



**EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN REGARDS
TO TRAVEL & TOURISM IN BIHAR**

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Abstract

Intent: This exploratory paper sets to find out the tourist scenario in Bihar and the social media elements which are included for the effective tourism promotion. It will also take a feedback from the common people so as to know whether social media marketing of tourist places and products are effective or not, if yes then have they been motivated to travel or not and if no then what could be the strategies for developing it better

Background: Bihar, the land of the holy Buddha has always attracted tourists from all across the globe for its deep penance into Buddhism. The local markets of the city of Bodhgaya are filled with foreign-friendly products which help them make a profit during the tourist season. Social media in today's time has become a free of cost tool to reach the many and promote the product.

Methodology: the paper adopted an exploratory structuring in order to find out how effective social media is when one talks about the marketing of tourist products and places in the city of Bihar. Thus the study took place is Gaya, Bihar, a very tourist popular place and the respondents were the local residents, selected on convenience sampling method who know the place well.

Key Words: Bihar, Tourism, Social Media, Buddhism, Gaya



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Introduction:

The success of any product or services depends on its value for customer. Qualities and specialities of the products decide the life cycle of the product. For the same association of all marketing mix is must in a balanced way. The American Marketing Association has define marketing as the process of planning and executing the conception, promotion, pricing and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to initiate exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational needs (Kotler, 2004). Bihar's history has indicated a very rich heritage which has been inherited from many dynasties & commendable personalities. Though, all things considered the overall potential for tourism from the state still remains underutilized especially in terms of income & employment. For the promotion and advancement of tourism in the state Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation (BSTDC) was formed in 1981. But even after 30 years of establishment it has been yet to achieve the target of destination marketing. Destination marketing facilitated the procurement of tourism policy, which should be coordinated with regional development strategic plan. It should also guide the tourism impacts optimization the maximization of well-being for the region studying the trend of the last 5 years, the dynamism has improved mainly because of a better strategic plan based on law & order. Now the



Department of Tourism, Government of Bihar has decided to modify the image of the state from a pilgrimage destination to a leisure and recreation destination. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the efforts and particular steps taken by BSTDC to diversify the image of the state. In Today's times, the sector is on the upwards trend again and has drastically changed with the overwhelming influence of social media outlets, especially for creating new opportunities to attract as well as progress the potential customers through routed communication and stronger commitment towards guest engagement.

It may only be seen as something positive for the tourism and hospitality industry as it has so much to offer. It is still on a rise and provides a way to raise profits. Nevertheless, one of the most essential difficulties that service providers have encountered is how to engage in social media marketing and how to validate whether it is profitable for their business to use it or not. Therefore, some of the prioritized aspects of demand includes the scales of how someone measures such results; how someone ascertains the value of business on social media and lastly how one understands the values of social media to any organization along with how one makes use of social media for a business in order for it to be accepted by the community whilst intensifying the brand and lastly how one have measures the value of the accomplished efforts. The tourism industry is primed to take primacy of social media outlets, as the industry has long relied largely on destination reputation, consumer point of view, spread of information, and positive word-of-mouth advertising. In much illustration, such as the case of the 'Incredible India' campaign and 'Bharat Darshan' campaign, integration of social media into the marketing strategy of Indian Tourism has shown remarkable, measurable results in increased rates of visits as well as visitor gratification.

Literature Review

UNWTO defines tourism as a phenomenon of social, economic and cultural aspect, which motivates the movement of people to places or countries out of their usual environment for the purposes that are personal or business/professional. For some tourism represents relaxation and enjoyment, a trip during the holiday weeks away from work, and some confusion the need for study and research. But for some specific others, tourism is an employment opportunity; it is a sector that can bring earnings to a considerable lot of people around the world, as evident from some developing economies, majorly relying on tourism as the main source of living. Therefore it is important to research it, analyze it and study it more attentively. A.M. Kaplan, M. Haenlein (2010) quoted an in-depth technology savvy definition, saying 'Social Media is an Internet based cluster of applications that were conceived on the ideological & technological foundations of Web 2.0, which has permitted the creation as well as exchange of Content generated by the User'.

