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## E-TOURISM – NEW MILESTONE IN TOURISM INDUSTRY(A STUDY ON TRENDS AND TECHNOLOGY)

#### Mr. Naveen Kumar T. G

Lecturer , Department of Tourism Administration (M.T.A) Kuvempu University, Shankarghatta , Shivamogga.

#### ABSTRACT

ourism has closely been associated to the continues growth of information and communication technology for over two decade. Nowadays, Internet and information and communication technology are present on all operative, structural planning and marketing levels to provide global interaction among tourists and travel and hospitality industry. E-tourism is the platform where buying and selling activities done under common interest. E-tourism trends are boosting the opportunities to develop the tourist services and it contributed significantly in developing the tourism industry.

**KEYWORDS:***E*-tourism, trends, technology, social media and role of *E*-tourism.

## E-tourism- A Milestone in Tourism Industry

#### INTRODUCTION

The world of travel and tourism existed from centuries i.e. from the nomadic era when people were travelling for the sake of food and shelter. The revolution in travel came with the introduction of wheel, steam engine; and aeroplane. People started to cross their geographical boundary and explored the world. With the modernization of the era and introduction of new trends in each and every sector, many aspects revolutionized in every field. People started to accept and demand IT in every field rather than manual human work. The metamorphosis in the travelling world came with the concept of "E-Tourism" from the beginning of 80s. The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) transformed the concept of e-tourism throughout the globe.

The drastic progress of tourism is connected with the advancement of ICTs above 30years. E-tourism gave birth to the most advanced technologies of the modern days like Computer Reservation System (CRS) in 1970s, the Global Distribution System (GDS) in 1980s and the internet in late 1990s. E-tourism decreased the unnecessary heavy man power which was involved in many sectors of tourism. The new technologies like CRS, GDS and internet transformed the operational and strategic tactics of tourism dramatically. E-tourism gifted a direct link between the customer and the supplier by removing the intermediaries.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

The first segment of literature was from the scientific paper of Applied Studies in Agribusiness and Commerce – APSTRACT, Agroinform Publishing House of Budapest by GergelyRáthonyi holding the title Influence of social media on tourism. This paper stated very detailed information about Web 2.0, Social media, social networking sites and blogs. We can also



see a very clear picture of impact of social networking sites on the tourists, impact of blog on travelling as well as business, usage of internet and social media in tourism, Information sources of the travel planning etc.

Although this documentation gave an insight to the E-tourism sector it has not allowed me to gain further knowledge on E-commerce and approaches enabling them to be able to complete data collection. Therefore has not been useful upto that level regarding the topic of this paper.

The third academic journal Ecoforum [Volume 2, Issue 1(2), 2013] was on"E-tourism: Concept and Evolution" written by IulianCondratov. This paper looked into the technology used to used in the E-commerce to have strategic management and e-marketing. It looked into small to medium organisations within the tourism industry and destination management systems with the use of ICT. Diffusion of innovation was also discussed. It stated the technological progress and ICT impact on the touristic market.

The forth and final Piece of literature review is the Travelers' E-purchase intent of tourism products and services. This looked at online trust which is an important element when attempting to E-market your organization as well as attempting to e-commerce with consumers. Lack of trust can led to a decrease within online transactions in-between you and consumers that you are trying to connect with. The paper then lead on to discuss if consumers are in acceptance with internet use within the tourism industry. This looked into the sample description, model fit and hypotheses then followed by a discussion. (Nunkoo, R, &Ramkissoon, H 2013)

#### **RESEARCH GAP**

There has been few research study on the various aspects of E-tourism. Previous studies made only on Etourism and utilization of the tourism resources for the betterment of the tourism industry accessibility. The studies are emphasizing on how to provide accurate & quality accessibility of information for the tourist. There are researches held on tourists' satisfaction and also on on-line service satisfaction but there is still a research gap on etourism trends in the industry. Current research is going to fulfil the research gap by scooping out the important determinants of Convenience in E-tourism trends in the industry.

