

# Analyzing the Role and Influence of Social Media on Tourism and Hospitality Industry

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## Abstract

*Social media communications have a significant impact on how people choose what to buy in the current digital age. The Indian tourism sector is also affected by this new age phenomenon. Before deciding where to go, Indian consumers (in this case, travelers) research travel options on a variety of social media platforms. Therefore, from the perspective of an emerging market, we need to comprehend social media communication better and how it influences consumer behavior (travelers). The researchers compare how consumers interact with the message, how they feel about the travel destination, and ultimately how they choose the destination when using user-generated content, company-produced content, and social media advertising. The study's research methodology was referred to as a descriptive research design. The analysis demonstrated how crucial user-generated content is for piquing interest in a travel destination, which then results in a favorable perception of the location and, ultimately, a choice of location. Additionally, there is a distinct relationship between the independent variables, the choice of location, and the mediator roles that attitude and participation in the message process play.*

**Keywords:** Social media, tourism, Facebook, Instagram, impact analysis

## INTRODUCTION

Traveling away from home for amusement, recreation, relaxation, and enjoyment is known as tourism, and it involves both the act and the process of doing so while utilizing the commercial relationships with service providers. Most individuals do this to escape their hectic job and business life and come near to tranquil nature. As a result, this mentality among the populace has contributed to the rapid growth and diversity of the tourist sector within the social system. According to UNWTO, the growth of tourism throughout the world in developed and industrialized countries has benefited the economy and created jobs (2015). The tourism sector has started to provide benefits to many nations, which is beneficial for the economy since it boosts foreign exchange earnings, boosts employment opportunities, and boosts the GDP of the nation as a whole.

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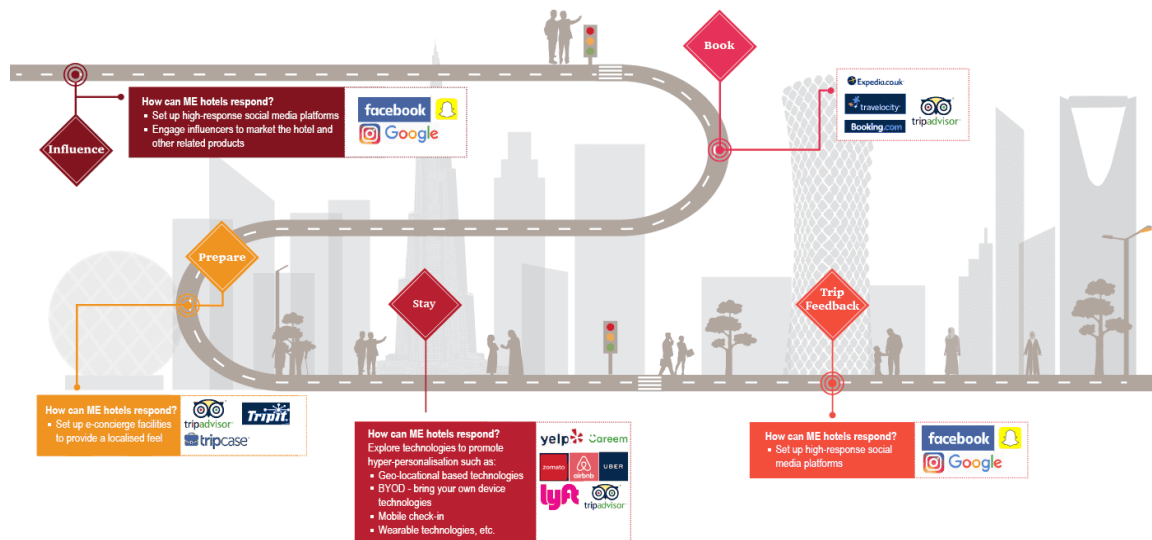
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This study aims to shed light on Bangladesh's tourism prospects and how the country's tourist industry may be promoted via the use of social networking platforms. The RMG (ready-made garments) industry generates a significant portion of the foreign cash needed to support Bangladesh's economy. Currently, the country's top export-earning industry is the apparel and footwear manufacturing sector, accounting for about 83% of all exports (BGMEA B2B Web Portal) [1–4].

According to experts, India might exploit its tourist sector to attract foreign investment



**Figure 1.** Different global social media platforms.

Source: <https://blog.hootsuite.com/types-of-social-media/>

Figure 1. Social media and social networking sites are crucial instruments in the Internet era that, when used extensively and effectively, may significantly contribute to the growth of the travel and tourism sector. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and individual blogs greatly influence people's decisions on where to spend their leisure time. Because of these platforms, people are much more aware of the locations and the unique activities they can do there. These websites also draw a lot of attention to hotels and tourist attractions, giving them the potential to expand their clientele.

