

# Role of Media in the Promotion of Sustainable Tourism: An exploratory Study of Sikkim

<sup>1</sup>Mahesh Puja      <sup>2</sup>Kumar Amit

## Abstract

Appropriate information and message, being the source of knowledge, could have impact on the attitude to access resources available to the target people over a period of time. Development communication, in this context, is considered to be an important means for spreading the message of development to the rural masses. The Ecotourism Directorate of Sikkim runs appropriate multimedia campaigns to promote ecotourism through mass media.

**Keywords:** Tourism, sustainability, multimedia campaigns.

## 1.Introduction

The need of sustainability has become a fundamental issue in tourism development and growth, after the debate at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. According to Principle 4 of The “Rio Declaration” on environment and development (1992) *“In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it”*. The Principle 22 states that *“Indigenous people and their communities, and other local communities, have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development”*.

India has some of the world's most bio-diverse regions. It hosts 3 biodiversity hotspots<sup>3</sup>: the Western Ghats, the Himalayas and the Indo-Burma region. These hotspots have numerous endemic species<sup>4</sup>. The State of Sikkim is located in the area of the Biodiversity Hotspot of Eastern Himalaya Region. To promote conservation incentive and suitable livelihood option for the natives, the Government of Sikkim has formulated an Ecotourism policy based on two primary motives; “poverty alleviation” and “nature conservation”. (Kumar, 2014)

---

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor, Manipal University, Dubai

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Galgotias University, Delhi, India

<sup>3</sup> **Biodiversity hotspots** are defined as areas featuring exceptional concentrations of endemic species and experiencing exceptional loss of habitat.

<sup>4</sup> Species are described as endemic if they are unique to a specific area or region, and don't naturally occur anywhere else. Due to their limited ranges, endemic species are particularly vulnerable to extinction.

## 1.1 Conceptual Framework of Sustainable Tourism

The requirement of nature based tourism emerged as an outcome of the world's acknowledgment and reaction to global sustainable practices. There was an increasing concern to minimize the negative impact of tourism on the environment and also a concrete evidence was available that tourists have moved away from mass tourism to more individualistic and enriching experiences. Moreover, these instances were further substantiated with the urge to include natural and cultural component during vacations. This set the ground for the alternative form of tourism which was termed in due course of time as 'Eco Tourism', 'Sustainable Tourism' and 'Responsible Tourism' etc. However, all these terms were rooted in the concept of sustainable development and intended to benefit local communities and destinations environmentally, culturally and economically. (Diamantis, 1999)

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) defines ecotourism as: "environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features - both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations". (IUCN, 1996)

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) definition, ecotourism refers to forms of tourism which have the following characteristics:

1. All nature-based forms of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas
2. It contains educational and interpretation features
3. It is generally, but not exclusively organized by specialized tour operators for small groups. Service provider partners at the destination tend to be small, locally owned businesses
4. It minimizes negative impact on the natural and socio-cultural environment.
5. It supports the maintenance of natural areas which are used as ecotourism attractions by:
  - a. Generating economic benefits for host communities, organisations and authorities managing natural areas with conservation purposes;
  - b. Providing alternative employment and income opportunities for local communities;
  - c. Increasing awareness towards the conservation of natural and cultural assets, both among locals and tourists (UNWTO, Ecotourism and Protected areas, 2002)

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) has proposed a revised definition of ecotourism in 2015 as, "*responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people and involves interpretation and education*" with the specification that education is to staff and guests. (TIES, 2015)

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world accounting for some 9% of the world's GDP and over 200 million jobs. In 2015, international tourist's arrival crossed 1 billion marks and UNWTO predicts that growth trends in world tourism will continue, with total arrivals reaching 1.8 billion by 2030. The highest share is expected to get by emerging economies, including developing countries.

Tourism has potential to play a major role in delivering sustainable development in many countries. For this it is critically important that it must be well managed so that it benefits local communities and the natural and cultural environments upon which it depends. (UNWTO, The Sustainable Tourism for Development Guidebook , 2013)

In September 2015, the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted a universal agenda for planet and people, termed as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets, tourism is explicitly featured in Goals 8, 12 and 14 because of its capability to promote sustainable consumption and production and its critical contribution to sustainable development. In 2015, over one billion tourists travelled internationally. This provides over one billion opportunities for sustainable development, in line with the SDGs. Considering the immense potential of sustainable tourism to be a part and parcel of SDGs; the United Nations has declared 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. (UNWTO, UNWTO Annual Report 2015, 2016)

