Trends of Marketing Management
In Tourist Attractions

*** Dr. Ajit Kumar Shukla**

Tourism has an international market, but marketing strategies need to be build up from the basic marketing inputs used in domestic tourism. Cultural differences (language and social usages), political differences (Income and its distribution and currency regulation), and geographical differences (topography and demography) are of supreme importance in the tourism and travel market. These environmental influences and their relationship to parallel influences in a particular region facilitate relocation of promising tourist markets. Marketing strategy inputs need to be adjusted to foreign markets. The tourist products (attractions) require simplification and adjustment to local differences in taste, price and quality levels. The long distance to an overseas market requires a concern with transportation and distribution; Differences in wholesaling and retailing require the use of different marketing channels. Prices must reflect the additional costs of transportation, customers and other controls. Promotion needs adjustment to variation in travel media, availability of sales personnel and other promotional inputs. As the level of international tourism increases, the entire organization is directed towards the tourist and travel market.

There are a very large number of reasons why tourist attractions take place. The purpose of tourist attractions may be classified as:

➢ Sun, Sea, and Sand
➢ Touring, sight- seeing and culture
➢ Visiting friends and relatives
➢ Business travel meetings, conferences, etc.
➢ Spend motives such as - Study, Sports, Health and Religious pilgrimages.

Tourist attractions are regarded as central to the successful development of tourism regions and the tourism system as a whole (Gunn, 1994; Leiper, 1990). In a substantial review of tourist attraction studies, Lew (1994) suggests that there are three frameworks for studying attractions; an ideographic approach which focuses on the special features of sites, an organizational approach which has largely been concerned with spatial and capacity dimensions, and the cognitive framework which has been concerned with visitor reactions to attractions. In broad terms, these approaches reflect the study and analytical skills of geographers, planners and visitor studies or psychology researchers. It can be noted, however, that these approaches do not entirely cover business and commercial dimensions in assessing the growth and development of attractions. The concern of the present article is to use a diversity of sources to document recent business trends of marketing management in tourist attraction.

DEFINING ATTRACTIONS

Definitions of attractions have to include natural environment features (e.g., World Heritage Areas), cultural features (e.g. museums and art galleries) and commercial purpose-built features (e.g., theme parks).

In earlier treatments of this definitional issue, it has been proposed that;

'*A tourist attraction is a named site with a specific human or natural feature which is the focus of visitor management and attention.'*

G. Wall (1997) has observed that tourist attractions may have a specific point location, as suggested in the above definition, a linear shape or a regional character. Further, attractions which have a regional character such as an historic urban district or an extensive national park, may sometimes also be seen as a set of point attractions. The focus of attention in the present discussion will be on specific point based tourist attractions. It is recognized that some scenic and cultural resources with a wider spatial pattern will only be partially encompassed by this approach.

FRAMEWORKS

A range of conceptual frameworks can be seen as highly applicable to trends of marketing management in tourist attractions. For example, emerging models of tourist marketing such as the PRICE (Planning, Research, Implementation, Control, and Evaluation) approach, developed by Morrison (1996) can assist in explaining some of the current activities of the attractions sector. Additionally, the application of models to understand the value of interpretation for visitors and business also offer explanatory power (Moscardo, 1998). Further, generic models describing strategic planning and quality management provide explanatory and predictive frameworks for

*** *Reader,* Department of Commerce, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
E-mail : ajitrajshukla@yahoo.co.in

assessing current and emerging directions (Porter, 1996).

