








Role of AI and Social Media in Tourism Destination Marketing and Crisis Management

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Abstract

With the digital technologies, particularly social media and artificial intelligence (AI), the Indian tourism industry is experiencing a radical change. The integration of AI and social media has reshaped the techniques of global tourist destination marketing and crisis management. Social media emerged as a crucial tool for marketing travel destinations, influencing tourist's perceptions, and rebuilding confidence, during and after crises. This study aimed to examine the role of AI and social media in promoting different tourism locations, especially after a crisis, to restore traveler trust and attract tourists to India.

The study incorporates qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The effects of AI- automation and social media on the Indian tourism sector and crisis management strategies were explored by reviewing existing research articles and reports. The quantitative data was collected through in-depth interviews of 25 travelers, which helped to determine the influence of social media and AI on five important travel components including destination, transportation, lodging, cuisine, and leisure activities. The findings reveal that social media played a significant role in marketing of tourist destinations. Social media and AI have significantly facilitated trip planning, including real-time assistance in selecting hotel, food, sightseeing, transportation, adventure activities, and shopping. Furthermore, both technologies have emerged as essential tools in crisis management, crowd management, exemplified by their utilization during the Mahakumbh in 2025. This study contributes to our understanding of AI-driven tourism development and recommends raising awareness of using AI tools for better experience and the ethical use of AI technologies to improve destination resilience and industry growth.

Keywords: Media Influence, Artificial Intelligence, Destination Tourism, Social Media, Crisis Communication.

1 Introduction

Tourism is regarded as an ecologically susceptible industry, which influenced from policy, economics, socio-cultural, technological advancements, and legal factors [2]. The tourism industry is India's fastest expanding sector, with an annual growth rate of 7.1%, helping the country to grab 10th position globally in terms of GDP contribution [14]. Digitization and technological advancement have significantly impacted the growth and development of this sector, as well as its associated industries. Artificial intelligence (AI) and social media are two key factors that have transformed crisis management and destination marketing strategies. This study investigates the potential effects of new technologies on tourism promotion techniques and resolving unexpected issues in the industry.

The emergence of AI and social media has resulted in a paradigm change in tourism communication. Digital media has a huge impact on the expansion and development of the tourism sector by facilitating users to access, engage, and exchange information about any tourist destination [4]. Social media platforms are replacing conventional media and have emerged as essential modes of crisis communication and tourism marketing. Various organizations, including, the International Eco-Tourism Society, Eco-Tourism Society of India, World Wide Fund for Nature, and International and Global Sustainable Tourism Council, use social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Google, and Pinterest to promote sustainable tourism and connect stakeholders [6].

Social media played a significant role in amplifying the Mahakumbh Mela on a worldwide scale by creating campaigns "#Mahakumbh2025" and "#SpiritualPrayagraj", which resulted in a large gathering in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh [19]. These digital networks give worldwide audiences direct access to their tourism destinations, allowing for real-time interaction with visitors and the exchange of user-generated content for marketing. Various digital elements like Wikipedia, social networking sites, blogs, virtual communities, collaborative taglines, photos, and videos, all contribute to drawing visitors toward particular locations. According to the study, TripAdvisor has a major impact on destination marketing in Assam and Odisha. The renowned arts and craft gallery Shrimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra, national parks, wildlife sanctuary, islands, and Kamakhya temple were promoted on the TripAdvisor platform as a one-stop destination for visitors, effectively attracting tourists to Assam in the last five years [6]. The visual content of different locations posted on Instagram and Pinterest is well aligned with the experiential essence of travel, acting as excellent motivation for potential visitors. For example, 569 social media posts including images, reels, and videos received an exceptional interaction rate of 4.79% during the Mahakumbh event 2025 in Prayagraj.

Artificial intelligence is growing as a powerful tool for marketing tourist destinations, possessing distinctive strength in data analysis, personalized experiences, and customer engagement. Industry recognizes AI as an invaluable partner in simplifying processes and optimizing resources without jeopardizing the vital human experience required to enhance customer ratings, and satisfaction. States and Union Territories are gradually adopting AI-driven solutions to improve accessibility, increase visitor engagement, and ensure a more seamless travel experience. The Incredible India Digital Platform (IIDP) strives to streamline the overall tourist experience by providing digital services that connect travelers to places, activities, and experiences in real time. The IIDP encourages better communication between tourists and local businesses [8]. AI algorithms can easily identify trends, preferences, and patterns, allowing tourism firms to modify their marketing strategy to meet tourist demands.

