

# Strategic Marketing Of Meghalaya Tourism: A Conceptual Framework For Sustainable Development

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## ABSTRACT:

Meghalaya is a standout travel destination because of its exceptional fusion of rich cultural heritage and scenic beauty. It has great potential for boosting the economy of the state through tourism activities. Promotion of tourist attraction in the state calls for a strategic marketing approach that encompasses various marketing strategies. Further, a holistic marketing mix that includes vital elements should be carefully planned and implemented to ensure the successful effort in communicating tourism offerings of Meghalaya. The study will delve on the significance of adopting a critical marketing theories and depicting the appropriate marketing strategies, thereby incorporating it in the selling and communicating the tourism offerings in the state of Meghalaya.

**Keywords:** Strategic Marketing, Tourism, Strategic Marketing Mix, Meghalaya Tourism, Sustainable Development

## 1. Introduction:

The growth of tourism in Meghalaya has been divided into three stages, beginning with inception in the 1980s-1990s, followed by establishment from 2000 to 2014, and lastly, take-off from 2015 to 2019 (Lyngdoh, 2022). Meghalaya tourism can promote socio-economic growth as well as the preservation of culture and livelihoods (Priyanka & Devarani, 2022). It also has the potential to strengthen the economy in Meghalaya (Khyriem, 2018). The growth of tourism is coupled by the increase in entrepreneurial set-up like construction, transport, agriculture, food processing, handicrafts, and financial services (Meghalaya Tourism Policy, 2023, Department of Tourism, Government of Meghalaya). Additionally, tourism serves as an alternate source of livelihood in the state of Meghalaya (Peinlang, 2019). Hence, tourism in Meghalaya contributes significantly to the state's GDP (Lyngdoh, 2022; Meghalaya Tourism Policy, 2023) and acts as a mover towards economic upliftment and thereby promotes the state income and employment (De & Devi, 2010). Tourism is one of the world's greatest industries, contributing \$6 trillion yearly to the global economy (or 9% of global GDP) and employing about 260 million people worldwide - either directly or indirectly (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2011). The tourism industry is now the biggest and most varied sector in the world, since it functions as a main means of producing income, employment, private sector expansion, and infrastructure development for several nations (Chancharat, 2011). Many researchers have posited that tourism not only facilitates business expansion, but also instigates holistic economic development (Lee & Change, 2008). However, to bolster the promotion of tourism, it is essential to implement a well-suited marketing strategies coupled with appropriate marketing mix.

Marketing, in this regard, may act as the catalyst that sparks the economic growth of a nation (Arnold & Quelch, 1998). Enterprises today are faced with intricate and fiercely competitive markets and with the advent of globalization, rapid and disruptive innovation, and accelerated commoditization have fundamentally transformed the methods of promoting products and services. Consequently, it is of utmost importance to adopt strategic marketing approaches and techniques to effectively navigate the heightened market competition, increased market complexity and more discerning customer base (Cravens, 2006; Alastair, 2022). Strategic marketing planning is the first phase of the marketing process. It encompasses the development of an organization portfolio, formulation of the mission statement, establishment of goals and objectives, and creation of functional strategies for each department within the organization (Eraqi, 2005). Trombetta (1976) highlighted the significance of enterprises actively participating in strategic marketing decision-making to optimize resources and capitalize on opportunities, rather than just responding to unforeseen occurrences. This paper aims to examine the prospects of strategic marketing in the tourist industry of Meghalaya. Developing a complete strategic marketing strategy is of utmost importance to effectively promote Meghalaya's distinctive attractions.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Literature review:

The study will approach with review of literature on the theme strategic marketing and relevant marketing theories aligning its implementation in the tourism industry. Literature will be gathered from peer reviewed journal which are published in a reputable journals or platforms to ensure an

academic rigour and the genuineness of a content. Search key of literature will be on the theme 'strategic marketing', 'marketing mix', 'product differentiation', 'market dominant', 'product differentiation', 'Stakeholder theory', 'Ansoff matrix' and other related theme that are significance in presenting the new concept that will contribute in the existing body of knowledge.

## 2.2. Theoretical Integration:

Integration of some vital marketing theories will be incorporated to have a sound stands on the practical application of marketing strategies in relation to tourism offerings. We believe that theories such as Ansoff matrix, 7 P's of marketing mix and stakeholder theory is crucial in facilitating mass reach and fostering a better offering of the tourism

commodities in the state of Meghalaya. Application of theoretical marketing framework will helps understand the path in flourishing the tourism sectors in the state and establish market dominance which will ensure competitive edge in the tourism business.

