



## A Study On The Role Of Social Media In Promoting Tourism : With Special Reference To Rajasthan Tourism

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### ABSTRACT

Social media is an interactive media where one is free to post their content, share it and popularise; we just need an internet connection. An estimated 2.95 billion people were using social media in 2019 and it is supposed to get increased to almost 3.43 billion in 2023. We can get connected with anyone from anywhere in the world easily with just a click. We are world's second largest internet market as well (2019). That's a huge for any country, also making us a big market for any online platform providing company. Our generation is an online generation, we are available everywhere online, on every social media handlers. The aim of this study is to discuss about the different campaigns taken up by the department on social media to increase its audience and how engaging these campaigns proved. Also in this study we are dealing with the role, social media had played in the growth of Rajasthan Tourism worldwide.

**Keywords :** Social media, Rajasthan tourism, Social change and development.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

According to a survey, internet users spend 2 hours and 22 minutes per day on social networking and messaging platforms. Now days almost every sector is using social media to increase their popularity amongst people, so do the tourism sector. There are many companies who are targeting audiences online by their creative content like Travel & Leisure, Outlook, Lonely Planet, Conde Nast Traveller and many others. Not only has private sector, public sector has also shifted towards new media. Ministry of tourism (Incredible India- 2011) and some department of state tourism like Madhya Pradesh (2010), Kerala (2010), Rajasthan (2016), Gujarat (2010) and few others have shifted towards digital marketing. They understood that their target market can be reached more profoundly with the usage of new media.

#### Rajasthan tourism

The Rajputana of yore, set amidst the great Thar has a history rich in chivalry and valour. In this land of

superlative everything- its people, customs, culture, costumes, manners, dialects and even cuisine is mesmerizing. Its ruins, relics and romances speak of the vicissitudes through which it has passed. While the invaders celebrated their victories, the women folk of those killed had performed **Johar**- voluntary accepting death by jumping into the ritual fire as described by the department, "Rajasthan takes one on an unforgettable journey. Its heritage forts, palaces and havelis, mountains, sand dunes, lakes, folk music, dance, diverse culture, colourful attire and people always delights tourists. Also, the Fairs and festivals celebrated in the State are vibrant examples of the rich cultural heritage attracting huge number of tourists to Rajasthan. However, due to various reasons, other States, despite having less tourism potential caught up in recent years and even surpassed Rajasthan in tourist arrivals. It was then in year 2015, when the department decided on a multi-pronged marketing strategy (mixture of traditional and online marketing). Since the work was not easy,

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private tenders were made and many companies applied for it. The target was simple, to choose the best. At the end of this, for the selection of the professional tourism marketing / creative agency, presentations of the companies were made before the Chief Minister of Rajasthan. As the result Multi Modal media Campaign was launched on 15th January 2016 by then former Chief Minister Vasundhra Raje”(Source: 'Note on marketing

cell'- marketing section of department of Rajasthan tourism). M/s Adglobal 360 P Ltd., Delhi was hired to make the most of Digital Media, creative posts, tweets, various blogs, and live telecast of fairs & festivals on social media platforms. As per the data provided by the department, a result of this marketing campaign (of which social media marketing was a part), tourist arrival in the state increased by 17.3 % and 10.5% respectively in calendar years 2016 and 2017.

**Total number of visitors in the state (2015-2018)**

Year	Domestic	Foreign	Total
2015	35187573	1475311	36662884
2016	41495115	1513729	43008844
2017	45916573	1609963	47526536
2018	50235643	1754348	51989991

(Source: Pragati Prativedan 2018-19- Annual progress booklet by the Department of Rajasthan tourism)

This chart shows significant growth in the arrival of tourists in the state, both domestic as well as foreign. Social media marketing is not the only reason behind this growth but as in this study we are dealing with only social media marketing so will stick to this only. There is noteworthy increase of 17.93% in the arrival of domestic tourists in the year 2016 from 6.3% in 2015. This showed that after making a digital presence of the state, the state tourism experienced a great lift in the number of tourism in the state, making it more profitable. Though all credit doesn't go to digital presence only, but we can't ignore the fact that it was the joining year of the state on social media platforms.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

- **Gupta (2019)** describes about the measures taken up the state government towards the development and what problems they are facing. She also talked about how the tourists are worried about their safety and security due to anti-social attacks in the state. She stated many initiatives taken by the state tourism corporation like organising various cultural activities, providing tourist- friendly amenities, new concepts- 'Jaipur by Nite', etc. for

promotion of tourism in the state.

