

Digital Marketing: Strategies, Trends, Implementation, and Practices. A Case of Uttarakhand Star Category Hotels

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Abstract

Digital marketing is the new mantra for marketing hotel products. Digital marketing strategies have played a major role in the overall growth and development of the star-category hotels of Uttarakhand. Star Category hotels in Uttarakhand have experienced enhanced customer interaction, a faster medium to reach the global market and its impact on the hotel's overall revenue. The state of Uttarakhand in northern India is one of the most beautiful states with many tourism products, for instance, mountains, wildlife, pilgrims, monuments, hill resorts, rural tourism, and many more. Uttarakhand relies heavily on the tourism and hospitality sector as it contributes around 3 % to its overall GDP and around 10 % to its state employment. However, the adoption of new marketing tools i.e. Digital marketing appears to be relatively low in the case of major hotels due to unfamiliarity with digital tools, investment costs and hotels still relying on traditional marketing techniques. A considerable number of research and project work have been carried out on digital marketing and hotel performance but very limited work has been carried out for star category hotels of Uttarakhand. The current study aims to analyze how digital marketing impacts the overall growth and development of Uttarakhand hotels. The study has also attempted to examine the shift from traditional marketing to digital marketing and the use of various digital marketing strategies in the star-category hotels of Uttarakhand. The present study is exploratory and endorses the qualitative approach of primary research methodology and used the case study method by taking major star hotel chains of Uttarakhand. This paper concludes by discussing and highlighting the benefits of digital marketing over traditional marketing techniques and how major chains like Taj, Marriott, and Hyaat are using digital marketing strategies to target domestic and international tourists.

Keywords: *Digital Marketing, Uttarakhand, Traditional Marketing, Strategies*

Introduction:-

The new technologies in the tourism and hospitality sector have been developing exceptionally at a rapid pace from the beginning of the 21st century bringing changes and influencing every industry and sector globally. In the year 2020, approximately 4.8 billion people were recorded as web surfers and the highest number of web surfers were recorded from India and China which offered a big opportunity for the major hotel brands to indulge themselves in the digital marketing space (Kapoor & Kapoor, 2021). Even According to Mary Meeker's 2019 Internet Trends Report, India also ranks second as it has over 12% of the world's 3.8 billion internet users and is a little behind from the top ranked China.

According to IBEF (2019) Report, the Indian Tourism and Hospitality industry must be considered one of the most digitally advanced sectors when it comes to using digital platforms for all travel-related activities, i.e. planning the travel, booking, availing the local transport facilities and experiencing the local hospitality. Hence Digital marketing must be defined as the process of interacting with current and future customers using the internet or other digital or electronic mediums like social media, and mobile phone networks to market the product and services. Buhalis (2020) also highlighted the significance of Digital technologies for marketing hotel products and services and how the shift from traditional marketing to contemporary is impacting the overall operation and the future strategies of the global hotel chain.

The last decade has also witnessed a major shift in the various marketing strategies used by the leading hotel chains, especially in the Indian hospitality context. The substantial growth and development of digital marketing tools, and digital platforms have proved to be a major setback for traditional marketing techniques. Digital marketing has enabled hotel chains to reach a wide range of domestic and international tourists and showcase their extensive range of products and services. There has also been a significant rise in overall internet users which has increased to 62% as compared to 16 %

in the last decade which also includes social media usage and promotions (Desai, 2019). In the hospitality sector, we often use ‘Customer is the King’, but we should accept the fact that in the earlier days, customers had very limited choices and hotel options, and even the booking and traditional marketing process were also very time-consuming. Newspaper, Magazines, TV, Radio, Print Ads, Billboards, & hotel Brochures were the only popular mediums to reach the target customers which was also supposed to be a very expensive way of marketing (Gupta, 2019).

In the last decade hospitality industry especially in Uttarakhand has witnessed significant growth and advancements in the field of digital space. Uttarakhand tourism is one of the fastest growing tourism destinations in India which has also recognized the importance of digital marketing. The shift from traditional marketing to digital marketing is evident from the marketing strategies used by major hotel chains i.e. Taj, ITC, Jaypee, Hyatt, Marriott, and even Lemon Tree. Furthermore there is also a major shift has been observed in the customer’s preferences, the customers have become more aware of the product and services even their expectations and price sensitivity have also increased. Digital marketing in the late 2000 and the early of 2012 in Uttarakhand became more sophisticated when there was a sudden increase in the number of internet users and customers who were connected to the digital media platforms.

