

Recovery Marketing of Conflict affected J & K, India for boosting Tourism

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Abstract:

Recovery marketing can be defined as the actual or possible regaining, restoration or improvement of something lost or taken away as a result of a significantly negative situation.

The main emphasis of this study is laid on the crisis experienced by destinations like Srinagar, J&K; although these destinations possess tremendous potential in terms of tourism influx activity, but because of their negative image these destinations fail to attract high tourist arrivals.

Against this backdrop, the study proposes to examine the dynamics of such destinations along using case study approach towards the states of India. So this study is having wider scope by evaluating the dimensions of recovery marketing. The nature of this research may be described as “exploratory”, “descriptive” and “analytical”. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the Destination Management Organizations (DMO's) like travel agencies, tour operators, tourism development authorities etc. In total 118 questionnaires were distributed out of which only 108 were filled by the respondents. 6 questionnaires were partially filled and 4 were returned unfilled. Results attained from the analysis explain that Kashmir is facing the problem of brand awareness and brand identity and there is need of training the staff in the hotels and travel agencies. Also the presence of the excessive security at airports and spurt security check ups at the destination creates the negative image about the particular tourist destination. The data analysis explains that if recovery marketing is put into the practice it will definitely lead to recover the image of the destination with a new logo and tagline. On the basis of these conclusions, the scholar framed some recommendations like rebranding Kashmir valley as a safe and secure destination, business expansion through previous data analysis, framing logo for the respective travel agencies, collaborative marketing, concentrating on the domestic tourism etc.

Key Words: Recovery marketing, tourism, DMOs, travel agencies etc.

Introduction:

Recovery marketing can be defined as the actual or possible regaining, restoration, or improvement of something lost or taken away as a result of a significantly negative situation. (Eric C. Schwarz).

In the context of destination service recovery, remuneration may be given to a tourist after a service failure has either been observed by a service provider's employee, or when there exists a propensity to complain by tourists who are not satisfied. The remuneration may be in the form of a cash payment or an in-kind voucher or coupon, valued at some cash equivalent amount (Michel 2002).

Davidow (2002) concluded that additional compensation appears more effective than partial compensation, but up to a limit, and that future research should examine this issue. Garrett (1999) found that greater amounts of compensation did not necessarily significantly increase service recovery outcomes. Drawing on previous research, Garrett (1999) explained that recovery remunerations may be "too fair" or above what is considered to be a fair recovery outcome, causing "distress or guilt because they [customers] believe they are receiving more than they deserve" (Garrett 1999).

Rodolfo Va'zquez-Casiellesa, Vi'ctor Iglesiasb and Concepcio'n Varela-Neira (2010) illustrates that service recovery refers to the actions a company takes in response to a service failure.

Smith et al. (1999) used equity theory to suggest that "over rewarded consumers may be less satisfied than those who receive equitable rewards because they feel distress and guilt about the inequity of the exchange". This suggestion is on point with the effects of positive inequity as discussed by Garrett (1999).

The main emphasis of this study is laid on the crisis experienced by destinations like Srinagar, J&K; although these destinations possess tremendous potential in terms of tourism influx activity, but because of their negative image these destinations fail to attract high tourist arrivals. Against this backdrop, the study proposes to examine the dynamics of such destinations along using case study approach towards the states of India. So this study is having wider scope by evaluating the dimensions of recovery marketing.

Literature Review:

In this study, the chapter of literature review has been classified into two classifications which are contextual review and literatures on recovery marketing. A discussion on these is as follows:

- **Contextual Review:**

This segment of literature review consists of a description of the ways by which tourism gets a set back and then a need for recovery marketing is created.

Tourism is a key component of development in many countries, and despite its notable economic power and apparent resiliency, tourism is highly vulnerable to internal and external shocks as diverse as economic downturns, natural disasters, epidemic diseases and international conflicts. While a natural disaster can impede the flow of tourism, terrorism risk tends to intimidate the travelling public more severely—as demonstrated by the realignment of travel flows and cancellation of vacations during periods of heightened terrorist activity. For example, the recent floods of September, 2014 in the state of Jammu and Kashmir produced a blow in terms of declination in tourist flow. Many reservations/ bookings were cancelled due to this natural calamity.

