

IMPLICATION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL TOURISM IN TELANGANA STATE

**ZAKER UL OMAN, Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, J.S. University,
Shikohabad, U.P.**

**Dr. ISHTAIYAQ KHAN, Associate Professor, Supervisor, Department of
Commerce, J.S. University, Shikohabad, U.P.**

ABSTRACT

Innovations and new technologies are changing the way travelers look for and book vacations as well as how travel agencies sell their goods and services to those travelers online. Digital marketing of vacation packages, online ticketing, locations and attractions, online advertising of state heritage properties and tourism destinations. The efforts of Telangana Department and Telangana State Tourism Development Corporation (TSTDC), as well as their most recent creative ideas for promoting tourism in the state, are excerpted from and made public in this report.

Key Words: Online tourism, Customers Satisfaction, Holidays, tourist places, internet, Touch Screen Kiosk, Museum on Wheels, i-Explore App and its features.

1. INTRODUCTION

Innovations and new technologies are changing the way travelers look for and search for vacations, as well as how travel agencies sell their goods and services to these travelers. The tourist industry is growing steadily, thus it's critical for business owners in this sector to understand how to reshape it. Customers are consistently using the internet for longer periods of time and for more browsing (Srinu, S., & Reddy, V. V. 2022). As a result, the field of digital marketing is growing in popularity. For example, when we look up a location on a map for digital tourism, the internet provides you with instant access to information about that specific location so you can make travel plans appropriately.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Telangana, a state in India known for its rich history, cultural heritage, and diverse landscapes, is increasingly leveraging digital platforms to promote tourism (TSTDC). This review explores the current state of digital tourism in Telangana, including initiatives by the government and tourism industry, the impact on tourist experiences, and potential areas for future development.

2.1 Government Initiatives:

The Telangana State government has undertaken several initiatives to promote digital tourism, including:

- **Developing an official tourism website:** The Telangana State Tourism Development Corporation (cms.tstdc.in) provides comprehensive information on tourist destinations, accommodation options, and travel itineraries.
- **Embracing online visa applications:** The state government has facilitated electronic travel authorization (e-visa) for visitors from 43 countries, simplifying the application process.
- **Promoting tourism through social media:** The TSTC actively uses social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to showcase tourist attractions, events, and cultural experiences.
- **Investing in online marketing:** The government conducts online advertising campaigns and collaborates with travel bloggers and influencers to reach a wider audience.
- **Developing mobile applications:** The TSTC has launched mobile applications offering information on tourist destinations, booking services, and interactive features like virtual tours.

2.2 Industry Efforts:

The tourism industry in Telangana is also embracing digital technologies (Janet Davis Neal 2000):

- **Online travel booking platforms:** Leading online travel agencies (OTAs) offer booking options for hotels, flights, and activities in Telangana, increasing accessibility for tourists.
- **Virtual tours:** Several hotels and travel agencies offer virtual tours of their properties and destinations, allowing potential tourists to experience locations remotely.
- **Social media engagement:** Hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions use social media to connect with potential visitors, share user-generated content, and run targeted promotions.

Impact on Tourist Experiences:

Digital tourism initiatives in Telangana have positively impacted tourist experiences (Margita Papova, 2006):

- **Increased information accessibility:** Tourists can easily access comprehensive information about the state's offerings, aiding trip planning and decision-making.

- **Enhanced booking convenience:** Online booking platforms offer a convenient and efficient way to book accommodation, tickets, and activities.
- **Improved communication:** Social media allows tourists to connect with tourism authorities and local businesses, enhancing communication and resolving queries.
- **Virtually explore destinations:** Virtual tours enable potential visitors to experience destinations before visiting, aiding in informed travel decisions.