#### **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Ecommerce created a new channel for the world marketing of product and services and generated new entrepreneur opportunities to give information and other knowledge based services. One of the finest paths of describing tourism prospectus of a nation is using ICT and web based services. E-tourism is a platform which creates opportunities for the tourists to get clear idea about their trips. It helps the tourists experience the expected services at the destination with in few minutes tourists can choose their holiday vacation as per their wish. The following researchable issues are identified after a thorough literature review.

1. What are the current trends in E-tourism?

2. What are the various trends and technologies used in E-tourism development?

#### **OBJECTIVE OF STUDY**

#### The main objective of the study is:

To analyse and examine the trends in E-tourism.
To study the various aspects and technologies given birth by E-tourism

#### Scope of study

The present study is concern to study the effect of E-tourism in tourism development and the new trends of e-tourism which is featuring a lot to the tourism industry.

#### Limitation of the Study

The present study is based on the descriptive data; therefore the limitation of the secondary data applies on this study. The study is also limited up to the f E-tourism trends and its contribution for the tourism development.

#### **Research Methodology**

Here we have adopted descriptive research methodology. This research is more specifically based on the secondary data from the internet, magazines, books, reports, conference's proceeding and National-International journals, Quotations and opinions of prominent authors. The data and information have been collected and analyzed.

#### **E-tourism and Social media**

The concept of E-tourism and social media runs parallel. It is the contribution of the social media that etourism has been promoted and adopted by many individuals through the awareness created in the social media about e-tourism. The combination of ICTs and internet rendered a lot to the process that the social media stared replacing the traditional and outdated sources of information. Even the perception of the consumers has changed a lot. The consumers are becoming more sophisticated; hence they demand more specialized media.

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), "social media is a group of internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundation of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content". Tourism is information based and information intensive industry, hence Web 2.0 offered many new technologies which created a good medium of communication.

We can find a huge number of sources through which the user can get information related to travel like from Blogs, Wikipedia, videos, photos etc. The photos and videos serve as authentic and actual visual aspect of a particular place. E-commerce brought elasticity in tourism as the travelers can beforehand collect all the travel related information. Social media became a hub of information to render to the consumers who are involved in the tourism industry. Many of the social media sites like Facebook, Twitter etc give the consumer a change to interact directly with the local people. The traveler can make friends before hand, before reaching to the destination.

The social media is also responsible for the promotional work of e-tourism. Now-a-days in many websites we can find various travel related stuffs which side by side promote tourism too. Incase any new trend in E-tourism, the social media are the first to popularize it. Through social media a single message can reach a millions of individuals at a time. If the consumer wants to get detailed information about the advertisement given in social media related to tourism, by clicking the link, the consumer is directly redirected to the actual vendor of that particular information who can provide very authentic information and data related to the matter.

#### **E-tourism and Impact on Social Media**

E-tourism has become a hub in the social media. Whenever we are opening any social media site, we can find various tourism stuffs like advertisements, blogs, packages etc. The concept of E-tourism majorly focuses on the electronic means of tourism. This is the most advanced technology used in today's date which has been spread throughout the tourism industry. ICTs include not only the hardware and software required but also the groupware, Netware and the intellectual capacity (humanware) to develop, program and maintain equipment.

According to Buhalis (2003), ICTs include "the entire range of electronic tools, which facilitate the operational and strategic management of organizations by enabling them to manage their information, functions and processes as well as to communicate interactively with their stake-holders for achieving their mission and objectives."

The cooperation resulting from the use of these systems effectively mean that information is widely available and acces-sible through a variety of media and locations. In addition, users can use mobile devices such as laptops, mobile phones as well as digital television and self serviced terminals/kiosks to interact and perform several functions and avail several services. This convergence of ICTs effectively integrates the entire range of hardware, software, groupware, NetWare and human ware as a result which blurs the boundaries between equipment and software.

## Various technologies and trends of E-tourism i.Internet-

Internet is the root of E-tourism. The internet is a global system of interconnected computer networks that use the internet protocol suite to link billions of devices worldwide. The internet carries an extensive range of information resources and services such as the inter-linked hypertext documents and application of World Wide Web, electronic mail, peer-to-peer networks etc. the overall E-tourism system runs with the help of internet only.

