# A Study on e-Marketing and e-Commerce for Tourism Development in Hadoti Region of Rajasthan

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**Abstract.** Travel, Tourism and Hospitality industry is growing day by day. It is providing immense opportunities of growth and development to a destination, region, state and Nation. The rapid changes in Information Communication Technologies generated the demand of e-marketing, e-commerce and content marketing in travel, tourism and hospitality industry. No doubts that ICT developments are impacting the demand and growth of tourism and its products phenomenally on the globe. On the other hand the region like Hadoti of Rajasthan state which is highly rich in tourism is lacking behind in the usages of e-commerce-marketing and content marketing in promotion of the attractions and other itineraries. The paper tries to explore the benefits of using e-commerce-marketing and e-business model for the destination image building and promotion of tourism of the region. The paper showcasing the benefits of shifting from the traditional promotional techniques to adapt e-commerce tools and techniques for travel, tourism and hospitality industry of Hadoti region.

**Keywords:** e-Marketing · e-Commerce · e Business model · Tourism · ICT

## 1 Introduction

e-Marketing and e-commerce are the buzz words for the promotion and marketing of travel, tourism and hospitality industry. An extensive approach could allow in enhancement of tourist visits for the Hadoti region-marketing, e-commerce and content marketing are bringing opportunities to the travel, tourism and hospitality industry at large. Information technology and communication creates essential modifications in the process, allocation and pattern of the tourism industry (Buhalis 2000). It is quite interesting and useful to find out where on the globe private organizations and government both recognized the need of e-commerce tools and techniques in travel, tourism and hospitality where we are lacking behind? In present era tourism and hospitality are the major sources of employment and income. It is a dynamic industry which needs sustainable information regarding its innovations, events and products. The recent demonetization in India also gives a push the usages of internet and ICT in

tourism and hospitality industry. The changing needs and desires of the tourists in terms of satisfaction, safety and security also developed the urge of ICT usages in the said industry. At this stage no destination which would like to be recognized on the globe as Tourists Destination can ignore the usages of e-commerce-marketing and the recent trend of content marketing for tourism development.

## 2   Tourism Industry

Indian tourism industry is rising day by day. According to India Brand Equity Foundation the Indian tourism accounts for 7.5 percent of the Gross Domestic Product. Tourism industry is the third largest foreign exchange earner country. Not only this Indian tourism sector's total contribution to GDP is excepted to reach US $160.2 billion by 2026. The GDP contribution by the travel and tourism industry is suppose to grow to US$ 280.5 billion by 2025. On the another side the World Travel and Trade Council focused on improving infrastructure, introduction of e-visa services which have contributed significantly to the growth of Indian tourism industry. Indian tourism industry have lot to offer. It is remarkable that in 2014, the nation earned USD 19.7 billion earnings from foreign exchange from tourism-tourist visa scheme which is enabled by electronic travel authorization which has been launched by the Government of India in year 2014 for 43 countries proved as a boon for Indian Tourism.

Rajasthan which is one of the famous states for tourism and tourism products also witnessed a hike in tourists in 2015 to 2016 (up to December 2015) tourist arrivals in the state reached 36.66 million. On the other hand the Hadoti region of the state has witnessed a down fall in tourist arrivals both domestic as well as foreign tourists arrivals which has been shown in the table given below Table 1.

**Table 1.**  Domestic and foreign tourist arrivals form 2012–2016 June

| Year | Domestic tourist arrival | Foreign tourist arrival |
|------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2012 | 62029 | 1881 |
| 2013 | 63015 | 2889 |
| 2014 | 51467 | 3516 |
| 2015 | 90598 | 2574 |
| 2016 (June) | 42876 | 1010 |

Source: Adapted from Hassan and Sharma 2017

There could be many reasons for the aforesaid down fall in the number of tourists at Hadoti region. The researchers in the present study would try to focus on one of a major reason i.e. the non or less usages of e-commerce-marketing and content marketing in the promotion and branding of the region as tourist destination

## 3    Tourism Industry

We cannot imagine our daily lives without internet. It's not surprising in this era if one tourist is excepting the he/she will get prior information before reaching the destination, while their visit and after their visit. In case of foreign tourists this exception goes high. Internet and mobile usages after the demonetization in India are coming more in demand. The travel, tourism and hospitality industry is an industry which needs constant communication with the potential tourists in every corner of the globe. Information technology and communication is probably the only tool and technique through which tourist destinations can attract and grab the higher number of tourists. Internet is not only a mean to provide information directly to the potential tourists but it also a better way to make a pre-satisfaction in the mind of the tourists, to identify the needs and desires of the tourists prior their visit. Technology advancements allow the pattern of exchange to be changed of clientele and businesses, which are the foundation of the entire marketing (Hanson 2000; Middleton 2001). The booking systems of tickets, hotels etc. made it easy for the travelers to approach the destinations. Worldwide the tourism industry has facilitated by ITC. (Buhalis 2003). ICTs in tourism industry include various components that consist computerized reservation systems, teleconferencing, video, video fliers, management information systems, airline electronic information systems, electronic money transfer, digital telephone networks, smart cards, mobile communication, e-mail, and Internet (Mansell and When 1998). Competitive advantage of organization can be achieved by tourism managers who clinch new information technology and vigorously contribute in the technology planning process to identify new users and manage their expansion (Moutinho 2000). The tourism industry process has been changed through E-innovation strategy (Hipp and Grupp 2005; Martin 2004).