Chatbots enable users to predict analytic travel patterns, which influence industry strategy for attracting and interacting with potential visitors to specific destinations. Furthermore, AI's predictive skills have enhanced demand forecasting in the hotel business, resulting in more effective resource allocation and cost reductions. Additionally, AI has encouraged the development of smart destinations, making tourism more sustainable and visitor-friendly. Moreover, interactive chat, real-time videos, and audio files were considered effective mass communication tools that may be beneficial during a crisis [2]. Digital technologies such as mixed reality (MR) systems and augmented reality (AR) applications are deployed in museums across the world, as well as intelligent tourism products and ecological booking platforms [10]. AI was implemented for high-tech security at the Mahakumbh Event 2025 to monitor the region and prevent any unpleasant incidents. For the first time in the world, AI was utilized for crowd management via density mapping. To manage the crowd at the event, 160 CCTV cameras were equipped with AI facial technology [1-18].

1.1 Impact of Social Media and AI in Destination Marketing

Social media content and AI applications have transformed marketing efforts by delivering personalized content to target audiences, leading to higher engagement and conversion rates. These technologies have also been utilized to enhance tourism attraction management, event planning, and travel insurance underwriting, all of which contribute to better visitor experiences and operational efficiency [15].

Several research studies found that YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram played an important role in promoting particular tourist destinations. State governments upload photos and short videos of iconic sights in their regions on these networking sites, successfully attracting tourists. For example, the Rajasthan Tourism Board employs Instagram for promote their forts and major attractions. Madhya Pradesh highlights historical sites, wildlife, and religious places through social media campaigns like "MP ki Maya", "shadowgraphy series", "Spiritual Journey", and "Discover the Heart of India" to attract tourists to different destinations. The Kerala Tourism Department uses Facebook and other platforms to endorse Kerala as a family vacation destination through the "#GoKerala" campaign. Northeast India has promoted lesser-known locations like Ziro Valley and Mawlynnong using Instagram and YouTube. The Ministry of Tourism runs the "Dekho Apna Desh" campaign to promote various tourist attractions in India [12-13].

Mobile applications and AI improve the visitors' experience by recommending cost-effective travel plans. TripAdvisor was utilised to promote Silk Tourism, Tea Tourism, Religious Tourism, and Wildlife Tourism in many states in India [6]. AI influences travelers' decisions by providing them with past data and recent predictions about various tourist spots. AI is also fostering sustainable development through ecological tourism and heritage conservation [9]. Tour planning has become easier with machine learning algorithms, which include booking systems, fraud detection, personalization travelling plans, round-the-clock customer care services, and active responses. Virtual assistance and Chatbots enhance people's experiences by frequently responding to their queries related to ticket bookings, hotel reservations, and cancellations for any destination. Virtual reality enables travelers to organize their journeys by seeing realistic 3D digital videos. The Google translator tool assists customers in cross-cultural and international travel planning. Its multi-language translation feature removes linguistic barriers, especially in India, where multiple languages are spoken in different states [4]. Various countries are using different language translation tools to assist tourists with language problems,

such as ConcierGPT, VoiceBiz, and Kotozna, which are used in the United States, Thailand, Singapore, Japan, and India.

Google Maps, another AI tool with its Global Positioning System (GPS) technology, assists travelers by suggesting the easiest and fastest routes to their destinations. Along with road maps, this application provides satellite and aerial views of locations to help visitors in planning their excursions. It also recommends the best places for accommodation, food, and shopping based on reviews, ratings, and photographs. Facial Recognition Technology (FRT) is employed to detect fraud at tourist sites. FRT simplifies visitor check-in and out processes, as well as provides them reminders and directions for destinations. Various hotels incorporate robotic automation in their hospitality services, including house cleaning, housekeeping, and room delivery. For example, Marriott hotels use Amazon's Alexa robot, Westin hotels employ LightStrike Germ-Zapping robots for room disinfection, and Aloft hotels use a robotic butler called Boltr to deliver food to rooms.

