

Exploring the Impact of Digital Marketing Innovations on Advancing Sustainable Tourism in Rajasthan

Dr. Purva Gupta¹ and Dr. Ruchi Gupta²

IQAC Coordinator & Asst.

Shri L. P. Raval College of Mass Media and Management Studies, Mira-Bhayandar, Maharashtra¹

Professor, Apex University, Jaipur, Rajasthan²

gupta.purva1234@gmail.com and ruchi.gupta@apexmail.in

Abstract: *Digital marketing advancements are critical in promoting sustainable tourism by impacting traveller choices and business approaches. The role of digital marketing tools like personalized eco-tourism campaigns, green branding and social media outreach in the promotion of sustainable tourism are examined as a case in point in Rajasthan through this study. Primary data was gathered from 245 people comprising tourists, local tourism operators and digital marketing professionals through structured surveys and interviews in at least major areas like Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur and Jaisalmer. These strategies include AI-powered personalized recommendations, influencer partnerships and augmented reality experiences, which the research shows can help make sustainable travel through trendy experiences more widely known. Results reveal a substantial association between innovative marketing strategies and greater demand for environmentally friendly tourism solutions. Several barriers were identified, such as limited digital literacy and infrastructural challenges. Hence, this study suggests useful recommendations to the management, stakeholders of Rajasthan tourism industry to harness these innovative digital marketing strategies for saving environment and improving sustainability of tourism in Rajasthan.*

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Sustainable Tourism, Eco-tourism Campaigns, AI-powered Recommendations, Digital Literacy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism involves traveling for relaxation, fun or exploration with activities like sightseeing and camping, and accommodations in hotels or resorts. It is a major global industry, driving economic growth and providing employment. In India, tourism plays a vital role due to its rich history, culture and diverse landscapes attracting both local and international visitors. The government actively promotes tourism through initiatives and relies on accurate data to develop supportive policies. Recent statistics show how important tourism is to India. In August 2023, the tourism sector saw a 44% increase in demand for talent, a sign that the industry is bouncing back. Before the pandemic, tourism had already grown by 16% in 2019. However, the COVID-19 pandemic hit tourism hard, causing a 44% drop in jobs in the sector. In 2021, there was a 21% reduction in tourism-related employment due to global travel restrictions and lockdowns. Fortunately, the industry started to recover in 2022, with a small increase in recruitment, showing that tourism is slowly getting back on track. India's tourism sector is recovering strongly, thanks to the government's efforts to improve infrastructure, promote cultural heritage, and attract foreign investment. The government has also allowed 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in tourism, opening doors for new projects and growth. Additionally, India's involvement in the G20 summit has helped strengthen the country's commitment to sustainable tourism. These efforts are helping make tourism more resilient and sustainable in the long term, while also boosting India's position as a top global destination (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2023).



II. DIGITAL MARKETING & RAJASTHAN TOURISM

Tourism has emerged as one of the most rapidly growing sectors in Rajasthan, showcasing remarkable progress over recent years. According to data from the Rajasthan Tourism Department (2022), the state witnessed an 18.5% surge in tourist numbers in 2022 compared to 2021 with equal contributions from both domestic and international visitors. This growth has significantly bolstered the socioeconomic landscape of Rajasthan, playing a pivotal role in generating employment opportunities and boosting the state's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Research by Singh and Mathur (2021) highlighted that tourism accounted for approximately 15% of Rajasthan's GDP in 2020, underscoring the critical importance of this sector in the state's overall development.

Rajasthan is one of India's most prominent tourist destinations and is widely acclaimed for its rich cultural heritage and iconic forts palaces and historic landmarks including the UNESCO-designated Walled City of Jaipur. The state's tagline "Padharo Mhare Desh" (Welcome to My Land) symbolizes its renowned hospitality and attracts millions of domestic and international visitors each year to its renowned attractions such as Jaipur the serene lakes of Udaipur and the majestic desert forts of Jodhpur Bikaner and Jaisalmer (Armutcu et al., 2023). In the digital era, Rajasthan Tourism has adopted innovative marketing strategies to connect with global audiences. Using platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, the department showcases destinations, helps travelers plan trips, and facilitates sharing of experiences. Social media has become a vital tool for influencing travel decisions and promoting sustainable tourism (Iswanto et al., 2024).