The current study is relevant to but not conceived within any one of these frameworks. Instead, it seeks to document the emerging trends in the attractions sector in order that these trends can be communicated to both scholars and practitioners for further analysis and consideration. The approach adopted represents an inductive rather than deductive approach to tourist attraction trends in the belief that by initially identifying a range of emerging patterns, both tourist attraction researchers and managers will have the largest possible critical

TABLE 1: World Wide Web Sites for Tourist Attractions Sampled

Attraction	Location	World Wide Web Site
American Museum of Natural History.	New York, U.S.A.	http://www.amnh.org/
Brookfield Zoo	Illinois, U.S.A.	http://www.brookfield.zoo.mus.il.us/
Buffalo Bill Historical Center	Wyoming, U.S.A.	http://www.truewest.com/BBHC/
Colonial Williamsburg	Virginia, U.S.A.	http://www.history.org/
Disneyland	California, U.S.A.	http://208.218.3.221/Disneyland/index.html
Disney World Epcot Centre Disney-MGM Studios	Orlando, Florida,U.S.A.	http://www.disney.com/DisneyWorld/index.html
Field Museum of Natural History	Illinois, U.S.A.	http://www.fmnh.org/
Grand Canyon National Park	Arizona, U.S.A.	http://www.nps.gov/grca/
Guggenheim Museum	New York, U.S.A	http://www.guggenheim.org/gigm.html
Hersheypark	Pennsylvania, U.S.A	http://www.800hershey.com/park/
Kentucky Horse Park	Kentucky, U.S.A.	http://www.imh.org/khp/
Knott's Berry farm	California,U.S.A.	http://www.anaheimoc. org/knotts.html
Mammoth Cave National Park	Kentucky, U.S.A.	http://www.nps.gov/maca/
Mystic Seaport	Connecticut, U.S.A.	http://www.mystic.org/
Old Sturbridge Village	Massachusetts, U.S.A.	http://www.osu.org/
Plimoth Plantation	Massachusetts, U.S.A.	http://www.plimoth.org/
Polynesian Cultural Centre	Hawaii, U.S.A.	http://www.polynesia.com/
San Diego Zoo	California, U.S.A.	http://www.sandiego.zoo.org/
Sea World, Florida Sea World, San Diego Busch Gardens, Tampa Bay Busch Gardens, Williamsburg Sesame Place Adventure Island, Tampa Water Country U.S.A.	Florida, U.S.A. San Diego, California, U.S.A. Florida, U.S.A. Virginia U.S.A. Pennsylvania, U.S.A. Florida, U.S.A.	http://www.4adventure.com/

Six Flags Magic Mountain	California, U.S.A.	
Six Flags Hurricane Harbour	California, U.S.A	
Six Flags Great Adventures	New Jersey, U.S.A.	
Six Flags Fiesta Texas	San Antonio, Texas. U.S.A.	
Six Flags Over Texas	Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas, U.S.A.	http:/ www.sixflags.com/
Six Flags Hurricane Harbour	Arlington Texas, U.S.A.	
Six Flags Astroworld	Houston, Texas, U.S.A.	
Six Flags Great America	Gurnee, Illinois, U.S.A.	
Six Flags St.Louis	St. Louis, Missouri,U.S.A.	
Six Flags Over Georgia	Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A.	
Six Flags Wild Safari Animal Park	Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A.	
Six Flags Water World	Houston, Texas, U.S.A.	
Statue of Liberty, National Monument and Ellis Island	New York, U.S.A.	http:/ www.nps.gov/
The Smithsonian (16 museums, galleries and zoos) National Air and Space Museum National Museum of Natural History Art National Portrait Gallery	Washington, D.C.	http:/ www.si.edu/
Universal Studios	Florida, U.S.A.	http:/ www.usf.com/
Universal Studios	California, U.S.A.	http:/ www.mca.com/unicity/
USS Arizona Memorial	Hawaii, U.S.A.	http:/ www.npc.gov/usar/
Yellowstone National Park	Wyoming, U.S.A.	http:/ www.nps.gov/yell/
Yosemite National Park	California, U.S.A.	http:/ www.nps.gov.yose/
Monuments of India	India	http:/ www.incredibleindia.org
Tourist places in India	India	http:/ www.tourism.gov.in

information base with which to enhance their respective endeavours.

METHOD

Information to assess trends in tourist attractions was obtained from four sources. A programme of direct on-site visits to a range of tourist attractions was funded from a number of tourism research grants. These visits were focused on four locations in order to maximize the diversity of attraction environments and styles. The four settings were natural environment attractions in India and historic attractions in Italy (including Rome, Venice, Siena, Florence, Padua and Milan), urban, regional and rural attractions in the Midwest of the United States (Chicago and Indianapolis and regional Illinois and Indian sites) and purpose-built tourist attractions in California (including Disneyland and Universal Studios) and Amusement Parks in India.

