Role of Destination Branding in Enhancing Indian Tourism

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Abstract – **Indian tourism is likely to be the third largest tourism economy by 2028 and create 10 million jobs in Indian tourism sector. Statistics reports say that there is significant increase in the inflow of foreign tourists and domestic tourist visiting the destinations. This will upscale the economic growth, increase FDIs and generate new business avenues and thus it is predominant for destination marketers to analyses the significance of destination image in branding destination. This article is based on a wide research work on destination image, and an extract of the role of destination branding in enhancing Indian tourism has been portrayed. The areas carrying importance have been discussed theoretically.**

Keywords - **Indian tourism, destination branding, destination image, Foreign Tourists Arrivals, Destination Marketers**

I. INTRODUCTION

India being a vast country has its own tourist attractions and possesses a rich heritage, diverse culture, architectural monuments, climatically pleasant mountain chains, and various other resources. The calumnious growth of tourism industry has not only been protecting bestowed resources but also elevating tourism-based businesses, contributing to economic growth and development, increasing opportunities in employment, foreign direct investments, and competes with other countries in world tourism market. It is important for the Government, Businesses and other thereof to promote the Indian tourism by branding destinations and to achieve tourism sustainability. Thus, the role of destination branding comes into the lucrative consideration. Indian Government has initiated many strategies and programs, for the betterment and promotion of Indian tourism targeting the world tourists. This article is based on a wider research on destination image and insights limited to analyze the importance of destination branding indulging scrutiny of destination image has been extracted.

II. INDIAN TOURISM

Indian tourism inculcates wide range of tourists attractions such as long beaches, stretch of sands, tropical forests, variety of lifestyles, climatic variations, plains and mountain chains etc., and it also has a blended ambience of arts, culture, history, traditions, customs, beliefs, values, religions, and climates etc. There are many types of tourism prevail in India and still research executes different phases to the box.

A. Types of Tourism in India

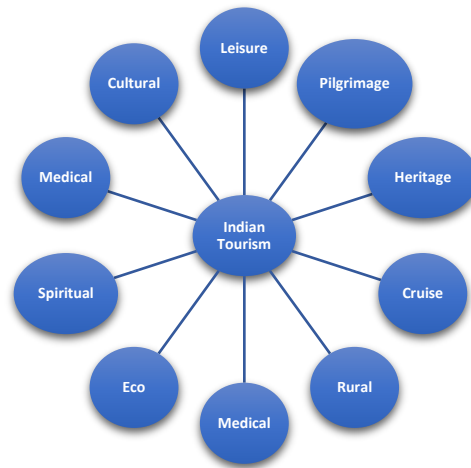Some of the common types of tourism in India are as follows.

Fig.1. Types of Indian tourism

- **Leisure Tourism**–activities involving visiting beaches, zoological parks, shopping etc.
- **Pilgrimage Tourism** – religious experience seeking determining belief and faith
- **Heritage Tourism** – visiting heritage spots, historic monuments, palace, landscapes
- **Adventure Tourism** – seeking fun, adventure, forest trekking, admirable for youngsters
- **Cruise Tourism** – exploring island and sea riding
- **Rural Tourism** – portrays rural areas, lifestyles, greenery landscapes and rural culture, traditions and customs
- **Business Tourism** – intend to elevate businesses and profits
- **Medical Tourism** – seeking healthcare, emerging tourism in India
- **Eco Tourism** – traditional, visiting hill stations, sanctuaries and forests
- **Ayurveda and yoga tourism** – ayurvedic medicine to experience effective health and yoga for seeking the peace of soul and meditation
- **Cultural Tourism** – intend to explore new culture and people

- **Educational Tourism** – seeking academic knowledge through symposium, conferences and workshops
- **There are many other types of tourism emerging in India such as Youth tourism, and Agricultural Tourism etc.**