Cox and Wray (2011) solicited tourism to be a way to diversify economic & financial condition in the rural areas by providing an opportunity of sources of alternative income and employment generation. Chin-Tsai Lin and Chuan Lee (2010) explored that the determination of marketing strategy is the scathing function of management. Pearce *et al* (2008) studied the importance that personalities who turn into individual icons hold; in order to attract the tourist to a particular destination e.g. a lot of places are known mainly for its association with specific people who were excellent in their own field. Hudson and Ritche (2008) pointed out very regular happening in the industry i.e. numerous destinations around the world sell themselves in very similar ways. Husain (2007) prioritized on the discrepancies related to tourism growth, in terms of accessibility, accommodations, attractions as well as amenities. Bihar in this regard has secured itself as an honourable status and distinct as an administrative state, with an individuality aspect, which works on the same base as that of the more preferable and important states and UTs in the country. In no other state in India are the regional differences so marked as in Bihar. After independence Bihar has shown growth. Prasad



(2007) analysed certain scenarios of the state with development, from a socio-economic and agricultural development and marketing perspective. Levinson and Gibson (2010) have explained social media from a marketer perspective as a set of tools that are used free of cost to distribute information and empower the marketers as well as the community to initiate and meaningful conversation & content online. Some examples of social media include vlogs, video as well as photo sharing sites, audio podcasts, Internet radio, and communication tools. The 21st century tourism promotion has entered a latest era as web have been become a powerful tool to nurture tourism at every country, region, state or destination. The first initiative in marketing of its kind, *Incredible India* was conceived and conceptualized in the year 2002, which had a lot of efforts in successfully establishing India as a destination of high-end tourism and generating about 16% rise in the tourist traffic in 2002.

Methodology

The paper adopted an exploratory structuring due to the nature of the topic selected. Out of 120 samples approached, 89 samples consented their inclusion in the study, which were selected on convenience sampling from the contacts of the authors. The study was conducted in the city of Gaya, Bihar by sending out online questionnaire. The secondary data was analysed from journals, open access sites, magazines and proceedings.

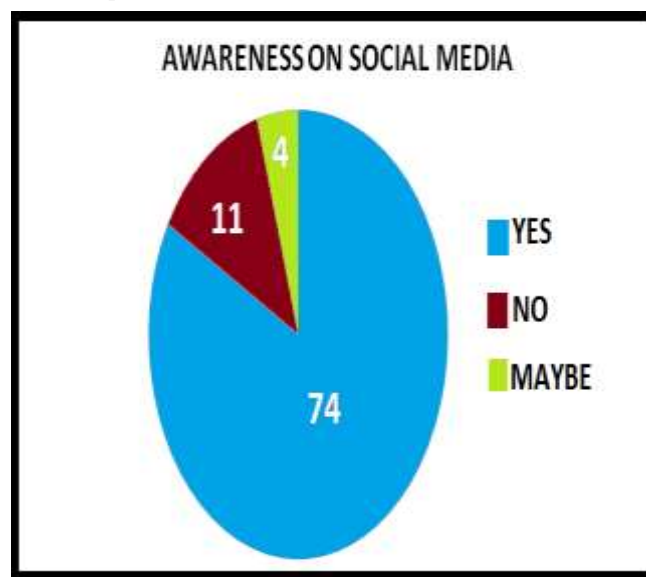
Objectives of the study:

1. To understand the tourist market of Bihar
2. To analyse on-ground overview of the social media effectiveness in the state of Bihar
3. To study the public opinion on social media being the motivator of tourism

Analysis & Discussions

As discussed earlier, out of 120 respondents that were approached for this study, 89 samples agreed to be included in the study, thus making the sample response rate of about 74.2%.

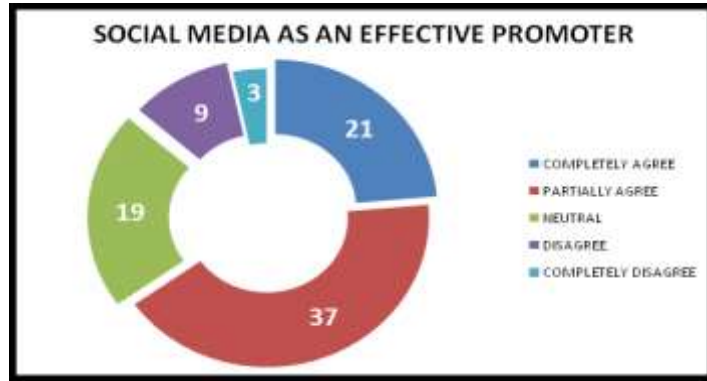
Figure 01: Sample Votes on social media awareness (Source: Author)



The First question took the awareness level test of the samples on whether they know about what the term social media is, to which 74 samples, (majority) said yes, 11 samples did not know about and lastly 4 samples voting maybe.