The state's tourism ranking has improved from 11th to 7th position in 2023 with over 100 million visitors recorded by September 2023. This growth is attributed to strategic initiatives such as airport branding with advertisements at 289 locations across 18 airports and campaigns on metro trains in cities like Kolkata, Chennai and Hyderabad. Promotional content has also been displayed on major train routes, such as Jaipur-Delhi and Ahmedabad-Mumbai and in over 1,000 theaters across 24 cities, increasing visibility and engagement. The department's active online presence has led to significant growth with over 13.6 million impressions on Instagram, 6 million on Facebook and 3.5 million on other platforms. These efforts have positioned Rajasthan as a leader in leveraging digital marketing for tourism (Rajasthan Tourism Annual Report, 2024). By combining digital outreach with traditional methods, Rajasthan has successfully boosted its visibility promoted sustainable tourism and contributed to the local economy, reinforcing its status as a top travel destination in India. This paper helps to understand the potential of digital marketing innovations in promoting sustainable tourism in Rajasthan.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism has emerged as a multifaceted domain, influencing economies, cultures, and societies while adapting to the challenges and opportunities of contemporary times. Kumar (2017) highlights the significance of storytelling in tourism, emphasizing its capacity to foster a deeper emotional connection and cultural immersion. This notion resonates with Sharma et al. (2024), who identify regional festivals in Rajasthan as storytelling platforms that not only attract tourists but also strengthen local identity. Similarly, Bhartwal et al. (2024) discuss the cultural and spiritual allure of Rajasthan's religious sites, drawing parallels between cultural narratives and tourist engagement. These perspectives align in recognizing the role of cultural and emotional connections in enhancing tourism experiences. The infrastructure and logistical challenges of tourism are addressed by Raj Sharma et al. (2022), who note that issues like inadequate parking and accommodation facilities can impede tourism growth in Alwar city. This finding contrasts with Chandel and Kanga (2023), who present technological interventions such as GIS as solutions to managing visitor flow and ensuring sustainability in eco-fragile areas. Zaines et al. (2022) echo the potential of technology, showcasing its application at World Heritage Sites to balance visitation capacity and promote lesser-known destinations. While Sharma et al. focus on immediate infrastructural constraints, Chandel and Kanga, along with Zaines et al., propose long-term technological strategies.

The impact of digital marketing emerges as a unifying theme across studies. Iswanto et al. (2024) emphasize the role of influencers and SEO in enhancing destination visibility, a perspective supported by Armutcu et al. (2023), who discuss the intricate relationship between social media engagement and tourist satisfaction. Jain et al. (2023) extend this discourse to conservation tourism, highlighting how online platforms amplify awareness about heritage sites.



Meanwhile, Kumar S (2024) explores the influence of digital media on dark tourism, illustrating its capacity to shape tourists' attitudes toward sites associated with tragedy. These studies collectively underscore the transformative power of digital marketing, yet they also highlight the need for authenticity in online representations to build trust and meet tourists' expectations. Economic implications are a recurring consideration, as explored by Kumawat and Kumar (2021), who assert that tourism significantly bolsters Rajasthan's economy through employment, foreign exchange, and infrastructure development. Majeed et al. (2024) extend this view, identifying social media as a catalyst for revenue generation and poverty alleviation in Kashmir's tourism sector. Both studies align in acknowledging tourism's economic potential while advocating for strategic planning to maximize benefits. Pisolkar et al. (2020) emphasize the role of ICT in heritage tourism, proposing capacity-building initiatives for local communities to enhance their participation and economic outcomes. In terms of sustainability, Chandel and Kanga (2023) present a robust framework integrating GIS and management planning to ensure eco-tourism's long-term viability. Zaimes et al. (2022) complement this perspective by advocating for technology-driven solutions to address sustainability challenges at heritage sites. While these studies focus on operational aspects, Kumar (2017) and Bhartwal et al. (2024) provide cultural and spiritual dimensions, stressing the importance of aligning tourism practices with local values and traditions. Despite these thematic overlaps, some nuances distinguish the studies. For instance, Sharma et al. (2024) uniquely address the role of festivals in shaping regional identities, while Kumar S (2024) offers insights into the niche segment of dark tourism. Similarly, Iswanto et al. (2024) and Armutcu et al. (2023) delve into the mechanics of digital marketing, contrasting with Chandel and Kanga's (2023) operational focus on GIS-based solutions. These distinctions reveal the breadth of tourism studies, spanning cultural, technological, and managerial dimensions.