### 3.1    e-Marketing

e-Marketing is an important technique to connect directly with the prospective customers. In the countries like India it is spreading its wings especially in metro cities. "e-Marketing describes about the company activities to inform, customers, communicate, promote and sell its aid through means of the Internet" (Kotler and Keller 2009:785). e-Marketing is tool by which the manufactures/sellers try to promote and market not only the gods but also the services. The shift in the service industry has been noticed because of the e-marketing strategies. Banking, insurance, tourism, travel and hospitality industries are using e-marketing tools like anything. Many times it has been observed that e-marketing is considered as a marketing campaign through the website. Actually e-marketing is vast and consist of several tools other than the company website. Although company website is a vital tool of e-marketing but considering it as the only tool of e-marketing is a wrong perception. Online distribution and payment processing is another important tool of e-marketing. The advancement in the technologies gives a boost in the usages of e-marketing specially in online distribution of the products. The recent demonetization in Indian economy and "go cash less" strategy has given a push to the usages of online payment processor. One of a new trend in

e-marketing is collection of responses which can be very helpful in service industry. For grabbing new customers' online advertising methods has been used by many leading companies. The tourism, travel and hospitality industry understand the urge of the different tools of e–marketing. Although the website can be viewed as the basis for e-marketing activities in tourism (Andrlić 2007), there are numerous e-marketing tools that can be adopted by the hotel industry. While adopting the e-marketing strategies for the promotion of products and services one of the important factor these days are Content marketing. Content marketing works as back bone for attracting the tourist to a particular destination by reflecting the significant content which may include images of the destinations, map and details of the place likewise weather, transport facilities, accommodation, places to see, virtual tours and other special features of the particular destination.

## 3.2    e-Commerce and Tourism

Electronic commerce as business performance that first and foremost depends on web technology to function, and three different mediums are included in web technologies: the internet, the World Wide Web, and wireless transmissions on mobile telephone networks (Schneider 2011, p. 4). Marketers need to focus appropriately on the necessities of the e-Commerce and online tools and techniques to make wonders and increase sales. Brand imagining, Product Positioning, Product Awareness etc. all were supported by the help of online websites. E-commerce is also helpful to stop the undue advantages enjoyed by fake retail stores (Sharma 2013).

E-commerce in travel is a new method of business enterprises, which practically includes publishing, electronic information transmit, online ordering, electronic accounts and online payment services which are related to tourism organizations. This kind of ecommerce has brought remarkable changes to nations in present era.(Zhang 2011, p. 408.)

Because of the shortage of system understanding several of the conventional travel enterprises are till date choose to run their business with the practice of instruction booklet dimension, although many of companies are identified the significance of network usage. (Shen and Huang 2011, p. 179.)

E-commerce can be described as "different sort of profitable deals or functions between two or more persons, by the means of electronic medium and system, and targeting at the exchange of products and services. (Demetriades and Baltas 2003, p. 40). While adopting e-commerce tools and techniques the markets must use a content which is significant and boost up the moral of the target viewers. Thus, for creating a brand image the following points must be considered by the marketers:-

1. Be individual in the appeal
2. Be in conversation which is significant
3. Be a manufactured goods
4. Be community (Arora and Sharma 2013).

In present era the customers not only want the information but also they wish to feel delighted while visiting and watching the websites. Only getting information is not the
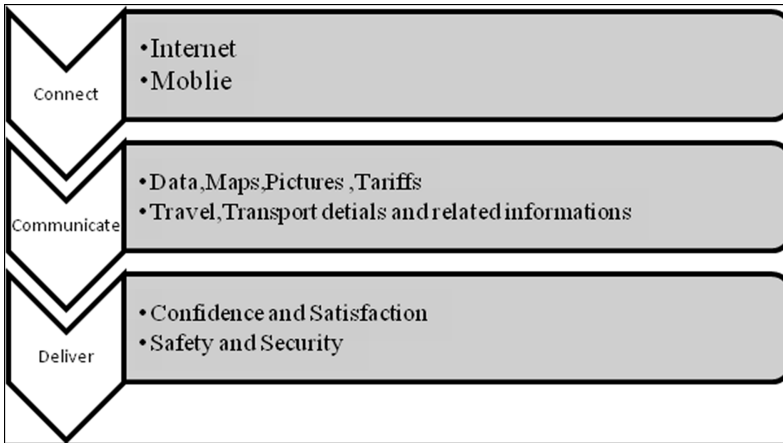
**Fig. 1.** CCD Model for e-Commerce and Tourism (Connect, Communicate and Deliver)