## 1.2 Sustainable Tourism in Sikkim

### 1.2.1 Sikkim; an Introduction

Sikkim is truly a mystical land, a confluence of advancement and mysticism. It is situated in eastern Himalayan region of India and have borders with Tibet, Bhutan and Nepal and only open border with China (Nathula-Pass). It hosts Kanchenjunga, the world's third-highest peak (8586 meters) which is also valued as the state's guardian deity. Sikkim became the 22<sup>nd</sup> state of the India in 1975. The ecological condition in Sikkim varies from low tropical, temperate to sub alpine and alpine zones in a small geographical area. Sikkim has a forest cover of over 47 per cent, which is the highest in India. The protected area network in Sikkim includes one National Park and seven Wildlife Sanctuaries that cover an area of around 2,183 Sq. Km., which is the largest in the country. Sikkim has a rich variety of flora and fauna. Sikkim's population comprises many ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups, each characterized by their unique culture, customs and traditions that exhibit strong bonds with nature. It is also reflected in a rich array of traditional festivals and rituals that take place throughout the year in Sikkim. (ECOSS & WWF, 2016)

### 1.2.2 Growth of Tourism in Sikkim

The growth of tourism in Sikkim started during the period of 2002-10, with the gradual opening of large areas which were inaccessible or restricted to tourists. Tourism centers and

circuits began slowly developing from Gangtok, the capital city, and gradually extended to other areas. The decision to allow tourists first to visit Tsomgo Lake and then Nathula Pass, near the Chinese border witnessed a surge of tourist flows. This was also aided by the Government’s decision to allow Leave Travel Concession by Air to the North East Region in 2010 for Central Government employees. (ECOSS & WWF, 2016).

Sikkim has been named as the best region to visit in 2014 by a leading global travel guide Lonely Planet. Lonely Planet describes Sikkim as “It’s clean (plastic bags are banned) and the mountain air is fresh. Best of all the people are among India’s most friendly, with a charming manner that’s unobtrusive and slightly shy”. Sikkim is witnessing a regular growth in tourism inflow. Till December 2015, 705023 domestic tourists and 38479 foreign tourists have visited to Sikkim. (Tourism, 2016)

The state of Sikkim has divided into four administrative districts; North, South, East and West.



**Fig. 1: Sikkim map**

East Sikkim is located at the south east corner of the state and Gangtok is the administrative headquarters as well the state capital. The area of the district is 964 km<sup>2</sup>. East Sikkim is very close to the border with China and Bhutan therefore the area is divided into two regions; Civilian and the Military region, which is under the control of the District collector and a Major General respectively. Most of the parts of East Sikkim are restricted for civilian use.

Only a few areas are open to tourists in the eastern parts of Gangtok. Tsongmo Lake aka Changu Lake at an altitude of 3780 m and Nathula Pass which is one of the three trading border posts connecting India and China are main tourist's attractions.

West Sikkim is next to East Sikkim in terms of tourism promotion. It is the place for adventure tourism and many successful ecotourism ventures including homestays can be found here. Pelling and Yuksom are two most popular destinations among tourists.

South Sikkim is an ideal place for trekkers, religious tourists, bird watchers and nature lovers. It is being promoted as next tourist destination after East and West Sikkim. Namchi is the district headquarter and a famous tourists destination. Temi Tea Garden and Ravangla are other prominent attractions.

North Sikkim is the northern district of Sikkim. Mangan is the districts headquarter of North Sikkim. North Sikkim can be visited only as part of an organized tour and tourists need special permits to visit beyond Mangan. Almost the entire zone of North Sikkim comes under the restricted territory; foreigner's visit beyond Thangu is prohibited. Because of these restrictions tourism in the region is at a nascent stage. Yumthang Valley, Chungthang, Lachen and Lachung are other prominent attractions.

It has been observed that the Government of Sikkim has devised a model to promote sustainable tourism in ecologically sensitive areas by managing tourists number as well encouraging high income - low volume tourists. Another initiative includes sharing of tourism revenues with local communities. Pokhri Sanrakshan Samitee at Tsomgo Lake is one such successfully implemented strategy. (ECOSS & WWF, 2016)

### 1.2.3 Ecotourism in Sikkim

Being a Himalayan state Sikkim has a very fragile ecosystem. Its strength has always been its natural beauty and distinctive culture, customs and traditions. To protect the unique cultural identity and to curb the negative impact of mass tourism Sikkim pioneered in creating a community supported ecotourism pathway which was based on the nature and cultural conservation. Community-based tourism (CBT) sites were evolved in different parts of the state with the core concept of village homestay that ensured benefits of tourism to local communities. This was further supported through policy initiatives of government of Sikkim including the Sikkim Ecotourism Policy 2011 prepared by The Forest Environment and Wildlife Management Department along with the JICA funded Sikkim Biodiversity and Forest Management Project (SBFP), and the Sikkim Registration of Homestay Establishment Rules 2013.