#### ii. Centralized Reservation System (CRS)-

A travel marketing and distribution system known as Computer Reservation Systems (CRS) was introduced in the year of 1950. Initially it was an airline database that overall manages the distribution of reservation electronically to the remote sales managers as well as the external partners. This system served majorly to the travel agents to serve and provide the travelers with confirmed tickets. This made all the travel businesses to operate more flexibly. The customers got up-to-date information along with higher accuracy rate. The travel agents got a very quick access to the customers. The market competitiveness as well as productivity increased. CRS was established as a key hole for the online travel agents and vendors. Later on the CRS was also introduced in the railway industry as well as the hotel industry. CRS act as a medium of communication between the chain of hotels as well as various subsidiaries located at various places. CRS provided the customers with quick access and immediate results to the availability of hotel rooms, airline seat availability, railways berth availability, services availability etc.

#### iii. Property management system (PMS)-

The PMS is the system used in the hotel industry. It is the system which provides the users i.e. especially the chain hotels to communicate easily. It focused more on the improvement of interconnectivity, intermanagement and interoperability of the hospitality sector.

#### iv. Global Distribution System (GDS)-

In the 1980s, Global Distribution Services expanded the overall geographical area. The GDS was renovated and modernized according to the development and growth of internet. It rendered the consumers with access to easily comparable information. All three systems i.e GDS, CRS and PMS (property management system) operate both independently and jointly. Then afterwards, the hotel Property Management Systems (PMSs) and hotel Centralized Reservation System (CRS) appeared in introducing switch companies into the market. However, all the credit goes to the development of Internet in turning the world into a hub that brought the revolutionary changes to the traditional structure of the tourism industry.

#### v. Mobile Applications-

The mobile applications are the latest birth, given by the internet in the current trend. The mobile applications are installed in the smart phones from where the travelers or the customer can access the information and get the products and services directly from the vendor. The mobile applications a have their own payment gateways from where the customer can directly pay through his/ her credit card or debit card. Few vendors also provide the option of Cash on Delivery (COD) for the products which will be delivered to the customers within a given period of time. The mobile application is also acting as a marketing tool for many vendors through which they are giving various offers, discounts, coupons etc. the person using the application can only enjoy these services.

The mobile applications render the customer with online booking, online payment, online availability, online reservation etc. Few of the applications are like Make my trip app, Trivago, goibibo app. vi. Web 2.0 in tourism (Travel 2.0)-

Web 2.0 is the second stage of development of the internet, characterized especially by the change of static web pages to dynamic according to the changing technology and user-generated content and growth of social media. Web 2.0 does not refer to any kind of update to any technical specification, but to the changes in the way web pages are generated and used. During the beginning of 2000 the Travel 2.0 came into air. Travel 2.0 describes the second wave of travel information website and the extended version of customization of the concept of Web 2.0 in the tourism sector.

The first wave i.e. the booking oriented wave like Expedia, AA.com, Kayaletc is extended to the second wave which is fully interactive and expands through the user generated content. A travel 2.0 site is structures in a way that allow the users to contribute stories, photos, reviews and travelogues. The people who visit a travel 2.0 sites can at a time get information about the destination, hotels, facilities and other aspects related to the destination and travel. Travel wiki, mashups, etc are considered under Travel 2.0.

#### vii.Cab services-

In the year of 2009 and 2010 the most trending services, provided through the online application are the cab services which are used by a great number of people. Though the concept of cab services existed from many decades, butthe revolution came through the "cab through app service". The passenger book the cab through the application of that particular company. This cab service is provide just for pick-up and drop to the passenger. The UBER cab services of United States in 2009 and OLA cab services of India in 2010 are the most trending services which revolutionized the concept of E-tourism. It provided a very safe medium having GPS track system in the cab through which the passenger and other people can track the cab. These cab services are provided only through the app system.