mere objective of the tourists. They would like to feel happy and relaxed while seeing the websites additionally they wish to feel safe and secure. The authors suggested a CCD model Connect, Communicate and Deliver for making potential tourist informed and delight Fig. 1.

### 3.2.1 Electronic Business Models

In present era the traditional business techniques and models has been replaced by internet and e-commerce. Timmers (1998) defined business business model as organized design for the good, service and information flows, an explanation of the a variety of business actors and of their roles, as well as a depiction of the possible benefits of these actors and finally a description of the sources of revenue. On the other hand Linder and Cantrell (2000) explained business model as the organisation's most important reason for creating significance". Hamel (2000) recognized four factors that determine a business model's prosperity latent-

- Effectiveness - Level to which the business conception is an well-organized method of providing benefits to customer
- Exclusivity- Level to which the business perception is distinctive.
- Balance - Level of balance among the fundamentals of the business theory.
- Revenue Generator - Level to which the business notion attain revenue generator which have the possible to create above average returns.

A business model defines how an organization creates funds by particularize where it is located in the value procession (Rappa 2001). Rappa's classification includes of nine generic e-business models, it categorize companies among the nature of their value plan or their approach of creating profits. Osteralder and Pigneur (2002) further endorsed a business model as a theoretical and architectural execution of a business strategy and as the base for the execution of business functions. The authors moreover formulated an e-business model that throw a light on the importance of e-business

**Table 2.** The pillars of an e-business model

| Pillars | Content & components |
| --- | --- |
| Product innovation | The services and goods a firm offers, indicating a significant value to the customer and for which he/she is willing to pay. The essential factors are the value proposition a firm needs to present to special target client segments and the capabilities that a organization has to receive in an effort to give this worth to the customers |
| Infrastructure management | This element describes the value process composition that is quintessential to give the value proposition. This entails the events to create and supply value, the relationship between them, the in-residence resources and the company's partner network |
| Customer relationship | By using ICT firms can redefine the concept of seller -buyer relationship. The association capital the company creates and keeps with the customer, to be able to satisfy him and create sustainable income. |
| Financial aspect | It is transversal considering that all different pillars impact it. This element is composed of the earnings mannequin and its price constitution. The income model determines the firm's profit model and accordingly its ability to survive in competitor |

Source: Adapted from Osterwalder and Pigneur 2002

issues and fundamentals companies have to think about in order to function productively. The model is based on four main pillars which are product innovation, infrastructure management, customer relationship, and financial aspects. Table 2 revels the interdependence of these factors with the detailed content and components.
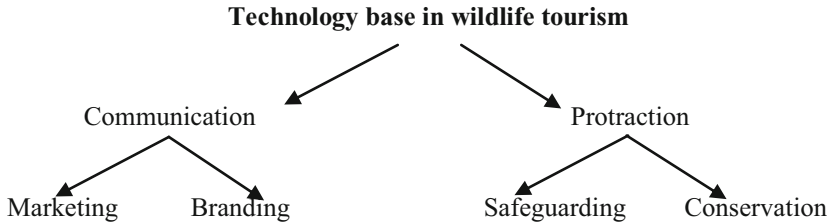
The aforesaid table reveals that the four pillars are reciprocally supported and unified.

### 3.3    ICT Adoption for Tourism Development at Hadoti Region

Hadoti region of Rajasthan state is highly rich in its natural beauty, culture, heritage, water bodies and wildlife. The region consists of four districts namely Kota, Bundi, Baran and Jhalwar. Every corner and area of this region is full of surprises and differentiation in the tourists' products. Hadoti region have immense potential in Niche tourism likewise –Dark Tourism, Culinary Tourism, Agri-tourism, Sports and Adventure tourism. Despite of its rich cultural heritage, wildlife, water bodies and historical monuments this region is not yet gets fully exposed on the globe. There could be several reasons behind it but the researchers while the research found one of the most important reasons behind this are almost no usages e-marketing for the promotion and branding of the tourist destinations.

