

## A Comparative Study of Effectiveness of India's State Tourism Development Website in Promoting Travel and Tourism

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### ABSTRACT

Tourism is travelling for an event or activity from which one derives enjoyment; it provides a feeling of happiness and satisfaction and is a means of entertainment for travelers. Tourism is a way of attracting a large number of customers and providing them accommodation and entertainment facilities. The ministry of tourism designs national policies for the development and promotion of tourism. In the process, the ministry consults and collaborates with other stakeholders in the sector, including various central ministries/agencies, state governments, union territories and private sector representatives. Concerted efforts are being made to promote niche tourism products such as rural, cruise, medical, space tourism, frontier tourism and eco-tourism etc.

**Key words:** Tourism; Central ministries; Eco-tourism; Governments

### INTRODUCTION

India is a substantial and vibrant country and is on the verge of becoming a major global destination. Tourism in India is important for the country's economy and is growing rapidly. The world travel and tourism council calculated that tourism generated ₹15.24 lakh crore (US\$210 billion) or 9.4% of India's GDP in 2017 and supported 41.622 million jobs, 8% of its total employment. The sector is predicted to grow at an annual rate of 6.9% to ₹32.05 lakh crore (US\$450 billion) by 2028 (9.9% of GDP) [1].

The ministry of tourism maintains the incredible India campaign focused on promoting the tourism in India. Ministry of tourism has different corporations for developing the domestic tourism i.e., ITDC, STDC, DMO etc.

**India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC):** ITDC came into existence in October 1966 and has been the prime mover in the progressive development, promotion and expansion of tourism in the country. The corporation is running hotels, restaurants in various places for tourists, besides providing transport facilities.

**State Tourism Development Corporation (STDC):** India is a beautiful country with a varied topography and a rich cultural inheritance. It consists of 28 states and 7 union territories. Most

states of India have a tourism development board, All the state tourism board have their own web-site, which provides information and infrastructure to the tourists visiting the state.

**Destination Marketing Organization (DMO):** Role of DMO is to promote the identified destinations to potential users. They promote different cities, regions to increase the number of visitors. It promotes the development and marketing of a destination, focusing on convention sales, tourism marketing and services. DMO's for visitors are like a pathfinder to the metropolis.

### Aims and objectives of the study

This study evaluates and compares the official websites of STDC. The objectives of this study were as follows [2].

- The objective of this study is to examine the significance and usage of state tourism website in online marketing.
- The idea is to explore the new design element that contributes to effective website content and the activities involved in updating an existing one.
- The analytical study of state tourism website will help to explore the significance of effective and interactive website in enhancing the branding and positioning of the state tourism board.

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**Received:** 06-Dec-2019, Manuscript No. JTH-23-2875; **Editor assigned:** 12-Dec-2019, PreQC No. JTH-23-2875 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 26-Dec-2019, QC No. JTH-23-2875; **Revised:** 15-May-2024, Manuscript No. JTH-23-2875 (R); **Published:** 12-Jun-2024, DOI: 10.35248/2167-0269.24.13.553.

**Citation:** Maitra R (2024) A Comparative Study of Effectiveness of India's State Tourism Development Website in Promoting Travel and Tourism. J Tourism Hospit. 13:553.

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## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study compares the performance of state tourism websites. Websites are being compared for the following variables *i.e.*, Ease of use, security, trust, quality, loyalty, website design, usefulness and accessibility for its visitors. The evaluation will provide recommendations to state tourism board for enhancing the website structure in attracting and motivating the tourist for state tourism. The comparison also depended on how much traffic the different tourism websites is able to retain and what kind of facilities and amenities they are providing to their customers. Therefore, the scope of the study was as follows.

- This study will be helpful for the tourists, as they will play the role of a catalyst in enhancing the substantive components of the state tourism websites.
- The internet site developers will utilize this research subject as they constantly wanted to propose a more exceptional experience to their clients.

A destination marketing organisation is a concern that publicises a town, city, region or country in order to increase the number of visitors. Web site's effectiveness or performance requires a multi-dimensional instead of unidimensional evaluation approaches and measures. Website characteristics and service features are essential drivers of customer satisfaction in an online context [3].

According to Lathiras, Zopidou, Mylonakis, Tahinakis, Protogeros and Valachis website evaluations are needed to enable continuous improvements in addition to evaluating site performance alongside competitors and industry peers. Organizations may also wish to track the performance of their websites over successive time periods. Evaluation of web site efficiency and effectiveness is essential due to the substantial costs for setup, advertising and maintenance. Researches indicate that there is an enormous need to go beyond hits and page viewings. Web site evaluations are needed to facilitate constant improvements, besides evaluating the site performance together with competitors and industry peers. An overall review of the results of this research has detected some average quality ratings, as well as some more positive evaluations of the individual components. According to Mura and Pahlevan through benchmarking exercises, corporations can compare their performance with external competitors as well as evaluate their internal procedures and products.