Figure 02: Sample feedback on social media being an effective promoter (Source: Author)

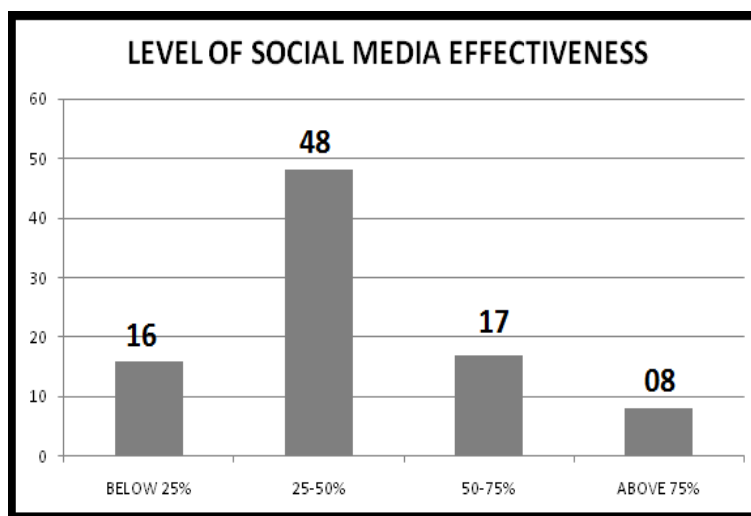


Following were the observations recorded:

Table 01: Responses recorded along with % share (Source: Author)

PARAMETERS	VOTES	SHARE %
Completely Agree	21	23.6
Partially Agree	37	41.6
Neutral	19	21.3
Disagree	9	10.1
Completely Disagree	3	0.33

Figure 03: Judging the level of effectiveness of social media (Source: Author)

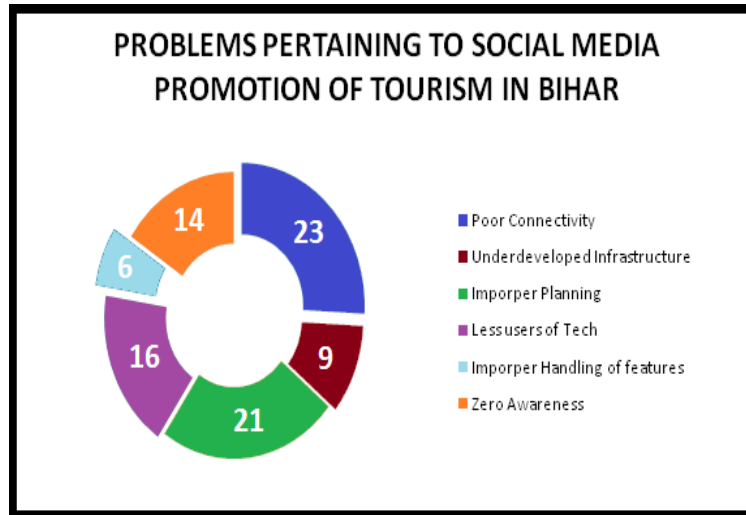


The following question enquired about level of effectiveness that social media has. 16 samples voted below 25% of



overall potential, 48 samples voted between 25-50%, 17 samples voted 50-75% and lastly 8 samples voted ‘more than 75%’. A majority was made towards the positive side here too.

Figure 04: Problems in effective social media promotion in Bihar (Source: Author)



The last question enquired some on ground problems that were faced in Bihar on social media promotion of tourism. The majority of samples i.e. 23 blamed poor connectivity, 21 samples blamed improper planning, 16 samples blamed less users of tech., 14 samples blamed 0 awareness, 09 samples blamed Underdeveloped Infrastructure and lastly, 06 samples blamed improper handling of features.

Conclusion

The exploratory paper studied the samples of Bihar in order to understand the effectiveness of Social media marketing and promotion of Tourism. 89 samples were in the study & belonged to Gaya city. The awareness was very high as 83% of samples know what social media is and is a very effective tool for tourism promotion as 48 samples voted between 25-50% levels. Some of the problems in effective promotion of tourism were also received as feedback, in which poor connectivity and improper planning were at the top. The study could have had a bigger sample base to have a wider perspective as well as a larger geographical area.

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