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## Increasing traveler's willingness to visit a destination: How social media usage & attitudes promote tourism via information dissemination: A case of Bundelkhand

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### Abstract

Social media has a significant impact on travel decisions and tourism in the current digital era. This study focuses on how social media usage and visitor attitudes might boost tourism in Bundelkhand, a central Indian region that is rich in culture but not as well-known. Despite having beautiful heritage sites like temples, old forts, and distinctive customs, Bundelkhand has not yet drawn many tourists. By improving attitudes and raising awareness, the study investigates how information posted on social media sites like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram can make tourists more inclined to visit Bundelkhand.

This study's main goal is to determine how social media use affects prospective tourists' decision-making and willingness to visit Bundelkhand. This examines how information disseminated on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube might influence travelers' opinions of a location and motivate them to visit. how user-generated content (posts, photos, and travelogues) stimulates curiosity and fosters confidence in tourists. A Major Source of Travel Inspiration: social media, Content Created by Users Increases Trust, Engagement Increases Visitor Willingness are the major key findings.

A mixed-method approach was employed, combining social media user surveys with an examination of Bundelkhand-related social media content. The study examined the frequency of references to Bundelkhand, the kind of content that is shared, and the ways in which tourists interact with this content. Additionally, it examined the effect of descriptive and visual information on traveler interest as well as influencer posts.

**Keywords:** Social media, Tourism promotion, Bundelkhand, traveler's willingness, information dissemination, digital marketing, and user-generated content

### Introduction

Social media's ascent has greatly expanded how customers can now obtain news, political, and business-related information. The extensive usage of these platforms encourages people to share more information, lowers uncertainty, and fosters a sense of community, which leads people to drastically alter their leisure and travel schedules. Social media has consequently emerged as a crucial instrument and a top location for producing and disseminating material in response to user requests regarding online travel information. Social media's crucial role in influencing holiday choices even in times of disaster

has been shown by the rise in user-generated material about how the tourism industry affected consumers' travel choices during the COVID-19 pandemic. Research on how consumer decisions are influenced by travel-related content shared on social media has increased. Some research has investigated the elements that motivate prospective travelers to look for travel information on social media using a technology adoption paradigm. When making trip plans, travelers may consult the social media posts of others who share their interests (Bertot, 2010) <sup>[3]</sup>.

Our study's main goal is to investigate how social media use and attitudes toward it promote information sharing in the

Bundelkhand region that promotes travel. As digital platforms, especially social media, have grown in popularity, tourism has changed dramatically. These days, travelers mostly rely on social media sites like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram to learn about new places, gather information, and make well-informed travel choices. This study centers on Bundelkhand, a historically significant area in central India that is frequently disregarded by mainstream tourists despite being well-known for its palaces, forts, and rich cultural legacy. Due to its unrealized potential, Bundelkhand is a perfect example to study how social media might be used to promote lesser-known travel destinations. Understanding how social media affects tourists' views, molds their impressions, and eventually motivates people to visit such places is the goal.

### Research Objectives

1. To evaluate how social media contributes to Bundelkhand's increased visibility.
2. To examine how visitors' perceptions of social media affect the places they choose to visit.
3. To investigate how user-generated material affects prospective tourists' inclination to visit Bundelkhand.
4. Assess the role of social media in raising Bundelkhand's profile:
5. Analyze how tourists' views of social media impact their destination choices.
6. Explore how content created by users influences potential visitors' interest in Bundelkhand:

### Review Of Literature

#### Theoretical Framework

To understand the factors driving travel desires, it is essential to consider various theoretical frameworks. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) <sup>[1]</sup> provides a useful lens for examining how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence travel intentions. Additionally, the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974) <sup>[8]</sup> explains how individuals actively seek out media content to fulfill specific needs and desires, which is pertinent to understanding social media's role in travel motivation.

(Kiráľová, 2014) <sup>[9]</sup> social media significantly influences the tourism sector on both the demand and supply fronts. It allows destinations to interact with their visitors in real time through various online platforms and to collect, analyze, and respond to feedback regarding the quality of their experiences. This article provides an overview of different types of tourist destinations and explains the role of social media and communication in the tourism industry. It discusses changes in visitor behavior and highlights the key features of social media and their effects on a destination's communication strategy. The main aim of this research is to demonstrate that employing social media-friendly methods can help destinations stay competitive. We also showcase some of the most successful social media campaigns and outline the elements of an effective social media strategy.