Website benchmarking is defined by Pangetal as an activity to evaluate existing website and competitors' best websites, identify the strengths and weaknesses of the former, analyse the gap and generate improvement requirements that can be adopted in actual implementation, to make it more competitive. The findings show the responses provided relevant information concerning participants' perceptions of the websites selected. When asked about the user-friendliness of the various online platforms, the majority of respondents concurred that the user-friendly websites are considered to be the best.

According to Tarafdar and Zhang as the organizations try out new ways of selling and communicating over the internet, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the performance of their

websites regarding the extent to which they can attract and retain traffic strongly influences the volume of business transacted on them. The reach of a website is an essential aspect of performance because it quantifies the extent to which a website is known or accessed by the people. The findings of the research were, the number of hits considered the top websites, the website reach might not vary too much across the websites. Second, the characteristics of the websites that we examined might have exchanged over the one-year point for which website reach and website loyalty data were taken.

According to Vatankhah, Wei and Letchmunan heuristic evaluation, heuristic estimation, cognitive walk-through, further inspection and standards inspection usually mean that a single evaluator inspects the boundary at a time. The level of usability of the specific tourism websites was determined by applying the corresponding merit values from 0.00 to 1.00 regarding reliability. The higher the value showed greater participant satisfaction, whereas the lower the value showed lower participant satisfaction. Each of the particular tourism websites, achieved its usability levels based on the corresponding usability point gain from the participants.

According to Hong, Katerattanakul and Joo in addition to web accessibility guidelines, automated software tools are available to help to find accessibility flaws on websites before the sites are publicly posted. The findings show that overall accessibility errors found from the Korean government websites are approximately two times higher than those from the US government websites. The accessibility errors are found in virtually every non-text information content group. In conclusion, the results of the manual evaluation conducted by human experts show fewer accessibility errors than those found in the evaluation conducted by the automated software tool [4].

According to Tung the concept of information system success model argues the quality of system and information has an impact on users' satisfaction. The two factors are cited continue to represent the systemic feature when analyzing satisfaction and performance. The study's findings hold that the perceived playfulness on travel website has a positive impact on perceived ease of use and usefulness and that the perceived ease of use has a positive impact on the intention. It concludes that the information and system quality of travel websites have a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

### Research methodology

The study is exploratory. This study involves website function evaluation, customer satisfaction assessment and website success factor identification. The study was based on two data collections:

- A questionnaire-based survey aimed at getting feedbacks from tourism website users.
- A detailed study of online website was carried out for five selected websites of tourism boards in India.

## Sampling design

Our respondents consist of nomad tourist, who are fond of visiting new places. While selecting the sample, priority was given to tech-savvy tourist, who generally visit different websites to gather the information as well as explore the destination through their appliance. These tourists have either visited or had a plan to visit the following states. It was hypothesized that they must have searched the information using the websites of state tourism board websites, i.e., Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab, Kerala and Rajasthan [5].

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Data analysis

**Demographic profile of respondents:** Table 1 was drawn to understand the socioeconomic background of the respondents and it was found that out of the total sample (n=180) 45.6% consisted of male and 54.4% of female.

- The age group is divided in three categories. It was discovered that more than half (69.4%) of respondents were under 25

years of age, while (21.1%) belonged to the age group of 25 to 35 and (9.4%) respondents belonged to the age group of 35-50 years.

- Marital status is categorized as in two categories. Single and married and it was observed that more than the maximum (71.7%) of respondents were single and only one-third (28.3%) were married.
- We have categorized accompanying person in five categories. Family, friend, colleagues, parents and spouse. It was observed around (29.4%) of respondents were accompanied by their family, (19.4%) were accompanied by their parents, (33.3%) were accompanied by their friends, (8.3%) were accompanied by their colleagues and (9.4%) were accompanied by their spouse.
- We categorized medium of travel into four categories. four-wheeler, train, bus and combination. It was observed that out of the total respondent (36.1%) respondents used the combination of vehicles as the medium of travel, (30%) respondents used the train as the medium of travel, (22.2%) respondents used a four-wheeler as the medium of travel and (11.7%) respondents used the bus as the medium of travel.