- **Bhambri (2018)** researcher reveals that how the social media is becoming a major area for marketing in this world and for tourism industry it is on peek. She explained in brief about the social media platform (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube and Blogs) and their role into the marketing, how far they are providing services to the companies for marketing. She also talked about how social media has transformed tourism marketing and have given a new perspective to the marketing area.

## 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the various campaigns used by Rajasthan Tourism via social media.
2. To examine the role of social media in growth of tourism in Rajasthan
3. To analyse the online growth in comparison with three other states of India

## 4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

**R1:** What is the role of social media platforms in the growth of tourism in Rajasthan?

**R2:** What are the different campaigns taken up by

Rajasthan tourism through social media to promote tourism in the state?

**R3:** What scope does Rajasthan tourism have when compared with other states of India?

### 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

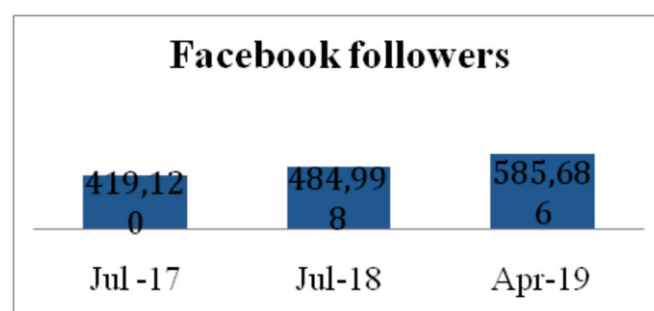
This study carried descriptive research method in which main focus is to answer the question 'what' and not why. The main point of this research is, it neither defines cause or effect relationship nor does it attempt to make any prediction. For the purpose of study, researcher has collected primary data by taking telephonic interview from Mr. Bhupesh Sharma, ATO (Marketing) and Department of Rajasthan Tourism. Secondary data was collected from books, journals, annual tourism report (by the Department of Rajasthan Tourism), online research papers, articles, websites and official social media handles of the state.

### 6. DATA ANALYSIS

Social media marketing is a tool, which is used by various companies to make their brand image online. Many tourism companies are also using this tool for their image building. Rajasthan tourism has also shifted towards social media marketing, as explained earlier. Here, we'll be discussing how the social media marketing worked in the case of Rajasthan tourism.

### • FACEBOOK

Facebook is a popular social networking platform, where one can connect with the people round the globe and can share their images, experiences, talent, etc. Various pages related to different activities like personal blogs, music pages, food blogs, etc. Rajasthan Tourism's Facebook account where they share content regarding tourism is - <https://www.facebook.com/rajasthantourism/> joining year of Rajasthan tourism was 2016.



(Figure 1)

As we can see through this chart that there is an increase of 166,566 followers from July 2017- Apr 2019. An increase of more than 1.5 lacks is commendable as it shows the engagement level of the people with the Rajasthan tourism a regular flow of posts can be observed by the department on this platform.

Tourism Board	Facebook Fans Nov 2017	Facebook Fans April 2019	Joining Year	Growth Rate %
Madhya Pradesh	3,94,321	11,59,548	2010	194%
Rajasthan	4,74,926	5,85,686	2016	23%
Kerala	14,00,000	26,85,211	2010	92%
Gujarat	12,00,000	13,22,513	2010	10%

Comparison with the other states' social media handles

(Figure 2)

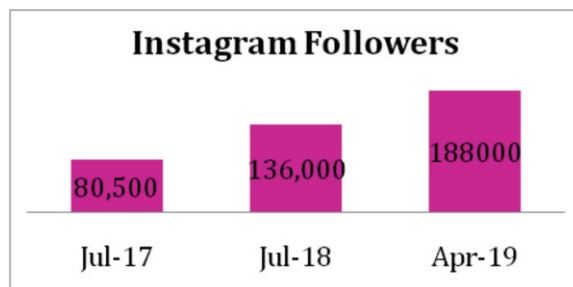
From the Figure 2, we can see the growth of various states' Facebook accounts. Here we can see that Rajasthan has also seen a growth in the number of fans

but it is less as compared to other states. It is a neutral position as from this we cannot say that the Rajasthan tourism is leading the board or is lacking behind, as it is

clearly visible the joining year of the state is much later than Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Gujarat. The growth rate of Rajasthan i.e. 23% and is still increasing which is a good sign for both the state and for the private corporation handling it. This has helped in creating a lively image of Rajasthan on social media platforms, bringing it back to the race of most favoured tourist place in India.

