
UNIT 11 SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE MARKETING

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11.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit you should be able to:

- understand the concept of socially responsible marketing in tourism,
- know about the critical concepts in socially responsible marketing,
- know the importance of the promotion mix,
- understand what is alternative tourism,
- know about sustainable tourism, and
- learn about the numerous agencies involved in socially responsible marketing.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry operates in an environment where there is increasing competition for both revenue and customers. The conclusion is simple – those who market will do better. The same holds true for socially responsible marketing. In this Unit, we have explained the need and importance of socially responsible marketing and how the marketing tools are used to achieve optimal results.

11.2 MARKETING

We will begin this Unit with a brief recapitulation of our understanding of what is meant by Marketing. Marketing means designing an organisation's product in terms of the needs and desires of the targeted market and then using effective means of promotion, distribution and service.

We need to focus on three aspects which are relevant to marketing:

- The objectives,
- The Exchange Process, and
- The Customer.

In tourism there is a fourth aspect i.e. the Server.

In the traditional market model the **Exchange** relationship involves mutual benefits, and the identification of the **Customer**. The **Objectives** are profits through customer satisfaction.

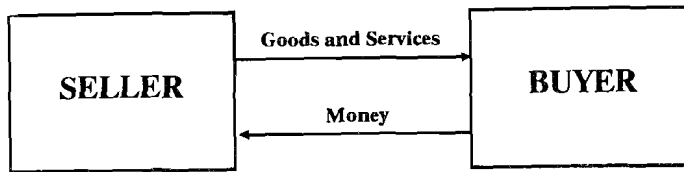


Fig. 1.

This is how the marketing model relates to the marketing activity. The customer is the person who pays for the tourism product or service. Marketeers then plan the traditional 4P's and the additional 2 P's that relate to the Tourism and Service industry, in terms of the requirements of the target market (see Block 4). This leads to a mutually beneficial exchange process and fulfillment of the objectives of the organisation i.e. profits.

11.3 SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE MARKETING

Philip Kotler has differentiated between marketing and social marketing in the following way:

"Social Marketing differs from other areas of marketing only with respect to the objectives of the marketer and his or her organisation. Social Marketing seeks to influence social behaviours not to benefit the marketer, but to benefit the target audience and the general society...It's sponsors simply wish to make the society a better place, not merely benefit themselves or their organisation".

What do we understand from this distinction? The important point that emerges is that in social marketing, the marketing activity of the organisation is not to be seen as a purely commercial activity as other objectives are involved. This is not to say that the aim is not to make a profit. The organisation can and does make a profit, but there are other equally important objectives involved. Therefore, an organisation or group involved in socially responsible marketing has multiple objectives, and each of the objectives is of equal importance.

11.4 A SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE MARKETING MODEL

The use of the traditional market model is not adequate in describing socially responsible marketing because:

- the exchange process is more complex. There are two equally important exchanges between the customer and the organisation. The exchange of money, and the exchange of information and communications,
- there exist multiple constituents, and
- the organisation has multiple objectives – other than that of monetary gain.

Therefore, a more complex model is required, which should incorporate the following points:

- the multiple objectives,
- the exchange process, and
- the multiple constituents.

1) Multiple Objectives

The primary distinction in socially responsible marketing lies in the objectives. What are these multiple objectives? According to Krippendorf, the goal is to develop a new form of tourism: **"the common goal must be to develop and promote new forms of tourism, which will bring the greatest possible benefit to all participants – travellers, the host population and the tourist business, without causing intolerable ecological and social damage."**

Shapiro has classified the marketing needs of organisations dealing with socially, responsible objectives into three areas:

- i) **resource attraction:** i.e. generation of profits and money,
- ii) **persuasion** i.e. use of communications to change attitudes, lifestyles, and
- iii) **resource allocation** i.e. allocating the funds generated not only to the shareholders and business partners, but to put back the funds into furthering the socially responsible objectives of the enterprise.

2) The Exchange Process

Persuasion is an important process in socially responsible marketing. Therefore the exchange relationship in socially responsible marketing involves the additional aspects of **Communication and Information**.

As you can see from the model this is a two way process. Hence, it is called an "exchange" process. Information is obtained from the consumer and the target market to ascertain how much of the social objectives of the organisation have been understood by the target market. On the basis of the data obtained, the communication mix by the organisation is prepared.

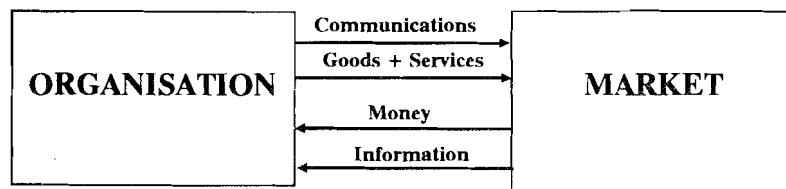


Fig. 2: The Social Marketing Exchange Relationship

This **communication process** involves exchange of communication regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the organisation. The message can be delivered to the target market by printing the mission of the organisation on posters, pamphlets or brochures.

