CHAPTER 8

TOURISM MARKETING STRATEGY FOR PUNJAB

According to Stanton, Michael and Bruce, “Marketing is a total system of interacting business activities designed to plan, price, promote and distribute want satisfying products to target markets to achieve organizational objectives1. This definition is system oriented which has several implications.

Stanton suggests that customer’s wants must be recognized and satisfied effectively. Further, he states that marketing is dynamic business processes, which are an integrated one and not a fragmented assortment of institutions and functions. It is not just one activity, it is a result of interaction of many activities and marketing activities start with the generation of a product idea and end only after the customer’s wants are completely satisfied. It is also implied that marketing must maximize profits over the long run in order to succeed in business.

According to Kotler, “Marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering and exchanging products of value with others2.

Thus the corporate strategy must be aimed at delivering greater customer value than the competitors.

Importance of Marketing Strategy for Tourism

Tourism is very important for a country’s overall economic welfare because it is a service industry, which has a great potential for direct and indirect employment and is also a source of development for various other allied service industries like transport and hotels etc. According to Jha and Singh, “The development of tourism business has been influenced by the services rendered by the travel agents and travel guides since they work
as information carrier”.3 Also According to the report of a study conducted by National Committee on Tourism, “In terms of economic significance the average per capita expense of the West Asia tourist far exceeded the rest. The other nationalities whose average expenditure (excluding international air fare) is greater than the average are United Kingdom, Japan, United States and Canada. Of these, the Japanese tourist stayed for a shorter duration but spent much higher for everyday of stay in the country”.4 and According to the report of the working Group on Tourism, “The total employment in tourism during 2004-5 was estimated to be over 7 million and based on the tourist arrival projections it should have been 12.5million in 2012 and 15 million in 2016.”

According to Marie, Emmer, Scott and Richard, “Travel agents are changing the way they make hotel reservations. They are turning away from toll free telephone numbers to booking hotel rooms directly through computer systems. Travel agents computer systems, which were referred to as computer reservation system (CRSs) for years, are now called global distribution systems (GDSs) because of their global reach”.6

According to Jha, “A plan for tourism can only served its desired goal. The main target to such a plan would be to arrive at an optimum harmonization of the inter-relations between the two places of market while avoiding the creation of serious economic, social and territorial imbalances. The key steps in the planning are assessment of tourist demand and paving ways for an optimal supply”.7

According to Krippendorf, “Marketing in tourism is the systematic and coordinated execution of business policy by tourist undertakings whether private or state, owned at local, regional, national and international levels to achieve the optimal satisfaction of the needs of identifiable consumer groups and in doing so achieves an appropriate return”.8

From the above it can be made out that tourism marketing activities are systematic and coordinated efforts extended by The State Tourist Organisation and/or tourist enterprises
Tourism Marketing Strategy for Punjab

In order to suggest an effective tourism marketing strategy for Punjab, suggestions/viewpoints of the respondents were obtained with the help of an open ended question. On the basis of these viewpoints/suggestions, generalisations have been made and also incorporating the findings of the study for the various other issues, a comprehensive tourism marketing strategy has been suggested in this chapter.

The findings of the study reveal that there are number of prospective locations in Punjab which can draw attraction of the tourists from India and abroad, therefore, there is a hard felt need to properly market it.

Punjab Government has established a separate Department for promotion of tourism in the state, it is known as Punjab Tourism. The basic functions of this department are to attract tourists from India and abroad and to make their visit and stay comfortable and peaceful.

However, from preliminary observations, it seems that though there is a lot of potential for tourism but the state has not so far taken any serious steps to optimally utilize the same.

Hence, the researcher has endeavoured to suggest a marketing strategy for promotion and development of tourism in Punjab.

Distribution of tourists by travel behavior such as travel arrangement, duration of stay in Punjab, type of tourism valued most and purpose of visiting were investigated. The results showed different market segments available in Punjab. Thus, form the results it is suggested that Punjab should adopt a marketing strategy to focus as well as prioritize the efforts on the most attractive segments of tourism.
This study has identified the most important factors using Factor analysis and multiple regression techniques. Moreover, this study also examined the significance of tour and travel operator’s service dimensions in satisfying the tourist using a multiple regression analysis. The results of this research showed tour and travel operators service dimensions are significantly related to satisfaction levels of the tourist. The study further examined the type of tour package schemes and average cost of package tourists and non-package tourist used by travelers. Thus the marketing strategy should take care to address these issues.

Based on the overall findings of the research on the data analysis and interpretation framework of the survey the following short-term and long term measures are recommended.

