

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN CENTRALIZED AND STATE-WISE TOURISM CAMPAIGNS IN INDIA

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Abstract

The purpose is to distinguish the initiatives taken by the state authorities and Central authorities to promote tourism in India. Gaps in the centralized promotional campaign, "Incredible India" are identified in this study. The methodology includes collection of secondary data and discursive analysis. Information relevance, Promotion strategy, and Key events and places were used for the comparative analysis for the purposes of the research paper. Above mentioned three factors need to be added to the centralized campaign, to give a holistic picture of India. The paper is unique as it is the first time that identification of gaps in the centralized campaign is done.

Key words: Branding, Incredible India, Marketing strategy, Tourism.

JEL Classification: L83, M37

1. INTRODUCTION

India has fascinated people from all over the world for its rich culture and heritage. There are historical monuments, beaches, places of religious interests, hill resorts etc. that attract tourists. Every region is unique with its handicraft, fairs, folk dances, music and its people. India is a land of diversities, with a wide variety of tourism offerings, varied geographies and sub-cultures. Tourism in India is the largest service industry, with a contribution of 6.23% to the national GDP and 8.78% to the total employment. The tourism industry in India generated about \$100 bn USD in 2008 and that is expected to increase to \$275.5 bn USD by 2018 at a 9.4% annual growth rate (India Tourism Statistics (a)). Also, India started "Incredible India" tourism campaign which is very successful & giving good rewards. The primary objective of this branding exercise was to create a distinctive identity for the country. The campaign successfully established India as an exclusive tourist destination, generating a 16% increase in tourist traffic in the first year i.e. 2002. Moreover, Foreign Tourist arrivals (FTA's) to India showed an increasing trend, from 2.38 million to 5.58 million from 2002 to 2010. Despite, such a successful branding India's share in World's tourism receipts is very meager i.e. 1.5% in 2011 (Ministry of tourism statistics, Government of India) (Table 1). Also, this trend of FTA's looks quite good if seen independently but if we compare this trend with countries like Malaysia or Thailand then we are far behind. 24 million foreign tourists visited Malaysia and 15 million foreign tourists visited Thailand in 2010 which are geographically very small in size as compared to India (World Tourism Organization). So,

the question arises that whether the strategies used for promoting Indian tourism are apt or whether they need some changes? So, the first attempt is to identify the Gap in the present campaign of "Incredible India" which is the objective of this paper.

2. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research paper is to find the gap and to improve the branding strategy of already successful centralized campaign, "Incredible India" so as to maximize the possibilities of foreign tourist arrivals in India. The purpose of this research paper is to identify the gaps in "Incredible India" centralized campaign vis-à-vis state wise campaign to promote tourism in India.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

This paragraph present a comprehensive review of literature on this subject. Harish (2010) opines to shift the brand architecture model of "Incredible India" campaign from Monolithic (umbrella branding) to House of brands (state-wise branding) to improve the branding strategy of "Incredible India" campaign but does not focus on existing gaps in the campaign. Various branding strategies, like co-branding, thematic branding, digital branding etc. that can be adopted by Incredible India campaign to rank India as one of the top most nations for tourism (Gawande and Dethé, 2008) but do not talk anything about state wise branding. Many bottlenecks that India is facing in tourism, like; infrastructure, language problems, poor

condition of airports and pilots, hotels etc. that have to be improved to make India a strong brand for tourism (Mahajan, 2007) but does not talk about the improvements in "Incredible India" campaign. Jauhari (2009) makes an attempt to find factors affecting tourism in India and suggestions as solutions to those factors to improve tourism but no focus is given on branding strategies. Bartwal (2008) in his article discusses that despite numerous efforts through "Incredible India" campaign, India is lacking tourist's figures. India is not able to flock a large number of visitors in its beaches, mountains and desert sands but does not talk about the methods to improve the present branding of Incredible India. There are many emerging dimensions in Indian tourism states and the various issues faced by Indian tourism industry, like infrastructure, lack of hygiene, high tariffs etc. (Iqbal, 2003) and also suggestions to improve the present conditions for improving our tourism industry. Khan and Ahmad (Khan, 2008a; Ahmad 2008) suggests that many foreign tourists should be attracted in India by liberalizing policies, taxation schemes and by increasing Government's role in promoting India as a brand. Tourism can be increased only if India's brand is improved in Global market by improving various dimensions of India but centralized campaign is not analyzed with state wise campaigns in his paper. A similar study was done by (Hans, 2008) in which he examines the progress made by India's tourism industry in the planning era, and the emerging issues (like alternative tourism) under globalization and make several suggestions to address the constraints in promoting sustainable tourism in India. It is also argued by Khan (2008b) that several tourism conditions in India will improve if Human Resource of our country is well-trained and efficient but does not touch other factors which are equally important to improve tourism. Dr. Abreau (2008) discusses the measures to promote tourism in Goa, Yoga tourism or farm tourism which is of great potential, proper