A second approach was to access the United States tourist attractions through World Wide Web sites. This rapidly

expanding resource of tourist attraction information was reviewed with the specific purpose of assessing identified sites for forthcoming or planned new features or events.

Many of the existing sites incorporate a feature labeled "What's Hot" or "Coming Attractions", thus facilitating the search for new commercial endeavors. Initial access to this sample of World Wide Web sites was through the international Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (http:/www.iaapa.org/new/faq.htm).

In particular, web sites for the renowned tourist attractions area of Central Florida and California are emerging trends. The various sites visited electronically are presented in Table 1.

The sites accessed in this way include a broad array of theme parks, national parks, museums and specialized attractions. Since the medium of access was the requirement that the attraction had an official web site, this approach over represents popular, large scale attractions.

The third approach to collecting information was to access the resources provided by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions. This organization has more than 4,000 members, principally family entertainment centers, amusement parks, water parks, zoos and attraction industry suppliers. It is a U.S. based organization but has a number of members in Asia and Europe.

A fourth method for assessing tourist attraction trends was to conduct twelve interviews with tourist attraction managers. These interviews were held over a four month period with select senior tourism industry planners and

TABLE - 2: A Summary of Leading Trends in Tourist Attractions

	Trend	Key Explanation
1.	All inclusive price	The trend to adopt a single initial entry charge is replacing component by component pricing.
2.	Attention to managing entry	The first few minutes spent in an attraction are increasingly being seen as vital in organizing visitor time and attention.
3.	Membership developments	Special deals for members and friends to encourage repeat visits and build attraction loyalty are emerging.
4.	Roving interpretation	The use of roving staff to provide explanations to visitors of the exhibits or setting is a new trend.
5.	Shopping specialties	The better realization of retailing opportunities through distinctive products is a strengthening commercial initiative.
6.	Visual souvenirs	Particularly for action-oriented attractions providing a video or photograph, souvenir adds to attraction income and its use is growing across a range of sites.
7.	Integration with festivals/ events	Greater development of themes built on special events and festivals diversifies the attraction's appeal and is being widely employed.
8.	Supplementary activities	Using attractions for film sets, weddings, as sites for incentive travel and film festivals adds to the use of the resource for more income and is gaining popularity as attractions seek to diversify.
9.	Partnership with other attractions	Sharing attendance data and participating in Joint marketing is an emerging cooperative trend, partly counter noting a trend for large companies to operate a suite of attractions.

10.	Market niche orientation	Attracting new markets by offering special opening hours or adding specialist features is a growing initiative.
11.	World Wide Web marketing and purchasing	The use of the www not just as an information tool but as a ticket purchasing and souvenir purchasing mechanism is an active development in India and abroad and likely to spread to other locations.
12.	People pressure management	In attractions with high density new visitor numbers and pressure, strategies to enhance visitor comfort and reduce visitor and resource stress are being crafted.

managers, principally in Uttar Pradesh, India.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The principal trends observed by the combination of methods used are presented in Table 2. These summary trends are not classified according to any assumed priority but rather are seen as mutually co-existing and sometimes interdependent initiatives.

The material presented in Table 2 can be explored further by amplifying on and citing case studies of the twelve trends.

ALL INCLUSIVE PRICE

These patterns of pricing are now common at tourist attractions. The first approach is to provide a charge at each of the individual components or service sites of the attraction. Difficulties with this approach include visitor dissatisfaction at having to pay small amounts of money almost continuously. Additionally, there is considerable expense incurred by needing staff at all the purchase locations. A second pricing pattern is to have a larger single entry fee and one to two additional charges for special facilities or exhibits. For example, in Zoo of Lucknow, the entry charge is almost all encompassing except for the special show which requires further payment. In theme parks, these rides are an expensive feature used by only certain markets. By charging specifically for these rides, the overall entry price can be kept lower. This is likely to encourage visitors who do to not use the thrill rides to perceive the attraction as offering value for money. The third pricing pattern is the all inclusive charge paid for at the entrance to the facility and giving visitors access to all parts of the attraction. Typically, large scale attractions such as the Gurgaon, (Haryana) theme and amusement parks adopt this practice. The all inclusive price refers to charges to exhibits and activities and does not apply to food and souvenir purchases. Overall, in the attractions sampled in this study, the trend is towards the all inclusive pricing policy and away from the piecemeal component pricing approach.