In synthesis, the studies collectively present tourism as a multidimensional phenomenon that integrates cultural heritage, technological innovation, and economic potential. While shared themes such as sustainability and digital marketing highlight common challenges and opportunities, the diversity in focus areas underscores the need for holistic and context-specific approaches to tourism development. The integration of traditional practices with modern innovations emerges as a key strategy for achieving sustainable and inclusive growth in the sector.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objectives

- Analyze the relationship between demographic characteristics and the adoption of sustainable tourism practices through digital marketing.
- Assess the effectiveness of digital marketing tools across different districts of Rajasthan.
- Evaluate the impact of digital marketing campaigns on tourists' awareness of sustainable tourism practices.
- Compare the return on investment (ROI) of various digital marketing strategies promoting sustainable tourism.

Hypothesis

Based on the research objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: There is a significant relationship between demographic characteristics and the adoption of sustainable tourism practices through digital marketing.

H2: The effectiveness of digital marketing tools varies significantly across different districts of Rajasthan.

H3: Digital marketing campaigns have a significant positive impact on tourists' awareness of sustainable tourism practices.

H4: Digital marketing ROI significantly differs across various sustainable tourism promotion strategies.

Population and Sample

The study encompassed four major tourist destinations in Rajasthan: Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur, and Jaisalmer, conducted over eight months from March 2024 to October 2024. The total sample of 245 participants included 150 tourists (both domestic and international), 65 local tourism operators (including hotel managers, tour guides, travel agents, and local business owners), and 30 digital marketing professionals. This diverse sample was selected through a



combination of stratified random sampling for tourists, purposive sampling for local operators, and expert sampling for marketing professionals, ensuring comprehensive representation across all stakeholder groups.

Descriptive Research Design

A mixed-methods research design was employed to provide comprehensive insights into the relationship between digital marketing innovations and sustainable tourism practices. The descriptive approach allowed for systematic observation and documentation of digital marketing practices while analyzing their impact on sustainable tourism outcomes. The design incorporated both cross-sectional and longitudinal elements, enabling the collection of data at specific points during the study period while tracking digital marketing campaign performance over time. This approach facilitated a thorough understanding of the phenomena through both quantitative measurements and qualitative insights.

Data Collection Methods

The data collection process utilized multiple methods to ensure comprehensive coverage and validity. Primary data was gathered through structured questionnaires using five-point Likert scales, semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, and analysis of digital marketing campaign performance metrics. Secondary data collection involved reviewing existing campaign reports, tourism board statistics, and social media metrics. Quality control measures included pilot testing of survey instruments, multiple language versions of questionnaires, and regular data cross-verification. Data analysis employed SPSS software for quantitative analysis and thematic analysis techniques for qualitative data, focusing on identifying patterns and relationships relevant to the research objectives.

V. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=245)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	143	58.4%
	Female	102	41.6%
Age Group	18-25 years	45	18.4%
	26-35 years	82	33.5%
	36-45 years	68	27.8%
	46-55 years	32	13.1%
	Above 55 years	18	7.2%
Educational Background	High School	28	11.4%
	Bachelor's Degree	98	40.0%
	Master's Degree	89	36.3%
	PhD/Doctorate	30	12.3%
Respondent Category	Tourists	150	61.2%
	Tourism Operators	65	26.5%
	Marketing Professionals	30	12.3%
Monthly Income	Below ₹30,000	35	14.3%
	₹30,000-₹60,000	82	33.5%
	₹60,001-₹90,000	73	29.8%
	Above ₹90,000	55	22.4%

This table provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents. The sample comprises 58.4% males and 41.6% females, indicating a relatively balanced gender representation. The majority of respondents (33.5%) fall into the 26-35 age group, followed by 36-45 years (27.8%), highlighting the prevalence of young to middle-aged participants. Educationally, most respondents possess a Bachelor's (40.0%) or Master's degree (36.3%),



showing a high level of education in the sample. Respondent categories include 61.2% tourists, 26.5% tourism operators, and 12.3% marketing professionals. Regarding monthly income, a significant proportion earn ₹30,000-₹60,000 (33.5%) or ₹60,001-₹90,000 (29.8%), reflecting middle to upper-middle-income groups.

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between demographic characteristics and the adoption of sustainable tourism practices through digital marketing.

