

Destination Branding and Architecture: Review and Critique



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Abhilasha Chauhan

Anupriya Kaur

Jaypee University of Information Technology

(c.abhilasha@yahoo.com)

(anupriya.kaur@juit.ac.in)

Yajulu Medury

Bennett Coleman and Co. Ltd. (Times Group)

(myajulu@hotmail.com)

The competitive positioning of destinations necessitates analyzing the present scenario of India as a tourism brand. The aim of this paper is to review destination branding and brand architecture literature and its relevance to promote India as a prospective destination. We also highlight some problem areas that need to be addressed in the design of destination branding strategy. In particular, this paper supports and extends the ideology of Harish (2010) to brand India with 'house of brands strategy'. This paper will meaningfully contribute to enrich the destination branding literature and will provide insights to the Indian tourism marketers.

Keywords: Destination branding, brand architecture, India

1. Introduction

Branding practices for tourism destinations worldwide gaining importance. In today's marketplace consumers have more choices but less time to make their decisions. Branding is the clear cut solution to simplify choices and their decisions. Recently, in tourism industry also the concept of destination branding has attracted considerable attention and interest from researchers, government and practicing marketers through worldwide. The successful destination branding rely on better images of a destination, thus researchers has linked it with destination image (Pike, 2008). Although destination image has studied extensively in the previous literature, but destination branding is an emerging area of research. Along with the concept of destination branding, brand architecture in context to countries is also a new arena of research. There has been done a little work on brand architecture and destination branding. Specifically, in India there are few research studies exists on destination image, destination branding and brand architecture. For India, it is more than a decade after "Incredible India" campaign; but a clear cut strategy for branding is not visible at country and state level. So, there is a need to discuss destination branding and architectural design for India. The objectives of this paper are: 1) To review the destination branding and brand architecture concepts in the literature. 2) To discuss the relevance of destination branding and architectural plan to promote India as a prospective destination and it also highlights the various problem areas in context to Indian tourism.

In the sections that follow we are presenting literature review on destination branding and destination brand architecture. This is followed by a discussion on destination branding & brand architecture for India. Next, the discussion and suggestions are made and highlights some problem areas prevalent in Indian tourism industry. The concluding section discusses the findings and the implications thereof.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Destination Branding

The concept of branding products initially appeared in the literature more than 50 years ago and branding in tourism came in late nineties (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998). The first initiative towards conceptualizing the branding in tourism started with Annual Conference of the International Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA, 1998) with the theme "Branding the Travel Market" (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998). The main focus of the conference was to discuss the various cases on branding destinations (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998). These included New York; Tasmania, Australia; Canada; New Orleans; Louisiana; Texas; and Oregon. It was visualized that similar to product brands, destination brands has a visible impact in the marketing plan that visitors can trust, before visiting a destination and will carry more than that in the form of experience and memories. Previous researchers have described destination brand and destination branding from various perspectives.

"A Destination Brand is a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience" (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998). Similarly, a destination brand "represents a unique combination of product characteristics and added values, both functional and non-functional, which have taken on a relevant meaning, which is inextricably linked to that brand, awareness of which might be conscious or intuitive" (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998, p. 140; Hanzaee & Saedi, 2011).

"Destination branding conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience" (Goeldner, Ritchie, and Mac-Intosh 2000; Kaplanidou and Vogt 2003) (cited in Hassan et al., 2010). It is "selecting a

consistent brand element mix to identify and distinguish a destination through positive image building” (Lee et al., 2006; Harish, 2010). Destination branding is the process of developing a unique identity or personality for a tourist (or investment) destination, and communicating the same to visitors (or prospective investors) using a name, a tagline, a symbol, a design or a combination of these to create a positive image (Harish, 2010). The governmental bodies, policymakers and the marketers are spending money, time and effort to build up a successful destination branding plan. An efficient destination branding process is advantageous to provide long-term economical benefits to a nation. It has equal impact on tourist’s search process and decision making to select a destination. The next section will thoroughly discuss that why destination branding is important.

2.2 Importance of Destination Branding

1. Reduction of Visitor’s Search Costs - Positive image building of a destination reduces the search cost and destination choice becomes easier for the visitors (Blain et al., 2005; Schaar, 2013).
2. Assurance of Quality Experiences - It is difficult to match the accurate expected quality experience before visiting the destination, but destination branding reduces it to a certain level. “It is admittedly more difficult for destinations to assure quality because of the variance of products and services a given visitor experiences within a destination” (Blain et al., 2005).
3. Unique selling proportion - Destination branding provides destinations the unique selling proportion as they compete against many other similar destinations. It assures sustainability and relevancy that cannot be imitated by the competitors; “the competition wants and is maybe able to copy but which they cannot surpass or usurp” (Morgan et al., 2002; Blain et al., 2005).

Blain et al. (2005) has discussed benefits of creating a destination brand that includes image, recognition, differentiation, consistency, brand messages, emotional response, and expectations.

