



Services marketing of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati

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Abstract

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) dissemination of information is a key role. Pilgrims form different places, different languages and different cultures, different back grounds, different attitudes are visiting Tirumala every day. They are very anxious about the information and guidance. Dissemination of information to the pilgrims is the duty of the organization to facilitate them and make their pilgrimage more convenient. Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams. The Tirumala is situated at highest 2,980 feet above the sea level and enjoys salubrious and invigorating climate. Above 40 to 50 thousands of pilgrims are visiting the Tirumala every day and an average of 70 thousands at peak seasons. The pilgrims visiting Tirumala are from different states, places, languages, cultures, status. Dissemination of information to such people having different faiths and believes is a major task and is a very important job. Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams is using all forms of media to inform the pilgrims. It is also felt ideal to study and evaluate the existing status of public relations department and to extended necessary suggestions for modification of the same. Services marketing are defined as “the integrated system of business activities designed to plan, Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People process and Physical Evidence and distribute appropriate services for the benefit of TTD service marketing. The perception of services marketing focuses on selling the services to the best interest of the customers. In this paper services Marketing of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati.

Keywords: product, price, place, promotion, people, process, physical evidence

Introduction

The world economy now-a-days is increasingly characterized as a service economy. This is primarily due to the increasing importance and share of the services sector in the economies of most developed and developing countries. In fact, the growth of the services sector has long been considered as an indicative of a country's economic progress. Economic history tells us that all developing nations have invariably experienced a shift from agriculture to industry and then to the services sector as the main stay of the economy. This shift has also brought about a change in the definition of goods and services themselves. No longer are goods considered separate from services. Rather, services now increasingly represent an integral part of the product and this interconnectedness of goods and services is represented on a goods-services continuum.

The concept of “service” is as old as humankind and began when man started serving himself (self-servicing). When a part of the society becomes affluent, it started utilizing the services of others at a price. Then services became a business proposition. However until the beginning of the twentieth century, the focus of economies was to produce more and more tangible goods and sell agricultural and manufactured products. Services such as accounting, banking, insurance and transportation were considered to be support to manufacturing units. But now-a-days, services influence our lifestyle and the quality of life significantly. All human beings have become service providers as well as consumers. Transportation, education, communication, healthcare, hospitality, entertainment, banking, information technology, electricity and a host of other such services has become a part of our life.

The Pallavas of Kanchipuram (9th century AD), Cholas of

Tanjor (10th century), Pandyas of Mathura and Vijayanagara Pradhans (14th and 15th centuries) were committed devotees of Lord Venkateswara. The statues of Sri Krishna Devaraya and his spouse stand in the premises of the temple. After the decline of Vijayanagara Empire, Kings from various states like the king of Mysore and Gadwal, worshiped the lord as pilgrims and gifted various ornaments and valuables to the temple. In 1951 another Hindu Religious and Endowment Act was made which facilitated the appointment of an executive officer and Board of Trustees and they run the administration. Tirupati Venkateswara Temple is a famous Hindu temple of Lord Venkateswara located in the hill town Tirumala, Andhra Pradesh ^[1].

TTD is the official custodian of hill temple of Lord Venkateswara. It is an institution with an annual income of nearly Rs. 2500 crore and a surplus of over Rs.650 crore. It has 97 independent divisions and operates around 750 bank accounts. Its administration has several unique features. It has no parallel anywhere in the world. It is a huge organization. Just so that we get a measure of the size of the TTD, if it were a listed company, it will rank around 300 in the list of over 5,000 companies on the Bombay Stock Exchange in terms of income (turnover). Interestingly, in terms of surplus (net profit), the TTD will rank around 100 in the list scoring over well-known companies such as Tata Motors, Ashok Leyland, TVS Motors and some banks including IOB and Karur Vysya Bank. And all this with just a single, of course, priceless asset ^[2].

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) was established as a result of the TTD Act in 1932. It is operated by a Board of Trustees that has increased in size from five (1951) to thirteen (1987) through the adoption of Acts. The daily operations and management of TTD is the responsibility of an Executive

Officer who is appointed by the government of Andhra Pradesh. The management, administration and organization of TTD are subject to the guidelines issued by the Government through the Ministry of Endowments from time to time. The administration of all Charitable and Hindu Religious Institutions and Endowments including TTD shall be under the general superintendence and control of the Commissioner^[3].

Objectives

- To study the Services Marketing in Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams
- To study the evaluation of service marketing in Tirupati Tirumala Devasthanams and
- To study the mass media used for publicity by Tirupati Tirumala Devasthanams.

Methodology

This paper is based on secondary data from various reports, Journals, Books, Published and unpublished thesis, website and existing work on the topic has been analysed to arrive at certain results.

Marketing Strategies of TTD

The marketing strategies of Lord Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple are to attract more sevas, Pilgrimages, to organize so many events, grand weddings etc. An analysis and detailed discussion of 7 P's frame work of marketing mix strategies is as follows.

Product

Services are the main attraction at Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple, Tirupati, is darshan of main deity in Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams. In addition to the main deity, the officers of devasthanam offer many other products to the pilgrims.

