

# Branding Indian Tourism: Entering Second Phase

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## Synopsis

Developing a strong image for any brand requires a carefully planned brand strategy based on:

1. A well defined and unique brand personality
2. Selection of the correct positioning strategies
3. 'Themed' product development
4. Consistent and appropriate advertising and promotion
5. Careful brand guardianship

India has already started 'Incredible India' campaign which is running successfully & reaping good rewards. But India's counterparts in south-east Asia already have the early mover advantage. So what are the factors that are to be looked into more closely while India enters the second phase of its tourism branding? It is important in this phase to build onto already running campaign. The challenges that lie ahead are plentiful and there needs a proper integrated branding strategy rather than numerous isolated efforts. It is also imperative to get to the root of many issues such as infrastructure, maintaining heritage sites etc. while we are moving ahead aggressively with branding. Implementing best international practices in tourism development is one of the important tasks that should be looked into.

The objective of this research paper is to explore the methods to develop the branding strategies for Indian tourism so as position India on the top list of tourist destinations.

## Objective

To position a nation so that it can achieve the maximum success in the world system, including garnering the maximum international recognition and clout, robust business relations with the world, and a healthy tourism industry. By doing this, a nation brings the maximum benefit to its people by giving them dignity, and by creating jobs and wealth.

## Research Problem

While the tourism sector pats itself on its back with facts and figures that seem to be growing each passing year, but the fact is that in the year 2006, India represented a paltry 0.52 % of the world tourism market share. So India still lags behind in tourism scenario.

## Research Methodology

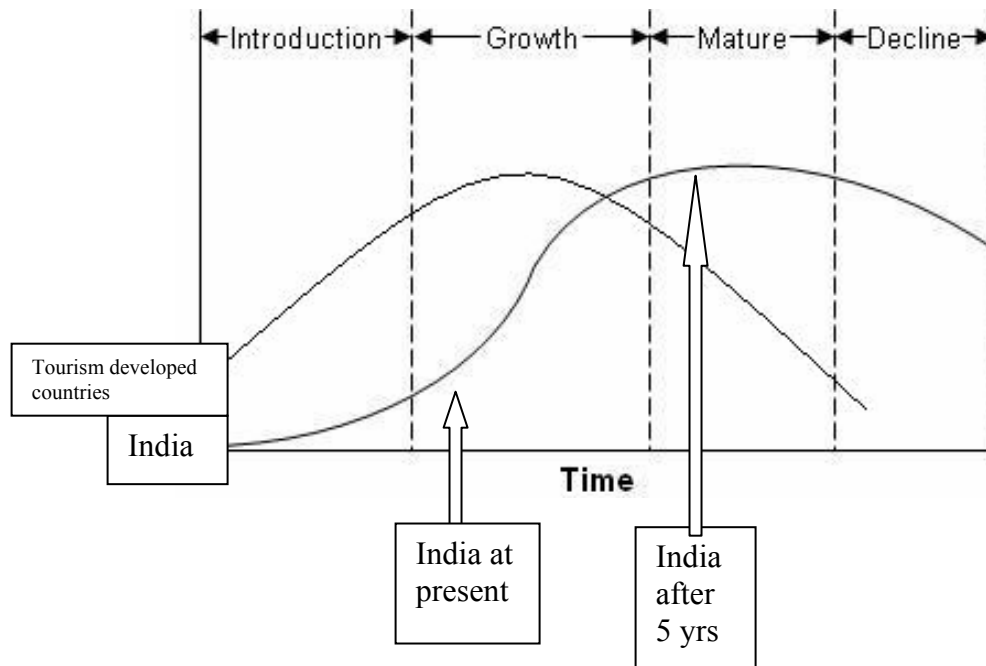
Secondary data was accumulated through various sources like internet, reference materials, newspapers, magazines etc.

