FORMS OF TOURISM PRODUCT

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A tourism product can be defined as the sum of the physical and psychological satisfaction it provides to tourists during their travelling en route to the destination. The tourist product focuses on facilities and services designed to meet the needs of the tourist. It can be seen as a composite product, as the sum total of a country’s tourist attractions, transport, and accommodation and of entertainment which result in customer satisfaction. Each of the components of a tourist product is supplied by individual providers of services like hotel companies, airlines, travel agencies.

The product for the tourist covers the complete experience from the time he leaves home to the time he returns. The tourist product today is developed to meet the needs of the consumer and techniques like direct sales, publicity and advertising are employed to bring this product to the consumer. The tourist product is the basic raw material, be it the country’s natural beauty, climate, history, culture and the people, or other facilities necessary for comfortable living such as water supply, electricity, roads, transport, communication and other essentials. The tourist product can be entirely a man-made one or nature’s creation improved upon by man. A consumer can combine individual products in a large number of ways. There would be many possible destinations, each with a number of hotels, each to be reached by more than one airline. Thus, the potential choice facing the consumer is very large. The large number of tourist destinations has placed at the disposal of a tourist a very large variety of tourist products in abundant quantity from a large number of competing destinations.

Tourism products can be classified as under for a better understanding of each of their peculiar characteristics, so that they can be marketed and positioned appropriately:

Natural tourism products. These include natural resources such as areas, climate and its setting, landscape and natural environment. Natural resources are frequently the key elements in a destination’s attraction: 1) countryside, 2) climate – temperature, rains, snowfall, days of sunshine, 3) natural beauty – landforms, hills, rocks, gorges, terrain, 4) water – lakes, ponds, rivers, waterfalls, springs, 5) flora and fauna, 6) wildlife, 7) beaches, 8) islands, 9) spas, 10) scenic attractions.

Man-made tourism products are created by man for pleasure, leisure or business. Man-made tourism products include: a) Culture (sites and areas of archaeological interest, historical buildings and monuments, places of historical significance, museums and art galleries, political and educational institutions, religious institutions); b) Traditions (pilgrimages, fairs and festivals, arts and handicrafts, dance, music, folklore, native life and customs); c) Entertainment (amusement and recreation parks, sporting events, zoos, cinemas and theatres, night life, cuisine); d) Business
Symbiotic tourism products. Some tourism products do not fall into the above categories. Wildlife sanctuary, marine parks, aero products and water sports, flower festivals are the example of tourism products which are a blending of nature and man. Nature has provided the resource and man has converted them into a tourism product by managing them. National parks for example, are left in their natural state of beauty as far as possible, but still need to be managed, through provision of access, parking facilities, limited accommodation, litter bins etc. Yet the core attraction is still nature in this category of product. These products are symbiosis of nature and man.

Event based tourism products. Events attract tourists as spectators and also as participants in the events, sometimes for both. The Oktoberfest organized in Germany, Dubai and Singapore shopping festivals, the camel polo at Jaywalker, Kite flying in Ahmadabad attracts tourists, both as spectators and participants. Event attractions are temporary, and are often mounted in order to increase the number of tourists to a particular destination.

Site based tourism products. When an attraction is a place or site then it is called a site based tourist product. Site attractions are permanent by nature, for example Taj Mahal, the Great Wall of China, the Grand Canyon in Arizona, Eiffel Tower, Statue of Liberty, etc. A site destination can extend its season by mounting an off season event or festival. A large number of tourists are attracted every year by the great drawing power of Stratford on Avon in England because of its association with Shakespeare, the city of Agra in India with its famous Taj Mahal, Pisa in Italy for its famous Leaning Tower. Some new features have been added to the same product to keep the tourist interest alive in the products. For example, now visitors can see Taj by night, music shows have been organized with Taj as the backdrop so that there are repeat tourists.

Other tourism products are: health tourism, eco-tourism, rural tourism, ethnic tourism, spiritual tourism, golf tourism, senior citizen tourism.

The tourism product has to be packaged and priced keeping in mind the target customer. Without any doubt, tourism is the main sector that can play a significant part in achieving rapid economic growth and drastically reducing unemployment in any country. Currently, it is the largest foreign exchange earner for the country. The development of the tourism industry on a priority basis is the need of the hour.

References

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