Hotels in Uttarakhand have now started using centralized digital marketing platforms and few are using unit-based systems as well which has positively impacted their overall revenue generation and future strategies. Some of the major digital platforms which are used by the Uttarakhand hotels are Social media marketing, Mobile applications, search engines, websites, Google ads, YouTube, Hotel online videos, and even online magazines. Digital marketing has helped the hotel companies in Uttarakhand to segment the customer base, launch multichannel marketing campaigns, and even provide and interact with the customers to provide personalized information related to the products and services. Some of the major Digital marketing methods are used such as Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Content Marketing, Market Influencer, Content automation, marketing campaign, e-commerce marketing, social media marketing, e-mail direct marketing, and even display advertising are becoming more common with the advancement of technology. Kaur (2017) argued about the star hotel chains of Uttarakhand where an exceptional development from traditional to digital marketing and a smooth amalgamation of new marketing techniques can be observed especially for the hotel chains like Taj, Hyaat, JP, Marriott, ITC, and Lemon tree.

Even (Prajapati, 2020) highlighted that the whole marketing system in the case of star hotels of Uttarakhand has been changed with the large amount of data sets being generated through various channels like social media, survey polls, sales data, demand trends, feedback and customer feedback. To gain a competitive advantage over competitors the hotel companies of Uttarakhand needs to show their existence on social media and needs to persistently upgrade digitally to capture domestic and international market. Many authors and scholars have worked in the Digital marketing area even a considerable number of research work has been done within the context of the hotel industry, but for star hotels in Uttarakhand, very little or no work has been done previously.

The current research has focused on bridging that gap and attempted to analyze how digital marketing is impacting the overall growth and development of Uttarakhand hotels and how the shift from traditional to contemporary is shaping the tourism and hospitality sector of Uttarakhand.

2) Literature Review:-

2.1) Tourism & Hospitality Industry in Uttarakhand:-

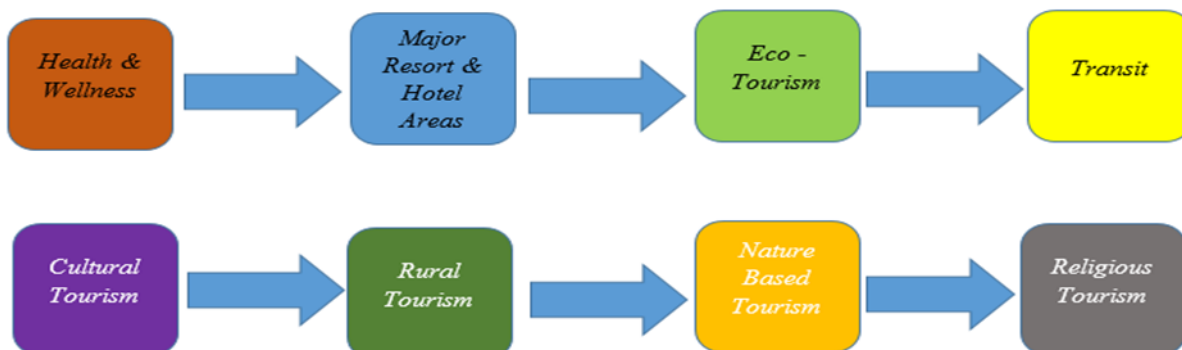
Uttarakhand is located in the Himalayan belt of northern India and is blessed with snowcapped mountains, lakes, rivers, unique flora and fauna, trekking routes, pilgrimage, and religious sites, wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, and even biodiversity zones. The state is also known for the famous char dham yatra i.e. Kedarnath, Badrinath, Yamunotri, and Gangotri which attracts a huge crowd from every corner of the country. Bansal & Gangotia (2010) argued about how Uttarakhand acquired the title of ‘DevBhoomi’ where the major purpose of visit for domestic and inbound tourists is holiday/leisure and yoga and health. According to the PHDCCI Research Bureau report (2013), Uttarakhand is the most preferred destination in India and has huge potential to become the tourism hub of India. Uttarakhand tourism suffered a major setback after post 2013 Kedarnath disaster, but it recovered very fast and according to the Uttarakhand Tourism Board Report 2019, the number of tourists visiting Uttarakhand reached its peak by three times the total arrival of domestic

and international tourists. To further give a boost to the Tourism & Hospitality sector of Uttarakhand the government has decided to develop around seven tourism zones across the state. These seven zones will focus on developing the local economy, hotels, and transport facilities, and offering employment to the local community. The seven zones are:-