Clarke (2000) has listed six benefits of branding related to tourism destination products:

1. Tourism is typically high involvement, branding helps to reduce the choice.
2. Branding helps in reducing the impact of intangibility.
3. Branding conveys consistency across multiple outlets and through time.
4. Branding can reduce the risk factor attached to decision making about holidays.
5. Branding facilitates precise segmentation.
6. Branding helps to provide a focus for the integration of producer effort, helping people to work towards the same outcome (Hassan et al., 2010).

Hassan et al. (2010) has identified the benefits of destination branding for the community as a whole:

1. Brings increased respect, recognition, loyalty, and celebrity.
2. Corrects out of date, inaccurate or unbalanced perceptions.
3. Improves stakeholder income, profit margins, and increases lodging tax revenues. Increases the ability to attract, recruit, and retain talented people.
4. Enhances civic pride and advocacy.
5. Expands the size of the ‘pie’ for stakeholders to get a larger share, rather than having to rely on pricing to steal their share (www.destinationbranding.com; Hassan et al., 2010).

Other than above mentioned aspects destination branding is important for various other activities:

1. Destinations attract FDI, Infrastructure investments and contribute in GDP of a nation (Hankinson, 2005; Balakrishnan, 2009).
2. Retail - Retailing has a wider aspect for any country’s economy. The shopping activities are not only important for tourists but also for local residents; it will be helpful in attracting domestic and international tourists (Rangan et al., 2006; Balakrishnan, 2009).
3. Urban-planning - The urban planning literature focuses on the nature of the place product, it’s historical development and the marketing implications of its distinctive features (Hankinson, 2004). Positive destination image develops on the basis of better accommodations, roads (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993), sport centers, theme parks (Tsiotsou and Ratten, 2010), cleanliness and pollution free environment etc.
4. Education - Worldwide destinations attract students and basis for that is positive value associated with that Particular destination. Indian and other students faced violence in 2011 due to that as earlier “Australia’s international student numbers continue to plummet with Indian students’ enrolments dropping by over 24 per cent during January - June 2012 as compared to previous year, according to government figures. Australian education providers saw a drop of 8.5 per cent in enrolments during January to June 2012, as compared with the last year (The Economic Times, Aug 2012; Chauhan et al., 2012).

This shows destination branding is widely important in various areas. Such happenings affects destination image of the place therefore it is necessary to build strong & positive images so that positive WOM can be spread throughout the world (Chauhan et al., 2012).

It is evident that destination branding is not important from tourism marketing perspective but it lays its significant impact to various fields. To strengthen the research approaches in destination branding; the basic branding concepts for the products have also been applied to the destination branding process. The Aaker (1991) model of brand equity, CBBE model of Keller (1993), brand box model of de Chernatony & McWilliam (1990) have gained importance in destination branding. Table 1 shows the detailed information:

2.3 Branding Models for Tourism Destinations

Table 1 Major Branding Models Used For Branding Destinations

Branding Models	Products		Destinations		
	Year	Author(s)	Destination	Year	Author(s)
Brand Equity Model & CBBE	1991, 1996 1993, 2003	Aaker (1991, 1996). Keller (1993, 2003).	Australia	2009, 2010	Pike (2009); Pike et al. (2010).
			UK	2011	Nam et al. (2011).
			Slovenia	2007	Konecnik & Gartner (2007).
Brand Box Model	1990	de Chernatony & McWilliam (1990).	UK	2000	Clarke (2000).
				2004	Caldwell & Freire (2004);
				2014	Kladou & Kehagias (2014).

Brand equity & CBBE

Major contribution in building up brand equity and CBBE were done by Aaker (1991; 1996) and Keller (1993; 2003). Aaker (1991) discussed about the brand equity components and how to measure them. Aaker (1991) defines brand equity as the set of brand assets and liabilities linked to the brand - its name and symbols that add value or subtract value from a product or service. Keller (1993) introduces the concept of customer based brand equity defined as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand.

These branding models were extensively studied by few researchers in context to destination branding. In the study of Konecnik and Gartner (2007) the CBBE model on the theme line of Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) has been applied for destination. The major components for building brand equity were destination awareness, destination image, destination quality and destination loyalty (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). In the another study, Pike et al., (2010) has evaluated the suitability of a CBBE model for Australia as long haul destination in Chile, an emerging market and tested the relationship among the proposed dimensions of destination CBBE model: brand salience, brand image, perceived quality and brand loyalty (Pike et al., 2010). Nam et al, 2011 also used CBBE model for a destination. Their study investigated about the mediating effects of consumer satisfaction on the relationship between consumer - based brand equity and brand loyalty in the hotel and restaurant industry. The brand equity dimensions used in their model were as follows:

CBBE1: Physical Quality

CBBE2: Staff Behavior

CBBE3: Ideal Self - Congruence → Consumer satisfaction → Brand Loyalty

CBBE4: Brand Identification

CBBE5: Lifestyle - Congruence

These brand equity dimensions are positively correlated with consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty (Nam et al., 2011). Similarly in the study of Kladou & Kehagias (2014) they proposed a model, having four dimensions of brand equity: awareness, image, quality and loyalty and fifth one were added as cultural brand assets. Their proposed model was focused on cultural urban destinations and international tourists visiting Rome were taken as sample for the study. Findings revealed that the five dimensions are interrelated and important for the customers' evaluation of a cultural destination. Consistent with place and destination branding literature, the significance of specific cultural brand assets is emphasized (Kladou & Kehagias, 2014).