Due to harsh climate, the number of tourists visiting Sikkim is less during winter and rainy season. To help Sikkim grow as 365 days tourists destinations the government of Sikkim conducts different ecotourism carnivals/festivals, promotional campaigns and other activities periodically to attract more tourists during the lean season. Following ecotourism

carnivals/festivals were conducted during 2015-16 to promote Sikkim as a prime ecotourism destination in India for both domestic and foreign tourists:

**Table 1: Ecotourism Festivals/Carnivals in Sikkim**

Sl. No.	Name of the Ecotourism Festival/Carnival	Destination being promoted	Date & Duration
1.	Sikkim Butterfly Meet	Yuksam-Rimbi, West Sikkim	17-19 July 2015
2.	Okharey Ecotourism Carnival	Okharey, West Sikkim	17-19 October 2015
3.	Red Panda Winter Festival	Gangtok, East Sikkim	23-31 January 2016
4.	2nd Losar cum Tourism Festival	Anden Walung Gumpa, West Sikkim	11-12 February 2016
5.	Tinjurey Ecotourism Festival	Pangthang, East Sikkim	12-13 March 2016
6.	Zakri-dhunga Rhododendron Tourism Festival	Maneybung Dentam, West Sikkim	13-15 April 2016
7.	9th Lampokhari Tourism Festival	Dalapchand, East Sikkim	14-16 April 2016

#### 1.2.4 Ecotourism Promotion Campaign in Sikkim

To promote Sikkim as a prime ecotourism destination in India and globally, the Government of Sikkim has proposed guidelines in their Ecotourism Policy in 2011. An apex body, the Directorate of Ecotourism has been constituted to ensure effective management and implementation of the ecotourism initiatives under the Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management Department in the State of Sikkim. The Directorate is the executing arm of the Sikkim Ecotourism Council, an autonomous body with representatives from government departments, civil society, tourism professionals and public sector representatives. In Sikkim, March to June and September to December is considered as a peak tourist season. One of the key targets of the Directorate is to promote Sikkim as a year around ecotourism destination. (Sikkim, 2011)

## 2. Research Methodology

### 2.1 Selection of the Topic

Appropriate information and message, being the source of knowledge, could have an impact on the attitude to access resources available to the target people over a period of time. Mass media tools such as TV, radio, community radio, print publicity, outdoor media and new

media are being employed to carry these messages for providing information and educating the people. Government schemes, programs and benefits are being informed to the general masses through different publicity programs in a campaign mode.

People's empowerment, as one of the major Millennium Development Goals, requires working with communities at the grassroots level and involving them to participate in the development efforts. Communication through mass media, in this regard, can have a prominent role to play and inform communities. To communicate and publicize the Government's programs and initiatives directly to the beneficiaries down to the grassroots level, the Ministry of Tourism & Civil Aviation Department of Sikkim, an Eastern Himalayan State of India, which is chosen as area of study for this work, runs appropriate multimedia mass campaigns through different means of communication. To pursue these objectives, the Government of Sikkim has formed Ecotourism Directorate which in co-ordination with The Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management Department takes care of publicity for the ecotourism initiatives in the state of Sikkim.

The plethora of choices in media vehicles has led to an urgent need to study the scope and effectiveness of their utilization for the purposes of 'People's Empowerment through Development Communication'.

## 2.2 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are significant to government, tourism service providers, and local people in a variety of ways. For the government policy makers, the results will help to make informed decisions, formulate and implement the appropriate policies and legislations to establish Sikkim as a prime ecotourism destination. For Ecotourism Directorate and other agencies who are entrusted with the responsibility to promote ecotourism in the state, this study helped in understanding means that they can utilize the available resources to attract many tourists and in providing convincing information to tourists. For the local people, the results of this study help them to know the role to play and the associated benefits of ecotourism in return.

## 2.3 Area of Study

The study area comprised two districts (East, West) of Sikkim, where media campaign and publicity programs were undertaken by the Ecotourism Directorate, the Department of Forest, Environment & Wildlife Management, State Tourism Development Corporation, and Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation of Government of Sikkim during the period of 2015-16 (up to April, 2016). The field work was conducted at the ecotourism sites of Gangtok in East Sikkim and Pelling in West Sikkim.

## 2.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the role of media campaign in promoting ecotourism in Sikkim.

2. To analyze the media platforms in terms of media vehicles employed and its corresponding strategies used for promoting ecotourism in Sikkim.
3. To analyze the impact of the promotional campaign on the target group in terms of their level of awareness generation about the ecotourism promotion initiatives and the benefits availed.