training to be given to local guides and people. Also, proper safety measures should be used for women, foreign tourists and at the beaches.

The above literature shows that there is not sufficient research work based upon improving tourism in India by improving the centralized campaign, "Incredible India". It is apparent that apart from infrastructure problems, unhygienic conditions, poor airport conditions, and uncleanness in the country discussed in the above literature, there is a lack of information for foreign tourists about current happenings and events in the various states of India and also security problems. This is why; efforts have been made to find out the missing information about top ten most visited states by foreign tourists in India in the centralized campaign, "Incredible India".

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology used here is secondary data and discursive analysis. Secondary data was accumulated through various sources like internet, reference materials, newspapers, magazines etc. This paper gets started with some important data on foreign tourist arrivals (FTA's) in India from 1997-2010 along with the data of top ten most visited states of India by Foreign tourists. Thereafter, it moves onto highlighting the steps taken by top ten state Governments (Govts.) of India to promote tourism in their respective states, and steps taken by Central Government (Govt.) to promote tourism through Incredible India campaign. Further, gaps in Incredible India campaign were found through this secondary data and lastly, information relevance, promotion strategy, and key events and places were used for the comparative analysis between centralized campaign and State wise campaign for the discussions of the research paper and to draw conclusions.

Table 1 - Foreign Tourist Arrival in India, 1997-2011

Year	FTA's in India (in millions)	Percentage (%) change over the previous year
1997	2.37	3.8
1998	2.36	-0.7
1999	2.48	5.2
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 (P)	5.78	8.1
2011 (Jan- June (P))	2.92	10.9 @

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government (Govt.) of India, 1997-2011

5. PRESENT TOURISM SCENARIO IN INDIA

The number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India increased from 5.17 million in 2009 to 5.78 million in 2010 a growth of 11.8% as compared to (2.2%) during 2009. The growth rate of 11.8% in 2010 for India was better than UNWTO's projected growth rate of 5% to 6% for the world in 2010. The share of India in international tourist arrivals in 2010 was 0.61%, which is 0.02% improvement over 2009. However, India's rank improved to 40th in 2010, from 41st in 2009. India accounted for 2.83% of tourist arrivals in Asia Pacific Region in 2010, with the rank of 11 (India Tourism Statistics (b)). In India, Tourism is one of the largest foreign exchange earners, next only to gems and jewellery and garments

(www.tn.gov.in). In Table 1 mentioned in the above section of the paper gives the data of FTA's in India from 1997-2011.

The above trend of FTA's in India shows improvements year by year but still there is a tremendous scope to improve these figures further more to bring more and more foreign tourists in India.

India is a huge country comprising 28 states and 7 union territories. Therefore, it is very important for India's centralized campaign, "Incredible India" to give all the important information about all the states in their running campaign in which foreign tourists would be actually interested, like, safety tips, current events and happenings, important developments in the states. Following table, i.e. Table 2 gives the data of top ten most visited states of India by foreign tourists.

Table 2 - Share of top 10 states/UT's of India in number of foreign tourist visits in 2010

Rank	State / UT	Foreign Tourist Visits in 2010 (P)	
		Number	Percentage share (%)
1	Maharashtra	5083126	28.5
2	Tamil Nadu	2804687	15.7
3	Delhi	1893650	10.6
4	Uttar Pradesh	1675123	9.4
5	Rajasthan	1278523	7.2
6	West Bengal	1192187	6.7
7	Kerala	659265	3.7
8	Bihar	635722	3.6
9	Himachal Pradesh	453616	2.5
10	Goa	441053	2.5
	Total	16116952	90.3
	Others	1735825	9.7

Source: State/UT Tourism Department, ministry of tourism, Govt. of India

Note: For some States data adjusted using the information available with Ministry of Tourism

In the next section, top ten most visited states by foreign tourists (Table 2) have been taken up for discussions for inferring the gaps in Centralized Campaign by comparing the promotion strategies of Central Government (Govt.) with State Government (Govt.) of the respective ten states.

