

‘A Study of Perception and Opinion on Gujarat Tourism Marketing’

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Abstract: *Culturally rich state, Gujarat has achieved a major milestone in tourism strengthening the state economy. As a matter of fact, to the greater extent, the effectiveness of Gujarat tourism marketing is responsible for this unprecedented growth reported in tourist footfall, foreign exchange earnings and development of tourism infrastructure at the destinations. The primary objective of this research study was to study the perception and opinion on Gujarat Tourism Marketing. A structured non-disguised questionnaire containing eleven criteria of Gujarat Tourism Marketing was administered and Chi Square test was applied to test the proposed hypotheses. The results showed that the opinions of respondents on selected criteria of Gujarat Tourism Marketing and their Gender are statistically independent and no significant association is found between type of respondents and their opinion on selected criteria of Gujarat Tourism Marketing except one criterion namely ‘Mr. Amitabh Bachchan has given a golden touch to Gujarat Tourism Business. It was recommended that Gujarat Tourist destinations should largely be promoted through social media; host people should be involved in marketing local tourist destination and be incentivised for the same and tourism marketing strategy needs to revamp.*

Key words: *Tourism, Marketing, Social Media, tourists footfall, foreign exchange earnings*

Date of Submission: 02-09-2017

Date of acceptance: 16-09-2017

I. Introduction

Globally, tourism is one of the most luring industries contributing to employment, state domestic product and foreign earnings. In order to fetch more benefits from tourism business, more efforts should be put in enticing tourists in a huge number. Tourism marketing not only assists a tourist in deciding a destination to visit but also tries to offer a desired tourist satisfaction. In fact, tourism marketing forms some expectations in minds of tourists and builds a distinct image about the destination. It becomes therefore essential to incorporate such elements in marketing that the diverse tourism products of Gujarat can be well marketed. Undoubtedly, the existing marketing of Gujarat Tourism is performing excellently. But now it's time to revamp it to bring tourism business at the highest level. According Edriaan Koenig, "Tourism Marketing seeks to maximise tourist satisfaction." A. Kumar defines, "Tourism Marketing is the delineation and execution of activities related to tourism their professional planning and execution and finally, ensuring the satisfaction of customers (tourists) in such a manner that the marketing objectives of the tourism organization are achieved within the framework of social, economic, political and environmental components of the place/region/country of origin as well as that of the place/region/country of tour destination."

II. Review Of Literature:

Joshi (2014), opined that tourism marketing is a tool to satisfy the modern needs of tourists. Dhote (2015), of a view that Khushboo Gujarat Ki.....campaign is the major turning point of tourism business and it reflects the diversity brand of Gujarat Tourism. Shah and Gupta (2012), found that Shri Amitabh Bachchan is an effective brand ambassador for Gujarat Tourism and there has been a rise in tourism business after the celebrity marketing. Vagionis and Loumioni (2011), affirmed that films constitute a vital important marketing tool which can effectively serve the strategy for promotion of tourism destinations. Ongwae et al (2013), concluded that marketing and promotional policy positively influences tourism growth. Molina et al (2010), concluded that favourable destination image plays a pivotal role for managing tourism and destination marketing successfully and promotional means like internet, brochures, tourist offices and guide constitute an active and open way of getting information for tourists. Parmar (2016), showed in the results that the average opinions of male and female respondents on factors namely advertisement and promotion of Gujarat Tourism and implications of marketing campaign of Gujarat Tourism are not statistically and significantly different.

III. Statement Of The Research Problem:

Seemingly, vibrant Gujarat is so diverse in terms of its cultural heritage and historical significance that it distinctly portrays its tourism Products. In fact, it attracts each genre of tourists such as nature lover, explorer, pilgrims, daredevil etc. However, still efforts need to be put to bring it on Global Tourist Map. To promote tourism business of Gujarat, a unique featured tourism marketing campaign was initiated which resulted into a noteworthy growth in tourist footfalls. The present study has been carried out by the researcher to understand the perception and opinion on Gujarat Tourism Marketing.

IV. Significance Of The Research Study:

Indeed, Gujarat Tourism business has a potential to grow further. However, still it requires recognition at both national and international front. In fact, a growth in tourism is expected only if Gujarat tourism products are widely promoted and potential tourists are attracted which is possible only through a refreshing tourist centric marketing strategy. This study is of a great help to Gujarat Tourism Department, tour operators, hoteliers etc to determine different elements for marketing tourist destinations of Gujarat and offering desired satisfaction.