2.3 Future Potential:

While significant progress has been made, several areas offer potential for further development:

- **Developing personalized recommendations:** Implementing AI-powered chatbots and recommendation engines can personalize user experiences and tailor information based on individual preferences.
- **Leveraging virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR):** Utilizing VR/AR technology can offer immersive virtual tours and enhance on-site visitor experiences.
- **Focus on niche tourism:** Digital platforms can be used to promote specific niches like heritage, adventure, or eco-tourism, attracting a wider audience.
- **Enhancing accessibility:** Developing apps and websites in multiple languages and ensuring accessibility for individuals with disabilities will cater to a broader range of tourists.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is based on the secondary source of information which is collected from Government Agencies, Census, organizational records and paper articles and journals. Mainly the data about Telangana tourism and digitalization in Telangana tourism is taken from the TSTDC official website.

4. RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

During the inaugural session of ETCIO Annual Conclave 2018, Jayash Ranjan, Principal Secretary of the industries and commerce (I&C and IT) Departments of Telangana Government, laid bare the technology roadmap of the Government of Telangana (Joji, K. 2020). According to him the Government of Telangana provide Wi-Fi hotspots in Hyderabad. It has identified that through an innovative idea of financing, it will make Wi-Fi available free of cost at 3000 locations of public gathering like a bus stop, popular shopping mall, markets, airports and

railway stations.

To facilitate the citizen of state and tourists the government is working with telecom service providers to support 4G networks in the state, such that with the Jio 4G support Telangana State become the first state in India where a telecom provider will have a complete 100% 4G coverage.

There is still a work to be done in the area of digital literacy in the state (Lonavath, A. K., & Virugu, K. 2022). To cover this government is set to promote 9.4 million households in the state, government is also creating digital eco-system to ensure e-commerce, e-health and e-education facilities in Telangana. As a First-step government creating T-fiber or Telangana Fiber Grid for establishing states' internet facility and the art network infrastructure to facilitate the realization of perception of Digital Telangana.

The country's largest tech incubator called "T-hub" is in Hyderabad and today it has become a national role model. The top five most valued companies by their market capitalization in the world – Apple, Google, Microsoft, Amazon and Facebook have their headquarters in Hyderabad.

5. MUSEUM ON WHEELS

The tourism department of Telangana State making its presence in all the districts of Telangana with an objective of educate people about Telangana especially children and youngsters. Telangana tourism started "The Museum on wheels", which is inaugurated on 21st September 2016 will be travelling to residential schools and colleges across all the 31 districts in the state. (Suresh, P. 2019).

The museum on wheels, as per a schedule, parks itself at the most popular tourist spots in the city through the week along with two guides, trained by departments, who give a digital tour of tourist spots in the state, with which on an average 500 people take the virtual tour in a day", said by S. Prabhakar, district tourists officer, Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy districts. The bus of tourism on wheels also contains and equipped with touch screen kiosks, a replica of Egyptian mummy, gives literature relating to tourist spots in Telangana State, which is aimed to stir curiosity amongst tourists.

6. DIGITAL TOUCH SCREEN KIOSKS

Digital Touch Screen Kiosks have been installed by Telangana Tourism at city most popular destination spots where it have observed heavy footfall of tourists, these kiosks serving as digital brochurers' of tourist sites/spots (Rathod, J., & Rathod, J. 2022). According to Tourism Commissioner Sunita Bhagwat, the digital touch screen kiosks getting immense

positive response that the tourism department has decided to extend this facility to all 31 districts of the state.

Through these digital kiosks, the potential tourists can browse through images, videos, maps and details of tourist's destinations in Telangana State without any requirement of internet access. The plan of updating the kiosks is in the process after which the updated version of kiosks will show details of more tourism sites and include eco-tourism spots such as urban forest park in the index. Apart from this user can also browse through print materials of Telangana tourism.

Besides these digital touch screen kiosks, Telangana tourism also provide several creative print brochures and coffee-table books, containing fares, photos, packages and timings of all tourism sites across the state, which is placed along with every kiosk.

