

Report on importance of communication in tourism industry

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



TOURISM AS COMMUNICATION: THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN TOURISM

Tourism is one of the most remarkable success stories of modern times. The industry, which only began on a massive scale in the 1960's, has grown rapidly and steadily for the past 30 years in terms of the income it generates and the number of people who travel abroad. Tourism is the largest service - sector in India.

Tourism contributes 6.23% to the national GDP. Tourism generates 8.8% of the total employment in India. India is to be a Tourism hotspot from 2009 to 2011. (This data is available on Indian Tourism Website). It has proved to be resilient in times of economic crisis and will continue to grow at a rapid pace of almost 4% a year in the 21st century.

According to the WTO (World Tourism Organization) forecasts, more than 700 million people will be travelling internationally by the year 2000, generating more than US \$620 billion earning. But what is Tourism? It is important to understand Tourism as a concept as well as a phenomenon.

It is not enough to treat Tourism as an industry and keep conducting research to increase profits. This industry is marketing aspects of a country or a region for profit. This implies that one invites visitors to access a part of one's home or neighbourhood. This cannot be dismissed as mere business. Tourism, therefore, is an extremely complex endeavor. Not only are huge amounts of money at stake, it is in addition providing economic incentives for protecting the natural environment, restoring cultural monuments, and preserving nature.

In a small but important way, Tourism is contributing to the understanding among peoples of very different backgrounds. But above all, it performs the business of providing a break from stress of routine and fulfilling dreams of leisure travelling. Concept Of Tourism The dictionary defines tourism as 'travelling for pleasure'; and a tourist as 'one who travels for pleasure.' Some definitions attempt to define Tourism in conceptual terms. These provide a theoretical framework in order to identify the essential characteristics of tourism and what distinguishes it from similar, sometimes related, but different activities.

Tourism is the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in these destinations and the facilities created to cater to their needs. Thus Tourism cannot be treated like any other industry. The Twentieth century changed the world forever. Technological advances translated into rapid strides in development in all fields—economic, political, social, arts and culture. Travelling, for profit or pleasure, came out of its exclusivity and became more routine.

In the feudal world only the Aristocracy would embark on a 'Grand Tour' of the 'Continent' or a 'Voyage' around the world. A more equal and prosperous population led the world towards this complex phenomenon we call Tourism. In its simplest form it is travel to new lands; the experience of the exotic in the unfamiliar; an attempt to educate ones' self or simply immerse ones' self in the joys of travel. The space of a hundred years

between the twentieth century and the twenty-first has changed tourism from travel to a form of social activity.

Rapid strides in knowledge about different, and little known parts of the world and their cultures has revolutionized the concept of tourism. The conceptual framework of human 'Thought' has undergone several transformations and the new world is an amalgam of a considerable number of worlds formed out of disparate 'thoughts'. Right from the onset of the last century the world has been searched and researched as a set of separate but related structures.

The smug and complacent divisions of nation, religion and God; of the earth and its resources; of the space surrounding humans broke down in an acknowledgment that all these are a common heritage of all. Intellectual movements that developed in France in the 1950s and 1960s analysed human culture semiotically. They are concerned with the analysis of language, culture, and society. The structuralist mode of reasoning has been applied in a diverse range of fields, including anthropology, sociology, psychology, literary-criticism and architecture.

Post-structuralism emphasizes the ways in which different aspects of cultural order, from its most banal material details to its most abstract theoretical exponents, determine one another. These philosophies include many, widely varying disciplines into a synthetic view of knowledge and its relationship to experience, the body, society and economy - a synthesis in which these are a part. Social theorists such as anthropologist and ethnographer Claude Levi-Strauss, Marshall Sahlins, James Boon and Pierre Bourdieu have analysed

human culture and society as a system of structures that need to be studied and analysed.

The Postmodern philosophy and other related philosophies such as a structural and scientific approach to all human activities like marriage, cultural values, religious beliefs, social conventions, art and traditions of peoples of the world is a movement away from the viewpoint of modernism. More specifically it is a tendency in contemporary culture characterized by the problem of objective truth and inherent suspicion towards global cultural narrative or meta-narrative.

It involves the belief that many, if not all, apparent realities are only social constructs, as they are subject to change inherent to time and place. It emphasizes the role of language, power relations, and motivations; in particular it attacks the use of sharp classifications that are absolute and rigid, rather, it holds realities to be plural and relative, and dependent on who the interested parties are and what their interests consist in. With so much thought being generated in a cross-cultural, globalised scene, the concept of tourism has become a many-layered complex of meanings.

Tourism has become the subject of much research. In Global Tourism, Davidson contends that tourism is not an industry at all. Tourism should not be viewed as a product activity or product but as a social phenomenon, an experience or a process. Recent research on tourism postulates that there are three approaches in defining Tourism—technical, economical and holistic. The first attempts to collect data by identifying

tourists; the second treats Tourism as a business and industry. Holistic approach or definition attempts to include the entire essence of the subject.