B. Current Scenario of Tourism Industry in India

From the statistics sources, it has been found that

- Indian tourism is expected to contribute 32.05 (US$ 492.21 billion) to GDP in 2028
- Indian tourism has been ranked 7th among 184 countries
- Tourism has been considered as the largest forex earner for India
- With the arrival of many foreign tourists (495056 in 2017), medical tourism in India is expanding and creating a competitive edge.
- In terms of accessibility, e-visa arrivals have been increased 49.5% year-on-year to 1.43 million between January and August 2018
- Tourism industry will boost up employment opportunities by 2028. It is predicted to rise 52.3 million jobs in 2028. It has already created 25.9 million jobs in India in 2017.
- Indian Government expects 20 million foreign tourists arrivals by 2020
- Government of India's strategies such as "*Incredible India!*" and "*Athiti Devo Bhava*" are very successful and promote Indian tourism
- Launch of '*Incredible India*' mobile app enhanced tourists experience
- Advent of *M-visa* (medical visa) has increased medical tourism in India dramatically.
- A huge increase in Foreign Direct Investment (US$ 11.39 billion) has been witnessed between April 2000 and June 2018

In wider perspective, India has been witnessing the increase of tourists from other countries. Though India is known for pilgrimage, pleasure trips, spirituality, adventure, and other phases of tourism has also been explored and seemed by tourists of different countries.

C. Foreign Tourists Arrival (FTA) in India

India tourism has seen the increasing number of tourists from other countries visiting destinations consisting of various images. The following table shows the foreign tourists arrivals (in million) in India over the past 18 years.

Table.1, Foreign tourists arrival in India between 2000 and 2018

Year	Foreign Tourists Arrival in India (in million)	Percentage change over previous year
2000	2.65	6.7
2001	2.54	-4.2
2002	2.38	-6.0
2003	2.73	14.3
2004	3.46	26.8
2005	3.92	13.3
2006	4.45	13.5
2007	5.08	14.3
2008	5.28	4.0
2009	5.17	-2.2
2010	5.78	11.8
2011	6.31	9.2
2012	6.58	4.3
2013	6.97	5.9
2014	7.68	10.2
2015	8.03	4.5
2016	8.80	9.7
2017	10.04	14.0
2018*	5.16	7.9

* Provisional – Jan to June, Source: Indian Tourism Statistics Report 2018.

From the table.1, a significant increase in the inflow of foreign tourists to India has been seen. Even though year 2001 and 2009 witnessed a decline in the arrival of tourists to India, 2010 had seen foreign tourist inflow boosting up. Thereafter till 2015, India has been preferred as one of the most desirable tourists destinations by 8.03 million foreign tourists. In 2017, India had witnessed 14% hike in the percentage of foreign tourists arrivals comparing to the year 2016.

D. Nationals Arriving India

Since India's traditional image is pilgrimage, and emerging types of tourism such as spiritual, adventurous, food, medical, cultural, heritage, and eco, many countries' nationals have been attracted. Also, the strategized destination promotion and branding has significantly upscaled the arrivals of tourist from different countries. The below table and figure show nationals arriving India and ranking has been done based on the total number of arrivals.

Table. 2, Nationals arriving India in 2017

Rank	Source Country	NTAs
1	Bangladesh	2156557
2	United States	1376919
3	United Kingdom	986296
4	Canada	335439
5	Australia	324243
6	Malaysia	322126
7	Sri Lanka	303590
8	Russian Federation	278904