Sr.No	Name of the Zone	Areas Under the Zone
1	Zone 1	Dehradun, <u>Mussorie</u> , Haridwar, Rishikesh,
2	Zone 2	<u>Nainital</u> , <u>Ramnagar</u> , <u>Corbett</u> , <u>Mukteshwar</u> ,
3	Zone 3	<u>Corbett West Park</u> , <u>Lansdown</u> , <u>Pauri</u> , <u>Devprayag</u> , Srinagar
4	Zone 4	<u>Uttarkashi</u> , <u>Gangotri</u> , <u>Harshil</u> , <u>Tehri Lake</u> ,
5	Zone 5	<u>Pithoragarh</u> , <u>Champawat</u> , <u>Binsar</u> , <u>Almora</u> , <u>Ranikhet</u> , <u>Kausani</u> , <u>Bageshwar</u> , <u>Dharchula</u> , <u>Munsivari</u>
6	Zone 6	<u>Badrinath</u> , <u>Kedarnath</u> , Valley of Flower, <u>Joshimath</u> , <u>Nanda Devi National Park</u> , <u>Devprayag</u> , <u>Rudraprayag</u> ,
7	Zone 7	<u>Yamunotri</u> , <u>Jaunsari</u> , <u>Chakrata</u>



(Source:- Uttarakhand Development Master Plan Report, 2021)



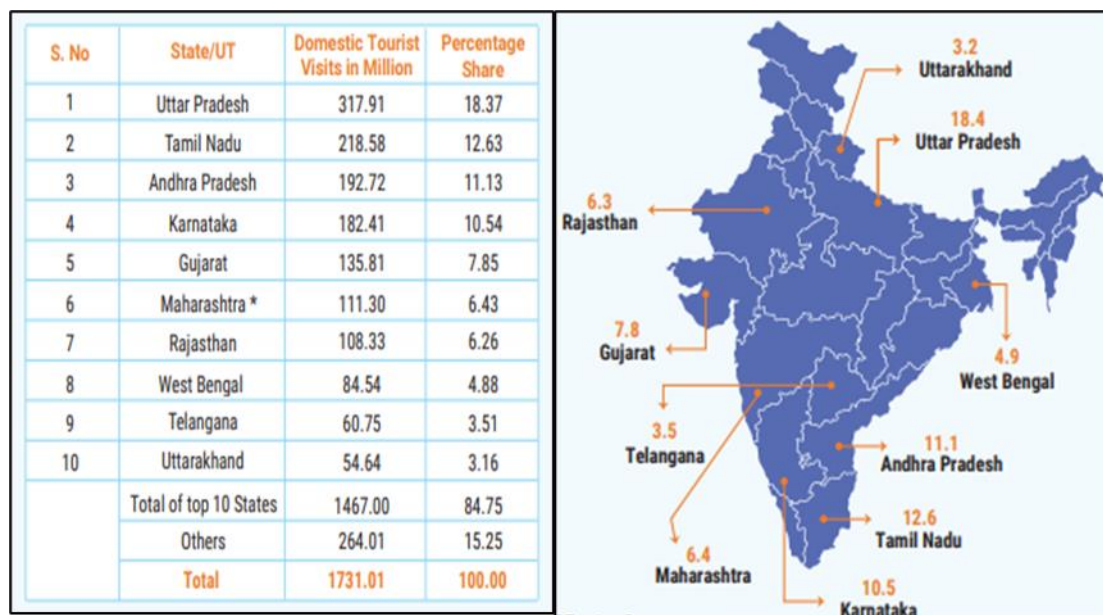
The government is also focusing on eight major tourism and hospitality sectors to be developed in Uttarakhand these eight sectors will act as a pull factor to attract more domestic and international tourists. This 8 sector will further attract the top hotel brands to invest and open the star category hotels in the lesser-known destinations of Uttarakhand.