The other model that has been extensively used in the tourism context is “Brand Box model” by de Chernatony & McWilliam. This model has two dimensions - representationality and functionality - to create a four matrix cell based on the consumer perspectives. Clarke (2000) adapted de Chernatony & McWilliam (1990) model and tested on six tourism brands in U.K. The tourism brands were Club 18-30, The National Trust, Orient Express, Thomson Holidays and Virgin Atlantic. These tourism products were categorized in terms of functionality and representationality.

Caldwell & Freire (2004) also adapted the de Chernatony & McWilliam (1990) Brand Box Model and applied to countries, regions and cities. The study was developed in order to understand and clarify whether the same branding techniques should be applied to these three different types of destinations. The student sample has been taken and was categorized as European and non European respondents. The results indicate that countries are so functionally diverse and perceived more as representational and on the other end regions and cities are perceived more from a functional point of view (Caldwell & Freire, 2004). So, these models were modified as per tourism perspective to enrich the destination branding literature. It can be concluded that the implementation of the branding models in context to destinations have a major impact on image building and customer loyalty. On a larger scale in practical it destinations are not like other products; branding destinations is a very complex process (Buhalis, 2000; Morgan et al., 2003) due to various reasons. The next section briefly discusses the factual point of view as to why it is difficult to brand destinations.

2.4 Complexity in Branding Destinations

Pike (2005) has discussed in detail about tourism destination branding complexities.

1. Destinations are multidimensional than consumer goods and other types of services.

2. The market interests of the diverse group of active stakeholders are heterogeneous and this lead to politics in decision making.
3. Local community consensus and funding issues to implement destination branding also affects the process.

Balakrishnan (2009) also differentiated that destinations need more attention for branding as compared to corporate, product and service brands; as discussed below:

1. Tourism is dependent on macro-environmental factors like politics, terrorism, disease outbreaks, weather/natural conditions and currency fluctuations.
2. Geographical constraints affects accessibility, weather, access to resources, defines infrastructure requirements and people characteristics.
3. Inherited names and past history like heritage, culture and perception of locations (like country of origin) evolve over time and cannot be easily changed (Shikoh, 2006).
4. Stakeholders are diverse and influential. Destinations are run by governing bodies which are politically motivated, have funding constraints and answerable to their stakeholders (Stokes, 2006; Hankinson, 2005; Pike, 2005).
5. The diversity of target customers, the complex decision making process and the multiple choice sets make destination marketing harder (Woodside & Dubelaar, 2002; Gonzalez & Bello, 2002).
6. Destinations are service dependent. Services account for over 65 per cent of global GDP and are people dependent, employing 40 per cent of the global workforce (ILO, 2007). Destination success also depends on infrastructure, technology and communications (IMD, 2005). Investments required are huge and need to keep global standards in mind.
7. Feedback and control issues (see Pike, 2005). Destination marketing organizations do not have top-down implementation control (Pike, 2005). Perception of destinations is influenced by publicity and promotion (Correia et al., 2007) which can be distorted by global market events and other destination images. Since destination brands are complex and are constantly changing (Trueman et al., 2004; Kates & Goh, 2003) they must be managed.

Branding a destination depends on stakeholders, external factors, geographical constraints etc. The countries like Spain, New Zealand and UAE through their branding strategies uplifted their economies (Gilmore, 2002; Morgan et al., 2003; Singh and Ahuja, 2014a). But in contrast to India the similar branding strategies will not work. India has diversity in culture, language, geographical terrain etc. So, definite brand architecture is needed as per the country's size, culture and diversity in any form.

The next section is developed to discuss the different strategy framework for destination branding suggested by various researchers.

2.5 The Strategy Framework for Destination Branding

Since destination brands are complex and are constantly changing (Trueman et al., 2004; Kates and Goh, 2003) they must be managed. Previous authors suggested various strategies to brand destinations.

Balakrishnan (2009) discussed in detail the relevance and importance of strategic destination branding based on the previous literature.

Branding Components

1. Vision and stakeholder management.
2. Target customer and product portfolio matching.
3. Positioning and differentiation strategies using branding components.
4. Communication strategies.
5. Feedback and response management strategies.

In the study of Gilmore (2002) he proposed the positioning diamond and it has four essential factors that need to be considered for branding each country:

1. Macro trends
2. Target audiences/stakeholders
3. Competitors
4. Core competencies

The process of using this positioning diamond is invaluable because it forces you to assess the priorities of your branding exercise, to think broadly as well as to narrow the parameters governing the development of your country's brand (Gilmore, 2002).

The longitudinal research study of Herstein & Jaffe (2008) was based on the real time re-imaging of the city from negative to positive. Herstein & Jaffe (2008) mentioned five stages for branding a destination

1. Diagnosis Stage
2. Vision creating Stage
3. Image Designing Stage
4. Image Assimilation Stage
5. Control

It can be summarized that applying destination branding on city, state or country level a clear inspection is needed that what that destination is delivering and what is expected to deliver through destination image (Herstein & Jaffe, 2008). Broadly the destination branding process is to analyze the current factors associated with the destination and then making a viable branding plan. There are examples where after applying clear destination branding strategies; countries, regions and cities are benefited. In the next section we will discuss few successful stories of implementing destination branding.

