

A Study on the impact of Destination Branding on Tourism

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Abstract

The current research study aspires to study the impact of destination branding on tourism in the state of Gujarat from the people residing outside Gujarat as they are the ones who may visit Gujarat as a result of the branding done by Gujarat Tourism Board. It includes the tourist's perception of destination branding and also to what extent does this process affect them. This research paper has been written with reference to Gujarat as this state has done extensive branding and has taken Mr. Amitabh Bachhan as its brand ambassador who is idealised by a vast majority of Indian population.

The tourist's perception has been taken as dependent variable and destination branding as an independent variable. A relationship between destination branding and tourist's decision making has been shown. On the basis of the analysis, it is suggested that more states of India should go for destination branding as it has positive impact on tourism.

Keywords: Destination Branding, Tourism, Tourist's Perception, Tourist's Decision Making

Introduction

The tourism industry also known as travel industry essentially refers to all the activities which are related to the short-term movement of the people from their host destination to some other destination. Tourism industry is one of the fastest growing industries. Tourism plays a very important role in the success of the economy of a country. Some of the benefits of tourism are-

- It helps in employment generation
- It boosts the revenue of the country
- It develops the infrastructure of the country
- It plants a sense of cultural exchange between the foreigners and citizens etc.

Destination branding is an important part of tourism. It has nowadays become a strong influencing factor for the tourist and thus affects the tourism of a destination. It has opened up a lot of opportunities and options for the tourist.

Destination Branding

Destination Branding is one of those activities relating to destination marketing which is aimed at promoting a tourist destination through the building of a linked

brand. It helps in attracting the tourists towards a place or destination thus ultimately increasing the tourism of that place. This activity exposes the tourist to the hidden attractions and benefits of the destination.

It is also referred to as a process which is used to establish a unique identity and personality of a destination that is different from all the other competitive destinations. In India, Kerala took the initiative and adopted destination branding to market itself as a tourist destination for increasing the tourism. After getting inspired from the response that Kerala received many other Indian states like Rajasthan, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, and Gujarat also took a step forward towards destination branding.

Tourism

Tourism refers to travelling to different places for recreation, fun, pleasure, entertainment etc. The people who do travelling or visit places according to their interest for pleasure are called tourists.

It is of two main types namely-

1. Domestic Tourism – It refers to travelling of the people within their own country.
2. International Tourism – It refers to travelling of the people to the foreign countries.

The forms of tourism can be categorized on the basis of –

1. Purpose of Visit – It includes visit for recreational, cultural, sports/adventure, health purposes etc.
2. Alternative Forms – It can include special interest tourism like for cuisine or wildlife, ecotourism, agro-rural tourism etc.

The tourism sector has helped Indian economy to grow. The government of India has implemented various policies over the years like–

- The “Incredible India” campaign (2004)
- The “Atithi Devo Bhava” campaign (2008) to complement the Incredible India campaign
- E-visa scheme (2014)
- The “Swachh Bharat Abhiyan” (2014)
- The “Adopt a Heritage” scheme (2017)

Beside the political factors, some other factors like socio-economic, environmental, historical and cultural and religious factors are equally responsible for increasing tourism in India.

Tourism of Gujarat

Gujarat is a state which is situated on the western coast of India with a coastline of 1600 km. It is one of the most industrialized states in the nation. There are numerous Indian and worldwide organizations situated in Gujarat and the zone has seen

twofold digit GDP development in past decade. It is otherwise called “Growth Engine of India”.

The state has been divided into eight tourism hubs. These are

- Ahmedabad Metro
- Ahmedabad Rural (North Gujarat)
- Surat (South Gujarat)
- Vadodara (Central Gujarat)
- Rajkot
- Junagadh
- Jamnagar (Saurashtra)
- Bhuj (Kutch)

Inside Gujarat there are a wide assortment of memorable spots, castles, mosques, sanctuaries, and spots of recorded significance in India’s battle for autonomy. There are more than 400 archaeological sites situated in. World heritage sites like Champaner, Indus Valley Civilization sites like Lothal and Dholavera, etc. It has some important religious places like Somnath, Dwarkadish, Ambaji, Palitana etc. These places attract both domestic and international travellers. In the recent years, Statue of Unity which is the tallest statue in the world has emerged as an yet another major tourism spot of not only Gujarat but of the whole country. This state is living space for the world’s rarest too enormous number of fauna and vegetation. Fauna incorporates Asiatic lions, wild ass, blackbuck, etc. Greenery incorporates types of khair, sadad, timru, babul, etc. The state additionally has national park namely Gir National Park, Marine National Park, Gulf of Kutch, etc. The tourists also come to visit Gandhi Circuit. Gujarat is also famous for its fairs and festivals. There is a huge tourism especially at the International Kite Festival (Uttarayan), Navratri Festival, Kutch Utsav.