The most preferred activities by tourists coming to Punjab are sight seeing than outdoor sports and entertainment activities. Thus, for framing an effective Tourism Marketing, maximum effort should be undertaken to develop and upgrade city sights, theme parks, national parks, historic places, galleries, museums, wild life sanctuaries. Additional Tourism professionals should be trained and assigned in the respective sections and divisions in the ministry of tourism that will be organized in the future.

There are different tourist destinations with different degree of attractions in the State; therefore, an aggressive promotion has to be done targeting the unique feature of each destination.

The study has identified different kinds of variables that motivated or attracted tourists to visit Punjab. The study indicated significance difference in the over all satisfaction of respondents of foreign origin and domestic tourists. Though there were some issues on which both groups of tourists have responded almost the same way but it has been observed that there are many points/ issues on which there was a significant difference of opinion of the respondents of these two tourist groups. Therefore separate marketing efforts/components should be incorporated for these two groups of tourists.

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From the above findings of the investigation it emerges out that these empirical findings of the research have practical implications for all concerned with promotion of tourism in Punjab. The tourism sector of Punjab has undoubtedly the potential for a lot of growth and to become a good source of employment and help the state in improving its economic condition but since there are number of challenges being faced by this budding sector of Punjab Economy, the same can be met by adopting a marketing Strategy which should focus on coordinating the efforts on the part of government and the various tourism intermediaries like tour and travel agents.

While the government is creating a favorable environment that would facilitate the growth of tourism in the state, the efficiency and effectiveness of the government initiatives in this regard need improvement in line with the findings of this chapter.

The responses obtained on this aspect were also segregated on the basis of the respondent group and the suggestions of each group have been generalized as follows.

**General Suggestions made by the foreign tourists:**

The following issues have emerged out of the generalization of the various suggestions received from the various foreign tourists.

- Setting up of more number of information outlets.
- Availability of foreign language tourist guides and better public and civic facilities.
- Better and cheaper accommodation and local conveyance. Pre-paid auto and taxis at the destinations mostly frequented by the tourists.
- Improvement of the hotel services which have to become more tourist friendly.
- Better informed guides and travel / tour operators.
- More publicity through media about the destinations and attractive Package tours.
Suggestions from Domestic Tourists

- Although there are tourist information centers at the major destinations and tourist attractions, in the form of PTDC information offices, these are not well equipped to handle the needs of the tourists.
- There is a greater need to revamp and systematize these centers for providing useful and specific tourist information with regard to tourist places of attraction, accommodation facilities, journey booking facilities, tour guides and updating of the available documents etc.
- There is also a need to open up more information centers at the strategic locations like Main Bus stand, Railway Station, Airport, mostly frequented tourist spots etc.
- The facilities for civic amenities and public facilities like Toilets, Drinking water, Rest rooms etc are to be improved manifolds in almost all the tourist destinations. The facilities for elderly persons, children, physically handicapped or sick persons are also to set up in all the places. A hassle-free arrangement for availing the benefit of local transportation is also required.

Suggestions from Tour Operators and other institutions

Some of the tour operators showed their interest to have linkages with the tourism department of Punjab. They are interested to work as approved tour operators.

- The international tour operators suggest that the cultural identity of Punjab needs to be publicised through various means to attract the tourists.
- Basic tourism related and wayside amenities need to be upgraded. The interactions revealed that the tourists face problems due to the lack of proper and trained guides. Proper information about the places is not available to the tourists.
- The main objectives of the state government should be to identify and develop tourist destinations giving special focus to pilgrimage and religious tourism.
Analysis on the Basis of Tourism Products

Tourism products should be developed and promoted. The themes that should be focused in Punjab include:

- Religious Tourism
- Leisure Tourism
- Culture & Heritage Tourism
- Business Tourism
- Highway Tourism
- Tourism based on Traditional Art, Craft and Cultural Activities
- Rural Tourism
- Nature Tourism

Suggestions relating strategic Destination Development

The State does not have much to offer so far as natural resources are concerned. Hence, some manmade features/attractions need to be created in the state to attract tourists. The state has excellent road network (both National and State Highway). Emphasis should be, hence, laid on highway tourism by creating projects lined on the highways. Destinations need to be developed focused on Religions, Leisure, Culture and Heritage, Natural and Rural Tourism.

Focus on Tourism Products

(i) Religious Tourism

Punjab is famous for its numerous gurudwaras. Each of these gurudwaras has its historical significance. Improving basic civic amenities at these places of religious importance and publicity of these places will attract more tourists to these places.

(ii) Leisure Tourism

This type of tourism can be easily promoted by creation facilities like Amusement parks. Water sports complex, Ropeways, Golf Course etc.
(iii) Culture and Heritage Tourism

A large number of old palaces, havelis and sarais exist in the State. These historical buildings can be converted into heritage hotels, restaurants or museums by providing suitable incentives to owners. Development of this sub-sector will not only attract foreign tourists but also provide encouragement and support to the heritage structures of the state. Development of these structures can also help to market the local culture, arts and crafts. Government should take necessary steps to promote Heritage tourism in the State.