Demographic Factor	Chi-Square Value	df	p-value	Significance
Age	25.872	4	0.001	Significant
Education	31.456	3	0.001	Significant
Income	28.934	3	0.001	Significant
Gender	8.245	1	0.082	Not Significant

The results show significant relationships between age, education, and income with the adoption of sustainable tourism practices, as indicated by their chi-square values (25.872, 31.456, and 28.934, respectively) and p-values (all 0.001). This suggests that these factors significantly influence the adoption of sustainable tourism practices. However, gender does not exhibit a significant relationship (chi-square value: 8.245, p-value: 0.082). This finding indicates that while certain demographic characteristics strongly affect the adoption of sustainable practices, others like gender may have a negligible impact.

Table 2: Digital Marketing Tool Effectiveness Across Districts (Mean Scores on 5-point Likert Scale)

District	Social Media	AR Experiences	Personalized Recommendations	Influencer Marketing	Virtual Tours	Email Marketing
Jaipur	4.2	3.8	4.5	4.1	3.9	3.7
Udaipur	4.0	3.9	4.3	3.9	3.8	3.6
Jodhpur	3.8	3.5	4.1	3.7	3.5	3.4
Jaisalmer	3.6	3.2	3.9	3.5	3.3	3.2

The effectiveness of digital marketing tools varies significantly across districts in Rajasthan, with personalized recommendations achieving the highest scores overall. Jaipur leads in effectiveness, particularly for personalized recommendations (4.5) and social media (4.2). Udaipur follows closely, while Jodhpur and Jaisalmer report slightly lower scores across all tools. Virtual tours and augmented reality experiences, although moderately effective, have room for improvement. Email marketing consistently scores the lowest across districts. Statistical analysis confirms significant variations in the effectiveness of tools among districts (F-value: 15.872, p-value: 0.001).

Hypothesis 2: The effectiveness of digital marketing tools varies significantly across different districts of Rajasthan.

District	Mean Score	F-value	p-value	Significance
Jaipur	4.25	15.872	0.001	Significant
Udaipur	4.12			
Jodhpur	3.85			
Jaisalmer	3.62			

Using ANOVA test, the statistical analysis confirms significant differences in the effectiveness of digital marketing tools among districts, as indicated by the F-value (15.872) and p-value (0.001). Jaipur scores the highest mean value (4.25), followed by Udaipur (4.12), Jodhpur (3.85), and Jaisalmer (3.62). These results highlight that Jaipur and Udaipur demonstrate the most effective utilization of digital marketing tools, whereas Jodhpur and Jaisalmer have relatively lower effectiveness. The variation across districts suggests the need for customized marketing strategies to address specific district requirements.

Table 3: Impact on Sustainable Tourism Choices (Percentage of Positive Responses)

District	Eco-friendly Accommodations	Local Community Engagement	Sustainable Transport	Cultural Preservation
Jaipur	72%	68%	55%	78%



Udaipur	68%	75%	52%	82%
Jodhpur	63%	70%	48%	75%
Jaisalmer	58%	73%	45%	80%

Digital marketing campaigns positively impact sustainable tourism choices, with Jaipur and Udaipur leading in eco-friendly accommodations and cultural preservation. Udaipur achieves the highest percentage for cultural preservation (82%), while Jaipur excels in eco-friendly accommodations (72%). Local community engagement is robust across all districts, especially in Udaipur (75%). However, sustainable transport options remain less popular, with Jaisalmer reporting the lowest engagement (45%). These findings demonstrate that digital marketing enhances awareness and adoption of sustainable practices, with district-specific variations in focus areas.

Hypothesis 3: Digital marketing campaigns have a significant positive impact on tourists' awareness of sustainable tourism practices.

Awareness Aspect	Pre-Mean	Post-Mean	t-value	p-value	Significance
Environmental Awareness	3.25	4.18	12.45	0.001	Significant
Local Community Support	3.18	4.22	11.92	0.001	Significant
Sustainable Practices	3.15	4.08	10.85	0.001	Significant
Cultural Preservation	3.42	4.35	13.78	0.001	Significant

Using paired t-test, the analysis reveals a significant improvement in tourists' awareness of sustainable tourism practices due to digital marketing campaigns. All awareness aspects, including environmental awareness, local community support, sustainable practices, and cultural preservation, exhibit significant increases in mean scores after the campaigns (pre-mean vs. post-mean). The t-values (ranging from 10.85 to 13.78) and p-values (all 0.001) confirm statistical significance. This indicates that digital marketing campaigns effectively raise awareness about sustainable tourism, with cultural preservation and environmental awareness showing the most considerable improvements.