### **3. Research Design**

#### **3.1 Sample Selection**

A sample of 200 respondents was taken for this study, out of which 100 were local residents of Sikkim and another 100 were tourists in Sikkim, which included a mix of foreign and domestic tourists. 80 domestic tourists and 20 foreign tourists were consulted precisely with interview schedules.

#### **3.2 Data Collection**

Keeping in mind the proposed objectives, the study is based on both primary and secondary resources. The study has both quantitative and qualitative data as components to substantiate our argument through statistical analysis to assess the impact of the campaign and to understand the functioning of Ecotourism Directorate.

##### **3.2.1 Primary Sources**

**Qualitative Research:** In-depth interviews with the officers of Ecotourism Directorate were done to gauge the system of sharing the Campaign Brief among various teams especially the creative (copy and art) and media planning section to aim at synergizing the process and outcome. The qualitative research also aimed at finding out the process of ideation and pre-testing of the promotional campaigns before these campaigns are released in media.

**Quantitative Research:** Under this study interview schedules were used to collect data from respondents. Two different interview schedules were prepared; one was for tourists visiting Sikkim and another was for local residents of Sikkim. It was constructed with a view to find out 'top of the mind recall' of the requisite campaign message; and also whether it resulted in the desired response/action on the part of the respondent, besides which medium was also more impactful in terms of recall, assimilation and action.

##### **3.2.2 Secondary Sources**

**Desk Research:** There was need to understand the media planning and buying strategies adopted by the Ecotourism Directorate, to reach out to the desired constituent publics along with an effort to have desk analysis on the campaign briefs received by the officials of Ecotourism Directorate to gauge and understand the clarity of campaign objectives among officials themselves.

Secondary records: Data were collected initially from the specific web sources of different departments of Government of Sikkim.

**Table 2: Govt. of Sikkim Resources**

Sl.	Name of the Department	Web Page
1	Department of Forest, Environment & Wildlife Management	<a href="http://www.sikkimforest.gov.in/Ecotourism.htm">http://www.sikkimforest.gov.in/Ecotourism.htm</a>
2	ENVIS Centre: Sikkim Status of Environment and Related Issues	<a href="http://www.sikenviis.nic.in/">http://www.sikenviis.nic.in/</a>
3	Sikkim Tourism Development Corporation	<a href="http://www.sikkimstdc.com/Index.aspx">http://www.sikkimstdc.com/Index.aspx</a>
4	Tourism and Civil Aviation Department	<a href="http://www.sikkimtourism.gov.in/Webforms/General/Default.aspx">http://www.sikkimtourism.gov.in/Webforms/General/Default.aspx</a>
5	Directorate of Ecotourism	<a href="https://www.ecotourismsikkim.com/">https://www.ecotourismsikkim.com/</a>
6	ENVIS Center on Ecotourism	<a href="http://scstsenvis.nic.in/index.aspx?langid=1">http://scstsenvis.nic.in/index.aspx?langid=1</a>
7	Sikkim Biodiversity Conservation and Forest Management Project (SBFP)	<a href="http://forestsbfp.nic.in/default.aspx">http://forestsbfp.nic.in/default.aspx</a>

The various records, white paper on policy, annual reports, ecotourism database, tourism policy of state etc were examined. The collected data was used for statistical analysis to justify arguments to measure the impact of the mass media campaign.

**4. Data Analysis**

Data was collected from the tourists and local residents of Sikkim through interview schedules and from Ecotourism Directorate officials through interview to analyze as per the given objectives. Thematic analysis<sup>5</sup> was followed to understand the process and outcome of internal briefings of the Ecotourism Directorate. Other qualitative data collected through observation were thematically analyzed to support findings from the quantitative data. Apart from these, quantitative data were fed into SPSS for cross tabulation and used for tables/graphs giving number, frequencies and percentage. Those tables/graphs were used to analyze the media planning, recall & retention of Ecotourism Promotional Campaigns and awareness about ecotourism.

---

<sup>5</sup> **Thematic analysis** is the most common form of **analysis** in qualitative research. It emphasizes pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns (or "themes") within data. Themes are patterns across data sets that are important to the description of a phenomenon and are associated to a specific research question.

#### 4.1 Understanding of Ecotourism Directorate and its internal processes

##### 4.1.1 On the process of internal briefing

The process of briefings for an advertising campaign is crucial to the success of any campaign as it helps the agency to understand the requirement of the Client. A ‘brief’ generally means “that a client for an advertising project... is informing, or briefing, an advertising agency of the client’s expectations for a proposed advertising campaign<sup>6</sup>.” It was observed that the briefs were clear and precise with the appropriate involvement of concerned officers. However no pre-testing of creative is done because of lack of time and resources.