The move to an all inclusive price raises, however, some management problems, particularly with regard to perceived value and allowing for varied visitor experiences. Arguably in some settings, the use of a set of specific charges allows visitors to choose their own experience and pay accordingly, thus increasing perceptions of value for money.

This attraction changed to an all inclusive price. At peak visitation times it is, however, very difficult to access all three components because of long queues and waiting times. For those visitors who can only fit in one of the features in the time they have available, this system encourages a perception of limited value for money.

MANAGING VISITOR ENTRY

As the trend towards charging an all inclusive price for visitors grows, there is an emerging parallel trend to manage visitors carefully in their first five minutes at the attraction. It is critical to manage a number of visitor needs in this important commencement phase of visitation. Visitors need to adjust to the new setting in terms of carrying bags, adjusting clothing requirements for indoor or outdoor settings, orienting themselves to the attraction environment and planning the sequence of their day.

One emerging trend to facilitate this visitor organization includes using designated personnel advising visitors where to meet, stand and how to get organized. A good example of this trend is the role played by officials at Panji, Goa in India and Tanyang (a hill station) in South Korea.

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENTS

Large scale attractions in particular are developing special clubs, societies and friends' groups for membership based special privileges. For large commercial ventures, such as zoos, museums and historic sites, these membership arrangements usually use discounts and after hours visits as incentives for visitors to pay the initial membership fee. Such members may act as indirect promotional agents for the attraction. In addition; accessing the visiting friends and relatives market through discounts to accompanying members or local personnel is a notable trend.

ROVING INTERPRETATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

An emerging trend in many attractions based on natural environments is the use of staff to provide spontaneous talks and information to visitors on the attraction features. Often these roving interpreters supplement or partly replace written and or highly structured guiding arrangements. This approach provides for different levels of information to visitors with varied interests. Many theme parks and increasingly other types of attractions are adding roving entertainers, including clowns, themed characters and musicians to interact with customers. Disneyland continues to be innovative in its interactive use of themed characters for children and adult entertainment.

SHOPPING SPECIALIZATION

Some attractions are making as much money from the sale of unique gifts and souvenirs as from the entry charges. Specialist shopping opportunities are very visible and important features of Agra attractions but smaller, less prestigious sites such as Khajuraho, an attraction focused on Indian sculpture keeps the shopping component of the operation open all year. The key to tourism shopping at attractions appears to lie in the imaginative creation of distinctive products which are partly souvenir items yet inherently attractive and unique products in their own right. Additionally, this attraction has a quality bookstore featuring a diverse range of volumes varying in sophistication for variety of readers. An emerging synergy between shopping centers and attractions is a related trend likely to have a marked impact in the future. India is the second most attractive destination among 30 emerging markets for retailers. While Russia remained the most attractive destination, India has overtaken China, which is ranked third. India's attractiveness among global retailers is cemented by its second place position. A number of international giants including Wal-Mart, Carrefour, Tesco and Woolworks are considering entry into India. Modern retail has entered India as seen in sprawling shopping centers, multistoried malls and huge complexes that offer shopping, entertainment and food all under one roof.

VISUAL SOUVENIRS

Attraction which offer thrill rides or special opportunities to be near appealing animals or exhibits are beginning to provide speedily produced photographic and video records of the visitor experience. This kind of souvenir sale provides a visual record for those without cameras or without the means and permission to photograph themselves at particular points of their experience. It has been reported, however, that frequent visitors to theme parks and adventure attractions tend to learn of the location of such computer controlled cameras and occasionally engage in unsafe or undesirable behaviors. Recent discussion amongst attraction operators has determined that such visitor behavior will largely be ignored. The use of this commercial photographic recording and souveniring is likely to spread to other settings.