Uttarakhand has huge potential to attract domestic and international tourists but the share remains very low, the domestic tourist's share remains at 4 - 4.5%, whereas the share for Foreign tourists remains at 1.01%. (Uttarakhand Development Master Plan Report, 2021) Hotels like Taj, JP, ITC, and Hyaat even see a similar pattern when it comes to the average occupancy of the year hence digital marketing strategies are highly effective and significant for attracting domestic and foreign tourists to Uttarakhand. The table highlights the expected growth and the arrival pattern of tourists in Uttarakhand in the year 2022, and there is an expectation of a marginal increase in the overall tourist arrival in the state.

Projection of Overnight Tourist Arrivals in Uttarakhand from 2006 to 2022

Year	Projected Domestic Tourist Arrivals (Mn)	Projected Foreign Tourist Arrivals (Mn)	Projected Total Tourist Arrivals (Mn)
2006	9.13	0.109	9.24
2007	10.45	0.127	10.58
2008	11.97	0.147	12.12
2009	13.71	0.170	13.88
2010	15.69	0.198	15.89
2011	17.97	0.229	18.20
2012	20.30	0.257	20.56
2013	22.94	0.287	23.23
2014	25.93	0.322	26.25
2015	29.30	0.361	29.66
2016	33.11	0.404	33.51
2017	37.41	0.452	37.86
2018	42.27	0.506	42.78
2019	47.77	0.567	48.34
2020	53.98	0.635	54.61
2021	61.00	0.712	61.71
2022	68.93	0.797	69.72

(Source:- Uttarakhand Development Master Plan Report, 2022)



Source: Ministry of Tourism Report, 2023

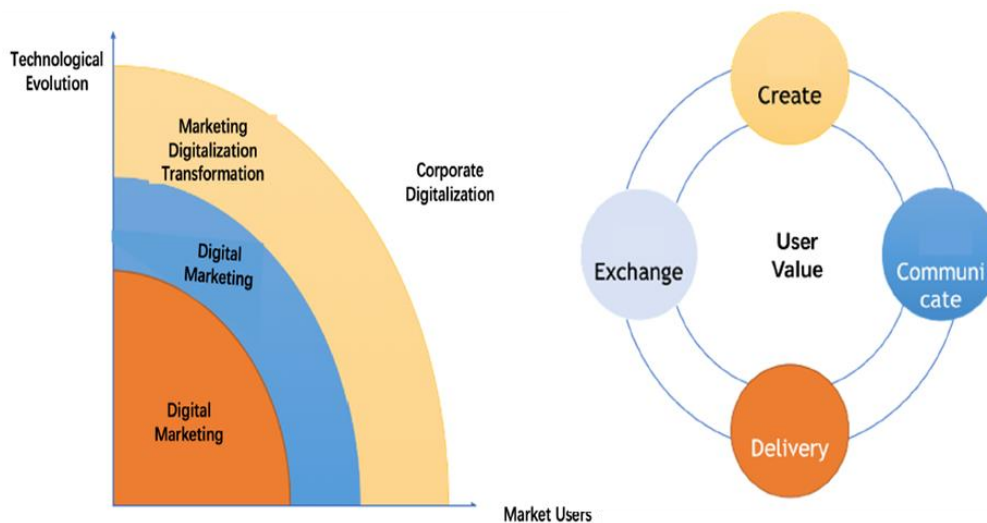
2.2) Digital Marketing: - A Theoretical Understanding:-

The theory and concept of marketing and the operating system of digital marketing have changed over the period. It was Prof. Stephen from Oxford University and Prof. Lamberton of U Penn Wharton were the first ones to discover the new features and theories of digital marketing and they used the term DSMM, which stands for (Digital, Social, Mobile, Marketing). Even Prof. Y.J.Wind, from Wharton, argued that DSMM is one of the most promising digital mobile Internet technologies which is highly effective in identifying, interacting, connecting, measuring, and thus creating, disseminating, and delivering value to the target market. DSMM was further elaborated by Lamberton & Stephen with four major phases i.e. intelligence, consumer, social media, and network nodes. They further presented the integration of major digital marketing concepts i.e. Internet marketing, search marketing, interactive marketing, social marketing, mobile marketing,

we-media marketing, word-of-mouth marketing, cross-channel marketing, big data marketing, etc. for smooth and effective marketing techniques. Even with the development of technology and the integration of high-tech technology linked with Internet services is now widely used for advertising communication resources and as a result new digital advertising marketing communication has evolved.