2.6 Successful stories of Implementing Destination Branding

Destination can be a country, state or a city; branding can be done at all levels. In recent years destination branding has gained importance as a research topic as well practitioners and marketers have applied it in practical to gain benefits. In a study by Gilmore (2002) he discussed about the repositioning of Spain from a poor destination image to a hot touristic destination. In this study it is explained that the careful planning and co-ordination among all the stakeholders leads to a successful branding of a destination. He quoted 'Experts on location branding note that Spain is among the best examples of modern, successful national branding because it keeps on building on what truly exists. The focus has been put on to ensure that the country is actually able to substantiate what its brand is saying about it (Gilmore, 2002). Similarly the success story of New Zealand was discussed by Lodge (2002) earlier it faced problems: acute economic need, poor recognition and detrimental positioning and overshadowed by a powerful close neighbor. The negative image was changed through repositioning strategy that was based on analyzing the core competency of the country and then making it as power selling proposition. In the whole process the government and other stakeholders were involved (Lodge, 2002).

Destination branding has been applied in context to cities, "Dubai is probably one of the best known examples of a city brand that has established itself in a very short period of time while riding the waves of globalization" (Govers, 2012). The reason for this is the successful destination branding of Dubai that transformed it to a dreamland from a desert. The major initiative was started in 1996 when through the combined efforts of government and private stakeholders together launched 'The Dubai Shopping Festival.' The destination marketing was structured around five primary reference points i.e. tourist, destination, citizen, tourism services suppliers (Vardhan, 2008). In recent years Dubai has gone through a fast pace development not only in tourism; but also in trade, business, shopping and improving lifestyle. This was difficult to achieve in a short time span, but the clarity on the vision and stakeholder's co-operation made it happen. The other case studies on branding cities are on Isfahan, Kuala Lumpur, Amman, Holon etc (Hanzaee & Saeedi, 2011; Bouchon, 2014; Khirfan & Momani, 2013; Herstein and Jaffe, 2008). So, it can be said that while branding a country or a small city, the success can be anticipated through the role of the various stakeholders and co-ordination among them.

Other than this, an efficient destination branding plan and a clear brand architecture strategy is needed. It is important because destinations vary in terms of geographical terrain, population, culture etc and they need a specific brand architecture plan.

2.7 Destination Brand Architecture

Brand architecture is an organizing structure of the brand portfolio that specifies brand roles and the nature of relationships between brands (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). Brand architecture refers to how a firm structures and organizes its product/brand portfolio in terms of naming, positioning and marketing the products (Harish, 2010). Brand architecture defines the way in which a brand signs a product, and whether it does so independently of another brand (Douglas et al., 2001; Rao et al., 2004; Chailan, 2009). Architecture allows us to define the degree of brand exclusivity in relation to product, implicitly meaning the brands field of operation in the market (Chailan, 2009). Chailan (2009) has discussed about Olins (1989) and Laforet & Saunders (1994) three levels of brand architecture:

1. Monolithic brands - corporate branding (one sole name for all products).
2. Endorsed brands - mixed branding (two brands associated with one product).
3. Branded products - house of brands (each product has its own brand).

Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) have discussed four types of brand architecture strategies for products.

1. A House of brand
2. Endorsed Brands
3. Sub brands
4. A Branded House

In tourism studies, the above brand architecture model of Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) has been extended for destinations.

House of Brands Strategy

The house of brands strategy involves an independent set of stand-alone brands, each maximizing the impact on a market. The house of brands strategy, allows a firm to clearly position brands on functional benefits and to dominate niche segments (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). Singh & Ahuja (2014b) relates Balearic Islands to the house of brands strategy; in which the individual islands such Majorca, Minorca, Ibiza and Formentera, are more recognized for their specific offerings than the brand name of the archipelago. Harish (2010) categorized Spain and Northwest China as destinations which are following house of brands strategy.

Endorsed Brands An endorsement by an established brand provides credibility and substance to the offering and usually plays only a minor driver role (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). When applied to tourist destinations, some Argentinean regions apply a model that can be linked to the concept of Endorsed Brands, as they take advantage of the awareness of the country name by adding it to their logo: Cuyo Argentina, Litoral Argentina, Norte Argentino, Patagonia Argentina (Singh & Ahuja, 2014b).

Master/Sub-brands Relationship In this case the brands connected to a master or parent brand and augment or modify the associations of that master brand (Singh & Ahuja, 2014b). The master brand is the primary frame of reference, which is stretched by sub brands that add attribute associations (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). In context to tourist destinations, Western Australia acts as a master brand. There are more than 140 adaptations of the Western Australia master brand logo, which are used for various geographic sub-regions, cities, local attractions and even product brands (Harish, 2010).

Branded House When applied to tourist destinations, the Maldives apply a model that can be linked to the concept of a Branded House (Singh & Ahuja, 2014b). As branded house strategy uses a single master brand to span a set of offerings that operate with only descriptive sub brands (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). Under this same category Harish (2010) took New Zealand and Egypt.