- **Literatures on Recovery Marketing:**

Recovery from a disaster or negative issue requires planning (Pike, 2016). Because a brand is about creating communication with a consumer, its vision is expected to inspire consistency and trust to consumer (Tasci and Kozak, 2006). When a destination is perceived as “dangerous,” “unsafe” or “boring” marketers have no use for “regular” slogans or visuals which describe its unique characteristics such as sea, sun or cultural events.

Destination recovery is taken to mean the suite of activities associated with restoring a destination to its pre-event level of arrivals and state of vibrancy, which encompasses not only physical rebuilding, but also the restoration of the destination’s image in the minds of consumers (Brigham, 2007). As destinations have (re)emerged and evolved as new geographies, new societies, new economies and centres of new opportunity the ability for the world to understand and embrace their new ethos has had much to do with the way in which the nation has expressed itself to internal and external audiences from a communications perspective (Mendiratta, 2009).

Recognizing that promotion alone is insufficient, others recommend maintaining good contacts with members of the international media; providing comprehensive information to international tour operators, travel agents, and the press (to evaluate travel risks in their proper context); and wisely guiding tourists away from high-risk areas (Wahab, 1996).

The strategic approach, by contrast, is to take comprehensive action, basing the new campaign on substantial changes in the destination's reality, among other factors

Research Methodology:

The nature of this research may be described as “exploratory”, “descriptive” and “analytical”.

It is exploratory because it does not have its roots in any prior research. It is a first of its kind. The main purpose of this research was to describe the whole problem in terms of concepts, variables, dimensions, constructs, sub-constructs and relationship between the variables and that made it a descriptive research.

This is a specific type of research that involves critical and significant thinking skills and evaluation of the facts and information related to the research being conducted and is explained with the help of statistical tools like SPSS, AMOS and techniques regression, factor analysis etc. in order to support the findings with the numeric. Thus, it can also be termed as an analytical research.

A brief discussion on the other aspects of research methodology adopted in this research is as follows:

- **Data Collection:**

Data was collected from both primary as well as secondary sources as per the need of the study. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the Destination Management Organizations (DMO's) like travel agencies, tour operators, tourism development authorities etc. In total 118 questionnaires were distributed out of which only 108 were filled by the respondents. 6 questionnaires were partially filled and 4 were returned unfilled.

- **Research Instrument:**

A self-structured questionnaire was prepared and the data was collected from the respondents through it.

- **Research Techniques and Tools:**

The collected data is analysed by the use of certain appropriate statistical tools like SPSS, AMOS and MS-Excel and techniques like Descriptive Analysis, Factor Analysis, and Regression Analysis.

- **Secondary Data:**

The secondary data was collected from various international as well as national journals and also obtained by reviewing the articles published in journals of national and international repute, on the internet and various business magazines and also the information is collected from the state and national bodies who are involved in framing policies regarding branding and imaging in tourism and hospitality industry.

- **Sampling:**

The sampling frame work was as follows:

- **Sample Element:** Both the Genders.
- **Sample Unit:** Registered Destination Management Organizations in Kashmir division, especially in Srinagar Capital City.
- **Sampling Extent:** Srinagar (Capital City), Jammu and Kashmir

The sample size statistically determined on the basis of pilot study was as follows:

Destination	Population	Sample Size
Kashmir		
DMO (Registered Prominent Travel Agency)	150	108
Development Authorities	10	10
Total	160	118

Analysis & Interpretation:

For testing the hypothesis the regression analysis was adopted and applied in this study which reveals as under, the regression analysis is run to assess the relationship of recovery marketing & destination image taking former as independent variable and later as dependent variable. The regression results revealed in Table 1 & 2 suggest that recovery marketing has a significant impact on destination image. The results indicate that for one unit increase in recovery marketing which is an independent variable, the destination image accelerates by 0.794 units ($R^2 = 0.794$) and are statistically significant as depicted by β and t - values. The result suggests a positive impact of recovery marketing on destination image. Therefore, it can be concluded from the regression results that recovery marketing is positively associated with Destination image.