Furthermore, the father of marketing Prof. Philip Kotler, gave a new theoretical understanding of CCDV (Create, Communicate, Deliver, and Value) where he focused more on the idea of creating a unique product & service, communicating, delivering it, and giving the value for the market. Even Prof. Don Schultz argued that digital marketing must be used as a process to build a long-term relationship with the customer, the customer must get what is promised by the hotel, for the value for money and should become the brand ambassador for the hotel. Here the concept of Value creation in marketing was also presented in detail, Fig. 2.2 highlighting the value creation process. The value creation concept is always in a circular process and has several activities, institutions, and set processes to create, disseminate, deliver, and exchange goods and services for the customers and society at large.

Digital Marketing technology has now evolved as a marketing concept of digital transformation for the hotel sector adopting the behavior of Internet users for booking the hotel and availing the services. Hotels have now started to build marketing technology capability and very efficiently update the systems for the development of digital promotional products and services. Fig.2 highlights how digital marketing helps in developing the digitalization of hotel enterprises, which further leads to showcasing and marketing their product and services. The current theories are highly applicable for the current study on the star category hotels of Uttarakhand as they integrate with the process of engaging with the hotel customers, building a strong customer database and customer relationships to create value and offer world-class services to the customers.



(Source:- Gu,M, 2023)

2.3) Digital Vs Traditional Marketing:-

Kotler & Armstrong, (2020) argued how digital technologies are bringing radical changes in marketing concepts, trends, processes, and strategies. The continuous development and widespread usage of a global network of information technology in the 21st century has made digital business one of the most significant modes of communication and business activities between hotels and customers. However different innovative marketing concepts like Digital Marketing, E-Commerce, Internet marketing, social marketing, mobile marketing, word of mouth, cross-channel marketing, and big data have been used by most of the star category hotels of Uttarakhand. Arya,(2011) highlighted that Indian Hospitality Industry is now in the top 10 Indian industries which are actively engaging with their customers on social media, websites, blogs, and YouTube channels. According to the Statist's report 59% of 5-star deluxe hotels, used blogs as their main marketing tools, whereas only 9% used blogs among the 1-star hotels and 72.5% of 5 – star Deluxe hotels used pay-per-click as a marketing tool, and 76.6% hotels and resorts used hotel website for their marketing strategy. Social media for the hotel industry of Uttarakhand is not just an option but must be considered as a crucial element to promote the products

and services to domestic and international tourists. Jagmohan, (2019) even argued about the relevance of traditional media usage where 65.6 % of resort hotels used telemarketing, 49.5% of 5 Star hotels used television, and about 60% of 5-star deluxe hotels used radio/FM, and 93% 5 Star hotels used print media as a part of their marketing strategies.

Kotler (2017) explained the integration of digital and traditional marketing approaches and highlighted the changing dynamics of digital and traditional marketing approaches. Furthermore, he stated that no doubt digital marketing has made marketing more pragmatic and efficient but nowhere it should be considered to replace the traditional ones as it has opened many doors to enhance the marketing strategies and showcase your product and services. Kotler (2017) proposed that Digital and traditional marketing must coexist because traditional marketing is highly significant in the early stages of interaction with the customers whereas as the communication grows and the expectations of customers increase, digital marketing becomes highly essential. Uttarakhand hotels should also put more emphasis on the usage of both traditional and digital media to promote their product and services for domestic and international tourists. However digital marketing will give more access and broader reach as compared to traditional marketing whereas traditional marketing will be highly useful for initiating customer interaction in the early stages of marketing the product and services. Hotels like Marriott, Hyatt, Taj, ITC, and Lemon Tree, are very aggressive when it comes to digital media strategies. ITC Hotels was the first hotel chain to occupy Twitter for marketing their hotel brands and services in India. ITC hotels have followed an excellent approach by following dual marketing strategies where they have a strong presence on the traditional side and a strong hold on the new digital platforms as well. Hotels get around 40% of their business through digital presence and digital marketing strategies, as it provides enhanced guest engagement and brand loyalty which further leads to efficient customer services and higher revenue generation.

3) Research Methodology:-

For the current research, the methodology that was applied has been chosen to acquire detailed information and deduce conclusions about the digital marketing strategies used by the star-category hotels of Uttarakhand. The current research will continue to study the research done by the author in the specific area. The previous research had identified several opportunities for digital marketing for the hotel industry, therefore the researcher now has attempted to identify and analyze the strategies, trends, implementation, and practices of digital marketing used by the star-category hotels of Uttarakhand.