It is a recent activity that brand architecture has been introduced to destination branding (Harish, 2010; Singh and Ahuja, 2014a; Datzira-Masip & Poluzzi, 2014). If we talk about destination branding or destination brand architecture in context to India, it is a new research area and is at its preliminary stage. There are countable research studies present on destination branding and destination brand architecture in India, mainly of Harish (2010); Singh & Ahuja (2014b); Venkatachalam & Venkateswaran (2010); Sharma (2013). The next section will discuss the scenario of destination branding and brand architecture in India.

3. Destination Branding and Destination Brand Architecture in India

3.1 Destination branding in India

Tourism is a major engine of economic growth in most parts of the world. Several countries have transformed their economies using the tourism potential the fullest. India is bestowed by nature's gift by having diverse tourism products to offer. It was quoted by Max Muller "If we were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty which nature can bestow – in some parts a veritable paradise on Earth- I should point to India. If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts – I should point to India" (Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Government of India (2002). This shows that India has been viewed as a popular destination with a unique identity.

In today's scenario countries focusing on destination branding and building up their destination brands. Tourism for any country is a source of revenue generation, employment and image building for various other opportunities. This was realized in Indian perspective also in 2002 by Atal Bihari Bajpai "Tourism has great capacity to create large scale employment of diverse kind-from the most specialized to the unskilled and all of us know that generation of massive productive employment opportunities is what India needs most (Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Government of India, 2002). But after independence in 1947 it took so many years to draft any comprehensive tourism policy. Below is the snapshot of the initiatives towards tourism policy making in the country.

- The first comprehensive National Tourism Policy was drafted and discussed in the Parliament (1982)
- Indian Institute of Travel and Tourism Management - (1983)
- Tourism Finance Corporation - (1989)
- National Action Plan - (1992)
- First Initiative by the State govt. of Kerela - Gods own country (1995)
- National Tourism Policy of 2002
- Incredible India campaign - (2002)

Source: Baken & Bhagavatula (2010); WTO (2013)

The 1982 policy action plan was based on the development of the so called tourism circuits (Singh, 2001; Baken & Bhagavatula, 2010). The golden triangle "Delhi-Jaipur-Agra" got much attention in that time span. After this it was realized that the country is in need of such professionals who can provide an excellent standard of products and services and it resulted in the creation of IITTM in 1983 at New Delhi. Now, Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management is an autonomous organization of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (<http://www.iittm.org/main/aboutus.htm>). In 1989 Tourism Finance Corporation, India (TFCI) was formed to promote a separate All-India Financial Institution for providing financial assistance to tourism-related activities/projects (<http://www.tfcilt.com/about.html>). After this, National Action Plan of 1992 was focused on improving tourism infrastructure and to make suitable policy for increasing foreign tourist arrivals and foreign exchange earnings (Bhatia, 2013). Later on, in 1990s the Kerela tourism went through the developmental phase (Baken & Bhagavatula, 2010) and emerged as one of the prime tourism destinations on the national and international map and is considered as the tourism trendsetter in the country (<https://www.keralatourism.org/rt-keralaupdate.php>).

The effective action plan has been made by the Indian government in 2002 when National Tourism Policy 2002 was formed. The focus of the Tourism Policy of India, in 2002 was to position India as a global brand to take advantage of the burgeoning global travel trade and the vast untapped potential of India as a destination Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Government of India (2002). But, the major change has been seen in the year 2002 through the marketing campaign Incredible India. The first marketing initiative of its kind, Incredible India was conceptualized in 2002 by V Sunil (while he was Creative Director, O&M Delhi), and Amitabh Kant, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism. The primary objective of this branding exercise was to create a distinctive identity for the country. This resulted in the iconic 'Incredible India' logo, where the exclamation mark that formed the "I" of India was used to great effect across all communications. The campaign successfully established India as a high-end tourist destination, generating a 16% increase in tourist traffic in the first year (<http://www.incredibleindiacampaign.com/>).

It is evident that these efforts made by ministry of tourism benefitted Indian economy up to a level. After years also this campaign benefitted the tourism industry in getting more tourist traffic (Incredible India, Geary 2013). But if we see it analytically the progress is very slow. After Incredible India campaign it has been so many years we are not able to get edge over the small countries like Malaysia, Dubai etc. "Incredible India campaign whether it on TV commercials or internet campaign has not properly explained about the states and the cities and the important tourism related information in it" (Singh et al., 2012). Thus, Incredible India campaign needs to be more properly informative, clear, and relevant to incorporate only relevant and practical information which a tourist would actually be interested in. Moreover, there has been no broad research aiming at infusing a sense of realism into the conceptualization of the role and potential of tourism, refining insights and bringing them in line with everyday reality (Baken & Bhagavatula, 2010).

3.2 Indian Literature on Destination Branding

There are few research studies based on destination branding. Most of the studies are related to conceptualization of destination image of India and mainly Goa (Chauhan et al., 2012). Till now there is not any standardized scale developed that can measure destination image and will help in better destination branding. The destination branding is unexplored dimension of research in India. A snapshot of tourism marketing literature in context to India has been presented in the Table 2.