In the **information exchange process** the organisation actively seeks the views of the general public and its customers into their level of awareness about the objectives of the organisation and its work.

3) Multiple Constituents

In Responsible Tourism these would be:

- the tourist,
- the host population,
- the destination region,
- the environment, and
- ecological and cultural aspects.

11.5 IMPORTANCE OF THE PROMOTION MIX

(Please read this Section in conjunction with Case Study INTACH on Humayun's Tomb - An Interactive Media Presentation in Unit 12).

As outlined above, one of the vital elements in socially responsible marketing is communication and information exchange.

The promotion mix of an organisation provides a means of communicating effectively to the consumer, and perspective customer, about its product and ideas. These communication goals are more complex for organisations dealing with responsible marketing, since the task

involves not only dealing with a "marketplace of products" but also dealing with a "marketplace of ideas."

The tools of the promotion mix are Advertising, Publicity, Sales Promotion and Personal Selling. These are the ideas abound in today's marketplace. For example, in responsible tourism these could be furthering the concepts and idea of conservation, rehabilitation, sustainable development etc. Each organisation is communicating its social message to the general public. What is needed is a clear and simple message that will achieve a "share of heart and a share of mind" with the target market.

The Range of Promotional Tools includes:

- i) Advertisement Tools like Radio/TV spots, mailings, point-of purchase displays.
- ii) Sales promotion Tools like Special events, Fairs, Exhibits
- iii) Publicity Tools like Press Kits, Reports, Public Relations (PR).
- iv) Personal Selling like Sales presentation, Tour Guides.

An effective management tool to achieve an optimum promotional mix is the AIDA Model or "Hierarchy of Effects Model". The aim of the promotion and sales campaign is to identify the stage the target market is in, using this model with relation to the "decision to buy". For the tourist organisation this would mean identifying the stage the target market is in by means of Market Research, with relation to the concept of conservation, rehabilitation and interest in eco tourism, etc.

The campaign needs to be developed with the aim of moving the tourist to the next stage in the model, by using appropriate promotional methods and tools. Market Research is an effective method to determine at which stage the consumer is presently in.

Table 1
Determining the Promotional Objectives

Stage	AIDA Model	Hierarchy of Effects	Management Task	Promotional Methods/Tools
Cognitive	Attention	Awareness Knowledge	Information	Poster, Exhibits, Advertisements
Affective	Interest Desire	Liking Preference Conviction	Persuasion Attitude Change Reinforce	Direct Mail, Reminders, PR, Support Mail
Behaviour	Action	Purchase	Motivation to Act	Direct Selling

(Source : R. H. Colley : Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results, Association of National Advertiser, New York 1961).

Research in Marketing of consumer products has shown that the most effective promotional tools are Advertising, followed by Sales Promotion, Personal Selling and Publicity. In responsible marketing the relative importance is changed. Although research in this filed is limited, Personal Selling is the most effective tool in this area.

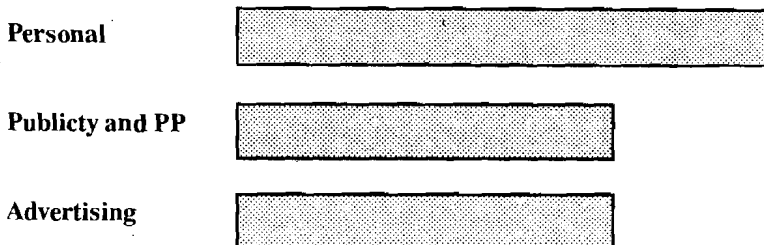


Fig. 3.

Check Your Progress-1

1) What is the main difference between marketing and social marketing?

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2) Shapiro has outlined three important marketing needs of an organisation understanding social marketing. What are these?

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3) List some promotional objectives in responsible marketing.

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4) What are the promotional tools used by - A Travel Agency, A Hotel, A Wildlife Sanctuary? List at least three tools for each.

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11.6 SOME CONCEPTS CRITICAL TO SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE MARKETING

We need to briefly touch on some of the concepts that are basic to responsible marketing in tourism. Three concepts are crucial. These are:

- Alternative Development,
- Sustainable Tourism, and
- The Concept of Carrying Capacity.

11.6.1 Alternative Development

The Brundtland Commission (Tokyo, 1987) had a profound impact on the definition of alternative development. The report that emerged from this commission is titled, The Brundtland Report. This report defined sustainable development as that which "meets the goals of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Proponents of alternative or sustainable development broadly agree on some basic parameters, a few of which are given below:

- 1) There is a need to change the scale of production from large scale to small scale operations.
- 2) It is important to achieve a development that is more people oriented.
- 3) Maintain economic growth with regard to the "essential needs of the world's poor".