## 2.3. Conceptualization and discussion:

The study is centered on focusing on critical marketing strategies and marketing mix, thereby investigating few vital marketing strategies and discussing its significance in bolstering marketing tourism in the state of Meghalaya. Further, study will also extracts vitals from the renowned theoretical framework in the field of marketing and portray a significant discussion that will be incorporated in strategic marketing practices.

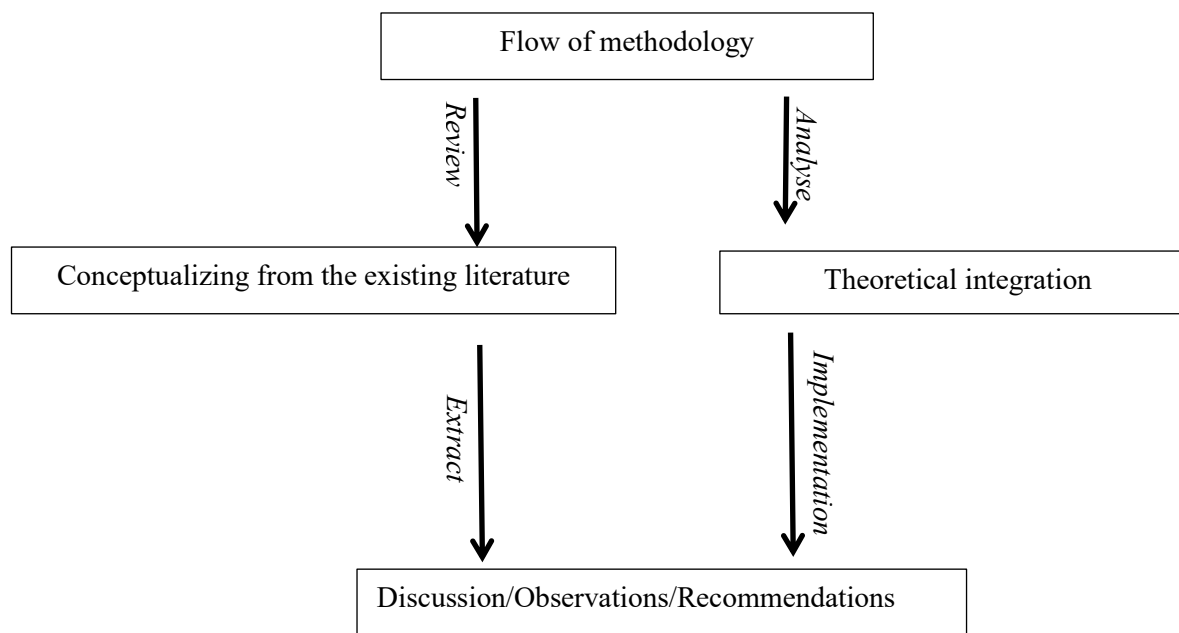


Figure 1: Methodology

## 3. Theoretical Framework

Existing theoretical framework in the field of marketing strategies are numerous and each theory of its own offer a valuable insight that contribute to the success of any unit if adopted appropriately. It is indisputable that each theory is significant in one way or the other. However, implementation of any given marketing theory is a though provoking exercise, nevertheless, there are some famous theories which are commonly adopted by any firm irrespective of its operation. Hence, this study will also delve on few renowned theories which are significant in term of market penetration and ensuring marketing dominance.

### 3.1 Ansoff Matrix Application

*Ansoff Matrix theory* portrayed the different dimensions that helps organization/ enterprise/ Institution in Product development, Product

diversification, Market Penetration and Market Development. This theory provides a strategic framework that helps enterprises determine its growth by focusing on their different dimensions of product and market. This theory presents four alternatives strategic options of expanding the sale of new and existing products to either new or existing market. The first strategy, **Market penetration**, entails enhancing the sales of existing commodities in existing markets, through rivalrous pricing, promotion, or increasing usage. **Product development** on the other hand focuses on making brand new products or modified product in offering to the existing customer base, emphasizing the practice of innovation and product improvement. **Market development** seeks to expand to the new markets with existing products, such as entering to the new geographical regions or targeting different customer group. Finally, **Diversification** is

associated with launching new products to new markets with the highest risk, but however, there may be potential for high reward. Analyzing these dimensions, the *Ansoff Matrix* helps the firm is assessing risk and choose the most suitable path for growth and expansion.

