

Role of Travel Agents Association in developing Wine Tourism Product in Nashik Wine Valley through Local Travel Agents

Prof. Chetan Bagul

M.G.V's S.P.H. College of

Hotel Management & Catering Technology

Nashik

Prof (Dr) J.V.Bhalerao

M.G.V's Institute of Management & Research

Nashik

ABSTRACT

Tourism industry is a fast-growing industry now days. Many countries are focusing and taking more efforts on developing destinations to increase the flow of tourists. This supports the economic development of the country. As the tourism grows all other industries also grows like hotel, travel agents, recreations, transporters etc.

Nashik is well known as a city of "Mantra" and "Tantra" having religious as well as industrial importance. The city is one of the four cities of the golden quadrilateral of Maharashtra. Therefore, the city attracts more tourists. More over Nashik district is also having natural beauty and due to good climate for grape growing, it has 60% of total wineries in India. Nashik has become home to an emerging wine making industry with distinct regional character. Tourists domestic as well as international are attracted to Nashik in search of a unique experience in wine tasting and the local scenery. Presently, the Nashik region has 38 wineries. It is a tourist experience which is required for the success of wine regions. The tourists of different religion visits Nashik for pilgrimage, business, heritage, nature etc. The travel agents play various role to fulfil the requirements of the tourists. The aim of this research paper is to find out the role of Travel Agents Association in developing wine tourism in Nashik Wine Valley through local travel agents

Keywords- Mantra, Tantra, Golden quadrilateral, pilgrimage, wine valley

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a journey which is mostly depends upon the travel agency because travel agencies give advice or suggestions to travellers on the type of itineraries or programme which they may choose for their holiday or business travel. Travel agent is the retailer of the tourism product; the tour operator is a manufacturer of a tourism product. He plans, organises and sells tours. Tour operator or travel agent in certain cases makes all the necessary arrangements-transport, accommodation, sightseeing, insurance, entertainment and other matters of this package in an inclusive price. So, the travel agency plays an important role in the development of tourism in the country and its promotion is recognised by all the segments of the travel industry. The government works in close collaboration with travel agent and tour operators in India and abroad, encourage them to plan and organise package tours for various destinations in the country.

Travel agents play a vital role in the promotion of any type of tourism. Travel agency falls under the service industry category. Travel agents generally provide or arrange all facilities to the customers. The travel agent arranges travel services from suppliers such as airlines, steamship companies, railways, bus companies, car rental firms, hotels and sightseeing operators. A journey cannot be successful without the help of travel agents. It is the travel agent who packages and processes all the various attractions of the country and presents them to the tourists.

The Travel agency is an organisation in the Private sector which plays significant role in the entire process of developing and promoting tourism. The retail travel agent provides a direct link between the consumer and the suppliers of tourist services i.e airlines, transport companies, hotels, auto rental companies etc. The travel agency also provides information about tourism.

The travel agency sells the tourism products of the country. Travel agency attracts the tourists by advertising the tourist attractions of the country. Travel agency plays a important role in the national integration an international understanding. It creates employment opportunities to the people.

Due to favourable climatic condition for grape growing, the Nashik district is famous for grape growing and exports. Therefore, wine industry is also well established in the district. Nashik has some famous wineries like Sula, Soma, York, Grover's Zampa, Vallonnee, Vinsura, Charosa, Chandon, Rennaisnace etc. The tourists coming to Nashik for different type of special interest tourism like Pilgrimage, Medical, Religious, Spiritual, Business, Heritage, Adventure, Nature etc. Many tourists take help of travel agent to facilitate their tour. Generally, they take help about tour planning, accommodation, transport arrangement, sightseeing, ticket booking, insurance etc. There are multiple needs of the tourists. Travel agent plays multiple roles to make hassle free tour

Wine tourism is one type of special interest tourism where travel agent plays a vital role. Nashik has near about 77 travel agencies including some tour operators who specialises in particular type of tourism like foreign tours, domestic tours, religious tours, temple tours, nature tours etc. But after having 38 wineries for a wine tourism, local travel agents are not making more benefit of it. Therefore, it becomes important to find the role of travel agents association.

Objectives: -

The study has following objectives

1. To understand facilities available for tourist in Nashik as a destination of wine tourism.
2. To find the role of Travel Agents Association in developing wine tourism in Nashik wine valley through local travel agents

Hypothesis: -

H₀- All travel agents do not explore wine tourism product as business opportunity in Nashik Wine valley.

H₁- All travel agents explore wine tourism product as business opportunity in Nashik Wine valley.

Limitations

The research study is limited to selected travel agencies/tour operators in Nashik city only. The data analysis is based on the responses given by the respondents.