V. Research Objectives:

5.1 To study the perception and opinion on Gujarat Tourism Marketing

VI. Research Hypotheses:

6.1 Ho1: The opinions of respondents on selected criteria of Gujarat Tourism Marketing and their Gender are statistically independent

6.2 Ho2: There exists no significant association between type of respondents and their opinion on selected criteria of Gujarat Tourism Marketing

VII. Research Methodology:

To achieve aforementioned research objectives, the researcher has adopted following research methodology. Population of this study consists of those tourists, potential tourists (who visited and are likely to visit tourist destinations of Gujarat in the near future) and people who are aware of Gujarat Tourism Marketing, while the sample of the said includes selected tourists (63) who visited Somnath, Polo Forests and Ambjai, potential tourists (15) and aware respondents (22). The sample size of this study includes 100 sample units. A convenient sampling method was used by the researcher. A structured non-disguised questionnaire was administered for data collection and Likert five points scale ‘Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree’ was used. Moreover, percentage and Chi Square test were used as statistical tools for data analysis and testing of proposed hypotheses.

VIII. Discussion Of Results And Findings

Ho1: The opinions of respondents on selected criteria of Gujarat Tourism Marketing and their Gender are statistically independent

S- Significant, NS – Not Significant

Table 8.1. χ^2 value for the opinion of respondents on selected criteria of Gujarat Tourism Marketing vis-à-vis their Gender

Criteria of Gujarat Tourism Marketing	Df	p value of χ^2	Result
Print media delineates vivid image of tourist destinations	4	0.089	NS
Creatively designed videos of tourist destinations of Gujarat	3	0.551	NS
Informative Advertisement on T.V. and in Newspapers	4	0.657	NS
More likes and comments on attractive Face book page of Gujarat Tourism	4	0.742	NS
Mr. Amitabh Bachchan has given a golden touch to Gujarat Tourism Business	4	0.282	NS
Unique tourism brand is created through celebrity marketing	4	0.659	NS
Laser, light & sound shows (with Mr. Bachchan’s voice) have significant Impact	4	0.258	NS
Events and programmes (such as RannUstav, International Kite Festival, Navratri Modhera Dance Festival, Vad Fest, Punch Mahostav, Monsoon Festival) promote Gujarat Tourism	4	0.218	NS
Beautifully portrayed destinations of Gujarat in serials and films catch the attention of the tourists.	4	0.244	NS
Food, Festivals and Fairs are well promoted	4	0.405	NS
‘Khushboo Gujarat Ki’ campaign has created a buzz	4	0.462	NS

As shown in the above table, since 'p' value of Chi Square test for all selected criteria of Gujarat Tourism Marketing is greater than 0.05, so the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that the opinions of respondents on selected criteria of Gujarat Tourism Marketing and their Gender are statistically independent

Ho2: There exists no significant association between type of respondents and their opinion on selected criteria of Gujarat Tourism Marketing

S- Significant, NS – Not Significant

Table 8.2. χ^2 value for opinion of types of respondents on selected criteria of Gujarat Tourism Marketing

Criteria of Gujarat Tourism Marketing	Df	p value of χ^2	Result
Print media delineates vivid image of tourist destinations	8	0.501	NS
Creatively designed videos of tourist destinations of Gujarat	6	0.495	NS
Informative Advertisement on T.V. and in Newspapers	8	0.288	NS
More likes and comments on attractive Face book page of Gujarat Tourism	8	0.619	NS
Mr. Amitabh Bachchan has given a golden touch to Gujarat Tourism Business	8	0.004	S
Unique tourism brand is created through celebrity marketing	8	0.664	NS
Laser, light & sound shows (with Mr. Bachchan's voice) have significant Impact	8	0.321	NS
Events and programmes (such as RannUstav, International Kite Festival, Navratri Modhera Dance Festival, Vad Fest, Punch Mahostav, Monsoon Festival) promote Gujarat Tourism	8	0.116	NS
Beautifully portrayed destinations of Gujarat in serials and films catch the attention of the tourists.	8	0.083	NS
Food, Festivals and Fairs are well promoted	8	0.057	NS
'Khushboo Gujarat Ki' campaign has created a buzz	8	0.288	NS

Based on the above table, it is inferred that there exists a significant association between type of respondents and their opinion on selected criterion of Gujarat Tourism Marketing namely 'Mr. Amitabh Bachchan has given a golden touch to Gujarat Tourism Business' (since p value 0.004 < 0.05). And no significant association is found between type of respondents and their opinion on remaining selected criteria of Gujarat Tourism Marketing as p value of Chi Square test is greater than assumed level of significance (0.05).