6.1 i-Explore App

However, Telangana State showcases the rapid growth right from its formation year 2014, with strong information technology base, Telangana Tourism not leaving any scope to utilize IT and latest innovations, to offer pleasant experience and wide range of information for tourists visiting the region (Swamy, A. K. 2021). One of the pioneer initiatives is the "i-Explore Telangana App". It is very unique and first-of-its-kind app by a tourism department in India this tourist centric app grows the tourist footfall, with better innovation and technological attributes (Vangapandu, R. D. 2021).

i-Explore Telangana App launched with the primary objective, where tourists can access useful, destination and spots, and overall Telangana information with a tap on their smart phones.

Features of i-Explore App

- i-Explore App provides real-time information regarding local weather in various places across the Telangana State
- The App featured with an option where tourists can find instant updated information about the different currency exchange rates with Indian Rupee.
- The App provides the options and arena to tourists about available close by and shopping centers and guides then through GPS.
- This App helps tourists to plan their trip, aspects of trip, mode of travel and other details, to explore the attractions and also exhaustive information available related to each destination
- The app offers a help desk feature where travelers can look up further information and receive

assistance with their customized journeys to various Telangana State destinations. It also lets users select from a variety of packages, make reservations, and explore Telangana's destinations.

7. FINDINGS

- ✓ The domestic and foreign tourists' arrivals recorded year by year growth in Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy districts.
- ✓ The number of foreign tourists to the state though recorded a positive growth is very low.
- ✓ Except Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy, Warangal and Mahboobnagar there were no foreign tourists to other states.
- ✓ The government has a critical role in developing the infrastructure.
- ✓ At present, tourist arrival in Telangana State is confined to Hyderabad and some pilgrim centers.
- ✓ However, nowadays Telangana State has become the medical attraction as well as business tourism.
- ✓ The share of Telangana State in the overall domestically tourists' arrivals is 5.9% and Ranked 7th position among all the other States and Union Territories in India.
- ✓ Digital Touch Screen Kiosks have been installed by Telangana Tourism at city most popular destination spots where it has observed heavy footfall of tourists, these kiosks serving as digital brochures of tourist sites/spots.
- ✓ Thus, the state has long way to go in attracting the foreign tourists by developing important tourists' places in the state.
- ✓ Tourism Department of Telangana State launched the tourism app named as i Explore Telangana App provides information relating to travel, hospitality, foods and restaurants, ticketing systems, public transport services, rescue services on outer ring road and also the information relating to park, parking, public toilets, hospitals, vaccination, safety and Security etc.
- ✓ i-Explore Telangana App launched with the primary objective, where tourists can access useful, destination and spots, and overall Telangana information with a tap on their smart phones.

8. SUGGESTIONS

As observed, Telangana State government has been only developing the important tourist locations, but the government has to develop the overall state by giving importance to village-based destinations, so that the people living in other districts will know properly about the State

and feel considerable. This might help them to develop their respective districts which helps Telangana Government to move up its rank in country as well as in the world and attracts many tourists increasing to GDP of the nation (Messier, P. 2020). As observed Department of Telangana Tourism and State Government putting all efforts in developing the state domestic revenue by promoting tourism spots in the state and generating income from tourism sector. It is suggested that the Tourism Department has to enhance their service and availability towards those tourists who still cannot able to access the services provided by them. Most of the tourists and even the citizens of the state did not hear about the “i Explore Telangana App” is in the market rendering excellent services regarding to tourism guiding and helping towards knowing and exploring the information about Telangana State.

9. CONCLUSION

Telangana State Tourism Development Corporation working really good but cannot able to showcasing the work done by them in order to make its influence in tourism sector one has to think about its popularity and advertise their work and services rendering to the public and make sure that public should aware of all of its schemes, packages, help desk, latest discoveries in their field area. Such that their works not go waste or unused.

Digital technologies are transforming the tourism landscape in Telangana, offering improved accessibility, enhanced experiences, and increased visibility. By embracing innovation and addressing areas for improvement, Telangana can further leverage digital tourism to attract a wider audience and showcase its rich heritage and diverse offerings to the world.

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