6. DISCUSSIONS

6.1. Maharashtra: Since, Mumbai is the commercial capital of India; therefore, a lot of Business tourists visit Mumbai for Business purposes. *Bollywood* is in Mumbai which is of prime interest to the population of India and outside. State Govt. is promoting beach tourism, heritage tourism and culture (www.planningcommission.nic.in). State Govt. is promoting 'bed and breakfast scheme' where tourists can stay with locals and can benefit of good, hygienic food and stay. State Govt. has also introduced a concept of 'youth tourism clubs' where tourists can give suggestions to improve tourism in the state (tourism.gov.in). Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation Ltd in association with Indian Railways -

Ministry of Tourism has launched a Super Deluxe luxury train "*The Deccan Odyssey*". It gives a tour of all the famous sites of Maharashtra (www.maharashtratourism.gov.in). State Govt. is also working and promoting adventure tourism, including paragliding, rock climbing, canoeing, kayaking, snorkelling, and scuba diving, floating jetties etc. in Maharashtra (www.maharashtratourism.gov.in).

Maharashtra should be featured as an important state which has cultural tourism, beach tourism, and adventure tourism in Incredible India campaign. Complete and proper information is not revealed in the Centralized campaign.

6.2. Tamil Nadu (TN): The state holds the credit of having maximum number of *UNESCO World Heritage Sites* in India which includes Great Living Chola Temples and Mahabalipuram (whc.unesco.org). State Govt. is promoting *Coastal Tourism, eco-tourism* and cheap *Medical treatment* (www.tourism.gov.in) in TN. TN is providing excellent and cheap medical facilities for tourists outside India (www.tamilnadutourism.org). Central Govt. has covered TN in its tourism campaign and promoting tourism in TN but still Central Govt. has

not yet promoted TN as a part of their Medical Tourism, tea tourism, cruise tourism and Coastal Tourism campaign and not integrated with the efforts of State Govt.

6.3. Delhi: Most of the tourists visit Delhi for business purposes and for political purposes as Delhi is the political hub of India (www.delhicapital.com). Also, Govt. is setting up *night bazaars* to showcase the rich art, culture and heritage of India and to provide quality leisure time to the tourists. Delhi Govt. has made *coffee homes* in various parts of Delhi to provide clean hygienic wholesome food to Delhi ties/visitors at reasonable rates (www.delhigovt.nic.in). Delhi Tourism Ministry has also introduced "*hop on' hop off*" tourist buses (www.mysterindia.com) and Round-the-clock helpline called the "*City Information Services*" introduced to help tourists to get information related to Delhi Tourism (www.thehindu.com). Incredible India campaign should back the State Govt. by including such important initiatives taken by the State Govt. in their campaign. Since Delhi is the capital of India, many important international events in all the spheres keep happening. Therefore, in centralized campaign both important information about Delhi i.e. new initiatives taken by State Govt. as well as current important events happening there must be present.

6.4. Uttar Pradesh: Uttar Pradesh is organizing cultural shows on different fairs and festivals with a view to attract more and more tourists. Government of Uttar Pradesh after considering the suggestions of the students of IIM-L has constructed *Heritage Walk* where some significant heritage buildings and monuments are mapped and route is created (www.up-tourism.com). Uttar Pradesh is famous for its World class architecture, *Taj Mahal*. It is amongst the Seven Wonders of the World (www.tajmahal.org.uk). Also, Mélange Events group is going to organize *Miss Tourism Uttar Pradesh* pageant to promote tourism in Uttar Pradesh in the end of 2012. Such a pageant would show beautiful facets of the state. Participants would be made to work in tourism related projects. Information of events Miss Tourism Uttar Pradesh is not available in Incredible India which is a good possibility to bring more foreign tourists (www.slideshare.net).