Research Methodology: -

The research is carried out by using primary data source and secondary data source. The primary data is collected by using structured questionnaire to know the role of travel agents in developing wine tourism in Nashik wine valley. The area covered for sampling is Nashik city. The secondary data is collected by using books, journals, websites and other online resources.

The convenience sampling method was used to collect the data from the travel agents in Nashik city. 20 respondents were selected from the 77 (as per the directory of Travel agents Association of Nashik).

Data Analysis & Interpretation

Objective-I : Facilities available for tourist in Nashik as a destination of wine tourist

Nashik is a well placed on tourism map in Maharashtra as well as in India due to its religious importance. More over due to good weather conditions and one of the city in golden quadrilateral of Maharashtra the facilities like accommodation, restaurants, car rentals, currency exchange, passport /visa assistance, excursion tour arrangements, guide service, insurance etc are already available. But in case of wine tourism, the information of different facilities at the wineries is of vital importance while serving to the tourists. The information given above is gathered by referring books, online articles and research papers, websites. To understand whether the local travel agents are aware of the facilities provided by the wineries and to develop wine tourism product in Nashik the researcher has framed structured questionnaire and circulated it among the selected travel agents. The data obtained is analysed as below.

Q.1 Which facilities of the following are available at wineries in Nashik Wine Valley?

Sr. No.	Facilities Available	Respondents
1	Hotel Booking	20
2	Ticket Booking	20
3	Passport/Visa Assistance	14
4	Car Rental	14
5	Travel/Baggage Insurance	19
6	Wine Tour	6
7	Currency Exchange	8
8	Money Transfer	8
9	Package Tours	16

Table No-1

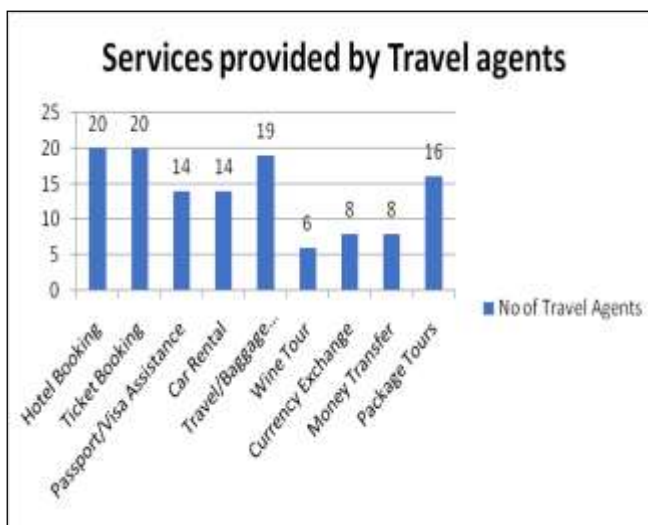


Chart No-1

Objective-II: Role of Travel Agents Association in developing wine tourism in Nashik wine valley.

Travel agents Association is a legal body which is formed by the travel agents to discuss their issues, business opportunities, tourism product development, strategies for growth, collaborations etc. by organising meetings. It also gives platform for the travel agencies so show case their services to the other travel agents. It also organises the exhibitions of travel agents to reach out to the people with their tourism product. It acts as a mediator between Govt and Travel agents.

To promote wine tourism as a product it was first important to know the opinion of the travel agents so it is fulfilled through the responses received as well as while discussing with tour operators through informal talks and structured questionnaire. It was opined that Nashik is famous for its historical importance as well as for various rituals & religious places of Hindus, Jains & Buddhist. So many tourists visit Nashik for religious purpose. Tourists visit Nashik for

1. Pilgrimage tourism
2. Nature Tourism
3. Adventure Tourism
4. Cultural Tourism
5. Agri Tourism
6. Medical Tourism
7. Business Tourism
8. Heritage Tourism

Following is the related analysis question wise.

Response from the Travel Agencies

Q.1 – Are there any enquiries about wine tour packages?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
YES	9	45
NO	11	55
Total	20	100

Table No-2

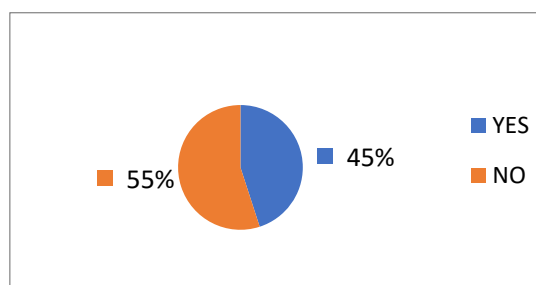


Chart No-2

Interpretation: -

From the pie chart it is revealed that 55% travel agencies do not get enquiries about wine tour packages and 45% travel agencies get enquiries about wine tour packages.