• **INSTAGRAM**

It is a famous photo and video sharing social media platform. This is a part of Facebook now; this is a major platform now days to influence people and to connect with them. Rajasthan Tourism's Instagram account where they share content regarding tourism is [https://www.instagram.com/rajasthan\\_tourism/](https://www.instagram.com/rajasthan_tourism/) joining year of Rajasthan tourism was 2016. Here, is a chart showing the growth in the number of followers from July 2017-Apr 2019.



(Figure 3)

As we can see through this chart that there is an increase of 107,500 followers from July 2017- Apr 2019. To engage audiences, they use various posts like best things to explore in Rajasthan, Bazars of Rajasthan (different cities), Filmsthan, adventurasthan, GOT theme, grids and many other themes. They involve audiences by uploading various posts like guess the Sthan, experience the wild, when in Rajasthan, puzzle paheli, and others.

Tourism Board	Instagram Followers – Nov 2017	Instagram Followers – April 2019	Growth Rate
MP	15,700	60,900	287.89%
Kerala	88,000	1,92,000	106.67%
Rajasthan	92,900	1,88,000	102.36%
Gujarat	52,100	76,100	46.06%

Comparison with the other states' social media handles (Figure 4)

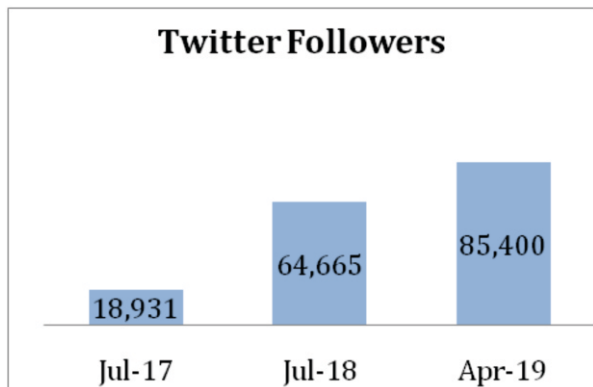
From the Fig.4 we can say that Rajasthan is having a prominent rate of growth from Nov 2017- Apr 2019. It got 95,100 new followers in this time and it seems to be a noticeable one. But one thing is notice able over here is, even after joining late, Rajasthan is still in better position than Gujarat. A big difference in growth rate can be seen in the fig above i.e. 102.36% of Rajasthan while there is only increase of 46.06% of Gujarat. They have gained only 24,000 followers in this time span, which is less than half of Rajasthan. Rajasthan was having highest number of followers in Nov 2017 but in Apr 2019, Kerala is

leading the board, giving a tough competition to Rajasthan. They were saying that it won't be right if we don't notice the growth of Madhya Pradesh tourism. It showed a great response from people, giving the growth rate of 287.89% which is highest amongst all.

• **TWITTER**

As it is said Twitter is the platform of the intellectuals. Making it short, simple and crispy some companies also use twitter as customer services, like Indian railways in some cases. Twitter is considered as the most authentic platform for news available online.

Rajasthan Tourism's Twitter account where they share content regarding tourism is - [https://twitter.com/my\\_rajasthan](https://twitter.com/my_rajasthan) joining year of Rajasthan tourism was 2016. Here, is a chart showing the growth in the number of followers from July 2017- Apr 2019.



(Figure 5)

As we can see through this chart (Fig. 5) that there is an increase of 66,469 followers from July 2017- Apr 2019? An increase of almost 70k is commendable as it shows the engagement level of the people with the Rajasthan tourism. This increase in the graph of twitter account shows that Rajasthan's prestige has a different place in the heart of people wherever one can see/experience. These posts create an image of Rajasthan in the minds of people making them to live that life. Social media have a power to trap people's attention and to insist them to visit any place by placing a picture and captioning it. These posts like Mandirsthan and Adventuresthan were made under Mysthan campaign to make people aware about the things to relate with or to do with when they visit Rajasthan. Pictures of the people were also shared under this campaign (shared by them).