#### viii. Social networking Sites-

The social networking sites and E-tourism are walking step by step in the current era. It was the 21st century, when the social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Tumblr etc came into existence. These sites now a days are focusing more on the travel sector. We can see various travel related stuffs like posts, photos, videos, comments etc. A lot of marketing tools are applied in the social networking sites where the user can see various pop-up windows, applications, webpage options related to tourism. These sites turned the world into a global village of people to stay connected with each other. These have digitalized the human connections. Facebook is used by a great number of people serving to the people of all the age group. It is one of the most popular and famous social site with over 955million monthly active users throughout the globe.

In the tourism sector, the world's largest Web 2.0 site (travel review site) is the trip advisor. It serves more than 74 million people per month who seeks advice related to their travel plans. This site offers authentic advice from various real travelers who share their experience and opinions. It hosts more than 75 million travel reviews and opinions of various travelers. It provides a good variety of travel choices and plans along with the booking tools.

These two different sites connect each other through a common application called Tripfriend. The main objective behind this collaboration is to provide the most authentic and proper information to the tourist about any particular destination from their close acquaintance.

#### ix. Blogs

The blogs are just like the stories written by the tourist who actually visited to any place. The blogs provide a good platform to share the traveler's own experience in a written form without limiting any audience. These are in the form of online journal style published on World Wide Web. A blog consists of images, texts, links to other similar blogs, web pages etc. Some of the most trending blog platforms are Tripadvisor, Twitter, Travelplanet, Igougo etc.

#### x. Global Positioning System (GPS)-

With the revolution in the concept of solo travelling and feminine travelling, the GPS strengthens its roots. The Global Positioning System is a global navigation satellite system that provides location and time related information in all weather conditions, anywhere on the Earth. The United States began its first GPs project in the year of 1973. Though GPS is a very old technology, but it is trending a lot in the tourism sector by providing the exact positions, maps, tracks, geocoding, vector mapping, local search etc. the travelers use the maps, routes etc to go to any place by their own without referring to any other person which may include a lots of risk. In case of nay unknown destination, the person can himself make his own route and travel.

#### xi. E-travel agencies-

The most current and new innovation of e-tourism is the E-travel agencies. With respect to the changing scenario, many E-travel agencies are formed who degraded the traditional system of travel agents by providing the packages and services to the customers directly though online basis. Just by sitting in home, the customer

can purchase a service directly from the travel agency. These travel agencies also provide customized packages and budgeted packages etc. these travel agencies have their own payment portal through which the customer can transact online. Etraveli, I-traveleretc are the online travel agents who provide online services to the customers.

#### xii. E- TOURIST VISA

The E-tourist VISA includes the completely online application form which do not require any kind of intermediaries. The traveler get the E-tourist VISA directly after reaching the destination. The E-tourist VISA do not come with any set of hectic rules and regulations. There are Countries like India, Denmark, Singapore, Malaysia, San Marino etc have the procedure of E-VISA.

According to the Press Information Bureau by the Ministry of Tourism of India, a total of 1,15,677 tourists arrived in the month of March, 2016 on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 25,851 during the month of March, 2015 accomplishing a growth of 347.5%. The trend of E-tourist VISA initially started from 27th November, 2014 where the facility was available until 25th February, 2016 for the citizens of 113 countries arriving at 16 Airports in India. The Government of India has extended this scheme for citizens of 37 more countries w.e.f 26th February 2016 taking the rounding figure to 150 countries. The following are the major highlights of e-Tourist Visa during March, 2016:

a) During the month of March, 2016 a total of 1,15,677 tourist arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 25,851 during the month of March, 2015 registering a growth of 347.5%.

b) This high growth may be attributed to introduction of e-Tourist Visa for 150 countries as against the earlier coverage of 43 countries.

c)The percentage shares of top 10 source countries availing e-Tourist Visa facilities during the month of March, 2016 were UK (27.74%), USA (13.41%), Russian Fed. (7.04%), France (6.55%), Germany (5.18%), China (4.49%), Canada (3.89%), Australia (3.79%), Spain (1.99%) and Ukraine (1.66%).

d) The percentage shares of top 10 ports in tourist arrivals on e-Tourist Visa during the month of March, 2016 were New Delhi Airport (46.76%), Mumbai Airport (18.75%), Goa Airport (11.11%), Chennai Airport (5.55%), Bengaluru Airport (5.03%), Kochi Airport (2.82%), Kolkata Airport (2.38%), Amritsar Airport (2.12%), Hyderabad Airport (2.07%) and Trivandrum Airport (1.33%).