Traveling and tourism may be viewed as a cultural, social, and economic phenomena that forces individuals to relocate for personal, business-related, or professional reasons to states or locations outside of their usual surroundings (UNWTO). The tourism sector is among the most dynamic and diversified in the world. The tourism and travel sector are a major source of money, employment, social development, and infrastructural development for many developing and impoverished nations worldwide. The expansion of the travel and tourist sectors is accelerated when other forms of economic growth are not financially feasible, particularly in emerging nations worldwide (Department of Regional Development and Environment Executive Secretariat for Economic and Social Affairs General Secretariat, Organization of American States; Annex-2). Bangladesh is one of the countries where the tourist sector has to be encouraged even more, according to this essay on global tourism. This is due to Bangladesh being a "developing nation," a new classification. And the current situation is consistent with the paper's predictions that the national economy isn't expanding as quickly as predicted. The number of individuals who are aware of popular tourist destinations has increased significantly over the past 10 years or so because to the proliferation of blogs, vlogs, and social networking sites. The ability to draw both domestic and foreign tourists make this a highly helpful instrument for boosting the economy in tourism destinations. However, there might be some confusion as to what travel and tourism actually are. All forms of travel are not the same as tourism. There must be some degree of movement in order for something to be labeled tourism.

The purpose of this study is to ascertain what function social media platforms serve in promoting ecotourism in the Indian states. The report also outlines the steps that need to be taken on social media to promote environmentally friendly travel and associated goods from the destinations mentioned above. By supplying them with the knowledge they need to plan their media and develop effective marketing strategies, the study will aid the government, the local population, and sustainable tourism firms [5–8].

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The travel and tourism sectors indirectly and legally contribute to the expansion of the local economy in the destinations that are visited. This is a result of the requirement to produce and distribute products and services to consumers (UNWTO, Understanding Tourism: Basic Glossary). The tourism sector is expanding and has advanced significantly in recent years. It is crucial for a region's economic development, the state budget, and local employment. People have the opportunity to showcase their own cultures and learn about others through tourism. For a rising nation like Bangladesh, which has many tourist attractions that people from all over the world desire to visit, foreign cash is crucial. Additionally, social media will constantly contribute to improving the situation. Social networking websites are a great resource for foreign visitors to learn about popular tourist destinations. The simplest approach to contact a lot of people without doing much physical effort is through digital networking platforms. Places or business locations may be advertised in a way that will draw both domestic and foreign tourists with the correct investment and ideas. Basically, social media plays a significant role in how a country uses tourism to generate income and expand its economy.

There are a variety of impacts of tourism. It is one of the sectors that influences many areas of a tourist attraction in a “domino effect.” A tourist destination’s services expand as it becomes more popular. Local small company owners have an opportunity that they can seize. Local small- and medium-sized service providers also have the ability to draw more visitors and customers by offering attractive discounts. The way individuals interact with one another and move about is another significant development. The department of roads and highways is aware that urgent road improvements are required if travelers are to enjoy their journeys. Each person experiences service differently; thus, no two people can ever have the same level of pleasure. The greatest customer service must constantly be provided in order to keep clients satisfied.

The economy, society, culture, and ecology are all affected by tourism simultaneously. However, effects can have both positive and negative aspects. While the economy or the environment gain, negative things also occur to the economy and the environment. The only way to ensure that the potential negative impacts on the general population and the area it affects don’t outweigh the financial benefits is to closely monitor the tourist business.

### **Economic Impact**

The local economy, service providers, and other company owners are all affected by tourism both directly and indirectly. It provides locals with employment opportunities such as tour guides, housekeepers, hotel management, safety personnel, and more. Indirect jobs are also produced in the agricultural, food manufacturing, retail, and marketing industries. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) estimates that in 2017, tourism contributed Tk. 427.5 billion, or over 2.2% of the nation’s GDP. And it will probably increase by 6.1% in 2018. The travel sector has historically contributed to job growth. It was in charge of 1.8% of all new jobs in 2017. In 2018, it is anticipated to increase to 3% (2018) (Dhaka Tribune). Thus, this helps address the issue of unemployment in certain places and offers local residents an opportunity to obtain well-paying work [9–12].