### 3.2 7 Ps Marketing Mix

The extended marketing mix (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, Physical Evidence) established by *E. Jerome McCarthy* offers a comprehensive approach to tourism marketing that addresses both tangible and intangible service elements. The first element, **Product**, refers to the tourism commodity itself, which includes attractions, accommodation, transportation, and cultural experiences tailored to meet the needs and expectations of travelers. **Price** involves determining competitive and value-based reasonable pricing strategies. **Place** depict the destination or distribution channels through which tourism products are made available. **Promotion** comprises the mode of communication strategies used to lure tourists, common promotion strategies including advertising, social media campaigns, public relations, and influencer partnerships. **People** refers to individual involved in delivering various tourism services the tourism experience. **Process** indicates to the operations in smoothing up the execution of tourism offerings to customer. Lastly, **Physical Evidence** entails tangible and intangible factors that are incidental in shaping tourists' perceptions towards a particular tourist destination and its associated variables. These seven vital elements must be cautiously managed to facilitate the enhancement of tourist offerings and sustain a compelling, memorable, tourist interactions.

### 3.3 Stakeholder theory

Stakeholder theory is a concept in business management that focus on the importance of all stakeholders in developing the sustaining business model. Developed by *R. Edward Freeman* in the 1980s emphasize on the arguments that all players/actors who have a vested interest in the affairs of the business management should be taken on board and seek their opinion and support in executing long-term business operation. Further, stakeholders does not only include customer/tourist, employees, investors, community, government, etc, but it also include natural environment which the business must be taken due attention in conserving it.

### 4. Strategic Marketing and Tourism: an overview

The degree to which strategic marketing has been used in various tourism sectors is being influenced by developments in supply and demand shifts as well as changes in international travel since the 1950s

(Palatková, 2012). Impact of marketing on travel and tourism has been devalued by policymakers and practitioners, resulting in a misunderstanding of its importance to the sector (March, 1994). Implementation of strategic marketing in the field of tourism is less visible (Palatková, 2012). There is a need for more extensive research on strategic concerns in travel and tourism marketing and distribution, including a thorough investigation of contextual elements (Faulkner, 1993). However, to ensure long-term sustainability and profitability, organizations/enterprises/local communities should conduct strategic marketing, with an emphasis on long-term development rather than short-term development. Eraqi (2005) found that tourist firms in Egypt who focus on strategic marketing tend to have a long-standing in the market. The contemporary marketing strategy adopted by firms or organizations in the tourism industry is strategic partnership and collaboration. Strategic partnerships are crucial for tourism firms to achieve a sustainable and competitive market position (Williams, 1999; Eraqi, 2005). Additionally, responsible tourism is one of the tags used in strategic marketing practices by most firms, the Strategic Plan of Center for Responsible Travel (CREST) 2023-2026, emphasized on responsible tourism as one of the strategies to market tourist destination and in today's corporate environment, it is obvious that responsible management practices may result in economic advantages and be exploited to obtain a competitive edge (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Tourism business prioritizes social responsibility due to its reliance on cultural assets and natural resources. In Istria, Croatia, visitors emphasize nature preservation (Pavia, Gržinić, & Floričić, 2014), reflecting responsible tourism activities supported by the local community. Another common marketing strategy adopted by most tourist enterprises is the application of the internet and technology in promoting tourism related products/services. The intervention of internet has proven to be an effective marketing tool in reaching to many audiences. In the study conducted by Štefko, Királ'ová & Mudrík (2015) found out that the availability of the Internet at a relatively cheap cost and limited financial resources for both visitors and destinations in Slovakia foreshadow this medium's rise to prominence in strategic interactive engagement with tourists. Also, NTO (National Tourism Organization) in East Asia use the WWW (World Wide Web) to disseminate information about the tourism and hospitality sector which has been regarded as one of the most economically and significant marketing strategies in recent years (Soteriades & Avgeli, 2000; So & Morrison, 2004).

### 5. Strategic competitive Analysis using Ansoff Matrix- Meghalaya context

The survival of travel and tourism as a dynamic enterprise rest on the adoption of a strategic marketing approach (Riege & Perry 2000). According to Feurer & Chaharbaghi (1995) and Lin & Chen (2008) an enterprise competitive advantage is a unique set of variables that distinguish it from rivals and make it more successful. Strategy (especially marketing strategy) and competitive advantage are inextricably linked, on the one hand, competitive advantage serves as a foundation or essence for strategy formulation and on the other hand, strategy formulation is the process of creating and maintaining competitive advantage (Harris & Ogbonna, 2001; López, 2005; Cater, 2003). Travel and tourism enterprises are confronted with the fast-changing and unpredictability market situations. Developing a competitive marketing strategy will help an organization to establish, retain, or defend its position (Pratiwi et al., 2020). Public and private travel and tourism organizations might aim for overall cost/price leadership or distinguish themselves to seek product quality leadership. Furthermore, focusing on market niches can lead to a successful strategic position (Riege & Perry, 1998). The primary obstacle confronting tourism organizations is the task of establishing and sustaining prosperous enterprises among the swiftly evolving market conditions and surroundings. Continuously meeting evolving customer demands is crucial (Gretzel et al., 2004). Strategic marketing involves establishing long-term marketing objectives and a (strategic market) plan to achieve them (Alastair, 2022). The Intelligent Marketing Strategy serves as a reservoir of creative thinking,

