

A Pilot Study of Marketing of Coastal Tourism in Ratnagiri District: A Tourist Perspective.

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Abstract:

Tourism is very much part of the globalization process. It is sound to analyse whether the tourism industry requires the marketing efforts as in the case of other products. In fact, the tourism industry requires a reliable and effective communication system to ascertain the wishes, needs, motivations, likes and dislikes of tourists. Moreover, tourism promoting measures are purported to reach a large number of people of different needs, tastes and attitudes in various lands of diverse socio-economic structures. The purposes of this study are: a) to identify reasons why tourism is in poor state. b) To identify potentials for sustainable tourism development. This study also aims to identify tourists preferred destinations. The results of the empirical study which revealed motivational factors, preferred tourists and tour operators. Major findings and implications are discussed.

Introduction:

The desire for travel is integral in every person, hence the marketers of tourism products must necessarily have to adopt a distinct strategy for marketing various services. "Marketing in tourism is to be understood as the systematic and coordinated implementation of business policy by tourist undertakings whether private or state owned, local or regional, national or international, level to achieve the optimum satisfaction of the needs of particular consumer groups and, in doing so, to achieve an appropriate return. It is genuinely a powerful and a unique force for change in the community¹. Therefore Understanding the local basis of tourism is especially important in a globalized situation as it enable to discern the local processes that are consequently affected, causing the stakes to become intensely and actively felt². Thus tourism may have different effects on the social and cultural aspects of life in a particular region depending on the strengths of the region

Marketing is the process of discovering the needs and wants of a market and translating these needs or wants into product, service or specifications and then converting the demand for these products, services or ideas into a desired response". The term tourism was in practice from early years of the 19th century. Earlier the nature of tourism was restricted up to movement of people for trading and war purpose; as a result historians have contributed their thoughts on the tourism as a historical event. Sir Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has written in his well-known book „Discovery of India“ about the people and places of India, the said literature is a valuable document with reference to historical, economic and cultural development of the India. In the history of tourism it has found that; there were others who travelled for religious purposes either to propagate their religions in new lands or for the purpose of pilgrimage. While referring history of tourism; the attempt has been made to study growth & evolution of tourism. According to Oxford English Dictionary (1933:190) the tourist is, „one who makes a tour; for the purpose of recreation, pleasure or culture.“ Tourism & recreation in different manner; such as tourism concerned with long holidays whereas recreation is not required an overnight stay⁴. Austrian economist definition of Tourism, "Tourism is the sum total of the operation, mainly of an economic nature which directly relates to the entry, stay and movement of foreigners inside and outside a certain country, city or region." ⁵ has attempted to define tourism in his book „Towards Sociology of International Tourism“ as the Tourism is a

voluntary, temporary traveling in the expectation of pleasure. The issue of study motivations has been the subject of a number of investigations that attempted to understand. This study used a quantitative questionnaire to explore tourist's perceptions regarding study motivations and preferred destination areas. It begins by discussing various motivational attributes for marketing study in coastal area. Based upon the previous literature on marketing study in coastal area. Particularly, this pilot study reports on a number of major motivational factors and concludes with implications for stakeholders (tourists, tour operators and industry) in beach tourism marketing.

Allegations aroused during Pilot study:

The present state poses the following issues

1. Lack of adequate infrastructural facilities.
2. Absence of promotional agencies functioning well to promote tourism in study area.
3. Negative outlook towards the tourism by government authorities.
4. Poor government support
5. Security and safety on beaches
6. Poor road, rail and air connectivity.
7. Lack of water sports and recreation.
8. Lack of tourist circuit.
9. Lack of professionalism.
10. Lack of training institutes in tourism.

These are some of the allegations which require an in-depth study. An investigation into these issues will provide the basis for establishing a marketing strategy for the promotion of tourism in Ratnagiri and India.

The scope of the proposed pilot study was clarified based on the following points-

- Tourism places in Ratnagiri District.
- Role of government agencies
- Opinions of the service providers
- Opinions of the tourists
- Opinions of the local citizens

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This research study is of coastal tourism. It utilizes both primary and secondary data. The researcher will adopt following methodology for the proposed research work and plan the action accordingly.

The questionnaire was pre-tested using a judgment sample of 50 tourists, 10 accommodations providers and 5 tour operators, local citizens 50 in Ratnagiri District. An informal talk was also held with them. Questionnaire was subsequently revised based on the results of pilot study to improve the reliability and the level of understanding. Pilot study also aids the investigator to conduct field survey more effectively for collecting primary data.

The Pilot Study was undertaken in 2018 when the researcher visited beaches in the study area in between 16th Jan, 2018 to 1st Feb, 2018. The purpose was to "feel" the environment and ascertain the sequence of the larger inquiry to be conducted.

In each case 50 samples were randomly chosen for focused interaction (@ 5 each per location. Based on these observations and random interaction with tourist, the researcher could find following observations. The pilot study revealed that 60% of the tourist, (6 out of 10) perceive marketing strategies need to redraft in the study area for sustainable tourism.

So the main objective was to study and document the **Marketing in Konkan Region with special reference to Ratnagiri district** could be on track. This pilot study (50 respondents) conducted was to determine positive approach towards coastal tourism.