Table 2 Tourism Marketing Literature India

Author(s)	Research Area	Discussion
Harish (2010); Venkatachalam & Venkateswaran (2010); Singh & Ahuja (2014b); Sharma (2013).	Destination Branding	Discussed about destination branding strategies for India and its states.
Harish (2010); Singh & Ahuja (2014b).	Brand Architecture	Importance of brand architecture for India as a tourism destination.
Agrawal et al., (2010); Gupta & Gulla, (2010); Tripathi et al., (2010).	Religious Tourism	Suggested implications to promote India as buddhist destination and there is a potential for religious and spiritual tourism
Kale and Weir (1986); Chaudhary (2000); Madhavan & Rastogi (2011); Rajesh (2013).	Destination image, Satisfaction & Service Quality	There exists a gap between expectations and satisfaction level of tourists. Impact of tourist perception, destination image and satisfaction has been studied on destination loyalty.
Wilson, (1997); Dwivedi et al. (2009); Kamat (2010).	Studies on Goa	Explored the online destination image of Goa and emphasized on Goa's beach centric tourism with relation to destination life cycle model.
Bandyopadhyay et al., (2008); Nasreen & Thang, (2011); Singh et al. (2012).	Comparative Studies	Compared India and Malaysia on the basis of infrastructural facilities they are providing and put suggestions to improve the weak areas. Identified the gaps in "Incredible India" centralized campaign vis-à-vis state wise campaign to promote tourism in India.

The two research papers on destination branding were appeared in year 2010. In one of the research paper Harish (2010) briefed up destination branding and suggested brand architecture strategies for India. In the other study Venkatachalam & Venkateswaran (2010) discussed that how India can be branded as a unique destination and what will be the various challenges in the uncertain environment (Terrorism and Other risks). Sharma (2013) laid importance on destination branding and focused on Madhya Pradesh Tourism Co-operation's initiatives. Singh & Ahuja (2014b) also states that destination branding is an important concept for developing a brand architecture model for any nation. It is observed that the current research in India on destination branding is at introductory stage and there is a need to explore on this.

3.3 Destination Brand Architecture of India

The present brand architectural design of India is "Incredible India" under which all the tourism products are being promoted like beaches, forests, wildlife, deserts, wellness, etc. (<http://www.incredibleindia.org/travel>; Singh & Ahuja, 2014b). Harish (2010) linked India's current brand architecture to 'Branded House' strategy that India being a vast country, it is branded under a single brand that is 'Incredible India.' Singh & Ahuja (2014b) stated that due to umbrella brand "Foreign tourists would not come to know the uniqueness of India." The 'Incredible India' campaign brands India on the basis of almost all the attributes i.e. mountains, wildlife, culture, dances, beaches, etc. This branding does not give any unique or distinctive attributes which distinguishes India from its competitors. Harish (2010) in his research study also considered Incredible India

as a monolithic brand. He quoted that “India is divided into 29 states and six union territories, each of which is a mini-nation in itself. While India is projected as one country, the average foreign tourist coming into India visits just two-and-a-half states.” The study by Harish (2010) suggested the brand architecture strategy for India. He took Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000) “brand relationship spectrum” to suggest brand architecture strategy for India. It was appreciated in his study that 2002 ‘Incredible India’ campaign was quite successful but now there is need to move to next level. The “house of brand strategy” was suggested for India as it is diversified in terms of culture and geographical terrain. The major suggestions made by Harish (2010) in context to India are:

- Province or City branding
- The “House of Brands” strategy
- Singh & Ahuja (2014b) have also suggested two feasible models for India's brand architecture are: “House of brands” and “Endorsed brand.”

We will discuss in detail the suggestions made by Harish (2010) in the next section.

4. Discussion

The scope of brand architecture along with the destination branding increases because each and every destination is unique in some way it can be culture, geographical constraints. The ‘Incredible India’ campaign in 2002 was right approach but now there is a need to shift from promotional focus to establishing India as a desirable destination. Specially, India being a very vast country in terms of geographical terrain, culture etc, there is a need to shift. Incredible India brand is portraying the overall image of the country. But the question arises that is it actually able to lure tourists through “Incredible India” campaign in comparison to other small Asian nations?

The need of the hour is to get more into practical approach to adapt pure destination branding procedure and most importantly a brand architecture strategy. Branding as a concept was seen as relevant for tourist destinations but not always fully understood due to complex nature of tourism brands. In particular, branding techniques were often limited to the development of logos, strap lines and symbols (Hanikson, 2001). But today this is not enough for tourists; they want congruence between their expectation and satisfaction levels.