innovation, and information generation. Strategic marketing may play a mutually significant role in achieving organizational performance. On one side, it may fulfill the conditions necessary for sustainable competitive advantage, while on the other hand, it can lead to exceptional enterprises performance (Aghazadeh, 2015). The modern marketing approach in the twenty- first century has evolved from the traditional concepts of the twentieth century. This new approach, known as the "strategic concept," acknowledges that every aspect of marketing is important. It goes beyond focusing on product and customer, and takes into account the external factors such as competition, technology, government, and culture (Keegan, 2004). Consequently, marketing strategy encompasses the steps used to determine target audiences, create a positioning plan using the marketing mix, and decide how to segment the market (Slater & Olson, 2001). Hence, tourism enterprises and destinations can gain a competitive edge in the market by developing clear marketing strategies (Pratiwi et al., 2020).

Tourism in the state of Meghalaya has enormous potential due to its natural beauty, ethnic diversity, and cultural ethos. In 2019, the tourist footfall in the State stood at about 12.7 lakhs (including 25,000 foreigners). Tourism industry of Meghalaya is projected to reach ₹ 12,000 crore, with an estimated annual footfall of 20 lakh visitors by 2028 (India Today NE, Nov 22, 2023 <https://www.indiatodayne.in/meghalaya/story/meghalaya-tourism-to-grow-to-rs-12000-crore-annual-footfall-to-reach-20-lakh-by-2028-715195-2023-11-22>).

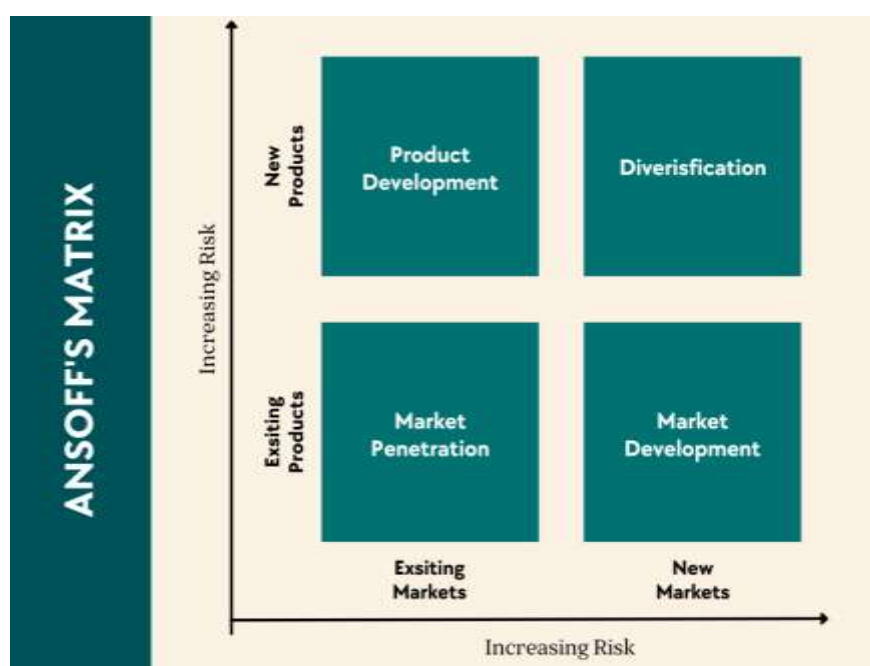


Figure 2 : Ansoff Matrix (Source : Ansoff Matrix Developed by Paul Vanzandt, 2023)

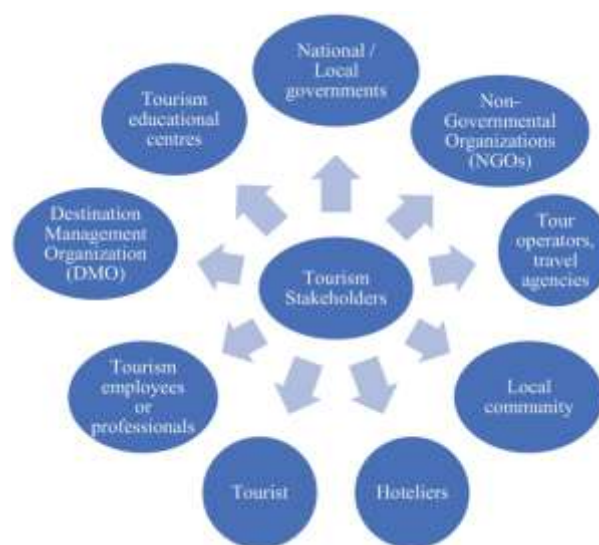
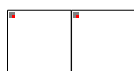