Primary Data: Primary data is been collected through questionnaires. Four types of questionnaires were prepared. First questionnaire was meant to be filled by the tourists in order to get a list of factors affecting

destination attractiveness of study area. The second questionnaire was prepared to be filled from various tour operators doing business in study area and dealing with the tour packages. The purpose of this questionnaire was to countercheck the responses given by tourists and to make the information regarding their perception more valid and authentic.

The fourth questionnaire was designed to know about the perception of accommodation providers in the study area. Were asked to fill this questionnaire so as to know their opinion regarding the flow of tourist in study area. Due to lack of financial and physical resources it was not viable to collect primary data from all over the Ratnagiri district, it being a very large coastal area. With the resources and time constraint in mind, it was more feasible and understandable to collect primary data from a representative area. Hence, coastal area of Ratnagiri district was identified as a demonstrative city for primary data collection.

The reasons for identifying ratanagiri district as a representative city as Ratnagiri is famous for coastal tourism, it has famous beaches and temples in and around the district and it is economical and well connected to railways and road. The domestic and foreign tourist arrivals in ratanagiri district are increasing but could not be established a destination like goa and Kerala. Ratanagiri district has a huge number of local tour operators and home stays hotel dealing with tour packages.

Total 50 responses were recorded and a detailed analysis was carried.

2) Selection of the coastal tourism spots (beaches):

In order to study marketing strategies for beaches, the researcher has selected beaches from following spots of study area

Table No. 1.4

Classification of the Sampled Places According to Type of Tourism

S.N.	Name of the Sample Place	Type of Tourism
1.	Ratnagiri	Beach + Natural + Religious
2.	Dapoli	beach + Leisure + Historic
3.	Rajapur	Beach + Natural
4.	Guhagar	Beach
5.	Mandangad	Beach + Natural + Religious

Field survey

The investigator has used a maximum of 5 point scale in the questionnaire.

The range is calculated on the basis of this 5 point scale used.

The primary data is collected from

Table No: 3.1

Sample size for Study

Sr. No.	Sample	Sample Size
01	Accommodation Providers (Hotels, Resorts, Home stay MTDC, etc)	10
02	Tourists	25
03	Tour operators	10
04	Local citizens	05
	Total	50

Besides primary data some secondary data have also been used which have been collected from the following sources:-

- UNWTO Reports
- Annual Reports and Economic Survey of Tourism Ministry of Government of India

- Singapore tourism board annual reports
- Various journals and magazines of tourism, news releases etc.
- Various websites of Maharashtra government
- District publications on tourism.

Data Analysis: Tourist pilot study data analysis and interpretation.

Table 1.1:Source of Information about Ratnagiri (tourist)

Source of Information about Ratnagiri	Response	Percentage%
Travel agents	5	20
Websites	10	40
Friends and relatives	20	80
Advertisements	15	60
Newspaper	10	40

Source: Sample survey

From the table it is clear that the friends and relatives act as the main source of information about Ratnagiri, followed by Websites, Books, Guides and Travel agents. The response for the question, purpose of visit was also asked as a ranking question (if the tourist visit for more than one purpose they can make their response in the order of preference).

Table 1.2: Purpose of visit (tourist)

Purpose of visit	Responses	Percentage
Rest and relaxation	22	88
Leisure (entertainment)	16	64
Religious (pilgrim)	7	28
Culturally motivated	5	20
Official (business)	5	20
Meeting friends and relatives	10	40
Health	3	12

Source: Sample survey.

The table shows that the main purpose of visit is for 'rest and relaxation' almost 88% followed by leisure, official, religious 28% and very few tourists visit for medical treatment 12 % and meeting relatives.

Table 1.3: Reason for choosing Ratnagiri as a tourist destination (Domestic tourist)

Reason for choosing Ratnagiri as a tourist destination	Responses	Percentage
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Uniqueness of attraction of beaches	24	96
Good infrastructure	5	20
Pleasing hospitality	20	80
Accessibility	10	40
shopping facility	6	24
Variety of cuisines	20	80
Attitude of the local people	5	20

Source: Sample survey

From the table it is clear that the most important reason for choosing Ratnagiri is the 'Uniqueness of the attractions' (beaches), followed by 'Pleasing hospitality at home stays', 'Accessibility', 'good infrastructure', 'Attitude of the local people', 'shopping facility was poor 24%' and cuisines were loved by tourist 80%

Conclusion: Beaches in Ratnagiri district has a lot of scope for the development of beach tourism. But, there has been a lack of awareness about the benefits that it can bestow upon the host populations along the coastline. The host populations must support this tourism to bring a vibrant economic force. There is a growing need for the application of tourism marketing such as designing the tourist products, pricing the products, distribution of tourist products and promotion of tourist activities. In spite of the fact that India has adequate potential for tourism, it has not made much movement. This is evident from the poor foreign exchange earnings from tourism. Foreign tourists' inflow into the country and inadequate tourist Infrastructure facilities. As tourism marketing has not been practiced much, the tourists as consumers do not get adequate satisfaction.

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