In this context the suggestions made by Harish (2010) in context to India were:

The “House of Brands” Strategy

It is mentioned above in the paper that House of brands strategy means involves an independent set of stand-alone brands, each maximizing the impact on a market. Harish (2010) suggested this strategy for India. To support House of Brands strategy for India Harish (2010) stated that “we have countries like Spain adopting the “house” of brands” architecture for tourism promotion, which is less than one-sixth of India’s size, and has one - 25th of the population, has found success by taking to the “house of brands” form of brand architecture, it would be even more imperative for India to consider a move away from the “branded house” approach”. “Branded house” or “Monolithic” branding strategy is all right for starters; in due course it would become advisable to progress into other forms of brand architecture. Similarly, Singh & Ahuja (2014b) revisited Harish (2010) and suggested In UAE, all the states have their own distinct branding independent of Nation branding. UAE is also big and diverse like, India. Therefore, all the states of India can also have their own individual branding on the basis of their own important attributes independent of the parent brand. This way, India's parent brand would be branded on some key attributes which are universal for the entire nation and all the states within India's parent brand should be having their own individual branding on the basis of their own unique attributes. This kind of branding would become 'House of brand' strategy for India.

Extending these strategies, we are really in a need of an efficient brand architecture model that will uplift India’s position. Destination branding and brand architecture has its implications not limited to tourism but for various other fields also. The countries and cities are competing worldwide not only for tourists but also for export markets, business investment, skilled migrants, etc (Singh & Ahuja, 2014b), urban planning, retail, education, political and international affairs (Chauhan et al., 2012).

The Ministry of tourism - India, is the central agency to control tourist activities in the country. The current model is the integrated model where Incredible India is the national campaign for the country. The suggestive measure made here is to set states free to make their branding strategies. As a controlling authority The Ministry of Tourism should encourage each and every state. Harish (2010) states that India is following “Branded House” or “Umbrella Branding” strategy but the real picture depicts that this is not well executed. Various states of India have also started promoting themselves as different brands under the umbrella brand “Incredible India”. Starting from Kerala’s “God’s Own Country” to Rajasthan’s “The Incredible State of India”, Punjab’s “India begins here” and Himachal’s “Unforgettable Himachal” with such promotional campaigns they are trying to attract the prospective visitors. On the other hand eastern states and other various states they are at their preliminary stage in taking initiative to uplift the tourism in their respective states. Though some of the States/UTs are very pro-active in promoting tourism, some others have not yet realized the full advantage of tourism in their economic development (Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, 2011). Whereas the active involvement of States/UTs is a pre-requisite for an integrated tourism development plans in the country. There is a need for a clear branding strategy and that should be uniformly implemented in every state. It will give rise to competition among states to brand them in a better way. The author supports the “House of brands” strategy for India proposed by Harish (2010) and Singh & Ahuja (2014b). The realistic fact behind implementing

“House of Brands” strategy is that it will lead states towards fair competition and will attract more tourists. The other perspective of applying “House of brands strategy” is to lure tourists to domestic destinations. India being a vast country has various tourism products to offer but there has been an increase in Indian tourists going overseas for holidaying. “Some proportion of these tourists can be diverted to domestic destinations if their image is enhanced by comparing them with similar destinations overseas” (WTO, 2013). This can be done through “House of brands” strategy by developing state’s individual brands.

City Branding

The other suggestion that has been made for India is city branding. Harish (2010) has quoted the example of New York, London and Paris that visitors have their clear intention of visiting these cities in particular rather than associating with the country. In such a way India has a long list of cities like Prague, Mumbai, Delhi and many more. “It is therefore advantageous to focus on the individual locations/attractions rather than national pride, unless the individual locations are associated with negative connotations which need to be neutralized by promoting a national image” (Harish, 2010). Chauhan et al. (2012) also supports that “City branding is a great idea for India as it has a vast geographical area.” The above discussed suggestions are of practical importance but before focusing much on implementing new strategies; it is suggested to look into the various problem areas that are prevalent in Indian tourism.

5. Problem Areas: Indian Tourism

1) Destination Brand Positioning

In the previous sections we discussed destination branding and destination brand architecture and suggested measures for India to implement. The major problem is that after 11 years we are promoting India as a one way image processing. If we link this with strategy framework of destination branding, it is only the promotional activity that is being executed. From the perspective that at the preliminary stages such efforts are appreciable, but looking into the potential India has, we are lagging behind other small Asian countries. In this regard the Pike (2008) model depicts that there should be congruency between the brand identity (marketer) and brand image (consumer) then only a branding plan is successful. Figure 2 is depicting Pike’s (2008) model of destination branding.

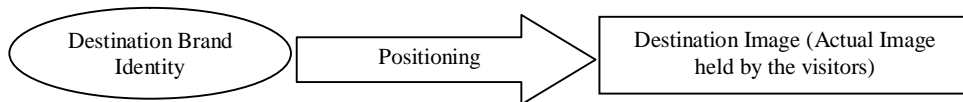


Figure 2 Destination Branding - Pike’s Model
Source: Pike (2008)