Considering the potential of tourism in the state of Meghalaya, the need to incorporate Ansoff matrix theory is the call of the day to penetrate in the tourism market and communicate Meghalaya tourism offerings at a global scale. To develop market in the tourism industry, one such strategy that tourism sector in Meghalaya may adopt is by building or communicating a USP (Unique Selling Proposition) for a particular tourism commodity/destination and ensure brand recognition. It is highly regarded as the most recent technique in the tourism business to attract more visitors and maintain a competitive edge. Unique Selling proposition (USP) or Unique Selling Point, are the features that distinguish one's services and goods from others. (Runyon, 1984). Every enterprise must determine what they do better or differently than their competitors, the desired features might be both psychological and physical (Ahmed & Krohn, 1994). When a country establishes a unique attraction, people see extra value in the commodity/destination. This might result in an area being considered as trendy because the consumer wants to be associated with the status that the place has to offer (Gilbert, 1990). USP is highly regarded as a mean of market development and market penetration thereby communicating it to a wider audience. The national/International tag or Unique Selling Proposition associated with Meghalaya tourist destination must be publicized using relevant strategic marketing techniques and platforms to showcase its unique diversification. Meghalaya is perceived as nature based tourist attraction, it is gifted with natural beauty and the need to inform its picturesque natural beauty, enterprise/Government/Community/organization who are at the helm of affairs in promotion must also communicate these different diversification to ascertain market penetration and market development. Nature-based tourism is generally considered to be one of the fastest growing sectors of the world largest industry (Mehmetoglu, 2007; Balmford et al., 2009). To match consumer demand, there is an increasing need to provide more nature-based tourism attractions to visitors (Naidoo, Ramseook-Munhurrun & Seegoolam, 2011). Designing product components (core, tangible, and augmented), nature-based attractions should also incorporate some cultural and pleasure elements at both the total and specific product level (Mehmetoglu, 2007). In this regard, tourism in state of Meghalaya should also design their tourism offerings (tangible and intangible) and incorporate cultural and infrastructural pleasure that are associated with the tourist attraction. By doing so, it can ensure market product diversification and market development. Furthermore, developing the existing tourism offerings in a sustainable way is important to facilitate product development. In this

regard, responsible tourism is one of the latest invention to facilitate product differentiation and at the same time ensure environmental sustainability.

## 6. Stakeholder Theory: Impact on Meghalaya Tourism

Selling of tourism offering in the state of Meghalaya requires the support from various stakeholders like Government, Local Community, Employees, Professional, Business and others. The mobilize efforts of these tourism stakeholders are incidental to the success of selling Meghalaya's tourism. Hence, the urgent need is to ensure a constant communication and collaboration with these stakeholders in order to have a wider reach. At the outset, tourism firm must concentrate on fostering a robust communication with the main stakeholder(s) as communication is often given only cursory attention, seldom going beyond the fundamental statement of its relevance to the strategic management process (Moss & Warnaby, 1998). An effective strategic marketing communication plan is crucial for achieving the desired success of a firm (Shrivastava & Dawle, 2020). The primary goal of communication is to generate a demand for the destination. (Kiráľová, 1995), and in this context strategic communication with various stakeholder that are incidental to the success of tourism business is paramount. Modern tourists want innovative and engaging forms of communication, desiring to establish meaningful connections with the location. Success of a location hinges on its capacity to attentively listen to guests and discern their underlying motivations for visiting. The use of interactive marketing communications of the destination is notably evident in terms of the alterations in tourist behaviour (Štefko, Kiráľová & Mudrík, 2015). Currently, in the age of globalization, a noteworthy phenomenon is the significant contribution of tourism to the global economy. The growth of international tourism is propelled by advancements in telecommunications and information technology (Astuti, 2020; Kotler, 2003). To effectively influence the way potential visitors and other interested parties perceive the tourist destination of Meghalaya, it is crucial to implement strategic communication. One modern approach to achieve this is by utilizing social media and technology to display captivating visuals of the destination. The dissemination of information via social media and technology has been a modern method used by organizations and communities to promote and establish the reputation of a tourism destination (Tasci & Kozak, 2006; Tran & Rudolf, 2022). It is pertinent to note that social media has revealed new and exciting locations in Meghalaya; nevertheless, to attract a large number of visitors, the media material must include strategic communication.