11.6.2 Sustainable Tourism

An understanding of alternative development leads us to the concept of sustainable or responsible tourism. This area also continues to give rise to a lot of ongoing debate, and a consensus on a single definition remains to be found. However a lack of a definition is a positive point, since the subject is evolving continuously.

Sustainable or responsible tourism can be broadly defined as "**forms of tourism that are consistent with natural, social and community values, and which allow both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interaction and shared experiences**". This means that **tourism should not have a negative effect or impact** on the environment, culture, or social values of the host population. Some critical areas to focus on would be:

- The environment has an intrinsic value and is to be enjoyed by future generations.
- Tourism should be a positive activity and benefit the visitor as well as the community.
- The relationship between the environment and tourism should be managed with a long term viewpoint, so that there should be no damage to natural resources.
- Tourism activities in terms of the operation and nature of the enterprise should be in harmony with the location.
- All those responsible i.e. tourism industry, local authority, environment agencies etc. need to work together.
- Idea of Carrying Capacity is at the heart of Sustainable Tourism.
- Emphasis should be on cultural sustainability. Tourism should not damage the culture of the host community. The experience of the tourist should be through organised encounters.

11.6.3 Carrying Capacity

Carrying Capacity, for the purpose of tourism, is defined as "**that level of tourist presence which creates impacts on the host community, environment and economy that are acceptable to both tourist and host, and sustainable over future time periods.**"

The concept of carrying capacity carries with it some notion of sustainability. Further the carrying capacity threshold is likely to occur first in some areas, and later in others. The tourism activity may first affect the ecosystem of a destination, and later affect the culture, or environment.

There are several types of carrying capacity of a site, or resort, or tourist area:

- **Physical capacity** is how many number of tourists can an attraction absorb at a given time, without causing any negative effects to the attraction or site.
- **Psychological Capacity** of a site is the amount of congestion that the tourist will tolerate before the site loses its appeal. Different sites have varying amount of carrying capacities. A beach has a different psychological carrying capacity as compared to that of a wildlife sanctuary.
- **Ecological Capacity** is the ability of the region to absorb tourists without destroying the balance of nature.
- **The Social and Cultural capacity of the host population**, involves the impact of the tourists on the culture and value system of the people who belong to the tourist region i.e. the host population.

11.7 AGENCIES INVOLVED IN RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

To make responsible tourism a success and not remain a mere lip service or an academic exercise, involvement needs to be both at the macro and micro levels. You will notice in the list given below, there are numerous agencies and enterprises involved in the business of tourism. These can be government controlled or run by independent entrepreneurs; they can be operated on a large scale, or a small scale; ownership could be local, national or even multinational.

Difficulties in coordination between such diverse enterprises are one of the major problems faced in trying to achieve a coordinated approach to long term planning and creating effective control systems.

- 1) **Organisations at the Macro level:** UNESCO, World Tourism Organisation (WTO), World Bank and Green Peace are some organisations active in the area at the Macro level.

Some Examples of the work undertaken by these organisations are:

- **The International Academy for the Study of Tourism** was set up in Santandor, Spain in 1988, under the aegis of the WTO. The aim was to create a scholarly body to investigate the theoretical nature of tourism and its global role.
 - A seminar on Alternative Tourism was organised by WTO at Tamanrasset in 1989, where alternative tourism was chosen to endorse "responsible tourism." The aim of the conference was to convince all parties – governments, tourists, hosts, the tourist industry – to respect the social and cultural resources on which sustainable development of tourism was seen to rest.
- 2) **Governments:** This includes Central, regional and local public authority to develop a responsible tourism policy with effective planning and monitoring systems encouraging good environment practices.
 - 3) **Non-Government Organisations (NGO's):** The role of the above has been outlined in detail in the previous Unit (No.10). Local pressure group formed by the host population and local citizens also come under this category.
 - 4) **Agencies involved in Tourism at the Micro level:** These include: Travel agents and tour operators, Developers of resorts, sites, attractions – both man made and natural, transporters and the accommodation sector like hotels and private lodges, etc.
 - 5) **The Green Consumer:** The individual traveller to whom environment issues are as important as the concept of how to spend his/her leisure time.

Check Your Progress-2

1) What is alternative development?

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2) What is sustainable tourism?

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3) List two different types of carrying capacities.

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11.8 LET US SUM UP

Social Responsible Marketing is becoming increasingly important if we wish to keep the activity of tourism in harmony with the environment. This is a complex task, since the objectives of responsible tourism are multiple, and coordination between the various agencies involved is difficult. However, if we wish to preserve the world's tourist attractions for future generations, all parties involved at the macro and micro level need to take a committed and long term part in this field.

11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) Read Secs. 11.2 and 11.3 carefully and you will find that there is a basic difference in approach. Profit is not the sole motive, influencing social behaviour is a major concern.
- 2) See Sec. 11.4.
- 3) See Sec. 11.5.
- 4) You have to answer from your own experience.

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) See Sub-sec. 11.6.1.
- 2) See Sub-sec. 11.6.2.
- 3) See Sub-sec. 11.6.3.