##### 4.1.2 Assessing the process of internal communication and teamwork at the Directorate

From the detailed discussions with Ecotourism Directorate officers, it emerged that there exists a team approach to the assigned tasks. Also the internal communication system exists in Ecotourism Directorate favors the effective implementation of the assigned tasks. The senior officers are also readily accessible. However the lack of manpower was a major concern.

##### 4.1.3 Examining the process of identification of stakeholders and media planning to reach them

The Ecotourism Promotional Campaigns targets at multiple stakeholders, therefore the choice of media vehicles needed to be diverse. It was observed that multiple media platforms were utilized in order to reach the diverse audience. This included Television Commercials, Radio Spots, Print Campaigns and Social Media. However a better guideline to determine the fund allocation and selection of media vehicles is required.

#### 4.2 Media Planning: Observation and Analysis

##### 4.2.1 The Role of Media Planning in a Campaign

Media planning forms a crucial part of any campaign given that media time and space are expensive; in a typical advertising campaign, the media costs account for eighty to eighty-five percent of the advertising budget; the remaining fifteen or twenty percent covers research, message, production, evaluation and profits for the (private) advertising agency.<sup>7</sup> It basically consists of (1) formulating a media strategy to deliver the creative so as to meet the brand’s advertising objectives, and then (2) implementing the strategy in an accurate and cost-effective manner.<sup>8</sup>

---

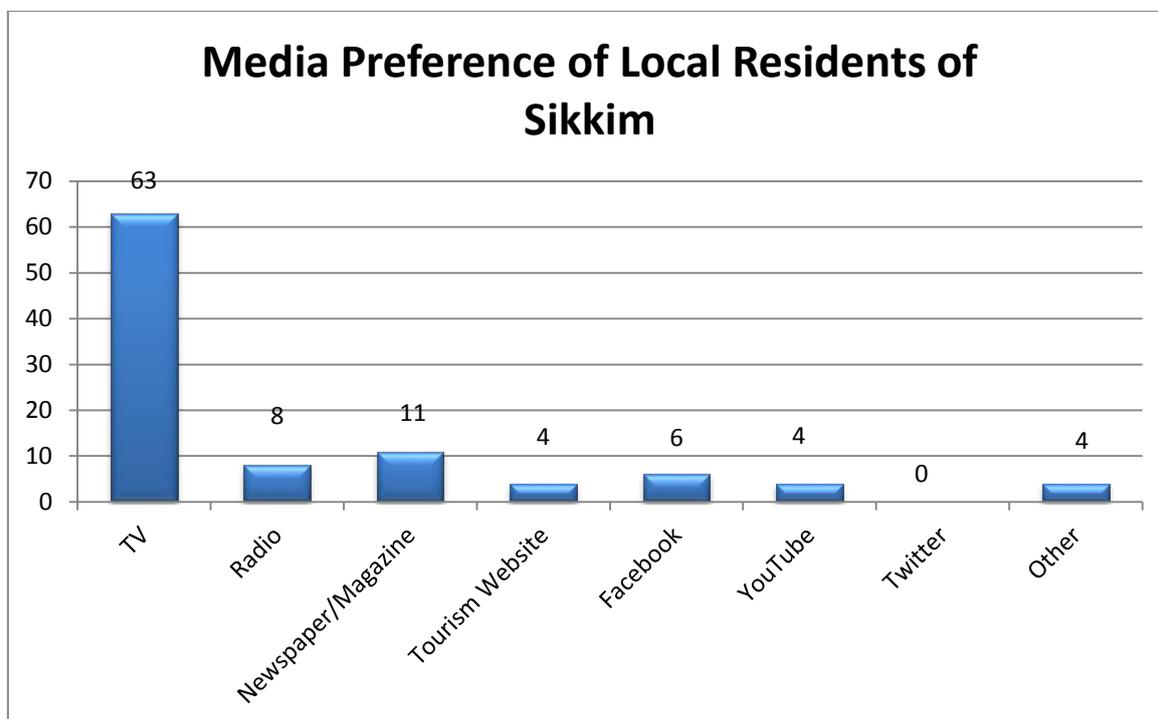
<sup>6</sup> Advertising, Promotion and Other Aspects of Integrated Marketing Communications, Terence Shrimp, Cengage Learning, 2010

<sup>7</sup> Advertising Media Planning: A Brand Management Approach By Larry D. Kelley, Donald W. Jugenheimer, 2008, M E Sharpe, USA, p 3

<sup>8</sup> Advanced Media Planning by John R Rossiter and Peter J Danaher, Kluwer Academic Publishers, USA, 1998, p xi