Destination Branding of Gujarat

The prime initiative taken by Gujarat to do destination branding was “celebrity endorsement”. In 2010, Amitabh Bachchan became the brand ambassador of Gujarat Tourism under this initiative. At that time a campaign called “Khushboo Gujarat Ki” which featured him went on air for the first time. This campaign turned out to be very fruitful for the tourism sector of Gujarat. In 2015, a “Tourism Policy” for the state of Gujarat was introduced and implemented. Under this policy the following strategies were adopted –

- Augmentation of Tourist Infrastructure
- Tourist-centric Approach
- Skill Development & Employment Generation
- Promotion of ‘Make in India’ and ‘Digital India’ campaign
- Thrust on Environment-Friendliness, Sanitation and Cleanliness

- Active Collaboration with the Central Government etc.

This state has not only experienced growth in the tourism sector but in the past years it is become one of the most industrially developed state. This growth has created a positive image of the state in the eyes of the tourists.

Literature Review

In past a lot of studies have been done on the topic destination branding and tourism, some of those studies were studied to create an understanding for the current topic which are as under -

Balakrishnan, M. S. (2009). This paper aimed to present a branding framework for designing successful destination strategies. Successful strategic branding of destinations is dependent on several inter-related components, which are discussed. The paper highlights key issues in destination branding and provides a platform for future research. Chen, R., Zhou, Z., Zhan, G., & Zhou, N. (2020). In this study, destination loyalty is defined as revisit intention and re-commendation intention.

Chauhan, A., Kaur, A., & Medury, Y. (2015). According to the results, 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.

Dileep, M. R., & Sindhu, S. (2010). It could be concluded that marketing is a crucial factor in the success of any destination. Kerala has been phenomenal in taking efforts and initiatives to develop market and promote tourism in the state. Periodical marketing research, creation of new strategies, introduction of new products and service as per the changes in the market constitute the vital success factors for Kerala.

Edward, M., & George, B. P. (2008). Based on the findings of the study, the need for a moderately different emphasis in guiding both the product and promotional development activities have been identified. In addition, this paper gives an overall view of the development and prospects of tourism in the state of Kerala.

Herle, F. A. (2018). This paper aimed at analyzing the central element of the entire tourist activity: tourist. It was concluded that destination image has an impact on tourist satisfaction and loyalty in the domestic context, offering a better insight into the relation between these concepts, by trying to determine which constructs have the most influence on tourist's satisfaction and their intention of revisiting and recommending the destination.

Lee, I., & Arcodia, C. (2011). This paper investigates the role of regional food festivals for destination branding, and explores the characteristics of regional food festivals that contribute to building a destination brand. The overall analysis shows that regional food festivals can play a role in regional destination branding and in improving the image of local food.

Qu, H., Kim, L. H., & Im, H. H. (2011). The objective of this study is to develop and test a theoretical model of destination branding through adopting both destination image studies and traditional branding concepts and practices. The results showed

that destination image exerts a mediating role between the three image components as the brand associations and the behavioural intentions.

Rajesh, R. (2013). This study developed a holistic model for destination loyalty. This study analyses the components, attributes, factor influence tourist perception, destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty.

Shukla, P. K., & Ansari, A. A. (2013). To find out the changing role of tourism development in Gujarat. How the different ways and type of marketing system is serving in the massive inflow of tourists in the study area. It was found that the Gujarat Government is working hard to make Gujarat as a tourism center of not only in India but also in the world.

Most of the reviewed papers highlight various factors such as destination loyalty, tourist perception about a destination, destination image etc. They have covered only the after results of a visit by the tourists. The above researches are very lengthy. They haven't covered the factors responsible for making the tourist visit a destination. Keeping in mind the above interpretation, the focus of the proposed study is on finding the impact of various factors such as destination advertisement, branding etc. This study focuses on finding out on what basis does a tourist makes a decision to visit a particular destination.

Table 1: Research Methodology

Variables of the study	Independent variables–Destination Attributes, Brand Personality, Brand Equity, Brand as Symbol and Image, Advertisement, Safety and Security, Infrastructure, Local Cuisine, Perceived Cost, Cultural and Historical Places, Natural Environment, Entertainment Activities Dependent variables–Destination Branding, Tourist Decision Making
Objectives of the study	1. To understand and interpret the impact of destination branding on tourist's perception about destination branding. 2. To study the relationship between attributes of destination branding and tourists decision making.
Hypothesis of the study	H _{a1} : There is an impact of destination branding on tourist's perception about destination branding. H _{a2} : There is a relationship between attributes of destination branding and tourist's decision making.
Research design	The exploratory research design is used for the analysis.
Sample and data collection	Primary data has been collected through a self-designed questionnaire which was then shared through online sources to 200 respondents.
Statistical tools	Regression, Correlation

Justification and Relevance

The purpose of the study is to understand the impact of destination branding on tourism with special reference to Gujarat.