6.5. Rajasthan: Rajasthan as a tourist destination attracts tourist for its historical forts, palaces, art and culture (www.rajasthantourism.gov.in). Many old and neglected palaces and forts have been converted into Heritage Hotels in Rajasthan (www.rajasthantourism-india.com). State Govt. has started a project called "*Adopt a Monument*" which allows Corporate Houses, NGO's or individuals to sponsor for the conservation of a monument (www.rajasthantourism.gov.in). A new concept "*Home Away Home*" is a paying guest scheme where tourists are made aware of the culture and lifestyle of the state. Under this scheme about 306

guest houses are being operated in the prominent places of Rajasthan (www.tourism.gov.in). Rajasthan has developed eight eco-tourism sites and biological parks so that tourists would get a glimpse of biological diversity (www.siliconindia.com). Through, Incredible India Govt. must highlight Rajasthan for these special activities. Rajasthan should be beautifully campaigned under culture and heritage tourism. Govt. of Rajasthan in collaboration with Centralized govt. can do a very strong branding and use strong marketing strategy to further promote tourism in this state.

6.6. West Bengal (WB): State Government is working on *Heritage tourism, tea tourism and rural tourism* as well. Also, '*Beach Tourism*' is a new project on which state Govt. is working on. Under this scheme beaches are developed and beautified for tourists. Infrastructure is being developed and undiscovered cities or districts are being transformed as tourist destinations. *Shopping tourism* is a new initiative by the Govt. to brand pre puja shopping spree. This concept is brought by Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) (tourism.gov.in). *Water sports* were held in West Bengal from Jan 13th to 16th 2012 in the form of its beach festival (www.bengalispider.com). Central Govt. campaign has not highlighted WB under their tea tourism, beach tourism, and rural tourism campaign. Most importantly water sports event mentioned above was not mentioned in Incredible India which is a great potential to bring foreign tourists to West Bengal.

6.7. Kerala: State Govt. has done various initiatives like; Kerala clean toilet campaign to keep public toilets clean, environmental friendly practices are being promoted to avoid pollution of the backwaters and other water bodies, promotion of local souvenirs, signage are made available at highways and roads to destinations, and hop on hop off services also made available *Life Saving Volunteer* is an initiative by the State Govt. to keep guards at high and risky water bodies, '*Tourist Warden*' to provide assistance and guidance to the visitors, in order to manage situations of crisis affecting tourists, the department will constitute '*Contingency Response Cell*' at the state level to act quickly to manage such eventualities (www.keralatourism.org). Apart, from these above mentioned features, there are many important features of Kerala like, monsoon tourism, backwater boat race, Ayurveda and medical tourism in Kerala (www.slideshare.net) which should be highlighted in Incredible India comprehensively and clearly.

6.8. Bihar: Bihar State Govt. is taking many initiatives to promote foreign tourists in Bihar. Bihar Govt. started a scheme of Motor boat picnic in the Ganges from 1st June, 2007 (Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation). Govt. is also taking steps to promote water sports in river Ganga. Many world-class facilities like Speed boat ride, jet speed ride, play activity; camel ride and air modeling have been introduced in Ganga riverine to tempt the tourists

(www.magnificentbihar.co.in). Also, Govt. is encouraging Eco-tourism, infrastructure and transport to promote tourism in Bihar (www.zeenews.india.com). Water sports, and other adventures in Ganga river and activities like; eco-tourism is a missing gap in Incredible India.

6.9. Himachal Pradesh (HP): HP Govt. encouraged religious, historic and rural tourism. *Home stay is a new thing to promote rural tourism* where tourists stay at home to get feeling of home. *Himachal Hat* is started to showcase rich cultural heritage of HP (himachalpr.gov.in). Very important and vital information for tourists is missing in Incredible India, like promotion of heritage trains, heli taxis, village tourism, and eco tourism (www.himachalprlive.com).

6.10. Goa: Goa Tourism Development Co-operation (GTDC) and Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC) have signed a memorandum of understanding to promote tourism in both the states. Goa's Govt. launched a concept of *Traditional Hospitality* where local people can invite foreign tourist to stay with them as paying guests and enjoy Goa's traditional culture (www.tourism.gov.in). Along with Hinterland tourism Goa Government is also taking steps to initiate *heli tourism* in Goa to connect various areas and to give tourism a new experience with different angles (www.expresstravelworld.com). Goa is very famous amongst foreign tourists for its beaches but foreign tourists are still not aware that Goa is also providing heli tourism, adventure tourism, Pilgrimage tourism, and wildlife tourism. Such information is available in State Govt. websites but not in Incredible India campaign which is useful information for foreign tourists.