## Major Findings

- ❖ The World Economic Forum 2008, has come up with its annual 'Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2008'. This report measures the T&T (Travel and Tourism) competitiveness of economies, by using an index called the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI). The TTCI measures each economy on the following criterion -  
Rules and regulations of an economy, how environmentally friendly the economy is, the safety and security an economy provides to its travelers, air transport, tourism infrastructure, natural resources, cultural resources, and few others. In total there are about 14 criterion where in an economy is measured.  
India ranks a lousy 65. Switzerland comes in 1 and Lesotho is a 130. Its sad as the recent rapes, murders, thefts have propelled India in the list of countries that are not safe for tourists. UK, US, Canada and Australia have issued warnings to its citizens about visiting India.
- ❖ The Travel & Tourism Industry in India is expected to grow and generate US \$ 128 billion by 2016. The Total Demand is expected to grow by 8% per annum, in real terms, between 2007 and 2016. In the year 2006, India represented 0.52 % of the world market share in International Tourist Arrivals.
- ❖ Foreign Tourist arrivals to India have been showing an increasing trend, it was at 4.43 million in 2006, up 13% from 2005 (3.92 million). But countries like Malaysia are way ahead, foreign tourist arrival in Malaysia in year 2006 being 17.55 million.

- ❖ Conde Nast Travellers, the worlds leading travel & tourism journal, ranked India among the 4 preferred destinations.
- ❖ Typically, a flight to India from Britain or the U.S. is 40% more expensive than a flight to Thailand, Indonesia and even Australia.
- ❖ The most important issue connected with tourism growth is issue related to visa.
- ❖ In the top destination states of Goa, Rajasthan and Kerala, there are no rooms available until the end of March. "A Le Meridien hotel opened just outside of Jaipur [one of the top tourist destinations] as late as December 14 and already you can't get any rooms there," says Prateek Chawla, director of Outbound Travels, a New Delhi-based travel-services company.
- ❖ There has been no stoppage of theft and crime against foreign tourists especially women tourists in India. There have been numerous rape cases of women tourists, putting Indian tourism to shame.

### Suggestions



India's Tourism brand compared to mature countries

The diagram above shows two life cycles, one of Indian tourism and other of mature tourist destinations. As depicted in above Life Cycle diagram for tourism brand, India at present is in early growth stage while most of tourism developed countries are in maturity stage.

India took higher Introduction period because of prior lack of branding it's tourism.

But now is the time to really have a jumpstart by properly chalked out plans.

So by the end of next 5 years we would be on fast track growth period. During these 5 years India has golden opportunity to make it big on tourist's list.

**So the tourism branding vision for India should be:  
'To be in top 10 tourist destinations in the world in next 5years'**

So India's tourism branding vision should be in two phases, viz, short term (for 2 years) & long term (for 5 years).

First phase broadly consist of mainly capacity building, infrastructure development, generating awareness related to niche areas like Ecotourism. Also domestic tourism should be promoted vehemently so as drive internal tourism movement first before forging onto international tourism development.

The branding vision for India:

Short Term (in 2 Years)	Long Term (in 5 Years)
Capability building, especially for Health Tourism	Mature Market development in Europe & US followed by development of new markets
Capacity building – Infrastructure, manpower by benchmarking with competitors	Strengthening product relevance to advanced markets
Product development & packaging	Full-fledged branding & promotional initiatives(Integrated Marketing Communication)
Market development in mainland India	Use of Information Technology (eTourism) to complement branding and promotional initiatives
Inducting local population into the scheme of things	Inducing private sector participation
Developing Ecotourism awareness	

Second phase is broader in terms of its coverage. It includes aspects like development of international markets in popular areas such as US, Europe. Besides once this is achieved we can go for new markets like Africa, South America, middle east, south east Asia etc. Here we should carry out full fledge branding & promotional activities and using Integrated marketing communication activities also information technology should be used to boost these campaigns. The tourism product should be developed fully by this time around. Also private sector participation should be encouraged and supported by the government since as we build onto the scale, there is going to be enormous need of resources eg money, manpower etc. so government along may not be able to take care of all this demand.