This study has been undertaken so as to find out what factors does a tourist consider while selecting a particular destination to visit. Tourism is such a big industry which has many aspects and does not rely only on after experience of tourist's visit. It is important to know and understand the various factors involved in persuading a tourist to go and visit a destination. These factors help in attracting and increasing tourism without which the industry would not work.

Destination Branding is a new addition to tourism which has been adopted by many states of India like Gujarat, Kerala, Uttarakhand etc. and is affecting tourism. This factor needs to be studied so as to find out its extent of impact on tourism. This study will further help people to know more about destination branding.

Results and Discussions

Objective - To understand and interpret the impact of destination branding on tourist's perception about destination branding.

Table 2

Dependent variable	Dimensions of Destination Branding	Multiple R	R Square	Significance	Co-efficient
Tourist's Perception	Positive and solid reputation of destination	0.667	0.445	0.000	0.247
	Name and logo of the brand				0.062
	Image of the destination				0.165
	Advertisement by celebrities				0.151
	Destination features				-0.004
	Benefits and features of the brand				0.161

Source: Processing of Primary Data in Excel

Table No. 4.1 depicts that for tourist's perception in all the six dimensions of destination branding the significance value is less than 0.05 that asserts the rejection of null hypothesis. The results of the Regression Analysis applied between Destination branding Dimensions and Tourist's Perception revealed that there is a significant impact of destination branding on tourist's perception. It has been found that there was a significant impact of positive and solid reputation of the destination, image of the destination, benefits and features of the brand and advertisement by celebrities on the tourist's perception about destination branding. Hence, this fur-

ther confirms the rejection of null hypothesis and acceptance of alternate hypothesis.

Objective -To study the relationship between attributes of destination branding and tourists decision making

Table 3

	Destination Branding	Tourist's Decision Making
Destination Branding	1	0.547
Tourist's Decision Making	0.547	1

Source: Processing of Primary Data in Excel

Table No. 3 depicts the correlation analysis between destination branding and tourist's decision making. The linear correlation coefficient is greater than zero that asserts the rejection of null hypothesis. The results of the Correlation Analysis applied between Destination Branding and Tourist's Decision Making revealed that there is a positive relationship between destination and tourist's decision making. It has been founded that the correlation coefficients have a magnitude of 0.5 and thus indicating that the variables are moderately correlated. Hence, this further confirms the rejection of null hypothesis and acceptance of alternate hypothesis.

Conclusion

Destination Branding is an important part of tourism industry. It has nowadays become a strong weapon to attract tourist to a particular destination. There are different ways of doing destination branding. It has opened a lot of opportunities in tourism industry.

This study primarily aimed at understanding the impact of destination branding on tourism. For this Gujarat state has been taken as a reference since it is one of those states of India which is using destination branding as a tool to promote itself and attract tourism. The objectives of the study were first, to understand and interpret the impact of destination branding on tourist's perception about destination branding. Second, to know the relationship between attributes of destination branding and tourist's decision making.

The data of the study is primary in nature and has been collected with the help of questionnaires filled by 200 respondents. To fulfill the objectives two types of testing i.e., regression and correlation testing has been applied. From the testing it has been concluded that there is a significant impact of destination branding on tourist's perception and also there is a positive relationship between attributes of destination branding and tourist's decision making. Both the test proved to be suitable for the study as the null hypothesis was rejected and alternate hypothesis was accepted.

Thus, the final conclusion of the study is that destination branding has a positive impact on tourism. The various attributes of destination branding like image of the

destination, positive and solid reputation of the destination etc. are responsible for affecting the tourist's perception about destination branding and tourist's decision making.

Suggestions

From the conclusion of the study, it can be suggested that more states of India should adopt the strategy of destination branding. This will be effective in increasing their tourism which will eventually lead to development of the state and the country also. A state like Rajasthan which is famous for its historical forts and palaces, food, art and craft, fairs and festivals etc. should popularize its destination features more as it will attract not only domestic recognition but international recognition also. As we know that the Covid-19 pandemic has badly hit all the industries and tourism is one of them. So, now it has become much more important for the industry to plan out such programmes and strategies that will help it to recover. The tourism destination can showcase the safety protocols and measures being taken by them during the Covid time to the tourists with the help of destination branding. This will make the tourists think that the particular place is safe to visit which will ultimately impact tourism.

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