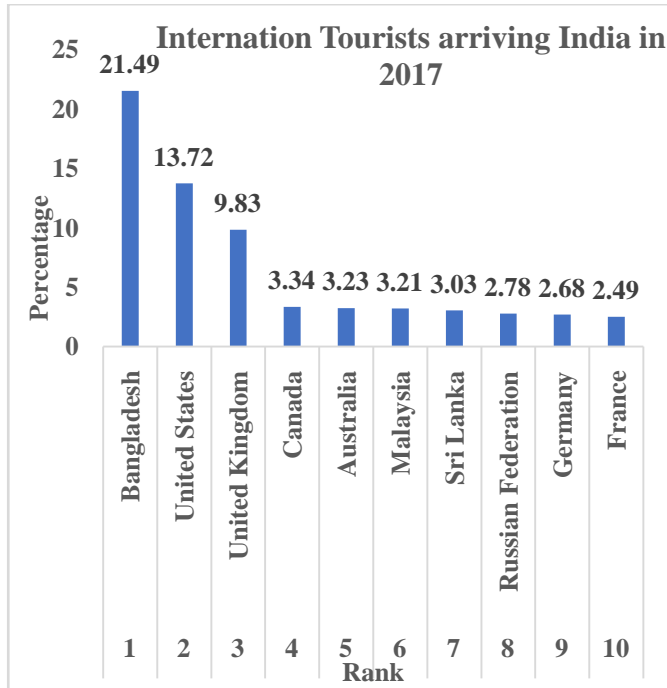| 9	Germany	269380
10	France	249620
Total top 10 Countries		**6603074**
Others		**3432729**
Grand Total		**10035803**

Source: Indian Tourism Statistics Report 2018

Fig.2, International tourists arriving India in 2017
Source: Indian Tourism Statistics Report 2018

The above table and figure depict the top 10 countries' nationals arriving India as tourists. Bangladesh has been ranked first, as 2156557 (21.49% - the highest percentage) tourists have visited India in 2017. United States of America has been ranked second, as 13.72% of tourists visited India, United Kingdom has been ranked third, as the total number of tourists arrived India was 986296, which is 9.83% of total arrivals. Canada, Australia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Russian Federation, and German has been ranked from the order four to nine based on the total number of tourists arrivals. France has been ranked tenth, as the arrival of France nationals were 249620 which is 2.49% of total arrivals. The total number of tourists arrival during the year 2017 is colossal 10035803.

E. Number of Foreign Tourist Visiting states of India

According to the sources, the total number of foreigners visiting the states of India is 26886638 and the distribution of state wise visit has been shown in the below table.

Table.3, Number of Foreign Tourist Visiting states of India in 2017

Rank	State/UT	Foreign Tourist Visits in 2017
1	Maharashtra	5078514

2	Tamil Nadu	4860455
3	Uttar Pradesh	3556204
4	Delhi	2740502
5	Rajasthan	1609963
6	West Bengal	1574915
7	Punjab	1108635
8	Kerala	1091870
9	Bihar	1082705
10	Goa	842220
Total of Top 10		**23545983**
Others		**3340655**
Grand Total		**26886638**

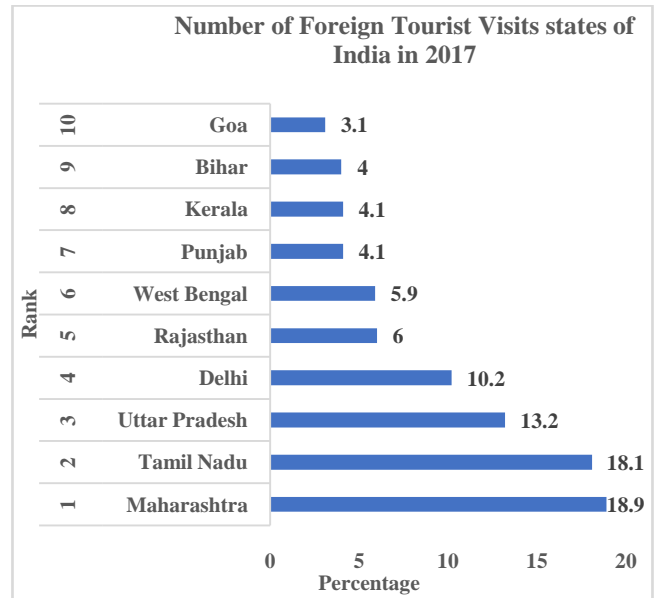Source: Indian Tourism Statistics Report 2018

Fig.3, Number of Foreign Tourist Visiting states of India in 2017
Source: Indian Tourism Statistics Report 2018.