Based on the research questions and purpose of the study, the study has been designed to acquire information from the star category hotels of Uttarakhand, and we focused on the five-star hotels of Haridwar, Rishikesh, Dehradun, & Mussoorie. The hotels that were taken as a part of the study were mostly three, four, and five-star hotels from the renowned hotel groups of domestic and International hotel chains. The respondents were given an assurance that confidentiality, privacy, and any personal information would not be revealed or will be used anywhere else except this area of research. The current research is exploratory and focused majorly on the digital marketing platforms and tools that are used by the star-category hotels in Uttarakhand. Since the current study is qualitative it has helped in splitting down the variables and further achieving the insights and understanding related to digital marketing and it may drive further research. The population of the study is confined to the major service providers of the star category hotels of Uttarakhand and a total of around 39 samples i.e. respondents from the various hotels from different hierarchical positions were taken from different departments of the hotels. Focused group discussion, individual roundtable discussions, and even telephonic interviews were part of the primary research methods, where the assistants, supervisors, Assistant Managers, HODs, and even the GM of the hotels participated in the survey.

The main objective behind this research method was to get inputs from the current industry professionals who are working in the star hotels of Uttarakhand. An attempt was also made to know in-depth the understanding and experience of employees and the leadership team regarding digital marketing strategies, trends, practices, and their overall experience with traditional methods and the contemporary digital method of marketing. Since the universe selected was Uttarakhand most of the respondents were from Haridwar, Rishikesh, Dehradun, and Mussoorie hotels. The findings of the study may not be generalized for the entire country but the recommendations and suggestions drawn from results may have some relevance to the other destinations and star hotels as well. The current research will add value to the existing literature

and will be highly significant for the hotels that are going through the transition phase of traditional to digital marketing strategies for marketing.

• **Objectives of the research:-**

- To study in detail the impacts of digital marketing on the growth & development of star-category hotels in Uttarakhand.
- To examine the shift from traditional marketing to digital marketing and its benefits in the star-category hotels of Uttarakhand

Research Question: - How digital marketing is contributing to the overall growth & development of star category hotels in Uttarakhand?

4. Findings & Discussion:-

4.1) Star Category Hotels & Channels of Marketing:-

Major hotel chains like Taj, Marriot, ITC, JP, Lemon Tree, Hyaat, and even Sarovar hotels are the key hotel players of Uttarakhand. Hotels offer many attractive packages and to market these packages they use different marketing channels to reach the domestic and international markets. Almost all the respondents from the star hotels endorsed the usage of digital technology, however, many also commented on the significance of other marketing channels to market the hotel products and services.

Sr. No	Name of the Hotel	Name of the Destination	Star Category 3 Star	Star Category 4 Star	Star Category 5 Star
1	Sarovar Hotel	Haridwar			
2	Fern Hotel	Haridwar			
3	Taj Hotel	Haridwar			
4	Taj Rishikesh	Rishikesh			
5	Lemon Tree	Rishikesh			
6	Anandas Hotel	Rishikesh			
7	Hyatt Hotel	Dehradun			
8	Ramada Hotel	Dehradun			
9	Lemon Tree	Dehradun			
10	ITC Hotel	Mussoorie			
11	Royal Orchid	Mussoorie			
12	Marriott	Mussoorie			

Most of the respondents highlighted the four major channels of marketing:-



The leadership team of Taj Haridwar & Taj Rishikesh, Hyaat Dehradun, Marriot Mussoorie, ITC Mussoorie, and Lemon Tree Rishikesh mostly the GMs and the RMs of these hotels during the interview schedule highlighted the significance of digital platforms for marketing their hotel products. Almost all the GMs and the RMs (Resident Managers) pointed out that Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google, & Trip Advisor are the most preferred online platforms to market their hotels. ITC & Taj GMs pointed out that Facebook and Instagram is the most preferred platform to reach the global and domestic market. GMs of Hyaat and Marriot suggested that Twitter is highly useful for posting official announcements, playing any campaign, supporting any CSR activities, or any particular events for guest engagement or celebration. However, all the GMs agreed about the relevance of Trip Advisor for analyzing guest reviews and feedback whereas they specifically pointed out that LinkedIn is usually used for HR purposes i.e. recruitment, talent management, or any employee engagement activities. However, hotels like Lemon Tree, Ramada, and Sarovar accepted that despite the growth of digital marketing there are few places where offline marketing is still very significant especially reaching the wider audience and tier 2 or tier 3 cities or even the rural parts of Uttarakhand.