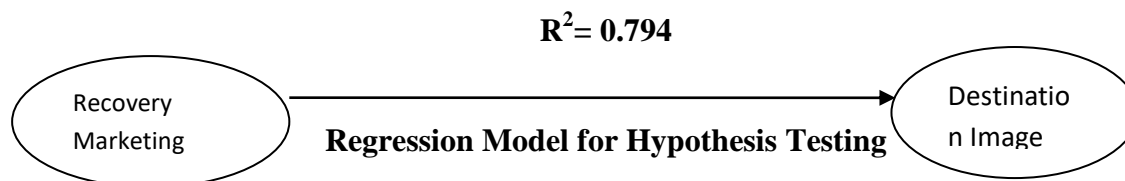
Table 1 - Regression Model for the relationship between Recovery Marketing & Destination Image

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.891*	0.794	0.793	0.62259

* Predictors: (Constant), Recovery Marketing

Table 2 - Regression Coefficients for Recovery Marketing & Destination Image

Variable	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Recovery Marketing	0.891	35.504	.000



Findings & Conclusions:

Jammu & Kashmir (as chosen in this study) is facing problems of political instability and insurgency from the last three decades. Before that Kashmir under the brand name "paradise on the earth" was receiving a huge influx of tourist till 1989. When the armed insurgency broke out here from 1989 there was a huge decline in terms of tourist arrivals.

The present study has the intention to give birth to strategies in order to rebrand Kashmir, for which the results attained from the analysis explain that Kashmir is facing the problem of brand awareness and brand identity and there is need of training the staff in the hotels and travel agencies. Also the presence of the excessive security at airports and spurt security check ups at a destination creates the negative image about the particular tourist destination. The data analysis explains that if recovery marketing is put into the practice it will definitely lead to recover the image of the destination with a new logo and tagline.

As per the literature available and data analysis, we come to know that recovery marketing is composed of five components which are brand identity, brand awareness, HR involvement services and facilities and advertisement. These components play a paramount role in rebranding the destination.

Service providers need to make sure they always include the explanations, efforts, empathy and politeness during the interactions with their customers so that the customer will feel that they are being appreciated. That will help them to develop a bond with this place.

The study also revealed that branding, as a merchandising shortcut to induce purchasing decisions, is necessary to identify and distinguish tourism destinations and to attract larger numbers of visitors. The results declared that the destinations has to re-brand themselves on the basis of the peculiarities of their market environments, rather than on their own specific characteristics e.g, in Kashmir Valley the word "trust" among the tourists about the safety and security should be of prime importance. Kashmir as a tourist destination possesses a tremendous potential in terms of service, facilities and tourism products. Kashmir can cater to the needs of every kind of tourist ranging from pilgrimage tourism, sports tourism, eco-tourism, adventure tourism and so on.

Recommendations:

Kashmir Valley which is plunged into a conflict since 1989 can adopt many recovery marketing practices such as-

- **Rebranding Kashmir valley as a safe and secure destination:** Enhancement of safety through involvement of local community, which will lead to development of a confidence and trust in the minds of tourists.
- **Business expansion through previous data analysis:** Historical data available with DMOs can help in rebranding the destination by inviting tourists for recapitulating their memories.
- **Framing logo for the respective travel agencies and destinations play a paramount role in brand awareness and brand identity:** Classifying the sub-destinations as per their tourism activities. It will help to grab the attention of the Special Interest Tourists, and will lead to re-brand as a destination from its sub destination and can help DMO's to sell Kashmir as a new brand like "*Kashmir: a destination where something is for all.*"
- **Collaborative marketing can help Kashmir in re-branding,** as collaborating with the media has a great impact on creating a destination brand with a new logo and tagline.
- **DMO's in the valley should invite world renowned travellers and writers** for rebranding it as a safe destination and promote it in their journals and magazines.
- **Concentrating on the domestic tourism** rather than international tourism, as if the domestic tourist get satisfaction they will spread a positive word of mouth.
- **Kashmir is the destination which almighty has bestowed a tremendous potential in terms of pilgrimage tourism,** as all the pilgrims of different religions get salvation here. In short the Kashmir can be rebranded as a destination of Pilgrimage for all the religions.
- **Kashmir has a potential to be the best world's best Golf Tourism Destination,** due to its serene environment and world renowned hospitality.

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