From the above table and figure, Maharashtra state stands at the first rank with highest percentage (18.9%) of tourists inflow. Tamil Nadu state secured rank 2 (18.1%) as the total number of arrivals during the year was colossal 4860455. Uttar Pradesh (13.2%), Delhi (10.2%), Rajasthan (6%), West Bengal (5.9%), Punjab (4.1%), Kerala (4.1%), and Bihar (4%) states have been ranked from three to nine based on the number of foreign tourist arrivals. Goa has been ranked tenth, as the total number of foreign tourists arrivals were 842220, which is 3.1% of the total arrivals in India during the year 2017.

F. Number of Domestic Tourists visiting States of India

According to the sources, the total number of domestic tourists visiting states of India is 1652485357 and the distribution of states wise has been shown in the below table.

Table.4, Number of Domestic Tourist Visit states of India in 2017

Rank	State/UT	Domestic Tourist Visits in 2017
1	Tamil Nadu	345061140
2	Uttar Pradesh	233977619
3	Karnataka	179980191
4	Andhra Pradesh	165433898
5	Maharashtra*	119191539
6	Telangana	85266596
7	West Bengal	79687645
8	Madhya Pradesh	78038522
9	Gujarat	48343121
10	Rajasthan	45916573
Total of top 10 States		1380896844
Others		271588513
Total		1652485357

Provisional – Jan to June, Source: Indian Tourism Statistics Report 2018.
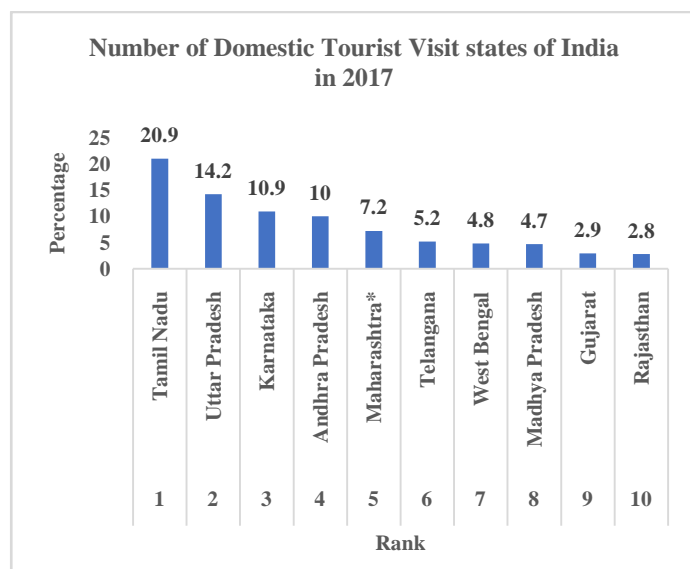

Fig.4, Number of Domestic Tourist Visiting states of India in 2017
Source: Indian Tourism Statistics Report 2018

From the above table and figure, it has been found that Tamil Nadu has been the most visited state by domestic tourists (345061140) in 2017 and ranked number one and Rajasthan holds 10th rank with 2.8% (45916573) domestic tourists visit Indian tourists destinations. Overall, 83.6% of the total domestic tourists visit the top 10 states of India whereas 16.4% visit other states. From the statistics, it is evident that Tamil Nadu is considered as the first and foremost attractive tourism destination by Indian nationals.

Based on the above statistics data form the sources, it is evident that the scope of Indian tourism is likely to be upscaled by 2028. As there is considerable increase in the inflow of national and international tourists transiting for acquiring tourism experience is higher year after year, it will be a concurrent growth for tourism-based businesses, and other thereof. The Government and destination marketers must be innovated in strategizing the attractiveness and delivering the delight experience to tourists. Thus, it not only promotes the destination but also influences market competition, emerging employment opportunities, raising FDIs, and economic growth.