**Figure 3: Tourism's stakeholder (Source: Sharma & Arora, 2024)**

Robust collaboration among diverse stakeholders is essential for promoting tourism in Meghalaya. This partnership might include government, tourist agencies, local communities, and private sector firms working together to develop successful marketing campaigns, improve infrastructure, enhance visitor experiences, and promote natural and cultural legacy of Meghalaya. Furthermore, it is critical for these stakeholders to work together to share resources, experience, and information to establish sustainable tourism practices that benefit the local economy and community while reducing negative environmental consequences (Selin, 1999; Erkuş-Öztürk & Eraydın, 2010). They may reach a larger audience by collaborating to develop creative methods, compelling tourist packages, and harness the power of digital marketing (Kumar, 2021). This cooperation might also include working with travel bloggers/Vloggers and influencers to develop compelling material that highlights Meghalaya's unique attractions and experiences. The combine effort of tourism stakeholders facilitate awareness and attract more visitors, resulting in economic development and more job prospects for the local community. In the advancement of tourism, collaboration and partnership is essential in optimizing the industry's capacity and nurturing its expansion (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2007). Through collaboration, various stakeholders including governmental entities, tourism authorities, enterprises, and local communities can combine their resources, knowledge, and connections to establish influential promotional initiatives, establish sustainable tourism methods, improve destination experiences, and appeal to a broader spectrum of international tourists (Jamal & Getz, 1995).

## 7. Strategic Marketing mix for tourism in Meghalaya

Marketing mix plays a pivotal role in the success of tourist marketing by enabling companies to efficiently promote their services and adapt to the requirements of travelers (Novitaningtyas, Achsa & Rahardjo, 2019). According to Ciriković (2014), an enterprise may remain competitive and meet the traveler's wants in a certain market niche via an effective combination of marketing mix elements. Strategic marketing mix for tourism comprises a blend of diverse components with the objective of promoting and enticing consumers to travel locations and experiences (Wijayanti & Ike-Janita, 2016). Utilising the four Ps of marketing— product, pricing, place and promotion can determine what to sell, how to sell it, where to sell it, and how to promote it. This model is very useful in the tourist industry (Kotler, Bowen, Makens, & Baloglu, 2017). Many authors and researchers adhere to the 4 Ps of marketing mix while promoting tourism products/services. Furthermore, 3 extra Ps are often considered to enhance the effectiveness of selling tourist goods and services. Thus, the 7 Ps includes product, price, promotion, place (distribution and placement), people, physical evidence, and process. Products are goods or services that are provided to tourists for fulfilling their needs, desires and expectations. Price is a major factor that travelers consider when making decisions about purchasing specific tourism products. Promotion is seen as an activity to familiarize tourists with the product/services. Place indicate its wide range of tourist products/destination that are specifically catered to visitors. Physical evidence in tourism destinations refers to the tangible and visible characteristics of the environment that tourists can

observe. People play a crucial role in running and managing the tourism business, ensuring everything runs smoothly. The process can be seen as a transformation, where resources are converted into specific goods or services for tourism (Novitaningtyas, Achsa & Rahardjo, 2019). Meghalaya Tourism business is highly dependent on efficient marketing strategies to attract and accommodate the requirements of travellers. A thorough grasp of the commodity mix is necessary, including tourism attractions, the overall ambience of the location, tourism facilities and services, and destination accessibility (Gajdošík et al., 2015). In this regard, organisations/communities/enterprises dealing with the promotion of tourism in Meghalaya must

include the aforesaid marketing mix. Furthermore, according to Prakasa et al. (2019), the composition of 10 components of the marketing mix: product, price, place, promotion, participant, process, physical evidence, packaging, programming, and partnership are crucial to effectively promote tourist goods and services. The development and promotion of tourism in Meghalaya requires keeping up with the described marketing mix and putting it into action to ensure delightful experience for tourists and enhance the probability of their visitation to a certain location. Developing marketing strategies to promote tourism-related goods and services or to enhance a tourist destination nowadays involves a systematic procedure, programming, and partnerships (Prakasa et al. 2019).