(iv) Business Tourism

The business tourists frequently visit the destinations like Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Kapurthala. Extending entertainment options in these location like multiplexes, air conditioned shopping malls. Golf Course etc. will lead to increase in tourist related activities in these locations.

(v) Highway Tourism

There is a good network of State and National highways in the State and a large number of travelers prefer road journey. There is a need for creating necessary facilities like hotels, restaurants, picnic spots, water parks etc. along the highways at suitable intervals for the highway travelers to relax. In fact, travelers can be induced to follow certain traffic routes if such facilities are better developed. State should encourage private investors to create such facilities on highways.

(vi) Tourism based on Traditional Art, Craft and Cultural Activities

There are several pockets in the State, which are known for their handicrafts and other craftsmanship. Similarly, there are many fairs that are celebrated throughout the year with enthusiasm. These need to be systematically promoted and marketed among the domestic and foreign tourists.
(vii) Rural Tourism
Punjab has a unique culture and it is famous for its hospitality throughout the world. Rural tourism clubbed with festivals and other cultural events will give a significant boost to the inflow of domestic and foreign tourists.

(viii) Nature Tourism
The state has the famous wetlands, which can be developed judiciously to promote nature tourism.

Punjab’s tourism development strategy should focus on the following priorities:

- Increasing the average duration of stay of foreign tourists.
- The management and implementation Tourism Perspective Plan.
- Promoting Highway Tourism of the religious, heritage and rural tourism.
- Promoting travel in Punjab.
- Promoting repeat visits.
- Promoting educational trips.
- Increasing visitor arrivals.
- Restoration and preservation of tourism attractions.
- Raising Punjab’s profile and showcasing the state as a global destination.
- Positioning Punjab as a hub for meetings, conventions and exhibitions.

Marketing Strategies on the basis of Tourist Needs Analysis
Some of the respondents mainly tourism intermediaries have stated that Tourist need and expectation is one of the main driving factors for the development of tourism. Tourists want value for money when they visit a tourist destination. These needs vary from region to region and tourist to tourist. The domestic and foreign tourists visiting Punjab have different needs. An average domestic tourist is a pilgrimage tourist in Punjab. The major items of attractions in Punjab as indicated by domestic tourists, were Gurudwaras and
religious places, forts, archaeological attractions, leisure and adventure activities and special interests like handicrafts, etc.

An average foreign tourist in Punjab seeks a blend of Culture and Heritage and Leisure avenues. The attractions and major items of tourist interest, as indicated by the foreign tourist, are culture and heritage; handicrafts, and archaeological attractions and monuments, leisure activities, village lifestyle and special interests like shopping for handicraft items.

From the above, it can be made out that Tourism Marketing Strategy must address various issues related to tourist needs and corrective measures to be taken while implementation of the it.

**SWOT Analysis for Punjab Tourism**

From the findings, suggestions and observations during the study, a SWOT analysis of Tourism in Punjab is made as under.

(i) **Strengths**

- Punjab is dotted with a number of important pilgrimage centres
- Active government support for Tourism development
- Good core infrastructure (i.e. Power, Roads & Communications). State has excellent roads, surplus Power and sufficient water
- State has a number of historic heritage sites
- Large number of Non Resident Indians visits Punjab every year.
- Punjab is rich in art and culture and has unique handicrafts
- High standard of living of the people in the state.
- Typical dance/music form of the state (Bhangra and Giddha) - the international icons like Gurdas Maan and Daler Mehandi have made significant impact of them in India and abroad.
(ii) Weaknesses

While many other States in India have made successful efforts at developing tourism within their states, the relative inability of Punjab to harness and develop its full tourist potential may be attributed to a combination of factors such as:

- State owned facilities are not maintained properly.
- Publicity of destinations is not adequate as compared to other states.
- Lack of effective policies.
- Inadequate Tourism Infrastructure.
- Ineffective Marketing and low awareness due to lack of brand image.
- Inadequate Promotion and Publicity.
- Lack of adequate tourist information centers.
- Inadequate knowledge about opportunities amongst tourists and tour operators.