(Tafveez, 2017) <sup>[14]</sup> Tourism service providers gain significant advantages from feedback received from tourists and the public via social media, which is essential for promoting the industry. It is important to encourage thorough research on the impact of social media. Most

studies have concentrated on the positive effects, while only a few have looked into the negative ones. The investigation into social media's influence is still in the early stages, so it is understandable that current research primarily highlights its beneficial aspects. Future researchers need to also consider the negative side of social networking, which includes issues like identity theft and fake surveys.

(Mohamad, 2022) <sup>[12]</sup> Due to their usage, travelers perceive landmarks differently now. It allows tourists to access relevant travel information, choose a destination, and share their experiences with others. This research utilizes a modified version of Ajzen and Tversky's Theory of Planned Behavior to explore how travelers' positive and negative experiences on social media, along with subjective norms, affect their destination choices. Self-administered surveys with a cross-sectional design were distributed to visitors in Klang Valley. Responses were collected through convenience sampling for this study. The hypotheses were tested using Multiple Linear Regression analysis. The results indicated that tourists' intention to visit a specific location can be influenced by positive experiences shared on social media and subjective norms. Consequently, the findings of this research will help destination management organizations better understand how to incorporate social media management into their long-term strategies to enhance tourists' intentions to visit.

The role of social media in tourism promotion has garnered significant attention in recent years. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have evolved into key tools for marketing destinations. Studies like that of Xiang and Gretzel (2010) <sup>[16]</sup> highlight how social media platforms allow travelers to share personal experiences and opinions, which in turn influences others' travel decisions. Social media allows for direct interaction between destinations and potential visitors, enhancing engagement and trust in the tourism experience)

Social media's capability to disseminate information is one of the key reasons behind its effectiveness in promoting tourism. According to Leung *et al.* (2013) <sup>[10]</sup>, social media serves as a platform for the real-time spread of information, which enhances the visibility of destinations like Bundelkhand. Research suggests that destinations with active social media strategies attract more tourists, largely due to the continuous flow of information related to attractions, services, and experiences. This creates a dynamic form of advertising that is far more impactful than traditional marketing techniques.

One of the key drivers of tourism promotion through social media is user-generated content (UGC). User-generated content refers to personal posts, reviews, photos, and videos shared by tourists on social platforms. A study by Munar and Jacobsen (2014) <sup>[13]</sup> found that UGC is perceived as more trustworthy and authentic compared to traditional marketing messages, influencing potential tourists' decisions. For destinations like Bundelkhand, which are less popular, UGC can be crucial in building trust and curiosity among prospective visitors. This content adds a layer of authenticity, as it shows real experiences rather than curated marketing material.

Social media also shapes destination choices by impacting traveler perceptions. In a study by Fotis *et al.* (2012) <sup>[5]</sup>, social media was shown to be a dominant source of

influence when travelers are planning trips, with 52% of respondents indicating they trust social media reviews and posts from friends more than advertisements. Moreover, destinations that invest in social media campaigns, such as influencer partnerships or contests, see more engagement and ultimately more visitors. Bundelkhand's relatively low profile could be boosted through such tactics, encouraging tourists to choose it over more well-known destinations.

The way tourists perceive social media content significantly influences their travel decisions. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) [7] examined the role of social media as a customer engagement platform and found that personalized content-like targeted advertisements and posts-heightens interest and engagement. As users seek out more personalized travel experiences, their perceptions of social media content become critical in the decision-making process. For a region like Bundelkhand, creating engaging, personalized social media content could significantly impact potential visitors' attitudes, encouraging them to explore the destination.

There is substantial evidence indicating that well-planned social media campaigns can drive tourism growth. In their research, Hays *et al.* (2013) [6] explored how social media campaigns can create awareness, attract tourists, and promote destination loyalty. They concluded that interactive and content-rich campaigns boost engagement and drive positive results for tourism promotion. Case studies of destinations like Iceland, which became a social media sensation through the "Inspired by Iceland" campaign, illustrate the power of such strategies. Similarly, Bundelkhand could benefit from curated campaigns that tell stories about its unique historical and cultural significance.

Research on cultural heritage tourism has also indicated the growing role of social media in preserving and promoting heritage-rich regions like Bundelkhand. According to Apleni *et al.* (2017) [3], regions with historical significance rely heavily on social media to showcase their cultural narratives. Bundelkhand, with its ancient forts and temples, can use social media to highlight these attractions and target specific audiences interested in heritage tourism. Social media's ability to reach niche groups makes it an ideal platform for promoting such destinations.