### 4.2.2 Media Planning Analysis

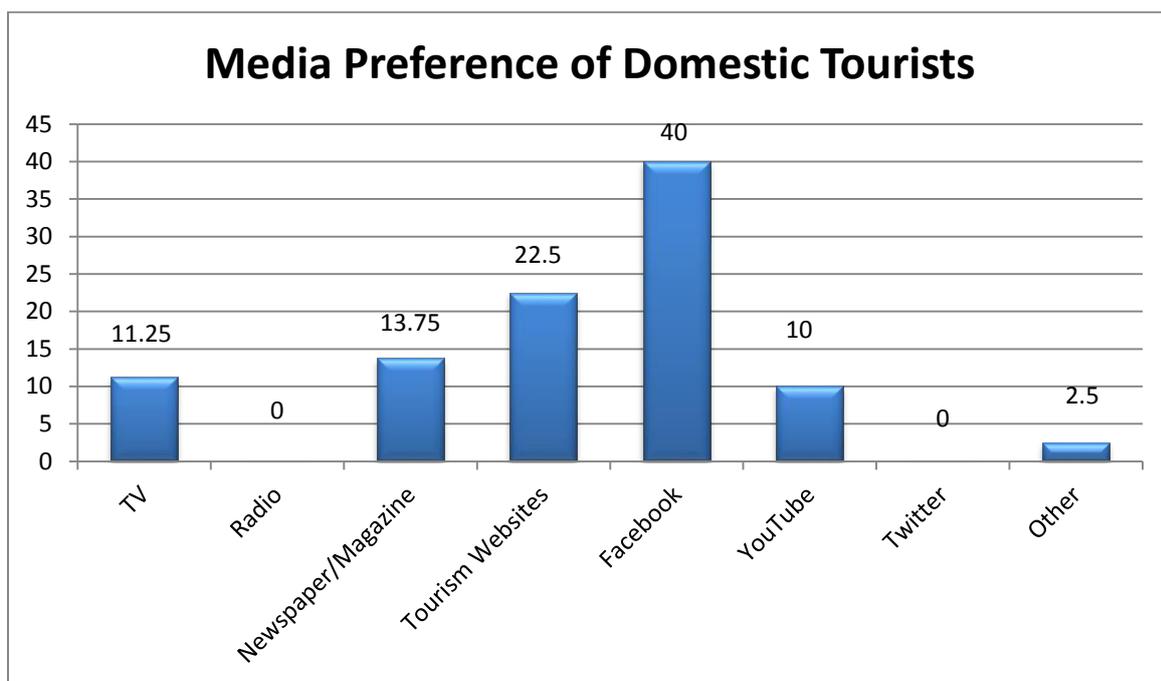
From the field survey conducted, *Television has emerged as the medium of choice among local residents of Sikkim*, with 63 percent of respondents overall naming it as their preferred choice. Newspapers follow a poor second with 11 percent while Radio accounted for only 8 percent of respondent’s preference. However, social media seems to be gaining momentum with 6 percent of respondents showed preference for Facebook, 4 percent for Tourism Websites, 4 percent for YouTube and another 4 percent for other Media.



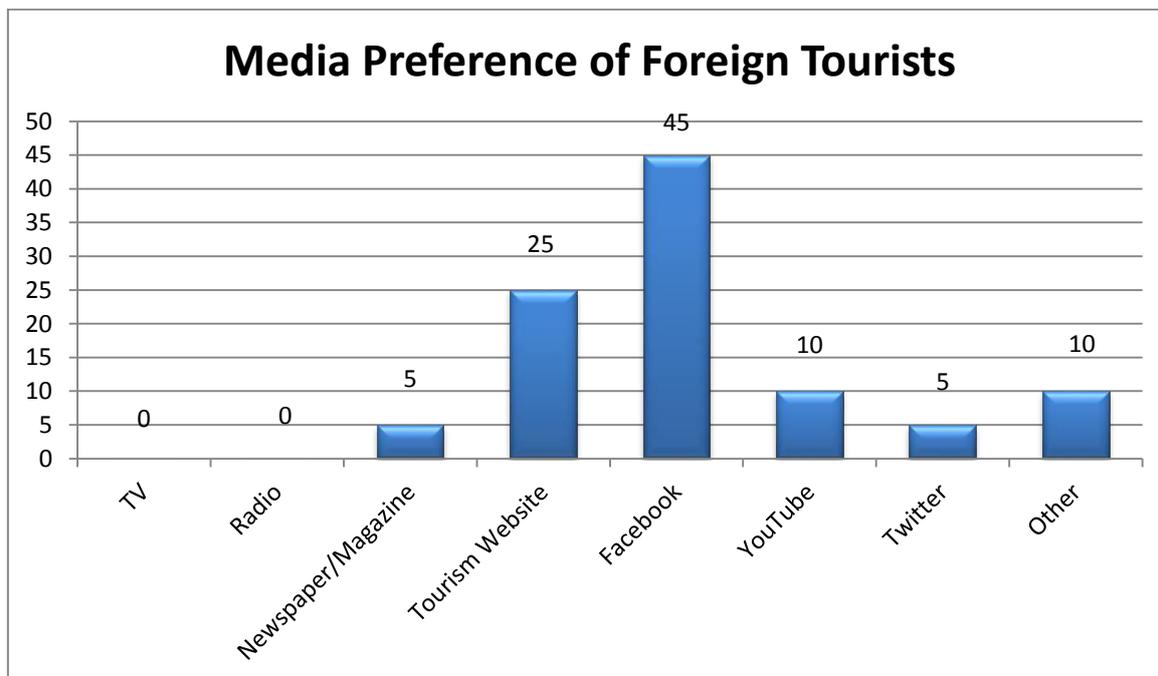
**Fig. 2 : media preference of local residents**