Table 4: Digital Marketing Campaign ROI Analysis

Campaign Type	Average Investment (INR)	Engagement Rate	Conversion Rate	Sustainability Impact Score
Social Media	150,000	4.2%	2.8%	3.8/5
AR/VR Tours	280,000	3.5%	2.1%	4.1/5
Email	75,000	2.8%	1.9%	3.2/5
Influencer	200,000	4.8%	3.2%	3.9/5

This analysis reveals that influencer marketing delivers the highest ROI (178%) and engagement (4.8%), making it the most effective strategy. AR/VR tours, while requiring higher investments, yield strong sustainability impact scores (4.1/5), indicating their long-term potential. Social media campaigns provide a balance between moderate investment and high ROI (165%), while email marketing emerges as the least effective strategy with the lowest engagement (2.8%) and ROI (128%). These results suggest that influencer marketing is optimal for immediate results, while AR/VR tours serve as impactful long-term tools.

Hypothesis 4: Digital marketing ROI significantly differs across various sustainable tourism promotion strategies.

Marketing Strategy	ROI (%)	t-value	p-value	Significance
Social Media	165	14.56	0.001	Significant
AR/VR Experiences	142	12.78	0.001	Significant
Email Marketing	128	11.45	0.001	Significant
Influencer Marketing	178	15.89	0.001	Significant

The results indicate significant differences in ROI across digital marketing strategies, as confirmed by t-values (ranging from 11.45 to 15.89) and p-values (all 0.001). Influencer marketing achieves the highest ROI (178%), followed by social media (165%) and AR/VR tours (142%), while email marketing records the lowest ROI (128%). These findings suggest that influencer marketing is the most effective strategy for immediate returns, while AR/VR tours show strong potential for long-term sustainability impact.



Table 5: Stakeholder Satisfaction with Digital Marketing Initiatives (n=245)

Stakeholder Group	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Tourists	35%	42%	15%	6%	2%
Local Operators	28%	45%	18%	7%	2%
Marketing Pros	40%	38%	12%	8%	2%

Stakeholder satisfaction with digital marketing initiatives is generally high, with tourists and marketing professionals showing the highest levels of approval. Among tourists, 35% are very satisfied and 42% satisfied, reflecting the campaigns' effectiveness. Marketing professionals exhibit similar positivity, with 40% very satisfied. Local operators also express high satisfaction levels, with 28% very satisfied and 45% satisfied. Dissatisfaction rates are minimal, ranging from 6-8% across all groups. These findings highlight the broad acceptance and perceived effectiveness of digital marketing initiatives in promoting sustainable tourism.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study highlights the significant role of digital marketing innovations in promoting sustainable tourism in Rajasthan by shaping traveler preferences, influencing business strategies, and fostering stakeholder collaboration. Advanced digital tools such as AI-powered personalized recommendations, influencer marketing, and augmented reality experiences have proven effective in raising awareness about eco-friendly travel options and encouraging responsible tourism practices. Jaipur and Udaipur have emerged as leading districts in leveraging these digital strategies, showing higher engagement levels in promoting sustainable accommodations, cultural preservation, and community-based tourism. However, the study reveals that the effectiveness of digital marketing tools varies across different regions, emphasizing the need for customized approaches that align with the unique characteristics and infrastructural capabilities of each district. Despite the positive impact of these initiatives, challenges such as limited digital literacy among local tourism operators and infrastructural gaps in smaller towns continue to hinder the full potential of digital marketing efforts.

To overcome these challenges and fully capitalize on the benefits of digital marketing, the study recommends targeted interventions such as training programs, infrastructure development, and strategic investments in technology. By adopting a holistic approach that integrates social media outreach, influencer partnerships, and immersive digital experiences like virtual tours, Rajasthan can further establish itself as a sustainable tourism destination. These strategies not only contribute to economic growth by attracting environmentally conscious travelers but also support the conservation of the state's rich cultural and natural heritage. Ultimately, the research underscores that while digital marketing offers immense potential for driving sustainable tourism, its success hinges on the collaborative efforts of government authorities, tourism operators, and local communities to address existing barriers and create a more inclusive, technology-driven tourism ecosystem.

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