### **Socio-cultural Impact**

Infrastructure has an impact on social and cultural components, and tourism may help the economy by boosting these elements as well. But tourism has benefits beyond merely boosting the economy. Additionally, it has favorable social benefits on tourist destinations, such as the expansion of amenities. For instance, parks, leisure services (amenities), businesses that provide cultural goods, and the arts. The locals now have a reliable source of income thanks to this. Aside from these factors, one of the most significant ones is that people are becoming more conscious of their cultural heritage. They are even more concerned with preserving and ensuring understanding of their local culture and sense of community.

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### Effects on the Environment

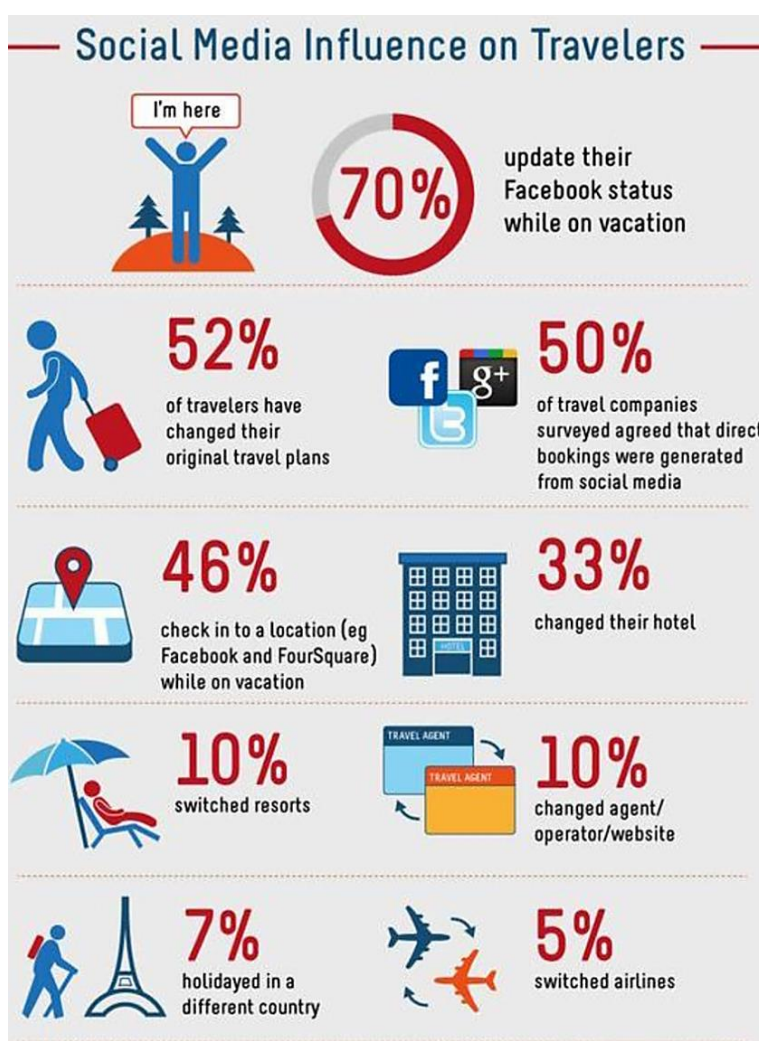
Tourism heavily relies on a location's or a specific location's natural qualities. The environment is the primary mechanism by which the tourism business functions. However, over usage of the region by visitors and residents harms the ecology. On the plus side, though, because of this mutually beneficial connection, areas that prioritize ecotourism gain from improved competition to preserve the caliber of natural resources. This is significant since natural resources serve as both the backbone of the ecotourism industry and the primary source of all the financial gains associated with it

Despite the fact that there is a lot of it, a recent state-of-the-art study of the literature discovered that academic research on how electronic WOM influences consumer behavior in tourism and hospitality is dispersed and often only looks at a tiny fraction of its effects. From what has been mentioned, it is evident that the concept of social media's potential to promote sustainable tourism is a relatively recent one. Additionally, not a lot has been written about it in the context of India. Few studies have been conducted to far on the use of social media to promote sustainable development. This study aims to close this knowledge gap by demonstrating how social media may be utilized to promote sustainable tourism in India's popular tourist destinations. The study also identifies critical socioeconomic and cultural elements that support sustainable tourism and enhance the image of the area [13–16].

### OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH

Traditional definitions of tourist destinations include places like countries, cities, or islands that have laws and regulations in place for promoting and organizing tourism. Simply said, destinations are the locations that people travel to and decide to remain in for a specific length of time. Destinations may also be considered to be geographical regions that visitors perceive as a single entity and where goods and services are created to cater to their requirements and desires [17, 18].