#### **BENEFITS OF E-TOURISM**

i.It is the easiest as well as less expensive and effective way of communicating with target markets and disseminating information.

ii. It is a quick and easy way for the customer to buy travel products.

iii. It offers opportunities for improvements in customer service and retention through meeting and promoting individual preference.

iv. The intermediaries are reduced as the customer can directly buy the services from the vendor.

v.Facilitates high quality design of products and services in the tourism industry, through continuously refined information about current and potential customers to anticipate and respond to their needs.

vi. Enhances the degree of externalization of some tourism services. Management information systems like Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and database technologies can facilitate supplier-customer relationships and the electronic analysis and transfer of information.

#### LIMITATIONS OF E-TOURISM

i. More chances of fraudster in the market with respect to the genuineness of the vendor.

ii.Lack of accuracy of the information given in the website without any kind of authenticity.

iii. Many legal and public policy issues, including taxation, have not yet been resolved or are not clear.

iv. One of the most concerned technological barriers is a lack of global standards for quality, secu-rity, privacy and reliability.

v.People do not yet sufficiently trust paperless, faceless transactions

vi. A huge group of customers like tangible products, but e-tourist majorly focuses on the intangible products and

#### services.

vii. The overall accounting, auditing and venture capital becomes a great problem due to crash of many websites.

#### ANTICIPATED RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to various studies and arguments carried out with relation to the concept of E-tourism, the progress seen and the satisfaction gained by the customers is really a lot commendable. It has more positive aspects than the negative ones. It is absolutely necessary to walk step by step with the running scenario and trend. The most important factor seen is the demand of consumers to boost up E-tourism. There are plenty of feedbacks and comments seen in various web pages in order to improve more and more the concept of E-tourism.

#### Very interesting facts and results are seen in E-tourism like:

- Removal of intermediaries
- Expansion of business
- Great awareness is created
- E-tourism do not restrict any group of traveler to use its features
- The whole world is connected with each other
- More authenticity is seen through the photos, videos, comments by the traveler himself etc
- Anyone can access the information from any corner of the world
- E-tourism is a hub of information
- It is more digitalized than the older traditional way of tourism.

But E-tourism's main drawback is its concern with the safety and security with the privacy stuffs. Many people misuse few of the copyright stuffs as well as post unwanted and unrelated posts which mostly promote vulgarity. These things are very much serious and sensitive stuff for a religion, culture as well as a country. Many of the fake websites are also being operated in the name of E-tourism. Few of the recommendation to improve the E-tourism in a great way as follows:

Strengthen the security issues

• More importance should be given on the amenities which are necessary for the travel rather than the classy services which are generally included in the websites.

• A proper admin should be there to overlook the posts posted by people like the photos, videos etc which should be related to the travel.

- Secured payment gateway should be there.
- The web pages should not exploit any culture, religion, community or country.
- There should not be any scope for the hackers.
- Broken links, unavailable or expired web pages must be removed.

• Misleading of the customer should not be entertained. For instance, many times the customer clicks a link, and end up opening another unrelated link.

• We cannot see much government handles stuffs like cab services, hotel services etc which should be purely handled by the government.

#### CONCLUSION

Thus, from a hand full of information of E-tourism, we can draw that it is the most necessary and innovative step taken by the tourism department as well as the tourism vendors to digitalize the tourism industry in order to the current scenario to tackle all other industries with respect to the technology and walk together without heading back. E-tourism is a proud to the tourism industry which can be accessed by any individual.

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#### Mr. Naveen Kumar T. G

Lecturer , Department of Tourism Administration (M.T.A) Kuvempu University, Shankarghatta , Shivamogga.

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