III. ROLE OF DESTINATION BRANDING

The primary role of branding destinations is to conceive distinct strategies to enhance social & economic development, brand / rebrand / reposition a destination, protect the natural resources, advance the cultural rejuvenation that can galvanize the sense of pride and strengthened identity of their residents. In tourism perspective, destination branding creates unique identity, defines the purpose of the destination, acquires competitive advantage and communicates its image to tourists carrying expectations to experience.

According to Blain, destination branding has been defined as "*the set of marketing activities that support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word, mark or other graphic that readily identifies and differentiates a destination; that consistently convey the expectation of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; that serve to consolidate and reinforce the emotional connection between the visitor and the destination; and that reduce consumer search cost and perceived risk*".

Creating a destination brand or image requires an in depth understanding of the existing image, nature of the destination, values, norms, culture, and customs, core attributes and personality associated with it, and thus becomes challenges and in turns opportunities too. It is decisive to consider the culture and core values of the destination, as it determines the exchange of services and relationship that the destination imbibes the tourists experience.

Destination branding is a strategic process which inculcates an efficient combination of creative and basic services delivered to tourists with the association of local stakeholders. It is highly extensive for the nation to brand their destinations not only for producing profit in tourism industry but also to protect the centuries of history, cultural heritage and landscapes of divine creation. Though India is witnessing a great development in tourism industry and increase in inflow of tourists, many destinations areunrecognized, unmaintained and unprotected. The most prosperous and familiar tourists destination brands have not been simply promoted or branded whereas many intensive research studies have been carried out and contributed for the development of those destinations and destination brands. To attract the inflow of tourist (nationally and internationally), the destination marketers must market the destinations demonstrating the distinctiveness of destinations from others, using unique marketing communication tools reaching the global tourists. As

consumers (tourists) motivation to tour is widely becoming dynamic, it is crucial for destination marketers to identify the competency of the destination, its image and personality aspects associated to it, not only to attract tourists but also to promote tourist destinations, create business opportunities and societal benefit. There are many influencing sources of information such as social networks, magazines, travel agencies, movies and other visual and print aids, and information types such as advertisements, professional advice and recommendations which influence the salience of destination image.

Destination image is one of the most researched area in tourism. Basically, it is the set of beliefs, ideas or impressions that tourists perceive about a destination or place. Destination image is crucial to understand because it has the power to influence or rearrange tourist's perception of a destination and can be constructed by many factors including past experiences, information received, motivations and belief etc. Destination image broadly consists of two aspects, viz Cognitive image and Affective image. Cognitive image is "the belief that tourists has about a destination" whereas "affective image is based on their experience associated with the destination". Some destinations are imaged based on traditional novels, poetry, religious books and monuments. The image of destination is not merely formed by visiting the destinations but also form the sources which intrudes tourists mind.

Destination image can also be portrayed by films, news and print medias where tourists or prospective tourists create a perception about the destination. For ex, literary image is created based on the historical events, films based on kings and kingdoms. Tourists who visit destinations tend to share their experiences and image of destination perceived by them with others. Thus, it not only creates a positive or negative emotion but also communicates the same to prospective tourists or general people. Destination image influences tourist's future visiting intention to visit recommendations, andimpacts tourist decision-making process.

The most influencing attributes of destination image based on Indian tourists spots are shown in the below table.

Table.5, Attributes of destination image

Natural Resources	Tourists Leisure & Recreation	General Infrastructure
Weather	Theme Parks	Roads
Beaches	Night Clubs	Transport Facilities
Lakes	Adventure & Excitement	Health Services
Mountains	Shopping Facilities	Communications
Deserts		
Landscapes		
Culture and History	Tourists Infrastructure	Destination Ambience
Historical Attractions	Accommodation	Luxury

Cultural Attractions	Food Services	Fascinating
Spiritual Attractions	Clubs and Theme parks	Family-oriented
Religious Attractions	Tourist Information Centre	Relaxing
Museums		Fun
Historic buildings		Boring
Natural Ambience	**Other Attributes**	
Overcrowded	Crimes and Offences	
Pollution	Political Stability	
Traffic Conditions	Economic conditions	
Cleanliness	Language	
Hygienic water	Resident responsiveness	
	Safety and Security	