A tourist destination is really a personal concept that each traveler interprets in their own unique way. It consists of a variety of regional goods, services, resources, and activities. The majority of other things are purchased after they are used, whereas tourist products are typically purchased before they are used. As a result, tourists choose where to go depending on the information they read about the place before traveling there. Therefore, it is crucial to provide prospective tourists with reliable and up-to-date information if you want to enhance their experience and make your tourism location more competitive. Therefore, word-of-mouth, advertisements, publications, and the place's distinctiveness are all emotional and illogical elements that influence a tourist's decision to purchase a tourism destination. People are prepared to spend extra for an excellent product in today's society if it is simple to obtain. Destination marketers have an excellent chance to maintain long-lasting ties with their busy clients because of social media. Destination marketers today need to look at more data to be competitive in the tourist business due to developments in technology, globalization, and consumer requirements and attitudes. Social media is a crucial tool for today's marketing and reputation-building of locations. Tourism is a rapidly expanding sector that relies heavily on the Internet and online commerce. Social media are the platforms that enable users to share and publish their own content. They provide chances for four distinct advantages—collaboration, communication, community, and collective intelligence. The most popular social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Google+, Flickr, YouTube, Pinterest, and Flickr. According to some authors, social networking sites, virtual social worlds, content communities, virtual gaming worlds, blogs, and collaborative projects are six separate types of social media. Like other businesses, the tourist sector has been impacted by the rising usage of social media. Social media has helped the travel and tourism business grow to a new level. Using social media, visitors may make judgments about their experiences and where they wish to go by getting first-hand information from other travelers Figure 2. Writing travelogues, blogging, writing about experiences, and reading travelogues that other travelers have put on their own social networking sites and the website for the place are all



**Figure 2.** Popularity and revenue analysis of different global social media platforms.

Source: <https://www.smartinsights.com/social-media-marketing/social-media-strategy/new-global-social-media-research/>

effective ways to obtain information. The most significant information sources for tourism include websites like gogobot.com, trippy.com, wanderfly.com, tripit.com, tripadvise.com, and online content. Compared with using more conventional communication channels, social media makes it easier and less expensive for the destination to contact visitors. A tourism destination needs to stand out from rival locations in order to maintain its competitiveness in the market. The location will stand out from the competition if it has a solid and well-organized marketing and communication strategy with an emphasis on social media. It is challenging to capture people's attention on social media since there is so much material available. There are methods to do this, though, including being novel, enlisting famous people, providing a chance to win, holding a contest, being exclusive, making sense, and having a visually appealing geographic layout [19–22].

The study's objectives are:

- The purpose of the article is to:
  - Examine both the positive and negative consequences of social media marketing in the tourist industry;
  - Recognize the link between social media and tourism marketing so that you can comprehend the concept of social media marketing in the tourism industry.

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## TOURISM AND SOCIAL MEDIA

To keep having success, making money, and getting benefits, the national and international tourism industry should be able to use the latest developments in social media to promote and market itself. In a world that is always changing, it is very important to make sure that the Internet and digital technology are used efficiently and effectively for tourism activities. Because consumers are more aware of their rights and the market is always changing, marketing companies have to be more strategic about product development, pricing, publicity choices, and placement. Social media and social networking sites are important tools for marketing and do a lot of other things. Most of the time, these tools give users a place to learn about products and services, become more aware of them, and share their opinions after travel experiences and travel evaluations. For businesses, it's a chance to market their destination, increase brand loyalty, and build long-term relationships. When companies use social media as a marketing tool, it gives them an edge over their competitors. There are a lot of people who use social networking sites now, so it is likely that information will be shared quickly. Customers are becoming more aware, there is more information available, and it is possible to look at many comments in a digital environment. In a globalized world like ours, this makes it clear that consumers can look into tourist destinations in a much faster, easier, and cheaper way. A lot of people plan their trips on the Internet. Most of the time, they look at several social media sites before making a travel decision. This is because they think that social feedback can help them make better buying decisions. As comments and ratings are posted on social media sites, they change how potential travelers see the destination and, in turn, how loyal they are to the destination. Some studies on the use of social media as a marketing tool came to the conclusion that the tourism industry is benefiting from the growth of social media because it allows companies to reach a large number of people at once. Most companies use social media platforms to market their destinations because they have seen that more and more people use social media in their daily lives and that social media has a much higher awareness rate than other marketing tools. Over the years, different social media campaigns have been run to spread the word about the place to everyone in the world. Social media is also a cheaper way to market a tourist destination, which is another reason to use it as a marketing tool. Nowadays, travelers don't trust ads that focus on the features and specialties of a destination. Instead, they want a personal touch, an intelligent, communicative, and creative message that includes empathy and feelings. The DMOs focus on social media marketing and make sure that their social media presence is so strong that their destination's unique selling proposition is always visible when potential travelers look for a similar destination [23–26]

