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**Title of Thesis: Marketing strategy for promotion of tourist inflow in India.**

## **Abstract**

India is becoming an attractive destination internationally. Due to the rapid economic growth and globalization, India is increasingly seen as an exotic destination offering a mix of culture, history and state of art amenities to the international traveler. However, the country attracts considerably lesser number of foreign tourists compared to a number of smaller South East Asian countries especially Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong and Singapore. In order to achieve the goal of 10 million foreign tourists by 2010 as envisioned by Government of India, it is very crucial to have a strong base of Marketing strategies. Main objective of the study was to analyze the marketing strategies adopted by the govt. and pvt. sector organizations to promote tourist inflow in India.

In order to meet the aforesaid study objectives we conducted the research with a blend of secondary research and primary research. Secondary research was carried out in order to accrue desired information. The detailed task wise methodology, relevant target groups and tentative information procured from each source.

The task involved collection, collation and review of foreign tourist arrival information, tourism policy, tax structure, marketing and promotional activities undertaken in the different states of India

The primary research would encompass collection of requisite information from the different sources. We also conducted personal interviews with the top management of various tour operators, other tourism suppliers, policy makers in the department of tourism and state tourism departments. The primary research also included focused case studies of Thomas Cook India, Cox & Kings India, Le Passage to India, and Kuoni India Limited.

The majority of the countries have lower per tourist exchange earnings compared to India; only USA is having a higher per tourist earning. This shows India's potential to earn more per tourist. However, India still ranks below a lot of countries in tourism arrivals; the percentage share of worldwide tourist arrivals only amounting to 0.45% in 2004-05

The top ten countries which have been contributing to inbound tourism in the past few years are U.K., U.S.A., Canada, France, Sri Lanka, Germany, Japan, Malaysia, Australia and Italy.

The seasonality in foreign tourist arrivals to the country shows a wide variation with majority of the tourists visiting the country during the month of December. The winter months of October to December is the preferred season of the foreign tourists for visiting India and least number of tourists visit in the summer months of April to June. Events and festivals should be organized by the govt. to attract tourists in lean season also.

The National Tourism Policy has identified certain tourism products which have the potential to attract foreign tourists. The products identified are Heritage Tourism, Wildlife Tourism, Eco-Tourism, Medical Tourism, Adventure Tourism, Rural Tourism, MICE Tourism, Buddhist Circuit, Golf Tourism, Shopping and Fashion, Cuisines. The main theme behind identifying tourism product is to develop particular product and its source place as per international standard.

Ministry of Tourism devised a scheme for integrated development of tourism circuits during the 10th five year plan. The objective of the scheme is to identify tourist circuits in the country on an annual basis, and develop them to international standards. During the period of 2002-07 total no 904 projects has been sanctioned and total of rs 1407 crore has been sanctioned for different states for the development of tourism circuits.

Policy on Private Public Participation in Development of Tourism Infrastructure is also another initiative to develop tourism in India.

Ministry of Tourism initiated the "Incredible India" campaign in December 2002. The campaign promotes India as a unique destination having a distinct cultural heritage.

Steps has been taken to develop domestic tourism in India.

The significance of recommendations and strategies of the National Tourism Policy are not being realized by all states. While, some of the states have followed the key recommendations of National Tourism Policy and have formulated Perspective Plans; others have formulated their distinct state tourism policies and plans.

Infrastructural facilities available at the tourism sites is the backbone of tourism industry that constitute rail, road and air, accommodation facilities, visa procedures, inter-country regulatory frameworks and policies etc comprehensive plans needs to improve the condition of the required infrastructure.

The air connectivity to the major locations is very limited for the foreign tourists. There are a very few international airports in the country. The air connectivity is especially very limited for the Buddhist circuit

with no international airport at any of the locations in the circuit and majority of the locations lacking direct air connectivity.

The growing gap between increase in in-bound tourist traffic and availability of hotel rooms has led to room rents touching an all-time high, blunting India's attractiveness as a cost-effective tourist destination. In Delhi alone, average room rates is hovering in the region of \$310-350 a night, while it has already scaled past the \$350-mark in Mumbai and over \$500 in Bangalore. In comparison, a decent luxury hotel in Bangkok can be booked for around \$100 a night. The result: A growing number of tour operators in the western world are beginning to stop hard selling India as an ideal vacation destination this winter-a peak travel season among foreigners

The tour operators feel that the government should play a more pro-active role in tourism enhancement. In order to increase foreign tourist inflow to the country, one of the prime initiatives of the government should be to increase the frequency of international and domestic flights. The Government shall also have to think about solving infrastructural problems – particularly road infrastructure. The tour operators also felt that security and safety were a major cause of concern for foreign tourists who visit the country and the government should take steps in order to prevent harassment to the tourists especially by touts and beggars at prime destinations. Moreover, there should be enhancement in accommodation facilities in all categories to cater to a wide segment of travelers. Multiple taxation policy is also a major area of concern which needs to be addressed by the Government to augment the flow of foreign tourists.