In addition to this, there were 37% of respondents who strongly agreed that 'print media delineates vivid image of tourist destinations' while only 1% of respondents strongly disagreed for the same. Majority of respondents strongly agreed for 'creatively designed videos of tourist destinations of Gujarat'. Besides, 43% of respondents strongly agreed for 'Informative Advertisement on TV and in Newspapers' whereas only 3% of respondents strongly disagreed for the same criterion. Interestingly, majority of respondents (45%) of respondents strongly agreed that 'Mr. Amitabh Bachchan has given a golden touch to Gujarat Tourism Marketing' while just 4% of respondents strongly disagreed for the same. Further, there were 62% of respondents who strongly agreed that 'events and programmes such as RannUstav, International Kite Festival etc promote Gujarat Tourism. Similarly, 28% of respondents strongly opined that Khushboo Gujarat Ki campaign has created a buzz while 26% stood neutral. Besides, the highest mean score is of criterion, 'Events and Programmes (such as RannUstav, International Kite Festival etc) promote Gujarat Tourism' (i.e.) 4.42 while the lowest mean score is of criterion, 'Print media delineates vivid image of tourist destinations'.

IX. Limitations And Scope For The Future Research:

As this study is based on conveniently collected data from the respondents, the results may not be generalised. Due to time and other constraints, the study is restricted to only three tourist destinations of Gujarat. Besides, the sample size of the research is of just 100 sample units. Further research can be undertaken by taking large sample size and covering other tourist destination of Gujarat. Similarly, comparative study of marketing strategies of top five states of India can be carried out.

X. Recommendations [Or] Suggestions:

As a matter of fact, Khushboo Gujarat Ki.... marketing campaign completely changed the face of tourism business of Gujarat. However, now it's time to revamp fresh tourism marketing strategy by including unique features such as highlighting film tourism, sports tourism, regional food festivals etc. There should be Use of those print media through which more potential tourists can be approached and prompted to visit tourist destinations of Gujarat. Further, more cultural events should be organized at tourist destinations of Gujarat targeting tourists. A part from this, tourist Information Centres, tourist guides and tour operators should adopt tourist friendly approach in catering tourists and put emphasis more on tourist satisfaction. Similarly, Gujarat Tourist destinations should largely be promoted through social media. And, host people should be involved in marketing local tourist destination and be incentivised for the same.

XI. Conclusion:

The given statistics reported that there has been a considerable rise in tourists footfall after Khushboo Gujarat Ki... marketing campaign including celebrity marketing. However, now it is a time to revamp such marketing strategy as can fetch large number of foreign as well as domestic tourists and prompt them to revisit. The results indicate that that the opinions of respondents on selected criteria of Gujarat Tourism Marketing and their Gender are statistically independent and no significant association is found between type of respondents and their opinion on selected criteria of Gujarat Tourism Marketing except one criterion namely ‘Mr. Amitabh Bachchan has given a golden touch to Gujarat Tourism Business’.

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Appendix I

Demographic Features of the Respondents

No	Demographic Details of Respondents		Count & %
1	Type of Respondent	Tourist	63 (63)
		Potential Tourist	15 (15)
		Aware Respondents	22 (22)
2	Gender	Male	62 (62)
		Female	38 (38)
3	Age Group	18-30 years	97 (97)
		31-40 years	00 (00)
		41-50 years	03(03)
		Above 50 years	00(00)
4	Education	Post Graduation	23 (23)
		Graduation	58 (58)
		HSC	18 (18)
		SSC	01 (01)
5	Occupation	Student	87 (87)
		Housewife	02 (02)
		Self-employed	02 (02)
		Businessman	01 (01)
		Service	08 (08)

Source: Primary, compiled by the researcher

IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM) is UGC approved Journal with Sl. No. 4481, Journal no. 46879.

Dr. Sushilkumar M. Parmar. “‘A Study of Perception and Opinion on Gujarat Tourism Marketing’.” IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM) , vol. 19, no. 9, 2017, pp. 01–04.