#### 3.3.1    Wildlife at Hadoti and ICT
The region encompassing wide wildlife sanctuaries likewise Darrah Sanctuary, National Chambal Gharial Sanctuary, Bhensrodgarh Sanctuary, Ramgarh Sanctuary, Shergarh Sanctuary and Sorsan. Hadoti region is a paradise for the Wildlife and bird

**Technology base in wildlife tourism**

Communication                    Protraction

Marketing        Branding        Safeguarding     Conservation

**Fig. 2.** Technology base in wildlife Tourism (Source: Adapted from Hassan and Sharma 2017)

watching. It gives ample opportunities to the visitors to see the natural habitat of animals. However, wildlife tourism is not getting that pace which is needed. The main reason behind it is lack of usages of information communication and technology usages. On the globe where different industries are recognizing the importance e-marketing on the other hand sanctuaries and bird watching destinations of this region don't have the websites. In present era we need ICT not only to circulate the information about the animals species, their natural habitat etc., but to give them protection and conservation. The below figure revels it Fig. 2.

The development of useful and workable technology experts still remains as one of the key challenges for marketing wildlife tourism. The availability of resources is also critical because technology use requires resource. Social networks mainly as Face book and Twitter are playing crucial roles in promoting wildlife tourism in many countries across the world. Technology becomes finely tuned with wildlife tourism marketing. Importance should be given to use and capitalize m-commerce, e-commerce, social media, blogging, and so on (Hassan and Sharma 2017a). It is really necessary to provide information through different media, including virtual tours, so visitors can get informed on the available wild animals and related visit sites, and by circulating such significant information, the wildlife attractions can be fairly set as part of tourism circuits and packages. Effective use of the Internet could include techniques like banner or video advertisements, pop ups etc. to showcase the pictures of animals, birds and sanctuaries. This helps visitors to plan a more encompassing and meaningful visits ahead of time while reducing possible disappointments and frustrations. By using proper marketing tools and means, planners, organizations and companies in the tourism sector can also propitiate the means for visitors to make their mind to visit the sanctuaries and zoo's (Hassan and Sharma 2017b). Technological gadgets are certainly contributing tourism promotion (Dadwal and Hassan 2015). In terms of strategic planning for wildlife tourism, it is relevant firstly "to connect the tourist desires and exceptions with the wildlife sanctuaries. Secondly it is important to write down their complaints regarding the wildlife visits experience for making the improvements" (Sharma 2014, p. 696). The information about the sanctuaries can work wonders for the potential tourists to attract towards wildlife sanctuaries. Lack of meticulous information about certain wildlife sanctuaries and parks is one of a major problem faced by wildlife tourism (Parveen and Sharma 2015).

### 3.3.2    Heritage and Cultural Tourism at Hadoti and ICT

The cultural heritage of Hadoti is very rich and diverse. The monuments, temples, forts, cuisine, fairs, festivals and crafts are giving the region a unique flavor to the region. The region covered many forts and palaces under its periphery. Taragarh fort at Bundi, Indergarh fort, Shergarh fort Baran, Nahargarh fort Baran, Gugor Fort Baran, Shahbad fort Baran and Gagron fort Jhalawar. A region with so many unique forts is difficult to find out in the state. While doing the research even the authors faced the problem to find out the details about the location, timing of the forts, and availability of facilities at nearby places of these forts. Only the details of Taragarh fort and Gagron fort are available on the website.

## 4    Conclusion

The research reveals that in spite of valuable tourism resources the Hadoti region is unable to attract tourists because of no usages of technology advancement tools. Lack of information related with the tourist destinations, missing road maps, directions, viability, timing, availability of facilities, transport to reach at the destination, images/pictures of the tourist destination etc. are few important aspects for any tourist which they desire to find out prior visit. While doing the research the authors themselves faced these problems. Although some of the travel agencies desired to use e-marketing and e-commerce for tourism promotion but they are still afraid. The local people are even not aware about few of the unique tourist destinations of the region. The paper stress upon the role of government in supporting tourism destinations through e-marketing and e-commerce. The present study draws the attention on the responses of some tourists who have shown their trust on the e-commerce transactions. The officials should also make sure that internet cost for users should be rational and reasonable as this will permit the growth of e-commerce to enlarge the horizon, which will bring positive results for the tourism sector. The state level and local level authorities should build a confidence in the mind of travel and tour operators, local people and tourists with an approach that the whole sector should have a cashless system and increase e-commerce methods for payments. The e-commerce transactions should be promoted such as movie e-tickets, e-entry tickets, transport e-ticket etc. Certainly to achieve these goals the government must create trust and improve on the promotional awareness. Education is also important in e- marketing and e-commerce some tourist destinations in the rural areas likewise Bilasgarh, Kanyadey are not known even by many of the locals. By the help of e-marketing and ecommerce people can get an outline of what is in the region to offer them. A foot forward by the government and private players can works wonder for the Hadoti tourism development.

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