Similarly if we apply the same destination branding model to Indian tourism branding efforts it seems to not fitting well (Figure 3). A study by Kale and Weir (1986) in which they had taken a sample of young Americans aged between 18 and 35 in order to assess their perceptions about India. Results indicate that the potential tourists were concerned about cleanliness, poverty, lack of personal safety, poor transportation. On the positive side, the respondents were impressed by India’s culture and history, its exotic atmosphere, and the opportunities it provides to observe unique customs and sample exotic food. A gap analysis between expectations and satisfaction levels was done by Chaudhary (2000) to identify strengths and weaknesses of India’s tourism-related image dimensions. It was observed that India is rated highly for its rich art forms and cultural heritage and irritants like cheating, begging, unhygienic conditions, lack of safety dampen the spirits of tourists (Chaudhary, 2000; Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, 2010). “Incredible India” marketing campaign 2002 depicts India’s sound image on the basis of culture, adventure, historical monuments, religion and festivals. But it is observed that a gap exists between the depiction and actual perception of the tourists (Jauhari, 2009). “The image of India is something that cannot be imposed on tourist by only advertisement campaign (one way communication)” (Venkatachalam and Venkateswaran, 2010). This shows that India is able to portray sound symbolic images but unable to match these on experiential levels (Chauhan et al., 2012).

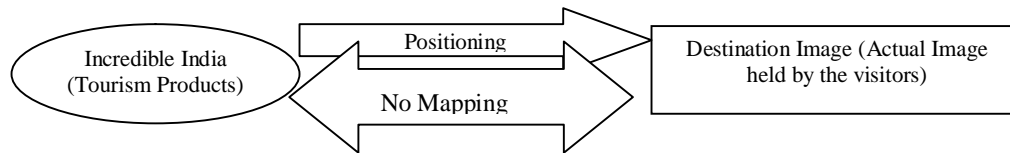


Figure 3 Destinations Branding in India

2) Infrastructure and Safety Issues

Considerable research in context of India shows that poor condition of roads and transport facilities is the main factor that hinders the tourist arrivals (Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, 2007; Chaudhary, 2000; Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, 2010, Chauhan et al., 2012). In addition, India lacks positive image because of hygiene and safety security problems faced by the tourists (Chaudhary, 2000; Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, 2010; Nasreen and Thang, 2011; Chauhan et al, 2012).

3) Not having proper Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs)

Past literature has emphasized on the importance and role of DMO in destination branding. Destination management organizations play a central role in promoting tourism in the country, region or town (Loncaric et al., 2013). A main function of DMOs is that of being responsible for marketing their destinations (Elbe et al., 2009; Loncaric et al., 2013). To make an effective marketing and branding plan for destinations DMOs play an important role, but in Indian context we can say that Ministry of tourism has market and research division but in context to states there is an ambiguity regarding formation of DMOs and their functions. DMOs should be aware of new trends and guide the development of their tourism product to take account of trends which may directly or indirectly affect consumer choices or behavior (WTO, 2007; Loncaric et al., 2013).

4) Role of stakeholders

Branding a destination is not equal to branding a product; here in case of destinations various stakeholders play a vital role. Without having equal co-ordination it is difficult to brand a destination (Balakrishnan, 2009). In India the subject of tourism is not included in any of the three lists of the Indian Constitution, viz. the Union List, the State List, and the Concurrent List. Many activities related to tourism are under the jurisdiction of other union ministries of the State governments. The various stakeholders of Ministry of Tourism are (Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, 2011):-

- 1) State/ UT Governments.
- 2) Industry, travel trade and hospitality sector associations
- 3) Individual hospitality and travel trade establishments
- 4) Students and teachers of hospitality and tourism institutes
- 5) Other Central Ministries/ Organizations
- 6) Domestic and foreign tourists
- 7) Others

After visualizing the various stakeholders still synchronization in planning process is lacking. Though at national level active participation of stakeholders is ensured but in case of many states it is yet not present in the strategy framework.

5) Less consumer studies

States/UTs will be encouraged to use the methodology developed by the Ministry of Tourism for collection of domestic and foreign tourists' visits in their States/UTs (Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, 2011). No accurate statistical figures are available on tourist outflow and inflow.

6. Conclusion

Till now the Incredible India campaign by Ministry of Tourism has served its major function as a catalyst for boom in Indian tourism industry. But now there is a need for a more comprehensive strategy that can very well portray the core tourism products. The reason behind slow development of tourism in India is the mismatch between the portrayed image of India and the actual image perceived by the tourists. The well known fact is that the infrastructure facilities, safety security issues, hygiene etc. are the biggest problems that tourists face here. Destination branding in terms of various stakeholders' co-operation, role of DMO's or a clear brand architecture strategy, all these are equally important to get edge in today's competitive arena. It has to be very clearly understood that destination branding is more than developing a logo and tagline for a destination. This running phase demands a change to shift from 'branded house' to 'house of brands strategy' (Harish, 2010). Along with this city branding will be good practice for India considering the diversification of India. Before implementing any strategic plan, for a successful execution of destination branding in India the problems like infrastructure facilities, hygiene, and safety security issues needs to be addressed first. The other most important role of this study was to build up a base for destination branding and destination brand architecture for Indian context. This paper contributes by summarizing the destination branding and brand architecture literature internationally and specific to Indian context. The managerial implications emerged from this study are as follows. We need a destination branding plan that will be efficiently implemented in all the states with pre defined set goals. It should be noted that this will help policy makers and DMO's to assess the development process at national or state level with set standards. Secondly, this study will enrich the theoretical base for Indian tourism literatures as there are negligible research studies are available.

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