Q.2 - Do you provide wine tour packages to the tourists?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
YES	7	35
NO	13	65
Total	20	100

Table No-3

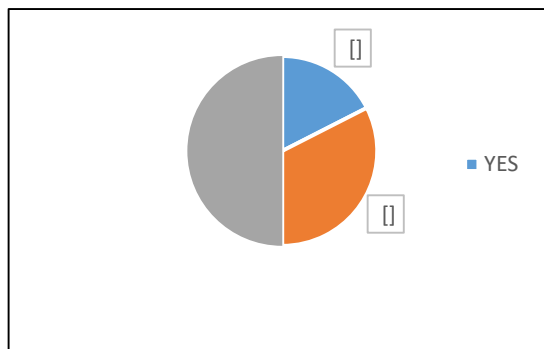


Chart No-3

Interpretation: -

From the figure it is clear that It means only 35% travel agencies have wine tour packages for their clients to offer and remaining 65% do not have it.

Q.3-As per your opinion, will wine tour packages get response from tourists?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
YES	7	35
NO	3	15
Don't Know	10	50
Total	20	100

Table No- 4

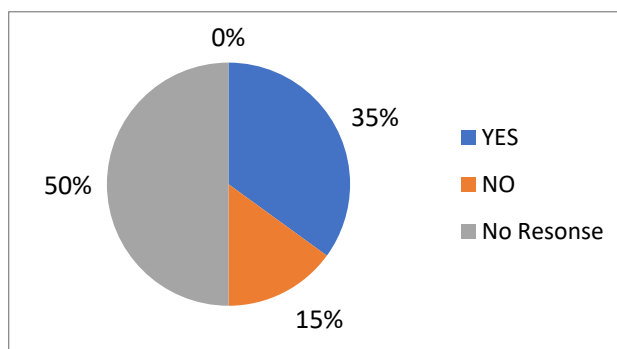


Chart No-4

Interpretation: -

The above figure indicates that 35% respondents says that wine tour packages will get response if provided by travel agent or tour operator while 15% respondents is having negative opinion about it. 50% respondents are not aware of the tourist's response.

If No or Don't Know Why?

The responses received from the travel agents for "No" is 15% and for "Don't know" is 50%. It shows that either they lack in knowledge about wine tourism or its business benefits or else they have not taken any interest to look as a business opportunity.

During discussion with local travel agents it came to the notice that It happened due to big travel agents from Pune, Mumbai, Ahmedabad who bypass the local travel agents and have direct collaboration with the wineries in Nashik Wine Valley. In short, they take advantage of ignorance of local travel agents and their failure to promote themselves on larger scale for wine tourism due to lack of fund.

Q.4- How many days wine tour package can be designed for tourist?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
1 Day	01	5
2 Days	02	10
3 Days	06	30
4 Days	03	15
Don't know	08	40

Table No- 5

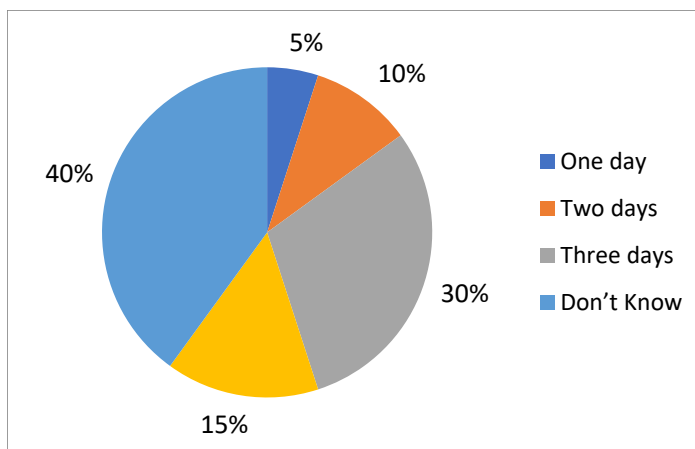


Chart No-5

Interpretation: -

It is revealed from above figure that 40% respondents do not about the number of days required for wine tour. While 30% respondents are of opinion that wine tour package to be designed for 3 days and 15% respondents are for four days and 10% for two days,5% for one days.

Q.7- Do you provide tailor made wine tour packages?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
YES	06	30
NO	14	70
Total	20	100

Table No-6

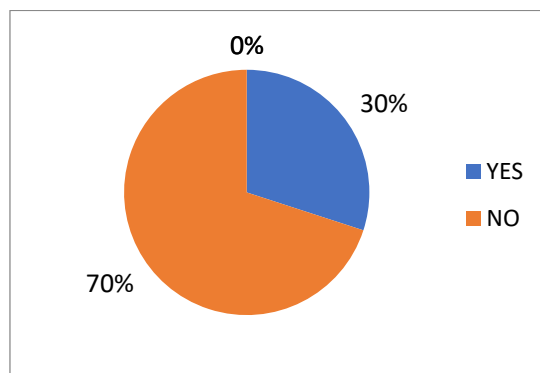


Chart No-6

Interpretation: -

The pie chart indicates that 30% respondents can provide wine tour package and 70% are unable to provide it.