Lord Sri Venkateswara, also known as Srinivasa, Balaji, and Venkatchalapati, made Tirumala his abode five thousand years ago. Even before him, it was Lord Varahaswami who had made Tirumala his abode. Since then, many devotees have continued to construct grand entrances on the ramparts of the temple over generations. The temple complex is spread over 16.2 acres of land. In Tirumala, the East facing Sri Varahaswami temple is located in the North West corner of the temple tank - Swami Pushkarini. As per the temple legend, Lord Srinivasa sought a gift of land from Sri Varahaswami, which he readily granted.

In return, Srinivasa provided him with an agreement deed assuring that he would be paid the first darshan, worship and offerings by all the devotees visiting the temple. This tradition is in practise to this day at Tirumala and Lord Varahaswami continues to receive the age old traditional worship. Even today, all offerings are first made to the Lord Varahaswami and then to the Lord Sri Venkateswara. The height of the main entrance has been increased periodically since 13th century. Its present height is fifty feet. This entrance has other names such as 'Padivaakili' and 'Simhadwaram'. In Tamil it is called 'Periya Thiruvasal'. On either side of this main entrance there are two feet high statues made of alloy metal (Pancha loha). They are Sankanidhi and Padmanidhi who are the guardians of 'Navanidhi', the treasure of Lord Sri Venkateswara.

Price

On the basis of information provided by the officials of the devasthanams and examination of records it is found that the main objectives guiding the fixation of pricing for various services is given below:

- 1) To cover the expenditure involved in the management of temple and other related activities.
- 2) To extend Sri Venkateswara swamy Temple Devasthanams services to all categories of pilgrims including poor.
- 3) To provide social, charitable and religious services as a responsibility of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams. Keeping in view the above broad objectives Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam: Devasthanams provides free services as well as paid services for various facilities and sevas.

i) Free Services

In order to meet the objective of extending services to poor devotees who cannot afford to pay the Lord Sri Venkateswara swamy temple devasthanam provides free services to the poor and rich pilgrims who visit the temple. Free Darshan: Free darshan or dharma darshan is available to the pilgrims who visit the temple. Free Accommodation: In the choultries managed by Sri Venkateswara swamy temple. Free Prasadams. To the pilgrims 100kgs of pulihora prasadam is distributed freely daily from 12 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. Large number of poor people gets benefit of these services through Sri Venkateswara swamy temple in Tirupati.

ii) Paid Services

There are many devotees who would like to pay for the services and avail certain additional facilities and services. Lord Sri Venkateswara swamy temple devasthanam has evolved a policy of fixing prices for various services to suit the needs of different categories of pilgrims the list of paid services offered Sri Venkateswara swamy temple devasthanam. Are mentioned below, Paid Darshan, Transportation, Arjita Sevas, and Accommodation.

Place

In the context of services the place decision include location of service premises, channels involved in delivering services, designing of distribution system etc. in the context of tourism services there is no adequate choice regarding location of tourist centre because the tourist destinations may be natural or historical attractions and they cannot be shifted elsewhere. To avail the main services the customers should reach the destination. The infrastructural facilities like transportation, communications, and banking etc. play very important role in attracting pilgrims to Sri Venkateswara swamy Temple. Transportation Transportation facilities can be discussed under two heads i.e. Transportation from various places to Lord Sri Venkateswara swamy temple, Tirupati. Transportation is within the area of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams temple Tirupati. Regarding transportation from other places to Lord Sri Venkateswara swamy temple, Tirupati, there is a wide network of transportation facilities by road, rail etc.

Promotion

The main purpose of promotional activities of tourism

marketing is to create awareness among consumers and consumers about products and services offered by the firms to increase the sales and to have an edge over other competitions. Advertising or publicity, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations and divert marketing etc. are inclusive of promotional activities.

1. Newspapers and Magazines

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati advertises through various newspapers and magazines about forthcoming important activities, utsavams, special occasions as Brahmothsavams in sevas, timings, sevas fees etc.

2. Television

Lord Sri Venkateswara swamy temple devasthanam' utsavams, religious and cultural activities can be advertised in bhakti T.V channel and S V B C.

3. Radio

Lord Sri Venkateswara swamy Temple Devasthanams Religious Programmers are important announcements can be broadcast over Radio.

4. Wall Posters

Lord Sri Venkateswara swamy temple devasthanam advertises through wall posters pasted at important places. Details of special utsavams like Brahmothsavams are advertised through wall posters.

5. Word of Mouth Publicity

Pilgrims satisfied with the services offered by Lord Sri Venkateswara swamy Temple devasthanams during their pilgrimages to Tirupati spread the information to others.

6. Communications

Lord Sri Venkateswara swamy Temple devasthanams uses various types of communications to communicate with pilgrims and others.

7. Website

Lord Sri Venkateswara swamy Temple devasthanams, Tirupati uses latest technology in communications for its promotional activities to offer various services.

People

People element plays very important role in services marketing. In this context people means the employees, who include front line staff, support personate, high contact employees etc. Most of the services delivered through people depend on selection of employees, training, motivation and behaviour.