### TOP 10 SOURCE COUNTRIES FOR FOREIGN TOURIST ARRIVALS TO INDIA IN 2006

S.No	Source Country	Foreign Tourist Arrivals (in million)*	Percentage Share
1	UK	0.734	16.5%
2	USA	0.697	15.7%
3	Canada	0.177	4.0%
4	France	0.175	3.9%
5	Germany	0.157	3.5%
6	Srilanka	0.155	3.5%
7	Japan	0.119	2.7%
8	Australia	0.110	2.5%
9	Malaysia	0.107	2.4%
10	Nepal	0.092	2.1%
Total of top 10 countries		2.523	56.7%
Others		1.925	43.3%
All Countries		4.447	100.0%

\* Provisional

Source:- Bureau of Immigration

As per above chart, UK & US contribute over 30% of total foreign tourists arrival. So this market should be sustained further.

But the need in future is to develop new markets in future before it is tapped by major countries for tourism.

Following are the measures to sustain the branding strategy:

❖ Tourism policing:

The concept of 'tourism police' — a boon to tourists, particularly women — is receiving a major thrust. The idea is to sensitize the police to problems faced by tourists, guide them to their destination, assist them when there is loss of passport or money, and ensure safety at tourist spots. Tourism police is also expected to deter harassment of women tourists, especially foreigners.

Continued incidents of violence against tourists have forced the Centre to advise states to recruit ex-servicemen for stepping up the security of tourists, particularly foreigners, and deploy them as 'tourist police' or as an alternative security force. But the action the states have taken on Centre's suggestion seems largely token. In Delhi, the tourism police have just about 80 personnel and 10 PCR vans for tourist assistance. This is when government statistics reveal the Capital sees the highest number of tourists in the country (20 lakh in 2006). "Ten vans for a destination like Delhi is just not enough. They need to sensitize the entire police force to make tourists feel comfortable," says a Delhi tourism department official. Today, only 10 states have implemented the measure — the communication had first been sent last year — while the rest continue to drag their feet.

But even in those states that have deployed special tourist police, it is open to question whether this is merely a token measure or a genuine effort. Incidents have been reported from at least four of the 10 states — Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan.

In September, two Japanese women were allegedly gangraped in Agra. In June, a South Korean tourist claimed she had been raped near Manali and in Alwar, Rajasthan, a German tourist said she had been raped by Biti Mohanty, the son of a top police official from Orissa.

These incidents dent India's image as a safe tourist destination — despite the Incredible India campaign abroad — and several prominent countries, including the US and the UK, have issued warnings in official travel advisories to their citizens who are bound for India. Other states where the step has been implemented are Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka and Kerala.

In Goa, a big attraction for foreign travellers, several cases of rape, molestation and other crimes against tourists have been reported. Officials at the ministry pleaded inability to intervene directly, pointing out that law and order being a state subject, they could only urge the states to take adequate steps to protect the tourists.

"Whenever such incidents occur, we get a report on them from our regional tourist offices. There is also a complaints cell in our ministry where grievances of tourists are recorded and followed up for action. Besides, in our media campaigns we try to create awareness among those engaged in the tourism and travel trade as well as general public on the issue," said a senior official.

The issue had also drawn the attention of a parliamentary standing committee on transport, tourism and culture, headed by CPM leader Sitaram Yechury. A report tabled last month said: "The committee notes with concern that incidents of cheating, fleecing criminal acts and harassment of foreign tourists bring a bad name to the country and have an adverse impact on the foreign tourist arrival. The committee feels that the issue related with safety and security is vital in creating goodwill and the Union Ministry of Tourism cannot wash its hands off stating that policing is a state subject."

So the plan for tourist security should not remain only on paper but should transform into some reality and proper implementation should be carried out.

❖ Internet as a branding medium:

The size of the place doesn't matter when it comes to an innovative online branding and marketing strategy. It provides a highly effective means of reaching prospective customers economically through attractive designs and navigation, plus search engine optimization and clever linking.

The Internet has opened a world for the countries to create a brand for themselves. The internet can be used as a medium for information dissemination of features offered by the country. This could be done through platforms like websites, other online support like merchandise for sale, offering integrated packages, travel booking facilities.