If “NO” why not?

70% respondents cannot provide tailor made wine tour package shows that they are not well aware of all the wineries in the region along with the facilities and their infrastructure. The planning of tailor-made wine packages requires a lot of knowledge about the wineries, accessibility, routes, facilities etc.

Q.9 Are you ready to explore Wine tourism product as a business opportunity?

Option	Respondents	Percentage
Already doing	06	30
Not ready	14	70
Total	20	100

Table No-7

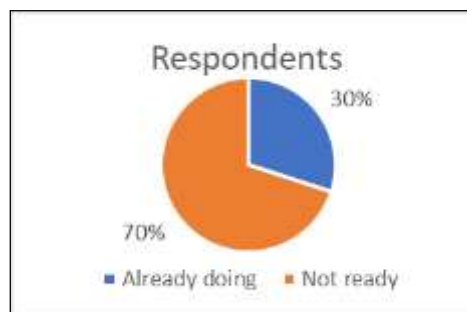


Chart No-7

Interpretation: -

The above pie chart indicates that 30% travel agents are ready to explore Wine tourism product as a business opportunity and 70% travels agents are not ready to explore it.

If Not Ready Why?

As the chart No-6 shows that 70% of the travel agencies are not ready to explore the wine tourism product as a business opportunity.

This is happening because of their unawareness about wine tourism product and lack of experience in handling such wine tours. Therefore they are reluctant in exploring it as a business opportunity.

There is a lot of potential in Nashik Wine valley for wine tourism. To take the advantage of it travel agents must be made ready for exploring through the training programmes. The Travel agent's association must take a lead and organise training programme for making them competent enough to take advantage of business opportunity in wine tourism sector.

Reasons-

There are some wineries that have their marketing offices in major metro cities of India and they take bookings of the tourists directly. Therefore, tourists directly go to the winery in the booked vehicle and stay at the winery. In such cases local travel agents cannot do anything. But for other wineries where there is no accommodation facility, they do many more.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

H₀- Travel agents do not explore wine tourism product in Nashik Wine valley for as a business opportunity.

H₁- Travel agents promote wine tourism product in Nashik Wine valley for as a business opportunity.

It becomes clear from the primary data that out of 20 travel agents only 6 are ready to provide wine tour package and rest are not ready. Similarly, there are 14 travel agents who are not ready to explore the wine tourism product as a business opportunity. Hence null hypothesis is accepted.

Suggestions: -

- 1) The travel agents in Nashik should get trained about the wine tourism product as a business opportunity.
- 2) They should use the information about the facilities at the various wineries in and around Nashik for promoting wine tourism product.
- 3) Travel agents Association of Nashik should organise the meet for Winery Owners and the travel agents in Nashik to get them acquainted with each other and about tourists needs and services provided by wineries in

Nashik. Travel agents Association can train travel agents to play vital role in developing wine tourism in Nashik wine valley which in turn shall benefit them as business opportunity and contribute to local economy.

Conclusion: -

Nashik being the tourist destination for various types of tourism like religious, heritage, nature, medical, spiritual, cultural, wine, agri, business etc attracts a greater number of tourists every year. Most of the tourists take help of tour operator or travel agents for their needs like hotel booking, ticket booking, bus booking, car rentals, sightseeing tours, pilgrimage places tours etc. Their needs vary as per their interest. Travel agents in Nashik also know the requirements of the tourists and they are prepared for it. There are few travel agents who have rich experience of special interest tourism e.g Medical, Agri, Wine etc. Along with other travel related services they provide services related to special interest tourism.

For tourist, the travel agent is a contact point for their travel or tour related arrangements. Travel agent is a service provider for the tourists. In case of wine tourism, in Nashik there are only 6 travel agents out of 20 who participated in survey. This shows that not all the travel agents having idea of requirements of tourists as well as facilities available at the wineries. All travel agents in Nashik city must take information and get themselves trained in wine tourism activities which will help them and thereby the tourists to explore the wine experience. The findings of the research study show that the role of Travel agents Association in developing Wine Tourism Product in Nashik Wine Valley through Local Travel Agents is less in case of developing wine tourism in Nashik Wine Valley. There might be other reasons for the less role of Travel agent's association in it which is a scope for further research.

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