Therefore, it is very clear that Central Govt. has not provided neither vital nor important information in its promotional campaign about the major states of India. As a matter of fact, our Centralized campaign must be a very strong platform for giving foreign tourists a beautiful, ideal and true picture of India. As compared to the centralized campaign of Australia where all the states and cities are mentioned so clearly along with the major attractions within each city with beautiful and attractive features and pictures, India's centralized campaign, Incredible India has not mentioned such information for foreign tourists clearly and in a user friendly way. Incredible India's 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. Thus, Incredible India needs to be more properly informative, clear, and relevant to incorporate only relevant and practical information which foreign tourist would actually be interested in.

7. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS:

7.1. Promotion strategy: So far, "Incredible India" is promoting India by highlighting almost every tourism product say, adventure sports, cool retreats, deserts, eco tourism, meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions, luxury trains, beaches, spirituality, royal retreats, wellness, wildlife and heritage sites. Such an approach might end up confusing foreign tourists through a jumbled cacophony, leading to a gradual dilution of the Indian tourism brand. Therefore, it is important that the "Incredible India" T.V. campaign or print campaign should include the names of the destinations along with the tourism products it is highlighting in its campaign to give a clear and non-confusing picture of India. In contrast, the state wise tourism campaigning is much more systematized as their promotion campaign revolves around their famous and important tourism products and in their campaign it is very clear that which destination and tourism product they are talking about. Further, promotion of this campaign apart from T.V., print media and websites should be done in the form of social media marketing, YouTube, banners, posters etc.

7.2. Information Relevance: First of all, foreign tourists would be more interested in knowing the safety and security about the place they are going to visit. It is very important for a promotion campaign to put a 'safe list' on their website or in their ad campaign. A foreign tourist must be informed about in which areas of the country riots are going on, or blasts took place, or some mishap took place. There should be a travel advice about the risks they might face while travelling to India so that they can decide properly about where, and when to travel in India. This information about safety is absent in our centralized campaign, "Incredible India". This information on safety tips is absent from all of the above mentioned state tourism campaigns except Rajasthan, but there are travel tips available for the foreign tourists in all the States' campaign and not in the Centralized campaign. Along with travel and safety tips 1800 (helpline) numbers and emergency numbers should also be made available in the Centralized campaign. Secondly, Information available on the Centralized as well as State tourism websites should be in proper hierarchy and be properly structured. Display of the information should be very user friendly and clear in such a way that a user should not lose the track of the information he was seeking. "Incredible India" Websites should be very attractive, catchy and give practical, true and latest information about the destination rather than theoretical, historical, or bookish information. Thirdly, information about important and latest events, like water sports, fashion shows, other sports etc. which are going to take place in various places of India should also be present in the campaign as foreign

tourists would be more interested in participating such international events.

7.3. Key events and places: Distinctive competencies of different states can be incorporated as an integral part of Incredible India campaign. Current happenings or events attracting all the limelight on global front can be highlighted according to their schedule. Architecture Wonders and monuments; like The Taj Mahal, Ajanta and Ellora caves etc. must find prominent space in the running campaign.

As discussed about Australia's campaign in the above section, Incredible India needs to mention all the states and the cities within those states and also the special features or highlights that are discussed in the respective states. This is very important because a foreign tourist knows about India and he would be keener to see the centralized campaign first rather than a particular State's campaign but once he knows about a particular state from Centralized campaign then he would visit that particular State's campaign.

8. CONCLUSION

This paper identified the gaps that can make "Incredible India" campaign more effective. Thus, this paper provides gaps in the form of missing information, promotion strategy and key events and places in "Incredible India" campaign in top ten states of India. Also, if above stated suggestions may be included in "Incredible India" campaign would certainly help to attract more foreign visitors in India and would also close the communication gap between centralized and state wise tourism campaign. At last it can be concluded that there are immense opportunities; both directly as well as indirectly related to Indian tourism industry. It is recommended that coordinated efforts are required amongst Central, State and Private authorities to establish India as a world class destination for travel and tourism. For the present, further research work is needed to do an empirical study to find the important factors and main attractions for which foreign tourists would love to visit India. Also, a strong brand personality of India can be found for future promotion and branding campaigns.

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