GMS Dann treats Tourism as a sociological process, an art of promotion, with a discourse of its own. The language of Tourism has its own essence. Tourism as Communication The social aspect of tourism enhances its value as a communicative process because Tourism is an industry with a difference. There is an undeniable exchange between places and people. This exchange is what is meant by communication. Communication happens at many levels (even for one single action), in many different ways, and for most beings, as well as certain machines.

Several, if not all, fields of study dedicate a portion of attention to communication widely, some recognizing that animals can communicate with each other as well as human beings, and some are more narrow, only including human beings within the different parameters of human symbolic interaction. Communication is the activity of conveying information. Communication requires a sender, a message, and an intended recipient, although the receiver need not be present or aware of the sender's intent to communicate at the time of communication; thus communication can occur across vast distances in time and space.

Communication requires that the communicating parties share an area of communicative commonality. The communication process is complete once the receiver has understood the sender. Thus, communication is a two-way process. The interaction of the tourist with the places he visits and the people he meets is therefore, a form of communication in which both the

visitor and the visited form a communication cycle. A considerable amount of weightage is given to the power of impressions on the mind of a person living in the twenty-first century.

One of the most important aspects of Tourism is the communication of the impressions created in the minds of tourists. These include non-verbal aspects -- sights and sounds communicate a general impression-- and the verbal aspect of communication-- language plays an important role in creating impressions. In the field of Tourism, communication, both non-verbal and verbal, can play a vital role in the promotion and profitability of this socio-economic process.

THE LANGUAGE OF TOURISM

The third part of the paper deals with the language of tourism and its relevance to tourism in India.

The International standard for Travel and Tourism, as recommended by the Ottawa Conference and adopted by UN Statistical Committee , proposed leisure, recreation and holidays; visiting friends and relatives; business and professional; healthtreatment; religion/ pilgrimage; historical; other (transit etc.), as tourist activities. The Global Tourist in India seeks novelty, history, knowledge, retreat, shopping, medical expertise, and the endless variety of Indian culture Every field has its language—the language ofmusic, of art...so does Tourism.

The language of Tourism, however, comprises of the non- verbal and verbal aspects of Tourism. Non- Verbal Communication And Tourism Nonverbal communication describes the process of conveying meaning in the form of

non-word messages such as gesture, body language or posture; facial expression and eye contact; object communication such as clothing, hairstyles, architecture, symbols and infographics, as well as through an aggregate of the above. Non-verbal communication is also called silent language and plays a key role in human day to day life from habits to etiquettes to civic sense and moral attitude.

Visual communication is the conveyance of ideas and information through creation of visual representations. Primarily associated with two dimensional images, it includes: signs, typography, drawing, graphic design, illustration, colours, and electronic resources, video and TV. Canadian media scholar Harold Innis had the theory that people use different types of media to communicate and which one they choose to use will offer different possibilities for the shape and durability of society.

His famous example of this is using ancient Egypt and looking at the ways they built themselves out of media with very different properties stone and papyrus. Papyrus is what he called 'Space Binding'. It made possible the transmission of written orders across space, empires and enables the waging of distant military campaigns and colonial administration. The other is stone and 'Time Binding', through the construction of temples and the pyramids that can sustain their authority generation to generation, through this media they can change and shape communication in their society.

This is an instance of Historical Tourism as well as visual and non-verbal communication. There are several examples of non-verbal and visual signs in the context of Tourism. These include historical monuments, places of

interest, scenery, national parks, rivers, forests etc. Indian Tourism offers an endless variety in all these. But our historical edifices silently communicate our inability to treasure our controversial history, and our indifference towards the proud preservation of our cultural heritage, through the defacement of our historical structures by both, the public and the government.

Keeping these points in mind one only has to look around oneself to see what kind of non-verbal language we are using to woo our Tourist—filth on roads, dirty toilets, rape of foreign tourists, over-pricing of souvenirs, cheating, shabby treatment of women and the elderly, throwing water over balconies, or garbage in the handiest corner,... the list of the non-verbal images India communicates to the world through the tourists is not always what one wishes to project or convey. First we have to improve our non-verbal and visual signals; then our verbal skills.

The sensitive advertisements made by 'Incredible India' are a very good step in this direction. The 'DevoAtithiBhavo' campaign is trying to sensitise the Indian public to view their actions and understand how they can appear to the outsiders or to Tourists. Verbal communication is related to words and does not synonym for verbal or spoken message. Therefore, vocal voices that are not words, such as a mumble, or singing a wordless note, are nonverbal. Sign languages and writing are normally known as verbal communication.

Nonverbal communication can be done by any sensory channel like with the help of sight, hear, smell, feel or taste. The forms of verbal communication

are sound, words, speaking, and language. Verbal aspects of language are Visible or Written and Audible or Spoken, Speech also contains nonverbal elements known as paralanguage. These include voice quality, emotion and speaking style as well as prosodic features such as rhythm, intonation and stress. Likewise, written texts include nonverbal elements such as handwriting style, spatial arrangement of words and the use of emoticons to convey emotional expressions in pictorial form.