❖ Example: How Australia branded itself:

The Brand

The ingredients of a powerful destination brand were all there:

POSITIONING- civilized adventures in the friendliest place in the world

BRANDPERSONALITY - friendly, fresh, different, fun-loving, adventurous

BRANDLANGUAGE- not just the cleverly crafted key words such as the tagline ("Come and Say G'day"), but the distinctive Australian accent that cut through in broadcast media and instantly distinguished the message as Australian.

Visual Identity: Vivid, natural colours, dramatic natural landscapes & fun loving cities, exotic wildlife.

### ***The advertising campaign***

The “come & say G'day” campaign went beyond Australia’s tangible attributes of beaches, wildlife, outback and the great barrier reef to engage Americans on an emotional level, inviting themselves to engage in the relaxed Australian lifestyle. It used friendliness, an Australian accent, a cheeky sense of humor and a sunny invitation at a time when Americans were concerned by terrorism abroad and the need to feel welcome when they traveled.

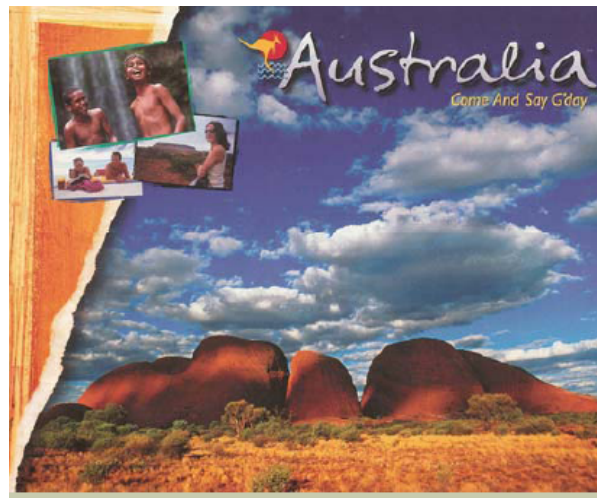
It was clear that the advertising had to move past the postcard or travelogue style of travel advertising of the past, and connect with Americans by inviting them to experience the country and immerse themselves in a different lifestyle. The campaign was led by television and radio advertising, and was supported by extensive tactical advertising in lifestyle and travel magazines to present specific Australian travel offers.

### ***Integrated marketing campaign***

Various tools were used to convey the message to potential tourists. Throughout the campaign there were as many as twenty marketing services companies engaged in some aspect of the campaign: research, data management, publishing, public relations, direct mail and exhibition designers.

### **"Come and Say G'day" Campaign Results**

Australia firmly established itself as a destination in its own right. Arrivals doubled over the first three years and for four years the growth rate was in excess of 25% annually.



Australia’s Successful ‘Come And Say G’day campaign’

### ❖ Development of niche tourism areas

Given India's unique endowments of biodiversity, forests, rivers, mountains, historical places, temples and pilgrims, caves, museums, monuments and culture, the industry holds immense strength for obtaining higher growth rate. The challenges in the sector lie in successfully preserving these in their original form, and making them accessible to domestic and international travellers. India offers various categories of tourism products, such as adventure tourism; medical tourism (ayurveda and other forms of Indian medications), eco-tourism; rural tourism; cruise tourism; meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) tourism; etc.

Eg. Medical tourism: With global revenues of approximately US\$ 20 Billion (2005), the medical tourism industry is one of the world's largest industry. India's cost effective treatment makes it an important player in this industry.

- Growing Medical tourism in India will be one of the major sources for foreign exchange.
- With increasing number of non-insured population in western countries and increasing healthcare expenditure to GDP resulting in people opting for treatment choices outside their country.

But there are still hurdles like

1. Upgradation of basic amenities and hospital infrastructure
2. Co-ordination between the healthcare and tourism sectors
3. Creating a resource pool of highly skilled and cordial manpower
4. Standardization of services and accreditation of hospitals

So It is imperative that we looked into such matters as early as possible and such niche tourism areas should be promoted by the government because of their potential to become good revenue earners.

