	.17		12.10	<.001
IT	0.52	.05	.52	10.70	<.001

Dependent Variable: TI

The standardized $\beta = .52$, $p < .001$ shows the impact of ICT Tools (IT) on Tourist Inflow (TI). The ICT tools are used by organisations for creating awareness and promotion of the services. The ICT tools support the tourism stakeholders by increasing the tourist inflow. Thus, the results reject Hypothesis H₀₁. There is a positive impact of ICT tools used in the organisation on tourist inflow.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, first, the ICT tools used by the tourism stakeholders for tourism marketing were identified. The most common ICT tools used by tourism stakeholders for tourism marketing are tourism information systems, automation, and the internet of things. The role of ICT tools in tourism marketing in improving the tourist inflow was also studied with the help of regression analysis. The usage of ICT tools by organisations helps to increase the tourist inflow.

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