**Table 1:** Demographic profile of respondents.

Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Kerala		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	82	45.6
	Female	98	54.4
Age	Below 25	125	69.4
	25-35	38	21.1
	35-50	17	9.4
Marital status	Single	129	71.7
	Married	51	28.3
Accompanying person	Family	53	29.4
	Parents	35	19.4
	Friends	60	33.3
	Colleagues	15	8.3
	Spouse	17	9.4
Medium of travel	Four-wheeler	40	22.2
	Train	54	30
	Bus	21	11.7
	Combination	65	36.1

## Reliability analysis

The cronbach's alpha statistic was applied to determine the reliability of the scale developed for evaluations of five websites. The alpha coefficient for the 13 items on the website of Madhya Pradesh is 0.886 suggesting that the items have relatively consistency. The alpha coefficient for the 13 items on the website of Punjab is 0.837 suggesting that the items have consistency. The alpha coefficient for the 13 items on the website of Rajasthan is 0.845 suggesting that the items have

consistency [6]. The alpha coefficient for the 13 items of the website of Gujarat is 0.855 suggesting that the items have relatively consistent. The alpha coefficient for the 13 items on the website of Kerala is 0.700 suggesting that the items have relatively internal consistency. Overall reliability was also checked which have 65 items for comparison, this value was very high 0.943. Which suggest that the scale adopted for the study is reliable (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Reliability analysis.

Name of the state	Cronbach's alpha	No. of items
Madhya Pradesh	0.886	13
Punjab	0.837	13
Rajasthan	0.845	13
Gujarat	0.855	13
Kerala	0.7	13
Overall	0.943	65

## The competitive position of website of destination

In this competitive position of the website of destination Table 3. Three (3) websites of the five states are compared. Amongst these websites, we observed that the website of Kerala has the highest rank because of its aesthetics, visual appearance,

customer service and the security it provides to its users and website of Madhya Pradesh has the lowest rank because it lacks in providing proper security, responsiveness and interactivity [7].

**Table 3:** Competitive position of website of destination.

	Mean	Std. deviation	Rank
Madhya Pradesh	3.6128	0.71898	V
Punjab	3.6769	0.59381	IV
Rajasthan	3.7145	0.60676	III
Gujarat	3.8372	0.61211	II
Kerala	3.9225	0.67199	I

## Website traffic

Table 4 has made comparison of the five state tourism websites by reaching to the customers. We observed that the website of Rajasthan has a high level of reach (30, 65,340) to their

customers. The website of Rajasthan is very famous as it provides information regarding the various tourists' destinations in Rajasthan. It was observed that the website of Punjab has the lowest level of accessibility to their customers.

**Table 4:** Website traffic.

Names of states	Launching	Reach	Revenue	Values
Madhya Pradesh	February 16, 1998	62,850	\$401.10	\$4,880.05
Punjab	May 17, 2005	13,620	\$87.00	\$1,058.50
Rajasthan	May 31, 2003	30,65,340	\$19,557.00	\$237,943.50

Gujarat	June 25, 1997	75,600	\$482.40	\$5,869.20
Kerala	July 28, 1998	2,57,340	\$1,641.90	\$19,976.45

This Table 5 is used for comparing the five websites of state tourism board. This table shows the daily page views, daily views and daily average revenue. It also shows the monthly and yearly page view and average ads revenue of these websites. All these

points have been taken into consideration to judge the effectiveness and compatibility of state tourism board web-site with their users in offering the high-end solutions (Table 6).

**Table 5:** Website traffic.

Names of states	Daily			Monthly			Yearly		
	Daily page views	Daily views	Daily ads revenue	Monthly page views	Monthly views	Monthly ads revenue	Yearly page views	Yearly views	Yearly Ads revenue
Madhya Pradesh	4610	2095	\$13.37	138300	62850	\$401.10	1682650	764675	\$488005
Punjab	999	454	\$2.90	29970	13620	\$87.0	364635	165710	\$1058.50
Rajasthan	224793	102178	\$651.90	6743790	3065340	\$19557.00	82049445	37294970	\$237943.50
Gujarat	5545	2520	\$16.08	166350	75600	\$482.40	2023925	919800	\$5869.20
Kerala	18872	8578	\$54.73	566160	257340	\$16410.90	6888280	3130970	\$19976.45

**Table 6:** MP descriptive statistics.

Key factors	Mean	Std. deviation	Rank
Information quality	3.78889	1.08	I
Customer service	3.66667	1.04	III
Visual appearance	3.66111	1.1	IV
Brand	3.67222	1.07	II
Incentive	3.65	1.06	V

The ranking order of the website of M.P. shows that the state tourism website of Madhya Pradesh provides a good quality of information to its customers, with its excellent quality information. The website also offers user friendly services to its customers with FAQ's to answer the queries. The colourful and vibrant appearance of the website also attract few customers with its picturesque view, which has been helpful in increasing its viewers. The website also provides incentives to its customers,

which is also one of the attractive factors. With all these good qualities, it creates a brand for itself. Apart from all these factors, the website developers should focus on the security factors as security is a very important factor for any website. They also need to improve the website's navigation and interactivity. The speed of responsiveness should also be looked after for attracting more customers (Table 7).