During FGD few employees highlighted how and why social media is very important, they highlighted how social media is affecting the overall hotel business by using social media marketing strategies. They pointed social media directly or indirectly impacts the travel decisions of the customers in deciding about a particular property and making a purchase decision. Social media is also one of the best platforms to share the hotel and travel experience which in turn helps the other customers to decide and build trust before making any purchase decisions. The four major elements of social media are:-



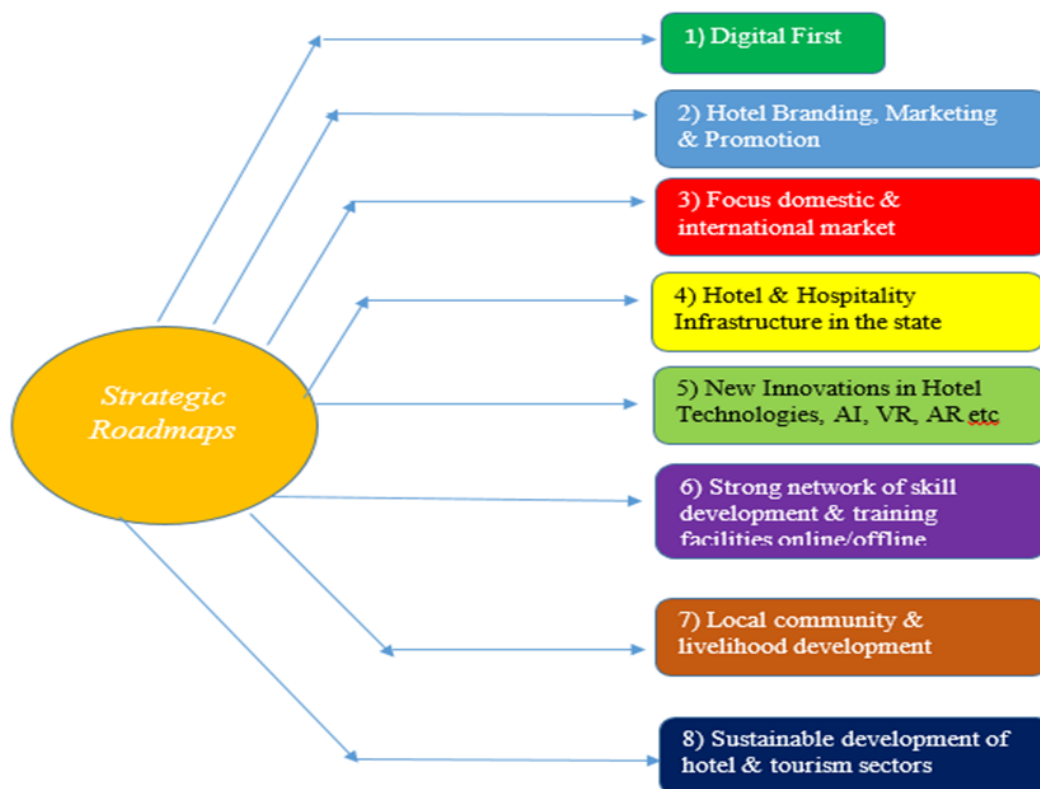
Almost all the hotels agreed that planned mega-events, food festivals, and recreational events act as a magnet, especially for marketing the product and services in the offseason. Hotels like Taj, Marriott, and ITC highlighted that mega events are usually planned on a particular theme, which could be a food festival, regional cuisine displays, spirituality, wellness, and even involving the local community the attract domestic and international tourists. These four components have a major impact on the overall marketing of the hotel products and services and have enabled them to project their product and services at a different level.

4.2) Technological advancements in hotel marketing & its implication on hotel employees:-

With the technological advancements and rapid changes in the demand pattern of the tourists, a major shift has been observed in all the major hotels of Uttarakhand. Almost all the hotels pointed out that online platforms will be the most preferred channel in the next few years. However, they also mentioned that there is still a segment among the customers that still prefer traditional print media so to target these customers as well, they to an extent rely upon traditional marketing channels. GMs of Royal Orchids and Anandas highlighted that the online channels are highly cost-effective, much faster, reach a wide number of customers and the visibility is also much higher as compared to the offline channel. While few groups mostly the young Assistant Managers and the Managers of major hotel chains also spoke about the innovations and technological advancements i.e. scope of Artificial Intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality. They further discussed in detail the benefits as they strongly feel that it can capture a good range of information about the

customers, and their historical profiles and even would be highly useful in making the right decisions for delivering a more personalized and unique experience to the customers in a much quicker manner.