**Figure 4: Marketing mix of tourism (Source: Holienčinová & Holota, 2018)**

A well drafted marketing mix in the Meghalaya tourism will allow industries/business/communities/organisation to handle their product offerings, determine competitive pricing, identify appropriate distribution channels, develop effective promotional campaigns, engage with participants and partners, optimize operational processes, provide tangible evidence of quality, create appealing packaging and programming, and establish mutually beneficial partnerships. The consolidation of all the essential elements required for an effective tourism marketing plan, allowing locations to distinguish themselves in a fiercely competitive market and provide unforgettable experiences for travelers (Gilbert, 1990; Soteriades, 2012). Consequently, marketing mix is of utmost importance in tourist marketing since it encompasses several components like product, price, place, promotion, participation, process, physical evidence, packaging, programming, and partnership (Prakasa et al., 2019).

## 8. Discussion and Observation:

Tourist preferences and habits evolve over time (Holienčinová & Holota, 2018). The goal of marketing in the tourism industry is to create and distribute goods that appeal to a diverse variety of tourists (Ciriković, 2014). A carefully planned and skilfully implemented marketing strategy is essential to promote tourism by firm/organisation/community. It allows the firm to effectively showcase its strengths to the target market (Ahmed & Krohn, 1994). The application of well planned marketing strategy and the incorporation of suitable marketing mix is critical to increase the visibility of tourism offerings in the state of Meghalaya. As mentioned, the tourism firm that desired to penetrate the market or diversify its presence is to inculcate some unique tagline that can lure tourist to experience a destination or buy any tourist product. However, some of the tourist destination in the state of Meghalaya is entitled with a national or international tag line like With well-known tourist destinations such as **Cherrapunji-Mawsynram- 'world rainiest place'; Dawki Umngot**

**river-** '*cleanest river in Asia*'; **Mawlynnong village-** '*Asia's Cleanest Village*'; **Krempuri cave-** '*World longest Sandstone cave*'; **Nokrek Biosphere Reserve-** '*India's most beautiful national parks with UNESCO world heritage status*'; **Living root bridge-** '*UNESCO world heritage site*'; **Mawryngkhong trek-** '*Spectacular and terrifying trek in India*'; **Krem Liat Prah -**'*longest natural cave in South Asia*'; **Khongthong village-** '*Whistling village of India*' and many more. The use of a slogans and USP in advertising messaging benefits both marketers and consumers (Talabi, Chile & Abubakri, 2012). USP in the marketing slogan can captivate tourist and entice them to visit such destination.

The importance of communicating a USP at a larger scale can mobilize a large number of tourist footfalls, but selecting the mean of communication is crucial decision. However, in this day of digital world, the intervention of internet and in particular social media proven to be the cheapest, yet effective tools for marketing any given commodity. Digital marketing has contributed significantly to the growth and development of tourism sector (Maurer, 2021). It act as an essential tool for effectively engaging with tourist far and wide. Tourism Department of the state of Meghalaya should allocate resources towards establishing a strong digital footprint by means of a user-friendly website, interactive social media platforms, and partnerships with reputable online travel agencies or renowned vloggers/bloggers. By disseminating high-quality visuals, informative content and virtual experiences, one can captivate prospective travelers and grant them an advance glimpse into the aesthetic allure that Meghalaya state has to offer. Integrated tourism planning involves collaboration among multiple levels of an organization, as well as stakeholders, to achieve desired goals (Hall & McArthur, 1998). Additionally, ensuring robust partnership and collaboration with various tourism stakeholders may boost and develop the tourism sector in Meghalaya. Collaborations with travel agencies, communities, tour operators and travel vlogger may aid in the creation of customized packages, making it simpler for travelers to organize their vacations. Participating in travel fairs and engaging with foreign travel communities may further widen the reach and attract a varied range of guests.

Sustainability of tourism firms or organization cannot be sustained without the support of local community of local administration, hence, engaging local communities in the tourism sector guarantees its long-term viability and enhances the overall visitor experience (Lee, 2013). Bringing them on board is significant to help firms sustain the tourist destination. Additionally providing training initiatives may augment the hospitality aptitude of local individuals, fostering a congenial and

welcoming atmosphere. Prioritizing conscientious tourist practices would aid in the sustaining of pristine environment of Meghalaya and rich cultural legacy for future progeny. Furthermore, to tap the tourism revenue of the state, there has to be adequate infrastructure to support tourism activities. An efficient infrastructure is crucial for effective tourism development (Adeola & Evans, 2019). It is important to enhance transportation networks, accommodations, and other necessary facilities to meet the demands of the increasing number of tourists. Having a smooth travel experience can really boost word-of-mouth, which is a powerful marketing tool.

## 9. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 9.1. Government Policy Framework

The government of Meghalaya should create a dedicated Tourism Marketing Authority with autonomous power and allocate a substantial amount of tourism revenue for marketing activities. Meghalaya is known for its best nature-based tourist offerings and the need to sustain its prime location is important and hence, this require some regulatory framework to balance economic development and environmental conservation. Government should create an impact assessment for tourism infrastructure projects and develop standardized training programme to service provider in fostering tourism sustenance from all corners.