## IMPACT ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The benefits and drawbacks of adopting social media for tourist business marketing Most frequently, information posted by other travelers on social media platforms will impact a prospective traveler who wants to learn more about a destination they will stay at for the first time. Any tourist organization's principal objective is to encourage as many people to make reservations. And using the Internet is the fastest and most affordable method to achieve this. The reputation and brand name of the location are affected by the remarks and statements made on social media, just as they will influence a potential traveler's choice to book. Social media has a significant impact on travel in this way. Negative comments will discuss the visitors' disappointments and unpleasant experiences, and positive comments will discuss the visitors' positive experiences and happiness. Therefore, it is crucial to consider how unfavorable reviews impact a location's reputation and how tourists make their travel decisions. Travelers' decisions are impacted by social media before, during, and after their visits. Prior to making a decision, they utilize it to investigate their possibilities, make a more informed decision, confirm their choice, and look for entertainment and housing. They use it while traveling to learn about nearby attractions, get in touch with loved ones, and post comments on websites to share their experiences with others. After the trip, they utilize it to share images with pals. Travelers may readily learn about costs, features, and what other travelers thought of their vacations via social media platforms. Social media information may either drive away potential guests or compel them to make a reservation since it is widely accessible and powerful. Social media also has

an impact on customer satisfaction and customer service. Marketing professionals may better address consumer issues and complaints by being present on social media, which enhances their standing with existing and prospective clients. A corporation appears more personable and shows its consumers that they are appreciated when it responds to their complaints. The majority of social media's drawbacks stem from the unfavorable remarks and viewpoints that previous visitors express about your location and merchandise on both the destination's website and their own personal websites. They were upset and had a poor experience, which is why they did this. These remarks may be seen by anybody who is linked to you on your personal networking sites, and they are prominently displayed on the destination site. Utilizing social media channels for marketing is a fantastic idea, but calculating the return on investment for each campaign may be challenging. A single piece of material may spark a discourse among numerous people on social media networks. The interactions on social media, such as likes, shares, comments, and retweets, influence how others see the location. However, if the social connections are unfavorable, marketing efforts may suffer. Not just those who follow the account, but also everyone who likes, shares, or retweets the post will be affected by this unfavorable interaction [27–43].

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The most crucial thing for marketing teams to keep in mind is that travelers as well as those who are interested in traveling may share any sort of information. It is crucial for marketers to uphold an ethical standard of behavior in their business to avoid getting into problems.

- An ethical code of conduct simply states that advertisers shouldn't present inaccurate or incorrect information in their advertisements. Because visitors' perceptions of a particular place are frequently influenced by the material on the official website. However, if the delivery is late or falls short of expectations, the consumer will often be dissatisfied. As a result, the consumer will have a negative opinion of the place and may complain about it online.
- To find out what consumers are saying about a place, marketers should visit the website. This will enable them to enhance positive benefits while minimizing negative ones.
- It is crucial to hear what consumers have to say and address their concerns. Because it will convey well how responsive the business is.

## CONCLUSION

This article is solely based on a review of the literature and research conducted on the use of social media by tourist organizations, the connection between social media and tourism marketing, and the outcomes of social media marketing. Many communities rely heavily on tourism as a source of revenue and employment, but due to changes in technology and the media, marketers must adapt their marketing and communication methods as well as the way they position themselves in a shifting market. The employment of cutting-edge technology and new media tactics is crucial for the continued existence of a destination. People no longer trust advertisements that highlight a location's advantages and qualities. They base their purchasing decisions on their ties and wish to help the area thrive. Social media enables marketers to create engaging content, exercise creativity, and promote interactivity. Social media has both positive and negative aspects, some of which might harm a location's reputation over time. However, if marketers work hard to address consumer issues and take other calculated measures to manage the adverse consequences, these negative effects may be reduced to a minimum. Social media is unquestionably a fantastic tool to connect with consumers, contact your target demographic, and promote your location. However, it is crucial to refrain from publishing anything that might offend your future and existing consumers if you want to prevent any unfavorable consequences.

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