INTEGRATION WITH FAIRS/ FUNFAIRS/FESTIVALS/EVENTS

Staging special events represents a way of enlivening the regular pattern of offerings at an attraction. Such special events may commemorate a long standing tradition celebrating the cultural heritage of the whole city. For example, Kumbh fair, Onam, Dipawali, Holi festivels, Ajmer Sharif Dargah festival, Christmas festival, Book festival, Cultural festival, Auto fair, Asiad games, Commonwealth games, Cricket matches etc. Such events are a focus for national and international promotions of attractions.

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

A number of attractions with outdoor spaces or distinctive environments are beginning to focus on special activities to enhance their income and popularity. For example, historic theme parks are being used as film sets or backdrops for television programmes. Additionally, other attractions are being used as sites for weddings, incentive travel activities and conference sessions. This trend to see the attraction as a venue for entertainment of all sorts rather than merely an attraction with a one-dimensional style has also seen the use of attractions as sites for film and music festivals, local craft groups and school educational resources. Examples of this trend include the Indian Museum, film festivals, beauty pageants and various musical shows.

PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Partnerships and links among tourist attractions are becoming increasingly varied. One of the concerns of the

operators interviewed was the continued expansion of large operators in the attraction business. The concern resides in the issue of whether small family owned attractions can remain profitable when large multi-state corporations move into the region. One response to this changing commercial environment is the cooperative research and data sharing amongst attraction properties. Such data sharing permits the appeal of the attractions sector to be compared to other leisure options and facilitates packaging among attractions.

MARKET NICHE ORIENTATION

There is an increasing trend for attractions to experiment with more flexible opening hours and special facilities to reach new markets. For example, the Children's Museum in Kolkata has added a rock climbing wall to its impressive set of displays. This feature attracts both child and adult enthusiasts as a training and practice facility for enthusiasts.

A number of Indian sites have moved beyond appealing to the general market and have developed special purpose tours, courses of instruction and learning opportunities in architecture, religious history, art, sculpture and archaeology. Formerly inaccessible environments such as monasteries and the villas of the wealthy now offer select opening hours and structured guided tours to people with well defined interests in the destinations.

THE WORLD WIDE WEB- A MARKETING AND SALES TOOL

The enhanced use of technology to manage and market attractions is a general trend across countries. In particular, the trend in Indian attractions to employ World Wide Web sites for general promotion is widespread. In addition to official sites for major attractions, devoted visitors often create their own sites, sometimes with the sanctioning of the attraction personnel.Such an agglomeration of sites provides both official and unofficial recommendations on how to visit the attraction. A particular feature of the Internet developments is the trend to sell tickets and merchandise through the web site. Such sales opportunities may provide attraction managers with the opportunity to prepare visitors more adequately for their forthcoming visits.

PRESSURE AND CAPACITY MANAGEMENT

An outstanding feature of many Indian settings reviewed for this paper, as of some major locations, lies in the problems caused by large visitor numbers at small point attractions. There are particular strategies used to cope with pressured sites which are likely to be trend setting solutions when similar problems emerge in other locations. The pressure management trends include the improved management of waiting lines, the adoption of quotas at entry and for visit times, strong traffic flow control, attention to resource protection, and partial closure or site zoning. Some illustrations of these trends are as follows:

A trend in the management of waiting lines is to provide greater visitor comfort- shade, resting poles, drinking water- and visitor information and entertainment to the waiting customers. The information can be in the form of estimated times to entry or videos describing features of forthcoming attractions or related resources. Major theme parks such as Disneyland have developed this unattractive component of tourist attraction visiting into an acceptable part of the visit experience.

A trend in the management of visitor pressure is the strong control exerted over visitor movement and traffic flow. In Venice's San Marco Cathedral, a tightly structured pathway permits access to only a limited section of the building. Similarly, in Florence's Uffizi Gallery, the control of visitor movement and traffic with ropes and signs is highly visible and permits traffic flow in one direction only.