1.2 Social Media and AI in Crisis Management

The tourism industry cannot avoid crises, especially when they are exaggerated or misinterpreted in the media. Although National Tourism Organisations play a vital role in crisis management, mitigating damage is more challenging without media involvement. The tourism sector is ready to use social media platforms effectively in disaster management plans [5-7]. Many issues must be addressed, including which social media platforms to use during each phase of crisis management. In the context of crisis management, both AI and social media are crucial in mitigating the impact of unexpected events on tourism destinations. Social media is significant throughout the crisis lifecycle. The media may identify potential issues before they escalate into crises and alert the public to ensure safety [17]. AI's deep learning algorithms help to detect unusual behaviors and potential security threats by monitoring social media conversations. In Mahakumbh 2025 event Although accurate information is essential for crisis communication, it can jeopardize both emergency and recovery management. Information accuracy is sometimes ambiguous, especially in the era of social media, and this can cause unwarranted anxiety and apprehension during crises. Social media platforms Facebook and X platforms assisted the organizing team and police department to find out those people who had been reported missing by family members during the Mahakumbh Event 2025. The police department posted photographs of missing people on Facebook and X, which proved to be quite useful in finding them [18-19].

AI-powered technologies are used to manage the world's largest public gathering at Mahakumbh, 2025, in Prayagraj, India, by maintaining real time surveillance of human movements at railway stations and bus stations. The Bhashini-powered Kumbh Sah'AI'yak Chatbot enables voice-based lost and found services, translation and multilingual support [18]. AI systems can monitor and analyze vast amounts of data from various sources, including social media, news sites, and weather reports, to identify potential crises early. This early warning capability allows tourism authorities to respond swiftly and effectively to emerging situations, minimizing negative impacts on visitors and the destination's reputation. Social media serves as a crucial communication medium during crises. It allows tourism organizations to quickly disseminate accurate information, combat disinformation, and maintain open lines of communication with visitors and stakeholders. The real-time nature of social media platforms makes them invaluable for sharing emergency information, safety instructions, and reassurances. AI and Machine learning technologies can predict and track catastrophic events by processing large volumes of data from various sources, including satellite images, social media, and sensor networks. These AI-powered systems can enhance resource distribution,

streamline evacuation procedures, and boost emergency communication. AI presents novel approaches to improve climate resilience through better monitoring, modeling, and mitigation strategies. AI-powered tools like chatbots and automated responses through messages guide people to use safety exits, and safe escape routes during crisis like fire breaks, and stampede etc. Sophisticated AI algorithms can analyze climate data to forecast future patterns, recognize vulnerabilities, and assess mitigation efforts [16].

The advent of social media as a two-way communication channel has changed crisis communication management, which previously relied on top-down information dissemination by authorities. Social media platforms play a crucial role during crises by raising awareness and facilitating broader discussions. They have significantly altered how different stakeholders interpret and respond to crises, primarily due to their ability to overcome geographical barriers and time constraints, allowing information to spread rapidly across vast areas [2]. Consequently, residents are no longer passive observers during disasters; they can actively search and distribute information related to crises, as well as recovery tactics. Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) use social media to connect with people, strengthen destination perceptions, and endorse major attraction points and visitors' experiences through visually appealing content like photographs and videos [12]. Facebook, X, and Instagram have greater reach among people, therefore these social media platforms can help in managing crisis communication by sharing real-time updates, providing evacuation routes, issuing safety warnings, eliminating misinformation with verified facts, facilitating communication with tourists, and gathering feedback from those on the ground.

2 Literature Review

The tourism industry is rapidly utilising AI and digital media for seeking and providing solutions of various economic, socio-political, and environmental challenges. Several scholars and academicians have explored the impact of digital media and social media in reshaping the destination marketing, but the role of AI in destination marketing and crisis management has been not researched.

This study [20] underlined AI's negative effects on the tourism industry. Researchers examines the impact of various AI-powered tools like automated recommendations and chatbots on operational efficiency and customer engagement. The study used the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to describe how tourism industry professionals use and adapt AI technologies. The findings highlights various problems including data privacy, ethical issues, and a lack of awareness and experience among employees, all of which can harm the trust of potential customers.