### 9.2. Infrastructure Investment Policy

The initial stage for creating infrastructure which will facilitate increase in the demand for tourist commodities, will require government in prioritizing connectivity that includes road transport, train networks, airports and digital infrastructure. Further, government or development financial institutions should establish tourism infrastructure development funds with relative low interest rate for local entrepreneur allowing them to build up basic tourist infrastructural facilities. Additionally, the government should mandate the creation on integrated waste management in all tourist zones.

### 9.3. Marketing and Promotion Policies

Development of digital mobile apps specifically for tourist services and information is important which allow tourist to gather first-hand information and do the reservation from that apps. Further, implementation of social media marketing policies needs to be upgraded at par with global standard that will have the capacity to intrigue the viewers and entice them to experience tourism related offering in the state of Meghalaya. Additionally, creation of brand identity or establishing tagline across various destination is the call of the day in devising a sound marketing strategies. Creation of



trademark protection for unique tourism assets and experience, endorsing a brand ambassadors with local and national personalities are a common but effective marketing strategies in boosting sale of tourism offerings. Lastly, facilitate training programme to community or individual associated with tourism activities in marketing techniques.

#### 9.4. Collaboration and Partnership policy:

Enterprise or entity cannot function in isolation, it needs the support of various players. Hence, collaboration and partnership in term of revenue sharing, investment, and operation is important. Institutions/organisations need to partner with the local, national and internal entity to bolster the sale of tourism in the state of Meghalaya. Further, instigating enthusiastic involvement of local communities in tourist endeavours and gather the support of community-based tourism initiatives to ensure the economic empowerment of local inhabitants while safeguarding their cultural heritage.

#### 9.5 Training and development:

State government must create training programs on strategic marketing tailored for those directly engaged in the tourist industry, including guides, hotel personnel, and service providers. Improve their proficiency in customer service, languages, and cultural awareness to enhance the overall guest experience.

A strong set of policies to encourage the widespread marketing of Meghalaya as a tourist destination should be drafted by the state government in conjunction with local communities or the destination marketing organization (DMO). The successful implementation of these policy recommendations will require strong political will, adequate financial resources, effective coordination among stakeholders, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. The government of Meghalaya must prioritize tourism as a key economic sector while ensuring that development remains sustainable, inclusive, and beneficial for all stakeholders.

#### 10. Conclusion and recommendation

Marketing success hinges on zeroing in on the right demographic and learning everything about the market. Selecting a target market is crucial for developing a successful marketing strategy (Jang, Morrison & O'leary, 2004). In tourism, a target market refers to a section of travelers who have common features (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 1999). Eco-tourists, adventurers, and cultural explorers might all find Meghalaya to be the perfect location. Those in need of peace and tranquility may find it in the serene surroundings, while those in search of excitement can enjoy the many hiking paths and water sports. In addition, visitors interested in

experiencing local traditions may do so during one of the state's many distinctive festivals, including Shad Suk Mynsiem, Wangala or Behdienkhlam. Hence, to showcase the natural diversity and culture of Meghalaya, choosing the appropriate marketing strategy is importance. Strategic marketing plays a crucial role in unleashing the untapped potential of tourism in Meghalaya. Through highlighting its distinctive attractions, reaching the appropriate audience, and embracing sustainable practices, the state can establish itself as an essential destination on the global tourism map. Meghalaya has the potential to attract adventurous travellers by collaborative efforts, community engagement, and utilizing online platforms, leading to economic growth and the preservation of its unique cultural and natural wonders.

The road ahead demands constant adaptation to changing tourist preferences, technological development and keeping with global market dynamics while preserving the Meghalaya natural and cultural assets for future generations. Strategic marketing, when executed with precision and commitment, will transform Meghalaya into a sustainable tourism powerhouse that benefits all stakeholders in maintaining its unique character and environmental integrity.

#### 11. Limitation and future scope of research:

Strategic marketing plays a crucial role in shaping the success of tourism especially in regions like Meghalaya, which are renowned for its distinctive cultural heritage and stunning scenery. Although the use of strategic marketing is essential to increase the sale of goods and services to endure the intense competition in the market (Cravens, 2006; Alastair, 2022), but this study is based on the theoretical framework analysing the significance of strategic marketing from a theoretical aspect. However, the need for an empirical study is importance to test the significance of a relevant marketing tools or medium. Furthermore, a practical examination of each component of the marketing mix is required to delineate the relative importance of each piece in relation to marketing a particular tourist destination.

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