- 1. Recruitment and Training:** As per the requirements of the various departments, staff will be appointed by placing notification in the media. Staffs are appointed on permanent, temporary/adhoc basis and a few staff is taken on deputation from Andhra Pradesh government and other sources. Recently a few jobs are getting done throughout sourcing.
- 2. Performance Management:** The effectiveness of the staff is evaluated through the quality of the services they render to the respondents. In this regard the quality of the staff is classified as very good, average, poor and very poor for the deep probe in the current study in respects of the following services a) Responding to inquiries b) Booking Facilities c) Services at accommodation d) Services at arjita sevas e) Services at darsan Services at Distribution of Prasadam's g) Services at Tonsure (Kalayanakatta) h) Services at Cloak Rooms and free Chapel Stands

Process

The service process refers to how a service is determined to a customer. It includes various decisions. Designing a service system, service process planning, procedure for delivery of services, technology used in service processing etc. The process should be such that it should enable to deliver the services quickly, promptly and efficiently without hassles. The process must be user friendly and cost effective.

In the context of the Lord Sri Venkateswara swamy temple Devasthanams process refers to the procedure involved in rendering various services such as darsan, sevas, accommodation, prasadam's, food etc. Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams Swami Devasthanam has been reviewing the procedures of delivering from time to time and bringing innovation through use of information technology from time to time.

Physical Evidence

Infrastructure and accessories provided at the place of transaction for the comfort and convenience of Pilgrims plays vital role in the marketing of services. In the present study a deep probe was made to study the effectiveness of the physical evidence provided by Lord Sri Venkateswara swamy temple in the marketing of its services through respondents. The physical evidence at the service point influences the Pilgrims. Congenial is clean environment, proper arrangements for comfortable stay during their visit, ambience etc., and makes all the different to a Pilgrims. Made is the Lord Sri Venkateswara swamy temple elaborate arrangement for the comfort and convenience of the visitors. The present study is made to find the rating of the following various arrangements (physical evidence) made at Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams temple.

- 1. Information centres:** Lord Sri Venkateswara swamy temple uses official website as information to inform the public about Temple.
- 2. Information material:** Lord Sri Venkateswara swamy temple distributes colourful and attractive booklets, pamphlet, calendars and picture cards printed with different beautiful locations of Temple, posters etc. information material free of cost to all.
- 3. Communication facilities:** Lord Sri Venkateswara swamy temple uses all the modern technology for its communication purposes.
- 4. Seating arrangements:** This temple made elaborate seating arrangements and rest places for visitors to relax and rest at various places all over Tirumala and Tirupati.
- 5. Illuminations:** Lord Sri Venkateswara swamy temples famous for its decorated lighting. The entire temple is illuminated with bright lighting. Settings, buildings, and every object is decorated with lights.
- 6. Sign boards:** Sign boards with directions, cautions, location maps etc. are placed all over Temple in Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam in Andhra Pradesh.
- 7. Souvenirs and gift articles shops:** Different articles including clothes, handicrafts, leather goods, perfumes, small electronic items, albums, hats, handbags etc. are sold at various souvenir shops located at different places at Tirumala.
- 8. Interior Decoration:** Tirumala decorated all its interiors tastefully by professionals from home and abroad. Every part of Tirumala is unique in style, decoration, ambience etc. Every care is taken to put the right colours, paintings,

wall hangings, chandeliers, furniture, carpets etc. to enhance the image and beauty.

9. **First aid and Medical facilities:** Adequate first aid and medical facilities are made for treatment of minor illness or accidents. Tirumala has a clinic with a full time doctor and staff with necessary medicines and equipment.
10. **Spittoons and Dustbins:** Visitors at Tirumala are requested not to spit and throw garbage/ waste in open, which creates unhygienic and dirt environments. To overcome this problem Tirumala arranged dustbins and spittoons at various places, which are cleaned frequently.
11. **Toilets and Bathrooms:** clean and neat bathrooms and toilets are located at different places for the convenience of the visitors to Tirumala and Tirupati.
12. **Road and transportation:** Roads all over for the comfortable journey of the visitors inside Tirumala and Tirupati. At some places tiles are fixed for good loo.
13. **Drinking water points:** Cool and fresh water is available all over at Tirumala at free of cost. Provided in Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams ^[4].

Conclusion

Tourism marketing and promotional efforts are the basic activities to link the product with the potential tourist market both at national and international levels. Marketing is about anticipating demand, recognizing it, stimulating it and finally satisfying it. It is the function of business to produce goods and services that satisfy consumer wants and needs at a profit. There are different wings managed by the Public Relations department such as printing press for propagation of Hindu Dharma, significance of the temple, Lord and for dissemination of information to make Tirumala pilgrimage a pleasant one. Information is carried out through different means of communication. A mixed blend of appropriate media is being used for providing information to the pilgrims. Pilgrims involvement is also noted down by making them part of the services offered by the institution with an innovative voluntary service Srivari Seva cell. Press release is a regular feature which is sent very frequently as a routine information tool to the press. Press conferences are held during important functions of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams institutions. This paper embodies the essential aspects of this research in terms of the introductory remarks, and what lies in the future for strengthening the area of services marketing in Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams Lord Sri Venkateswara swamy temple.

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