❖ Infrastructure build-up:

It is very important to beef up the infrastructure for tourist facilitation. Following measures should be implemented with well chalked out plan:

1. Building highways to connect to the destinations throughout the country.
2. Identifying and developing new and existing destination circuits.
3. Introducing special tourist trains and tourist buses to connect to most sought after destinations
4. Establishment of budget and luxury hotels on surplus land available with government near tourist places.

❖ Development of all sectors related to tourism:

Tourism, being one of the largest industries, plays a key role in achieving the socio-economic goals of the development plans of a nation. It is an important service-oriented sector which has made rapid strides globally in terms of gross revenue and foreign exchange earnings. It is a composite of service providers, both public and private, which includes travel agents and tour operators; air, rail and sea transportation operators; guides; owners of hotels, guest houses and inns, restaurants and shops; etc. They are involved in meeting the diverse interests and requirements of domestic and international tourists. The tourism industry should provide incentives to foster the quality of environment, generates more employment opportunities (particularly in remote and backward areas) as well as develops necessary infrastructure facilities like roads, telecom and medical services, in the economy.

❖ Thematic branding:

A successful integrated package should support the central tourist destination theme with the entire gamut of services comprising rail and road connectivity, water supply, communication, hospitality and all that goes into making the tourist experience worthwhile. The packaging in each case has to be unique, realistic and appealing. The potential of promoting theme-based domestic and in-bound tourism is large. For this, product brand strategy has to focus on customised theme based leisure options.

For example, Kerala can be thematically divided into sub- brands derived from its macro promo — 'God's own Country'. There could thus be packages for backwaters, beaches, plantations, wildlife, the monsoon, cuisine, pilgrimages and others.

Each must have a specific brand message linked with the value package it offers. Thematic options can be interlinked with similar ones in other parts of the country. An example of this would be to connect selective beach resorts in the country for beach tourists, and similarly for hill resorts, pilgrimage, heritage health and ayurveda, wildlife and others. Some of these theme-based packages could be offered in various combinations.

❖ Role of private players:

India has long history of big corporate houses, which have been instrumental in generating huge employment. But it is time now for these organizations to step up and help in improvement and maintenance of tourism. This can be done through measures such as funding the maintenance of heritage sites, helping build string network of road connectivity etc. Also through PPP(Public Private Partnership) many activities could be undertaken.

❖ **Manpower development:**

India has huge human resources, which can be tapped in to boost tourism. It will also create job opportunities for vast population.

How Canada created a manpower development for tourism:

The Canadian Tourism Human Resources Council (CTHRC) is the National body for coordinating education related to all fields of tourism – those working in travel, accommodation, adventure, attractions, transportation, food & beverage service, events & conferences, and tourism services. The Council promotes and enhances professionalism in the Canadian tourism industry through industry standards, training, and professional certification. It is a national non-profit organization, and brings together tourism businesses, labour unions, associations, education/training providers and government, to address the tourism industry's human resource needs.

Most provinces and territories have a Tourism Education Council (TEC), which are founding partners of the CTHRC, and are the delivery agents of human resource products and services for the tourism industry. The CTHRC produces National Occupational Standards, which are documents describing the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for competent performance in a specific tourism occupation. Training and certification in these is delivered by the TECs in each province and territory. The criteria for professional certification are established for each occupation by tourism industry professionals from across Canada. Standards are developed and validated by groups of people currently employed in the occupation (80% practitioners, 15% supervisors and 5% educators) to ensure they reflect the realities of the industry. The CTHRC also provides individuals with information on planning a career in tourism. Tourism Careers for Youth assists people aged 18-24 with transition from school to work in a group setting. With the support and guidance of education and industry partners, the Canadian Academy of Travel & Tourism has been established to provide students with the tools they need to succeed. Selected schools across Canada participate in tourism courses, projects and activities as part of their high school curriculum (grades 10, 11 & 12), through the academy. This provides a nationally accredited "tourism" certificate with their high school diploma. Sponsors of these tourism courses are: the American Express Foundation, Air Canada, the Canadian Pacific Charitable Foundation, Signature Vacations and Cara Operations Limited.