The protection of the core resources which attract so many visitors are achieved in the most popular sites in a number of ways. There is substantial use of temperature and humidity monitoring devices in Indian and Italian art galleries and museums to assess the impact of visitor body heat and the effectiveness of climate control. The use of the quota systems to limit visitor numbers is driven by the need to maintain consistent room temperatures for centuries old paintings and fabrics. The Last Supper extends this control of the environment further by having visitors pass through two detoxification units to remove dust, smoke and static particles believed to be harmful to the artwork. There is also a substantial use of security personnel and bullet poof glass shields to protect key resources from criminal behaviour. A growing tendency in some cities is to insist on the use of guides for seeing the environment. For cities such as Shimla, all the incoming bus tour groups are required to use local guides for both local economic good and resource protection. A final resource protection strategy emerging with the most fragile settings is to provide replicas or copies of the feature.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

The twelve trends reviewed in this paper and illustrated with examples drawn from various places and across a

Vol.43, No.1, pp: 42-45.

8) Laskmanan S. [2007] "Growth trends in mulberry silk production in India- An economic analysis", Financing Agriculture, July-August, 2007, Vol.39 (4), pp: 29-30.

9) Venkateswariaha A. "Sericulture in India", Ahsiah Puslisher, New Delhi.

10) Central Silk Board, Annual Book (2004), Bangalore.

11) www.tnsericulture.gov.in

12) www.kar.nic.in

13) www.google.com

---

range of attraction styles provide a potential stimulus for future tourist attraction research. In particular, a possible research agenda for tourist attraction studies can be defined. Such an agenda could carefully consider how customers react to these trends of marketing management. Such studies could be conducted within any one country or provide cross-national data on how customers see such matters as pricing, pressure and capacity management, shopping specialization, visual records and supplementary activities, Further, many of the trends identified could also be the target for specific studies using attraction owners and managers as the respondents. In particular, questions of the changing partnership and ownership control of tourist attractions and the strategic issues in market niche orientation and resource protection could be the focus of major research studies.

In this context, the three conceptual models identified in the introductory section of this article- marketing research, interpretation evaluation and studies in business strategy, could be of benefit to tourist attraction operators and audiences as well as a growth area for tourism scholars.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Fodness, D.D. & Milner, L.M. (1992). A perceptual mapping approach to theme park visitor segmentation. Tourism Management, 13(1):95-101.

Gunn, C.A. (1994). Tourism Planning, 3rd ed. New York: Taylor and Francis.

Kotler, P., Bowen, J., Makens, J. (2002), Marketing for hospitality and Tourism, Delhi, Pearson Education.

International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions. http:/www.iaapa. org/new/faj.htm.

Leiper, N.(1990).Tourist attraction systems: Annals of Tourism Research,17:367-384.

Lew, A (1994). A framework of tourist attraction research. In J. Brent Ritchie &C. Goeldner (Eds.), Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Research, Second edition (pp.291-304), New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc,

Morrison, A.M. (1996). Hospitality and Travel Marketing, 2nd edition. New York: Delmar.

Moscardo, G. (1998). Making Visitors Mindful. Champaign, III.: Sagamore.

Negi, J.M., (2002), Marketing and Sales Strategies for Hotels and Travel Trade, New Delhi, S.Chand & Company Ltd.

Pearce, P.L. (1991). Analysing tourist attractions. Journal of Tourism Studies, 2 (1): 46-55.

Pearce, P.L., Morrison, A.M. ,& Rutledge, J.L. (1998). Tourism: Bridges Across Continents. Sydney: McGraw Hill.

Porter, M.E. (1996). Operational effectiveness is not strategy, Harvard Business Review, 76(6):61-79.

Shukla, A.K. (1998). Role of Tourism in Indian Perspective, paper presented at Asia Pacific Tourism Association (APTA) Conference, Tanyang, Chung-Buk, South Korea, August 18-21.

Wall , G. (1997). Tourism attractions: Points, lines, and areas. Annals of Tourism Research, 24(1): 240-243.