Oral communication, while primarily referring to spoken verbal communication, typically relies on words, visual aids and non-verbal elements to support the conveyance of the meaning. Oral communication includes discussion, speeches, presentations, interpersonal communication and many other varieties. In face to face communication the body language and voice tonality plays a significant role and may have a greater impact on the listener than the intended content of the spoken words. Spoken Language contains elements like audibility and comprehensibility.

Comprehensibility lies in the correct modulation, accent, intonation, vocabulary, grammar. Visible verbal Language refers to bill boards, sign boards, pamphlets/leaflets, menus in restaurants, magazines, books—tourist guide-books, literary books...Here also bad printing, wrong spelling and shoddily translated works convey to Tourists the impression of a badly educated and unaware India. Communication is thus a process by which meaning is assigned and conveyed in an attempt to create shared understanding. This process enables collaboration and cooperation.

Language is the most natural link between humans today. The variety of languages in the world makes verbal communication a challenge. The development of English, Spanish and Chinese as the language of a major segment of the global population is a healthy development. A common, communicative language is required to enhance tourism Verbal Language and Indian Culture. There are many Indias within India. Linguistic identity is an integral part of Indian-ness and culture. Indian history, literature, science, medicine, religion and spiritual knowledge is a priceless heritage preserved in hundreds of languages.

Language in India is a many-splendoured thing – there are several classes of Indian languages-- classical, regional, dialect, official, national. Since communication requires adeptness in language—both, national and international, Indian Tourism must pay attention to the socio-cultural-lingual aspect of India. Just as one pays attention to the non- verbal communication that Indians may convey to Tourists, it is important to ensure that the verbal communication of India and its public is impressive and Tourist-friendly.

The language of any country or region is an indicator of the nature and complexity of its culture. The official languages of the country as well as of the states must be communicated to the Tourist in a befitting manner. This means that English and Hindi, and regional languages must be promoted and encouraged. This sounds simple but is a very tricky issue. With the emphasis on science and professional subjects, language studies has been neglected—students and universities, both have let the standard of language slide.

Consequently, English, while preferred by the majority of young Indians, remains a difficult language to master, and native languages suffer due to indifference and the contempt of the familiar. Moreover, these languages do not seem to offer any avenues of advancement, as there are not many profitable careers in regional or rural languages. The Tourism sector can benefit enormously, at the same time it can revive interest in learning languages among the youth. It can, and should work towards raising the standard of language in the Tourism sector.

It can do this in two major ways. First, it must engage persons with good language ability— in English, Hindi along with one or more regional languages. Second, it must invest time and money in Training. Language Training in India is multi faceted—and involves the consideration of two vital issues--Indian Languages and Indian Heritage. The language Users— employees at information desks, reception centers, booking centres should have a high level of communication skills.

The personnel working in the Tourist areas must be well-versed in the historical, geographical. cultural and socio-economic significance of the area they operate from. Tourist Guides are a very visible face of tourism. A great presenter must capture the attention of the audience and connect with them. The audience or tourists should have a positive impact with his/her body language and tone of voice. Visual aid can help to facilitate effective communication and is almost always used in presentations for an audience.

Here, the use of English, Hindi and of the local language is an important factor in making the experience a good means of communication between

India and the Tourist. A widely cited and widely misinterpreted figure used to emphasize the importance of delivery states that "communication comprise 55% body language, 38% tone of voice, 7% content of words", the so-called "7%-38%-55% rule". This is not, however, what the cited research shows – rather, when conveying emotion, if body language, tone of voice, and words disagree, then body language and tone of voice will be believed more than words.

A Guide who does not know the history and significance of the tourist item he is presenting would spoil the pleasure of the experience for the Tourist. If he knows and cannot communicate either due to poor communication skills or incomprehensible accent the whole exercise is rendered futile. Since the Guide represents, both, the tourism sector and the country and society of the visited, the poor performance of the Guide communicates a certain impression detrimental to the image of the country or state.

At this point, an illustration of the use of Urdu in the Tourism of Jammu and Kashmir may add weight to the argument. If the personnel of the Tourist Department have proficiency in English, Hindi, and Dogri, Urdu or Ladakhi, the temples of Jammu, the monuments of the Mughals and the eternal mountains of Ladakh would come alive for any Tourist and remind him forever of the richness, big-heartedness and timelessness of India. On the other hand, ignorant, and bad speakers may create the impression that a once great people have become an apology of a nation.

Recommendations for making tourism more successful:

- Make non-verbal signs of communication strong, correct and positive in their impact. People associated with the tourism industry must understand the vital role of language. Language is one of the most important tools in their work -kit
- The attitude of the industry towards the language-ability of their policy-makers, executives and field-level workers should not be indifferent
- Training in Languages must be stringent
- Special hubs must be created for teaching language skill

Conclusion

Language is a vital indicator of the level of any civilization. The level of the proficiency in language highlights culture of the people. Skill in the local, regional, national and an international language is the Brahmastra that will provide the cutting edge to successful Tourism

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