The journal article [3] examined the response of DMOs on X (formerly Twitter) following European terrorist incidents from 2015 to 2017. According to the research, European DMOs utilized this social media platform to highlight which particular locations were more active during and after terrorist attacks. In addition, the poll found that Paris had the most successful Twitter communication. The researcher also noted that most DMOs tend to be reactive rather than proactive, evidenced by the lack of immediate Twitter communication shortly after the occurrence. DMOs must maintain contact with tourists both during and after a crisis, as people rely on X (formerly Twitter) for up-to-date information. Governments and international organizations are increasingly using social media platforms for public engagement.

The AI technologies on various functions related to tourism sector including tickets and hotel booking systems, language translation, chatbots, virtual reality, face recognition and Google Maps are significantly effected the customer experinece all over the world. However in context of Indian tourism industry researchers highlight major challenges like demographical obstacles, social and economic differnces, data privacy, insufficient digital infrastucture etc. [4].

The research paper [15] looks into the synergies between AI and social media in the tourism industry, especially how their combined use improves both marketing efforts and crisis management approaches. It investigates case studies of destinations that have successfully employed modern technologies to boost their appeal, manage their image, and navigate through difficult times. The article also discusses the ethical implications and potential dangers of incorporating AI and social media in tourism, such as privacy concerns, data security, and the risk of overreliance on technology.

The research article [11] emphasises the influence of social media platforms and AI in disaster management, particularly earthquake. The researchers observed that social media analytics successfully utilised to monitor public opinion, identify seismic occurrences more faster as comapred to the traditional techniques used in Japan.

3 Statement of the Problem

The tourism industry is facing challenges in marketing destinations and managing crisis effectively, especially in digital and technical advanced world. Despite the potential of AI and social media platforms there is a lack of awareness regarding the optimal utilization of advance technology in tourism sector. With close inspection of the literature included in review of literature it is observed that majority of research focused on impact of social media on destination marketing but very little work is done on role of AI in crisis management and destination marketing. Therefore, this research paper aims to identify the influence of AI and social media in destination marketing and crisis management techniques. The study also seeks to investigate the dependency and trust level of travelers on social media for choosing any location and during the crisis.

4 Research Objectives

1. To evaluate the impact of social media and AI on promoting destination tourism in India.
2. To analyze the utilization of AI and social media in crisis management.
3. To identify the influence of AI and social media on respondent's travel decisions.

5 Research Methodology

The study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Quantitative data was gathered by systematic reviews of existing scholarly articles, reports, and studies published in Google Scholar, IEEE, PubMed, and ScienceDirect.

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with 25 individuals who had planned a tour within the last two months to analyze the influence of social media and AI in travel decisions. Interviewers were selected using convenience sampling. Feedback was collected through a questionnaire to understand how individuals use AI and social media before planning a vacation. Questions were drafted to help respondents recall their usage of social media and AI before and during their most recent trip. Interviewees were specifically asked about the sources

of information they used to make decisions and the extent to which these sources influenced their final decisions. The data was subsequently analyzed with appropriate statistical tools.

6 Findings of the Study

25 tourists were interviewed to access the utilization of social media and AI for tour or trip planning. Out of 25 interviewees, 11 were females and 14 were males, with ages ranging from 20 to 40. The data was collected through a personal interview, which was recorded with the permission of the interviewee. The recorded statements helped in the analysis as well as reduce the possibility of miscommunication.

The findings of this study are:

6.1 Choosing a Location: Interview analysis showed that respondents' tour plans are significantly influenced by various factors including rating, excellent landscape, lifestyle, ambiance, and different aspects of attraction. Social media platforms allow them to view certain photos or posts about their preferred attributes. Moreover, social media plays a supportive role in persuading individuals to visit locations that have been on their "wish list" for a long time.

6.2 Transportation: The motive behind asking this question was to ascertain the influence of social media and AI in selecting transportation modes. All respondents, except two who opted for self-drive trips, booked flight tickets via online travel agencies (OTA) and the official websites of airline. Price and time were the primary considerations when purchasing air tickets. Although AI assists in ticket purchasing, AI and social media do not seem to have a big influence on flight selection. Only one respondent admitted that he preferred inexpensive airlines mentioned in travel blogs, suggesting potential long-term indirect effects of social media.

Regarding local transportation and inter-destination travel, social media helps individuals obtain route information and identify the most convenient transport modes. For example, one respondent downloaded local transportation applications after reading about them on the internet. Another participant, finding public transport inconvenient at his location, hired a car as suggested by social networking sites, indicating that travelers use social media for guidance on navigating unfamiliar locations.