Tourism Board	Twitter Followers- Nov 2017	Twitter Followers- April , 2019	Growth Rate
Rajasthan	27,800	85,400	207.19%
MP	24,100	55,700	131.12%
Kerala	12,60,000	18,30,000	45.23%
Gujarat	13,10,000	17,20,000	31.29%

Comparison with the other states' social media handles

(Figure 6)

Here, in this Fig.6 we can see that Rajasthan is on top in the number of growth rate. Though its followers are less than others but the same thing still continuous, it's late joining. But if we compare it with Madhya Pradesh the growth rate and the number of followers is more even joining late. When it comes to Kerala and Gujarat the growth rate of the Rajasthan is more than double of their growth rate, i.e. 207.19% of Rajasthan and 45.23% and 31.29% of Kerala and Gujarat respectively.

• **YOUTUBE**

YouTube is a platform where one can share videos regarding anything and everything (following the norms). Rajasthan Tourism's YouTube account where

they share videos of various activities like TV Ads, fairs and festivals celebrated in the state is - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFibxqea7JmKpUWwStp18bA> joining year of Rajasthan tourism was 2016. Here, is a chart showing the growth in the number of subscribers from July 2017- Apr 2019.



(Figure 7)

As we can see through this chart that there is an increase of 95,068 subscribers from July 2017- July 2018. But when we talk about July 18- Apr 2019 it just shows an increase of only 2,634 subscribers which is much less than that of previous year. This drastic downfall of the

subscribers is something to get worried about as this is only 0.97% of previous years subscribers. These videos play a role of experience for those who are willing to visit Rajasthan and an advertisement for those who should make Rajasthan their next destination.

<b>Tourism Board</b>	<b>YouTube Followers - Nov 2017</b>	<b>YouTube Followers - April 2019</b>	<b>Growth Rate</b>
<b>Rajasthan</b>	<b>5,100</b>	<b>1,02,400</b>	<b>1907%</b>
<b>Gujarat</b>	<b>4,500</b>	<b>13,138</b>	<b>191.95%</b>
<b>Kerala</b>	<b>39,000</b>	<b>1,07,541</b>	<b>175.74%</b>
<b>MP</b>	<b>13,000</b>	<b>28,684</b>	<b>120.64%</b>

**Comparison with the other states' social media handles  
(Figure 8)**

This shows a drastic increase in the number of growth rate Rajasthan has come across during this time but as we know the growth was in the year 2018. Highest in the growth rate i.e. 1907% and second highest in terms of subscribers, Rajasthan showed an immense growth over this span of time in terms of gaining popularity on YouTube.

#### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Social media marketing have many tools like LinkedIn, Pinterest, etc. here only four were taken i.e. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, to study the effect of the social media on tourism. This could lead to not exact representation of the role as all these were not considered in this study. Yearly data of followers and subscribers of Rajasthan and other states was not able to get collected properly as the situation of pandemic occurred in the country and the state was in complete lockdown. All campaigns were not covered in this study due to limited availability of the resources.

#### **7. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS**

This study shows that there is a significant increase in the number of followers on the various social media platforms used by the department. Fig. 1,3,5,7 shows the same. This increase in the number of followers leads to good image building of the state online. Though the increase in the case of YouTube was hilarious in 2017-2018 can be observed in Fig. 7 but in the year 2018-2019 it reduced to only 0.97% of the 2017-2018 giving a reverse reaction than the earlier year, reason is unknown for now. It gives a rough idea that the year 2017-2018 brought more engagement to the various social media platform than the year 2018-2019. It can also lead to that the type of content in the year 2017-2018 was more engaging or appealing to the audiences than the other. Comparison with the other states came out as a no profit no loss kind of situation as Rajasthan joined much later than other states, so comparing them wasn't able to lead this study towards any direction. But one thing can be observed from this comparison that in two cases i.e. Twitter and YouTube, Rajasthan's account even after

joining later stood higher than others. Growth rate which it observed is much more than others. This shows that Rajasthan's tourism appeals a lot of audiences and people feel much more connected with it. Social media marketing is boom for those who know how to use it in a proper way and to bring out the best in it.

## 8. CONCLUSION

However, due to various reasons, other States, despite having less tourism potential caught up and even surpassed Rajasthan in tourist arrivals. It was then that the Government in year 2015, decided on a multi-pronged marketing strategy to create more and more demand for Rajasthan to get back its status as favoured tourist destination.” They have also realised that to connect well with their customers and for making them remember Rajasthan once again or to make them relive Rajasthan,

and for realisation that Rajasthan is not all about sand dunes and temples, it is much more than that; it was important to switch to the social media. This has become a turning point for the state as earlier the marketing strategies were different.

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