**Table 7:** Punjab descriptive statistics.

Key factors	Mean	Std. deviation	Rank
Information quality	3.761	1.03	V
Customer service	3.806	0.9	II

Visual appearance	3.844	1.03	I
Brand	3.761	0.97	IV
Incentive	3.778	0.99	III

The ranking order of the website of Punjab shows that the website has an appealing visual appearance which attracts its customers. The website also provides its customers with reliable service and also offer the incentives to attract the visitors of the website. The information quality of the website is also excellent it is easy for the viewers to understand. Altogether it makes the

website a reliable and good brand. Despite the excellent characteristics, the website developers need to work on the navigation, personalization, interactivity and ease of use of the website [8]. So that it could increase its viewers or customers (Table 8).

**Table 8:** Rajasthan descriptive statistics.

Key factors	Mean	Std. deviation	Rank
Information quality	3.7944	0.979	III
Customer service	3.8444	1.013	I
Interactivity	3.8111	0.979	II
Visual appearance	3.7444	1.073	V
Incentive	3.7611	0.977	IV

The ranking order of the website of Rajasthan shows that the customer service provided by the website attracts the customers. The interactivity and information quality and visual appearance of the website are also very good [9]. The incentives are also

provided to the customers to attract them. The website developers need to improve upon the personalization, navigation, accessibility, security and ease of use of the website as it is important to always improve upon the websites (Table 9).

**Table 9:** Gujarat descriptive statistics.

Key factors	Mean	Std. deviation	Rank
Information quality	3.9389	1.084	III
Customer service	3.8944	0.983	IV
Accessibility	3.95	0.97	I
Visual appearance	3.95	1.021	II
Incentive	3.8889	0.974	V

The ranking order of the website of Gujarat shows that the visual appearance of the website is very alluring. The accessibility of the website is also excellent; the customers find it easy to access the website. The information quality of the website is also satisfying. The customer service is provided to the customers to solve their problem and incentives are also provided which also

attracts them. The website developers need to improve on the personalization, responsiveness of the website [10]. The security factors should be looked after and also the ease of use. The visual appearance of the website is also very enchanting which attract its viewers (Table 10).

**Table 10:** Kerala descriptive statistics.

Key factors	Mean	Std. deviation	Rank
Security	4.0111	0.957	II

Customer service	3.9611	1.005	V
Accessibility	4.0111	3.894	III
Visual appearance	3.9722	1.027	IV
Incentive	4.0389	0.977	I

The ranking order of the website of Kerala shows that the incentives provided by the website attract the customers to use it. The essential key factors that attract its customers is the security; it makes the website reliable. It is also effortless to access the website. It also provides good customer service. The developers of the website need to improve the personalization, navigation, interactivity, responsiveness and simplicity of usage of the site.

### Exploratory factor analysis

KMO and Bartlett test of sphericity signposted that the data

were suitable for exploratory factor analysis. As the KMO measures the sampling adequacy that should be greater than 0.5 and it was 0.900 indicating that the sample was adequate to consider the data suitable for factor analysis (Table 11) [11]. From Table 11, it can be observed that Bartlett's test of sphericity was 849.269 significant at 0.000 level of significance. It indicates that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix. The above facts show that the data collected on different attributes of websites from respondents were suitable for factor analysis [12].

**Table 11:** KMO and Bartlett's test.

KMO and Bartlett's test results		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy		0.9
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. <i>Chi-Square</i>	849.269
	df	78
	Sig.	0

## CONCLUSION

The internet has become an important source of information for an increasingly large number of tourists when planning their trips or holidays. The tourism websites provide a way for people to know about different destinations. The proper design of websites is of utmost importance in inducing website traffic. This study focuses on the comparison of five websites, *i.e.*, Madhya Pradesh tourism, Gujarat tourism, Rajasthan tourism, Kerala tourism, Punjab tourism. It was found that the website of Rajasthan got the highest rank because of the attractive attributes of the website. Most of the people search information using its website. Some key features that attract visitors are its customer service, interactivity, information quality, visual appearance of the website. Whereas it was observed that website of Punjab has the lowest rank because of some of its key features like navigation, interactivity, personalization. The website developers need to work on these features to influence website traffic. The website developers should look after the security factor as it plays a significant role for the visitors. It was observed that many websites were lacking in interactivity key factor. This study provides a comparison between the five big websites of tourism in India. It shows the attractive factors of the websites and also the factors on which the website developers need to improve. It provides useful information about the vital factors of all the five websites, which can be used as an instrument by the website developers.

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