6.3 Accommodation: Social media's impact on lodging selections influences travel plans. The results stated that all participants booked their accommodations online before their trip, with most using online review and rating platforms. Besides location and price, several elements of review sites like TripAdvisor or OTAs seem to act as search filters. Respondents frequently developed personal evaluation criteria, not merely reading reviews but actively seeking information that intrigued them to remove or retain their options.

6.4 Tourist Destinations: It was observed that respondents searched for information on various social media platforms and official information channels before choosing destinations based on the main attractions. The use of social media to explore the best sights both before and during the journey underscores its role as a tour guide. Furthermore, it was found that social media is used to confirm or reject travelers' final decisions on which attractions to visit.

6.5 Restaurants and Eating Spots: First-time travelers, in particular, researched local cuisine and dining options on social media platforms such as Facebook, MakeMyTrip, WeChat, TripAdvisor, and Weibo, both before and during their trip. However, they ultimately made decisions based on their preferences, time constraints, and convenience. Mobile applications

like TripAdvisor, GPS-enables review apps, and Google/Baidu maps, are used by respondents to find nearby restaurants.

6.6 Adventure Activities and Shopping: Travelling plans are often accompanied by shopping activities. Tourists enjoy purchasing items for pleasure or collecting memories of their visited place. The majority of respondents were aware of which products are famous in specific places. Those unfamiliar with their journey seemed to rely on social media for shopping information. The findings indicate that travelers use social media websites as a reference before making purchases and selecting popular items from a location. In recreational activities, the role of social media as an endorsement was evident.

7 Managerial and Theoretical Implications

The study provides valuable information for many tourism sectors by understanding decision-making concerning visitor choosing processes and social media's influence in those processes. The data reveals that social media has minimal impact on travelers' decisions about air transportation. However, social media plays a crucial role in determining the best mode of transportation on-site. Buses, trains, and other inter-city transportation modes should focus more on social media platforms to raise awareness and improve their image on these channels. Given the importance of social media in restaurant and accommodation choices, professionals from both sectors should actively engage with social media platforms and encourage existing visitors to provide social media reviews to attract new clients. Social media has been shown to have indirect influence on demand generation and support for tourism destination selections. Strategies should include sharing photographs and videos of magnificent sceneries and places of interest to generate interest among potential visitors. We have recent examples from the Indian tourism sector, when Indian tourism companies decided to suspend all travel bookings from India to Turkey and Azerbaijan to show their aggressions against both countries for supporting Pakistan during the tension between India and Pakistan in May, 2025. This initiative received huge support from Indian social media users, and many of them cancelled their planned visits to Turkey and Azerbaijan, which had a substantial impact on both nation's tourism industries.

8 Conclusion

In India, AI and social media have transformed the way of planning trips, engage with destinations, and access services. The study demonstrated the influence of social media on the major decisions of travelers from choosing a location to shopping through real-time posts, photos, and videos. The dependency of travelers on digital technologies has increased in recent years. AI enables predictive analysis and effective crisis and crowd management strategies, which increased tourist's confidence. Various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TripAdvisor, have greatly enhance visitors experience by incorporating AI-powered tools like facial recognition, chatbots, and route optimization algorithms,. AI is still in its initial stage and the majority of people are not of its features, uses, and advantages in tour planning, as compare to social media. While AI provides considerable benefits, responsible and ethical use of AI is crucial in ensuring the tourism industry's long-term sustainability and inclusivity.

9 Limitations

Although, the research provides valuable insights into the role of AI and social media in

influencing destination marketing and crisis management, several areas remain unexplored. The major limitation of this study was its small sample size, only 25 visitors were interviewed, which is insufficient to represent the diverse population of India. The majority of data was based on self-reported experiences, which may be influenced by traveler's personal experience. The second major drawback is that the study did not include all AI-powered tools and social media platforms that have an impact on the Indian tourism industry. The study provided only two recent examples of utilization of social media and AI for crisis and crowd management at the national level, and international case studies are not examined by researchers.

Disclosure of Interest

Researchers have no conflicts of interest to disclose. We confirm that this work is original and has not been published elsewhere, nor it is being considered for publication elsewhere.

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