*Facebook has emerged as the medium of choice among domestic tourists visiting Sikkim*, with 40 percent of respondents overall naming it as their preferred choice. Tourism Websites follows with 22.5 percent while TV Spots accounted for only 11.25 percent of respondent’s preference. Other social media platforms like YouTube accounted for 10 percent. Newspaper/Magazine was preferred by 13.75 percent of respondents while 2.5 percent of respondents showed preference for other Media.

*Facebook again emerged as the medium of choice among foreign tourists visiting Sikkim*, with 45 percent of respondents overall naming it as their preferred choice. Tourism Websites follow with 25 percent while YouTube accounted for 10 percent of respondent’s preference. Other social media platforms like Twitter along with print publication accounted for 5 percent each as preferred media choice of respondents. Other means of promotion like events, trade shows, etc were significantly high and preferred by 10 percent of the respondents coming from foreign land.



**Fig. 3 : media preference of domestic tourists**



**Fig. 4 : media preference of foreign tourists**

### 4.3 Recall and Retention of Promotional Campaign

To gauge the recall and retention of the Ecotourism Promotional Campaign was one of the most important parts of the field research. A sample was purposively taken of those who have come across the advertisements directly or indirectly. The various advertisements of the

campaign were shown through laptop, phone or copy of print ads to aid recall among respondents. During the field work, 114 (or 57%) of the respondents said that they had either seen or heard the advertisements through different media tools like TV, radio, newspaper & Internet etc whereas 86 (43%) of them negatively responded they had not seen/heard/read these advertisements.

**Table 3 : Recall and Retention of Promotional Campaign**

<b>Program Seen</b>	<b>Local Residents of Sikkim</b>	<b>Domestic Tourists</b>	<b>Foreign Tourists</b>	<b>Total</b>
Losar cum Tourism Festival	5	0	0	5
Khanchendzonga Winter Festival	10	4	3	27
Okharey Ecotourism Carnival	13	4	0	17
Red Panda Winter Festival	22	9	4	35
Rhododendron Tourism Festival	6	0	0	6
Sikkim Butterfly Meet	7	4	0	11
Tinjurey Ecotourism Festival	14	6	0	20
Lampokhari Tourism Festival	11	2	0	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>114</b>

4.4 Awareness of Promotional Campaign

The table below gives indication that a significant number of tourists were not aware of ecotourism promotional campaigns in the state. 78 local respondents of Sikkim out of 100 said that they knew about the campaign while 29 domestic tourists out of 80 and 7 foreign tourists out of 20 said the same. Nearly 57 % or 114 out of 200 respondents were aware of ecotourism promotional campaigns, making it a success story as far as awareness levels are concerned. However, the less awareness among locals suggests that there are long miles to travel in order to promote Sikkim as an all year round preferred ecotourism destination in India.

**Table 4: Awareness of Promotional Campaign**

<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Type of Respondents</b>			<b>Total</b>
	<b>Local Residents of Sikkim</b>	<b>Domestic Tourists</b>	<b>Foreign Tourists</b>	
Yes	78	29	7	114
No	22	51	13	86
Total	100	80	20	200

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

As per the stated objectives of this study, placed below are the main findings and recommendations.

### 5.1 To analyze the role of media campaign in promoting ecotourism in Sikkim.

Observation – It has been clearly observed during the field work that a larger percentage of respondents have given the thumbs up to the Ecotourism Promotional Campaign. Out of 200 respondents 114 were able to recall the different ecotourism promotional campaigns.

Recommendation – There is a scope to improve the production quality of the creative of the campaigns. Also pre-testing is recommended before dissemination of any creative.

### 5.2 To analyze the media platforms in terms of media vehicles employed and its corresponding strategies used for promoting ecotourism in Sikkim.