A few managers from ITC and Sarovar hotels also pointed out that the guest and host emotional bond is highly essential. The hotel industry needs human interaction to create a memorable experience, there is a sense of fear as the application of these new technologies may lead to the absence of human touch and poor guest and host relationships. GMs of Taj Hotel and Hyatt pointed out that AI will be highly useful in simplifying the daily operational, desk, and ancillary departments' work and responsibilities which would eventually help in saving manpower costs and offering seamless services to the customers. They further highlighted how AI tools will also help in revenue management, sales predictions, occupancy forecasting, and comparison of rack rates and finally support taking the strategic decisions for the hotel growth and development. Few training managers and HR managers discussed analyzing the impact of each channel and the efficiency of these channels for marketing the hotel products and services. They also emphasized the point that they want a separate section and digital marketing experts to be appointed at the unit level to handle the digital platform and even analyze which channel is more effective and economical for hotel marketing.



Employees from Sarovar and Fern Hotel also mentioned that digital marketing practices and understanding the new technological advancements should be part of our training module and regular sessions must be conducted by the HODs and the training manager. Furthermore, the employees also pointed out that these trainings would enable the employees to get more connected with the guests, and engage the guests with the activities and is one of the best possible ways to bring the guest closer to the hotel brand and build a long-term relationship. The significance of digital marketing is well understood and the possible impact it can create on the marketing of hotel products and services to domestic and international tourists. Hotels must work towards updating their new channels of marketing at the same time they should also focus on the budget and the strength of each marketing platform to market their product and services. At the same time empowering the employees, and managers and incorporating the new training sessions related to digital marketing and new technological advancements will be a game changer for the Uttarakhand star category hotels in achieving long-term and sustainable marketing strategies.

5) Conclusion:-

The hotel and tourism industry plays an important role in the overall economic growth and employment generation in Uttarakhand. In today's changing economy marketing and promotion of products and services are highly crucial. In these changing times depending only on the traditional method of marketing will not give impressive results. However digital marketing is now the new mantra for the Uttarakhand hotels to market and promote their product and services to a broader audience which is faster and cost effective as well. Further, it has helped the hotels to decide and logically allocate the marketing budget and to analyze which segment is more effective with the help of data analytics. The hotels need to be present at all the marketing channels and target the customers at each stage of their decision-making whether it's showcasing the packages, special rates/discounts, hotel products & services, pre-arrival stage, arrival stage, occupancy or even post departure stage of the customer.

Uttarakhand star hotels need a more aggressive approach to marketing their products and services through digital platforms. Many hotels have realized the benefits as a result they have opened a separate department at the unit level to market their products and services and reach broader audiences. At the same time, social media and mobile marketing also have a significant impact on the financial performance of the hotel. The current research has attempted to build an understanding of the transition of traditional marketing into digital marketing in the star category hotels of Uttarakhand and how it's impacting the overall growth strategies of the hotels. However, the significance of the traditional marketing strategies is also still applicable for many hotels and is highly effective for marketing in tier 2 or tier 3 cities, rural areas, or even in the domestic tourist market. Here using the right marketing strategies based on different factors like customer base, demand pattern, seasonality, pricing factor, upcoming events/festivals, hotel brand or even the destination plays a key role. Even the application of AI has also impacted and given a new version to digital marketing strategies and it seems it will have major implications in the years to come at the same time it should not be considered as a replacer but as an enabler for digital marketing.

The study also highlights that Digital marketing has made it easier for hotels to maintain a database with all the relevant information about the guests, it has also helped the hotels to design and deliver any special requirements or requests made by the guests. Based on the outcome of the current study, future research could focus on the application of these digital marketing tools and the scope of new technological advancements such as search engine optimization, search engine marketing, pay-per-click, guest acceptance level, and their responses toward digital marketing. Future research could also focus on measuring the impact of digital marketing on other areas such as customer relationship management, employee and guest engagement, brand loyalty, and customer satisfaction. Last but not least if digital marketing is used extensively it will help the hotels to market their new packages, seasonal offers, or any new products and services more effectively targeting a particular segment of the customers in a much faster way.

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