From the above table, the destination's facilities and attributes adding value to tourists experience of tourists must been considered with immense importance as these are the core attributes that tourists confront in the destination. Availability of information, accommodation types, hotels, infrastructure, accessible transportation, safety measures, and other tourists attraction are the most renowned factors of perceiving image of a destination. The destination marketers should also be tracking the changes in perception of tourists on emerging destination. Being a strategic tool, destination branding has been highly used for competing with other destinations. Australia, Brazil, Colombia, and Spain are some of the countries which have highly relied on destination branding strategies. Spain represents Joan Miró's design (a sun, a star and trembling red, yellow and black letters) since 1983. Later, it relaunches a promotional campaign as 'Smile! You Are in Spain'. Times of 2009 witnessed that 14 out of 17 regions in Spain has its own brand image. Colombia in 2004, campaigned itself as "Colombia is passion!', which resulted in greater inflow of tourists in 2006. A greater attention has been seen in past two decades for destination branding in both marketing as well as in academic research. Many models and conceptual frameworks have been designed and developed to support the practical applications in

Branding destinations is not only just looking on the name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic visuals but also a process of conveying the promise of memorable experiences that is uniquely associated with the tourists destinations. It also acts as a messenger agent by consolidating and reinforcing the recollection of pleasurable memories experienced by the tourists. Branding destination gives an affirmation of quality experiences, reducing visitors search costs, and provides core competency for the destination. To achieve the competency in growing competition, developing a positive image in tourists perception is quite difficult yet challenging.

Stakeholder play a vital role in destination branding, both primary and secondary. The distinguishing factors of primary and secondary stakeholders are based on their potential

influence on the promotion of destination. Primary stakeholders are those who often interact and have strategic significance with the brand equity whereas secondary stakeholders are critical for specific issues related to the destination. In general, branding not only connects the customers but also inculcates the employees of the concern in the process of value creation and addition to consumer experiences. In this scenario, destination branding becomes significant for stakeholders management, where stakeholders' role and involvement in tourism planning and administration, is recommended in branding destinations. Stakeholders who influence on destination branding are local people, investors (domestic and foreigners), employees, visitors (nationals and foreigners), media, opinion leaders, entrepreneurs (supporting tourism-based businesses), travel agencies and companies, airlines and transport companies, service providers, foreign government and businesses.

In summarizing view, the destination marketers and government must identify the elements for empowering the brand image of the destination, and to analyses the significance of attributes which may affect during the branding process. The personality traits associated with the destination must be considered, as it encompasses the lifestyle of the destination, that is, traditional, modern, arousing, western, or down-to-earth etc. Ancestry – the historical and traditional aspects associated with the destination, and relative tourism factors such as landscapes, natural attractions, adventure, spirituality, religious, medical, or educational, etc., must be researched, to position the destination in the competing tourism industry. Understanding tourists perception and behavior, existing image of the destination, efficient combination of stakeholders, and benchmarking for providing delight experience to tourists in all perspectives would help the thereof in branding the destination effectively.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper attempted to understand the current scenario of Indian Tourism and what is the role of destination branding in conceiving destination image and enhancing tourism industry's growth. From the statistic sources, it is evident that there is increase in tourists inflow in Indian destinations. Foreign tourists arrivals and domestic tourists visiting destinations in India have been elevated in the past 10 years. Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu States are the most visited states by foreign and domestic tourists respectively, and the increasing trend of inflow is unlikely to decrease. In this growing tourism industry scenario, the destination marketers role of understanding the tourists perception of destination image, strategizing the resources and stakeholders, adding values and protecting the attractions, and facilitating the tourists experience would be appropriate in efficient destination branding. This would not only result in increase in tourists inflow, but also in creating new business opportunities, increasing FDIs, and contribute to the economic growth.

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