Observation – A look at the media platforms in terms of media vehicles employed and its corresponding strategies showed a remarkable skew in favor of television among local residents of Sikkim. However in case of tourists, both domestic and foreign, social media is clearly a preferred choice with a significant percent of respondents preferring it over other media vehicles. In social media, Facebook is most preferred choice followed by Tourism Websites and YouTube.

Recommendation – The future marketing strategy should have specific plan to target the tourists through social media. Though the internal processing of Media planning and use of industry-specific metrics was found adequate, Ecotourism Directorate needs to increase the manpower available for its Campaign Wing.

### 5.3 To analyze the impact of the promotional campaign on the target group in terms of their level of awareness generation about the ecotourism promotion initiatives and the benefits availed.

Observation – It has been clearly observed during the field work that large number of locals were aware about the Ecotourism Promotional Campaign. However, the awareness level was heading south in terms of awareness level of tourists. This will also help those who are associated with tourism to plan their offerings to get benefit out of it. This has also been vindicated by the statistical data where only 36% of the tourists were found aware of it.

Recommendation – While doing publicity campaigns ecotourism Directorate should also include a component for impact assessment, with pre and post-evaluations to not only measure success of that particular campaign but also to guide planning for future campaigns.

## References

1. Baken, R. J., & Bhagavatula, S. (2010). Some reflections on tourism and tourism policy in India. *IIM Bangalore Research Paper No. 320*, 1-21.
2. Barkin, D. (1996). Ecotourism: A Tool for Sustainable Development in an Era of International Integration? *The Ecotourism Equation: Measuring the Impacts* (pp. 263-272). New Haven, Connecticut: Yale F & ES Bulletin.
3. Bora, B. (2009). *Tourism in Sikkim: An Evaluative Study (Doctoral dissertation)*. Guwahati: Retrieved from Shodhganga: A reservoir of Indian Theses.
4. Butcher, J. (2010). The 'New Tourist' as Anthropologist. *Motivations, Behaviour and Tourist Types: Reflections on International Tourism Motivations*, 160-168.
5. Diamantis, D. (1999). The Concept of Ecotourism: Evolution and Trends. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 93-122.
6. ECOSS, & WWF, I. (2016). *State Tourism Policy*. Gangtok: Government of Sikkim.
7. Environment and Forests, M. o. (2011). *Guidelines for Ecotourism in and around Protected Areas*. New Delhi: Government of India.
8. GOI, D. o. (2002). *National Tourism Policy*. New Delhi: Ministry of Tourism and Culture.
9. GOI, M. o. (2015). *National Tourism Policy*. New Delhi: Government of India.
10. Honey, M., & Gilpin, R. (2009). *Tourism in the Developing World Promoting Peace and Reducing Poverty*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.
11. IUCN. (1996). *Definitions Sustainable Tourism*. Retrieved from Sustaining Tourism: <http://www.sustainabletourism.net/sustainable-tourism/definitions/>
12. Korstanje, M. (2007). The Origin and meaning of Tourism: Etymological study. *e-Review of Tourism Research*, 100-108.
13. Kumar, A. (2014). Sikkim; A Role Model of Ecotourism in India: A Critical Analysis. *Indian Streams Research Journal*, 1-5.
14. Lama, R. (2014). *Community based Tourism Development: A Case Study of Sikkim (Doctoral dissertation)*. Kurukshetra: Retrieved from Shodhganga: A reservoir of Indian Theses.
15. Sikkim, G. o. (2011). *Sikkim Ecotourism Policy*. Gangtok: SBFP & DFEWM.
16. TIES, T. I. (2015, January 7). *TIES Announces Ecotourism Principles Revision*. Retrieved from <https://www.ecotourism.org/>: <https://www.ecotourism.org/news/ties-announces-ecotourism-principles-revision>

17. *Tourism in India*. (n.d.). Retrieved from Shodhganga:  
[http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/9790/10/10\\_chapter%203.pdf](http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/9790/10/10_chapter%203.pdf)
18. Tourism, S. (2016, June 1). *Statistics of Tourists Arrival in the State of Sikkim*. Retrieved from Tourism and Civil Aviation Department:  
<http://sikkimtourism.gov.in/Webforms/General/DepartmentStakeholders/TouristArrivalStats.aspx>
19. UNWTO. (2002). *Ecotourism and Protected areas*. Retrieved from World Tourism Organization: <http://sdt.unwto.org/content/ecotourism-and-protected-areas>
20. UNWTO. (2013). *The Sustainable Tourism for Development Guidebook* . Madrid, Spain: World Tourism Organization.
21. UNWTO. (2016). *UNWTO Annual Report 2015*. Madrid, Spain: World Tourism Organization .
22. UNWTO. (2016). *UNWTO Annual Report 2015*. Madrid, Spain: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).