(iii) Opportunities

- Rich in Culture & Heritage
- Punjab has excellent general infrastructure. Tremendous scope for tourism development
- Proximity to national capital offers several advantages for tourism promotion
- Strategic geographical location - Punjab is located en-route to frequented tourist destinations in Himachal Pradesh and Jammu.
- Potential for attracting large number of outbound tourists and non-resident Indians.
- Border tourism - Retreat ceremony at Wagha Border is a unique attraction.
- Tourism has been accorded industry status by the Punjab government

(iv) Threats

- Competition from other neighbouring States focusing aggressively on tourism (Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan)
- Security restrictions - Border state
Tourist Trends and Behaviour

In Punjab, the tourism industry is surviving mainly because of Religious and business tourists. The leisure tourists are far and few. The domestic tourists arrival to the state has not significantly increased over the years. As the tourists from within the State form a major share of total tourist arrivals in Punjab, retaining these tourist as well as attracting tourists from other States will play a pivotal role in development of tourism in Punjab.

Non Resident Indians (NRIs) are an important tourist segment. A significant number of NRIs visit Punjab every year. They have a keen interest in local destinations, borne out of anxiety to renew roots and pass a sense of culture to their children; but this market is hardly tapped. Most of these NRIs visit pilgrimage centers in Punjab. For the purpose of leisure, they prefer destinations like Delhi and Himachal Pradesh to Punjab.

Strategy/Marketing

Promotion: Promotion of a destination is addressed to both tourists and private sector entrepreneurs and thus most of the promotional expenses for a destination or state have to be borne by the State Tourism Department. The promotion campaign of the state should be planned in line with the destination prioritization.

Destination: Tourism: The following steps are suggested to be taken up for further improving the tourist destinations in Punjab:

1. Setting up of more number of information outlets at the destinations and the entry points (Railway Stations/Bus Stands).
2. Frequency of transport facilities to the tourist destinations and places of interest needs to be improved. Government transportation needs to be augmented.
3. Making available better and cheaper accommodation and local conveyance. Pre-paid auto and taxis at the destinations mostly, frequented by the tourists.
4. More publicity through media about the destinations.
5. Cleanliness at tourist spots
Tour operators/Travel agents

Travel agents and tour operators can play a major role in promoting tourism in the state. The survey team interacted with three categories of tour operators/Travel agents i.e. those working at the Regional, Interstate and the International level. The regional and interstate tour operators/travel agents are mainly concentrated in the capital i.e. Chandigarh and Amritsar. The international tour operators are mostly located in Chandigarh, Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Amritsar.

Tourism Promotional Initiatives

Some mega infrastructure projects related to tourism are in pipeline, which will definitely give a big push to the state's tourism sector. Proposed ropeway between Anandpur Sahib and Naina Devi will be a major attraction, which can boost the present tourist inflow manifolds. Science City at Jalandhar, Government's focus on Harike Pattan, Khalsa Centenary Complex at Anandpur Sahib are some of the other major initiatives which will carry the state tourism a long way.

Marketing and Publicity

Marketing and play a pivotal role in successful implementation of the Perspective Tourism Development Plan. It is often a point of debate whether the tourist inflow at a certain destination attracts related infrastructure and projects or is it the existing infrastructure and tourism amenities that attract tourists to a certain destination. Thus the marketing effort for tourism projects should be addressed to both tourists and investors of tourism projects. The marketing objectives should broadly involve the following elements for formulating the marketing strategy:

1. Destination Prioritization
2. Target customer - Location-wise, Income-wise, Purpose-wise
3. Targeted Tourist inflow
4. Target investment inflow at each destination
From the Target Customers' point of view, marketing the tourist destinations in Punjab will have to be done at two levels:

1. Marketing for the local and domestic tourists; and
2. Marketing for the foreign tourists

The preparation of publicity material, organising of tourist festivals to coincide with the arrivals of tourists in Punjab and audio-visual presentations to familiarise the tourists with the tourist destinations in Punjab will have to be done in such a way that the produce is neither undersold nor oversold. This end, a few objectives have been identified:

1. To increase the average duration of stay of foreign tourists
2. To sustain the growth of domestic tourists.
3. To provide avenues for expenditure.

For creating effective awareness about the places of tourist interest in Punjab, it is suggested that to adopt an aggressive marketing strategy. The Department of Tourism of Punjab should open/revamp Liaison Offices in other important cities throughout the country and in the Indian embassies in selected countries.

The Department of Tourism, Government of Punjab should also publish a multimedia as part of giving thrust to promote tourism and making Punjab a global destination, the Department shall also launch an Internet edition of the contents that go into the CD-ROM.

The Department should actively participate in international travel markets, festivals, fairs and exhibitions. It is also borne out of this study that Punjab Tourism needs to have a periodical study on impact of tourism related activities on a continuous basis. The Department should engage the services of outside experts on a regular basis and that the department should frequently get feedback from people in the field of travel which will be stored in data bank. The department will also devise method of getting feedback from tourists.
References

5. Working Group on Tourism for the VIIIth five year plan (1990-95), New Delhi, 1989.