Despite its benefits, social media presents certain challenges in tourism promotion. One of the primary concerns, as noted by Miguéns *et al.* (2008) [11], is the potential for negative user-generated content, which can harm a destination's reputation. Additionally, the rapid spread of misinformation or dissatisfaction can quickly go viral, which poses a risk for destinations like Bundelkhand. Managing such risks through active engagement and responsive strategies is crucial for maintaining a positive image online.

The existing literature demonstrates a clear link between social media usage, attitudes, and its impact on tourism. From the dissemination of information to the influence of user-generated content, social media has transformed how destinations are marketed and perceived. By leveraging the power of these platforms, Bundelkhand can significantly increase its visibility and attract more visitors. Future research should focus on developing targeted strategies that incorporate these elements to promote Bundelkhand's unique appeal while addressing the challenges of negative online content.

## Research Methodology

The purpose of this study is to assess how social media affects Bundelkhand's exposure, how travelers' views affect the places they choose to visit and how potential visitors' interest in the area is impacted by user-generated material. We'll use a mixed-approaches strategy, integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches to have a thorough grasp of these issues.

To evaluate the role that social media plays in raising awareness about Bundelkhand, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites will all be systematically analyzed. A sample of 500 posts from the last 12 months on social media that have been marked with pertinent hashtags, such as #Bundelkhand and #VisitBundelkhand, will be gathered. Engagement indicators such as shares, likes, and comments will be among the data points of interest. Descriptive statistics will be used in the study to quantify these indicators, however, classify postings into several categories (e.g., images, videos, and tales). Table 1 will provide a summary of the results, showing the levels of engagement for each type of post.

To examine how social media impressions impact travel decisions, Five hundred prospective visitors who are active on social media will get an online survey. The questionnaire will ask about their usage of social media, how they influence the way they choose to travel, and how reliable they think social media Material is using a 5-point Likert scale, respondents will be asked to score how much they agree with the statements. Thirty in-depth interviews will also be done to provide qualitative understanding of how people make decisions.

To investigate how user-generated information affects potential tourists' curiosity about Bundelkhand, A thorough content examination of around 200 user-generated items will be carried out, such as vacation forum reviews and blogs. A poll using a similar 5-point Likert scale will then be used to see how consumers feel this content has affected their travel preferences.

**Result and Interpretation:** Correlation study will evaluate the connection between using social media and how likely it is that people will decide to visit Bundelkhand. Figure 1 presents the expected findings, demonstrating a favorable connection ( $r = 0.68$ ), between greater social media participation and a higher probability of traveling to Bundelkhand.

The analysis also reveals that, postings with photos receive the most average likes, suggesting that people respond more favorably to visually appealing material. This implies that Bundelkhand's attractiveness might be increased by highlighting its natural beauty on social media.

## Graph Placeholder

According to this correlation, travelers who actively participate in Using social media networks are more likely to select featured places emphasized through various platforms, supporting the significance of social media marketing for travel.

Content Type	Total Pieces	Positive Sentiment (%)	Avg. Engagement (Likes/Comments)
Blogs	100	75%	200/30
Vlogs	70	85%	150/25
Reviews	30	90%	100/15

According to a survey data analysis, 80% of participants reported that their desire to travel to Bundelkhand is greatly influenced by user-generated material. The research also shows that people are more likely to choose places with favorable user reviews. Positive sentiment ratings for many content categories demonstrate that people view user-generated material as more reliable than conventional advertising.

### Conclusion

The document emphasizes the significant role of social media in tourism, supported by theoretical frameworks such as the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Uses and Gratifications Theory to understand travel desires. It highlights how social media influences both the demand and supply sides of tourism, allowing real-time interaction and feedback collection for destinations. Social media feedback is crucial for tourism providers. Travelers now use social media to access information, share experiences and consequently perceive landmarks differently. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are key marketing tools where shared experiences influence travel decisions. The real-time dissemination of information on social media increases destination visibility. User-generated content (UGC) is considered trustworthy and significantly impacts travel choices. Personalized social media content enhances engagement, and well-planned campaigns can drive tourism growth, as seen in examples like Iceland. Social media also plays a growing role in promoting cultural heritage tourism. However, the document also notes the challenges of negative UGC and misinformation. Overall, it confirms the strong link between social media usage and its impact on tourism, suggesting targeted strategies to leverage its benefits while managing its risks.

The study methodology described here offers a sound strategy to comprehend how Bundelkhand's profile might be enhanced on social media and impacting travelers' decisions to travel. Surveying prospective travelers and examining social media participation data, When looking at content created by users, the objective of this study is to derive practical conclusions for Bundelkhand's tourist marketing plans. The results show that in order to draw more tourists to the area, a lively and interesting social media presence is essential.

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