India can learn from this example for developing its manpower resources.

❖ **Co-branding strategies:**

Tourism-hungry Malaysia is pursuing a co-branding proposal with the Indian government to lure Russian and European tourists from Goa into its rich and varied locales. We are trying a 'one destination, two countries' concept (with Goa)" on the lines of a similar model Malaysia has with its ASEAN neighbours, said the Malaysia Tourism Minister, Mr Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor. He was briefing media from nearly 50 countries on the mega tourism blitz, Chitrawarna Malaysia 2007, in Kuala Lumpur. According to tourism officials, some 50,000 Europeans, among them large Russian contingents, descend on Goa every year on hundreds of chartered aircraft. This is the market that Malaysia hopes to zap.

India can do the same by offering packages spanning several countries, increasing value and synergies both to the customer and each economy.

For promoting Indian tourism co-branding can be done through various initiatives like linking Indian tourism programmes of government with that of other countries tourism activities, similarly reverse initiatives can be undertaken to promote other countries tourism in India.

Also co-branding through private sector can be undertaken with activities like a private player in India tying up with its counter part from other country.

❖ **Background to Recent Initiative in Tourism development:**

**Sustainable Tourism Initiative (STI)**

The UK STI was kick started by Tony Blair at a WWF conference on the state of the global environment in 2001. At this meeting Mr Blair declared his intention to bring together the chief executive officers of a number of leading industries, including tourism, in order to realise a significant contribution to sustainable development in the run up to the 2002 World Summit. The STI is driven by the Foreign Office and is intended to bring together government departments, industry and NGOs to achieve a step change in sustainable tourism practice of the UK outbound industry and to establish a basis for continual

improvement. The four major UK tour operators are involved in the process – although with varying degrees of participation, alongside many more small and/or specialist operators and trade associations. Participating NGOs represent both conservation and development concerns.

Following identification of a number of key themes for the STI at a large multi-stakeholder meeting in July 2001, work has been carried out through 5 working groups coordinated by a Secretariat, based at Chatham House. Two large stakeholder fora meetings have been held to review progress and agree a broad action plan. The 5 working groups, convened by the Secretariat, had members from both NGOs and industry.

Three developed specific work streams:

- 1) Development of practical tools for sustainable tourism that operators can use or promote within their supply chain,
- 2) improved ‘communications’ via ‘Know Before you Go’ website, to encourage sustainability among industry and consumers,
- 3) Development of pilot projects in two destinations to stimulate dialogue between different stakeholders on sustainable tourism and develop joint activities to address issues of common concern.

The other two working groups were concerned with ‘process’ – how the STI should be managed, funded, linked with government, and what should succeed it. The latter question became a massive issue once it was decided to continue an institutional form beyond WSSD. After months of discussions of whether the ‘son of STI’ should be a company, an NGO, a tri-partite body or an industry body ... two new bodies are now being launched: a charitable foundation and a unit sponsored by the industry, both to continue the aims of STI in promoting ST within the outbound industry.

While most of the mainstream destinations for tour operators are not in developing countries, Africa has been included from the start largely due to the genesis of the initiative from Tony Blair’s interest and the desire to showcase something at WSSD. A pilot project has been conducted in The Gambia, an important destination for UK tourists, building on an earlier project funded through DFID’s Tourism Challenge Fund. Here an action plan for joint activities has been agreed with UK tour operators, local suppliers of tourism goods and services and the Gambia Tourism Authority.

## **Conclusion**

India is venturing into the second phase of its tourism branding and it is important at this stage to properly chalk out the plan for tourism development. This is because the competition for attracting major chunk of tourism pie is gearing up.

India is already projecting a vibrant, colourful image of it’s diversity in terms of customs, lifestyle, heritage sites etc. through its campaigns. It is time now for a committed effort by the governmental authorities with a co-ordination among various entities related to tourism along with participation of private players is of prime importance if India has to become a top priority for tourists.

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