

Tourism Product

Definition:

"The products which satisfy tourist's leisure, pleasure or business needs at places other than their own normal place of residence are known as Tourism Product. " Product in its generic sense can be thing, a place, a person, an event, or an organization which satisfies the needs of a person. The product which is offered should have an intrinsic value for the customer. Therefore, a product is an offering having some need satisfying capacity. This product can be exchanged with some other value, so that there accrues a mutual satisfaction for both the supplier as well as the receiver of the product. A Product could therefore be defined by its three characteristic:

- 1. The product must be offered.**
- 2. It should satisfy some need or needs of the buyer.**
- 3. It should be exchanged for some value.**

Very often the product can be a thing like the ethnic garments of Rajasthan or marble statue from Jabalpur. It can also be like a place like Mumbai or Goa. It could be an organization like the World Wildlife Federation (WWF) or FOREX department of a travel agency. Yet again, it can be a person like snake charmer, dancer, a guide or a fictitious character like Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse. Events are also tourism products like Snake Boat Race of Kerala or the Elephant Festival of Jaipur or the Kite Festival at Ahmedabad. Products of tourism also encompass activity. This could be paragliding or scuba diving or trekking.

We can divide products into two categories:

- 1) Tangible products like car, TV or microwave oven and**
- 2) Intangible products like banking, health service.**

Therefore, tourism products are intangible products or service having the following distinct characteristics:

- (i)** Intangibility
- (ii)** Inseparability
- (iii)** Perishability
- (iv)** Variability
- (v)** Absence of Ownership
- (vi)** Customer participation

1. Intangibility:

Services cannot be touched or seen. What can be seen is their effect. A guide's comment can be heard. While a travel agent provides a ticket from place A to place B, the ticket is just a piece of paper, only an entry pass for using the service. An airline provides the service of transportation. What we only can see is the aircraft which carries passenger from one place to another. The intangible characteristic poses problems of understanding and evaluating services. The services are promises which can be evaluated after or during use and not before. The difference between the products and services are products are first produced then sold and then consumed. But services first sold then produced and consumed simultaneously.

2. Inseparability:

It is not possible to separate services from the person providing the service. A guide or an interpreter has to be present to provide the service.

3. Perishability:

Services cannot be stored. For example hotel rooms not occupied for one particular day are lost for that day. If tourists do not do not come to see the Taj Mahal the view is lost for that day.

4. Absence of ownership

When a person buys a car, the ownership of the car is transferred to him but when that person hires a taxi he only buys the right to be transported to a pre-determined destination at a pre-determined price. Hotel rooms can be used but not owned by the guest. So services can be bought for consumption but the ownership remains with the person or the organization which is providing the service.

5. Variability:

Services are people based products. Services are inseparable from the person who offers it. They are produced and offered by individuals. Due to this, quality of service differs from person to person, and from time to time with the same individual. Therefore services cannot be standardized. Another reason for variability of services is involvement of the guest or customer in the process of service production, delivery and consumption system.

6. Participation of Customer:

In the service delivery system (selling – production – consumption) the customer is involved almost at every stage. A person who wants to fly from CCU to DEL may ask anyone else to book the ticket on flight but that person needs to be present on the flight physically. Otherwise the service for that particular person cannot be produced and hence cannot be consumed.

Classification of Tourism Products:

1. Natural: beaches, forests, mountains, lakes, deserts.
2. Man Made: fairs, festivals, monuments, paintings.
3. Symbolic: Marine Park, sanctuaries, water sports.

Needs satisfied by Tourism Products:

Pleasure, recreation: festivals, wildlife, sports
Relaxation, leisure: beaches, hill stations
Health: Yoga, Spas
Education: heritage, culture
Business: conference, convention
Special Interest: adventure sports