

An Exploratory Study on Marketing Communications on Incredible India! Campaign

Srikant Kapoor, Associate Professor, Amity Global Business School, Chennai

ABSTRACT

Tourism has a tremendous impact on the nation's economy. Rapid development in tourism sector has brought the farthest section of the world within the reach of every one. The 'Incredible India' campaign, as an integrated marketing communication effort by the Government of India in 2002, was conducted globally to promote India as a tourist destination to attract the tourists by showing different aspects of Indian culture and history like yoga, spirituality etc. It received a lot of appreciation from tourism industry observers and travelers. No doubt, some arguments were also raised against this campaign but the achievements after the implementation of the Incredible India campaign are praiseworthy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism in India

Indian tourism sector is one of the most crucial sectors of the economy in the country. It is not only a significant contributor to GDP and foreign exchange reserve of the country, but also it provides widespread employment.

Tourism sector can also be considered the backbone for allied sectors, like hospitality, civil aviation, and transport. Sensing the importance of the sector, Indian Government has invested abundantly in the past for infrastructure development. It has been partially successful with increase in foreign tourist arrivals over the last decade, courtesy "Incredible India Campaign". Infrastructure in the hospitality sector is still a matter of concern amongst other factors like season-based tourism in some states.

Domestic tourism is very huge in the country, promoted by various intents. Pilgrim and leisure tourism are two very important sectors. A lot of scope is available for new businesses to enter and tap the segment. With the rising economic status of the middle class and affluent population, outbound travel is on the rise. Though Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore circuit the most favored destinations among the tourists, interest for off-track destinations are also increasing. Foreign tourist arrivals in the country have increased substantially during the past decade Over a Billion people who voice over a million concerns in fifteen hundred different languages, India i

s where people live with variety, thrive on diversity and are too familiar with largeness to let it boggle them. Mud huts and mansions face off across city streets. Lurid luxury and limp living are inhabitants of the same lane. From the smoky mangroves of the Sunderbans to the steaming

Thar Desert, sizzling cities like Mumbai and Delhi to the scintillating villages of Khajuraho and Hampi, from the heights of the Himalayas to the deep blue waters around the Andamans, India is a travel haven – a tour package that frustrates and delights, as demanding as it is rewarding.

India is a country known for its lavish treatment to all visitors, no matter where they come from. Its visitor-friendly traditions, varied life styles and cultural heritage and colorful fairs and festivals held abiding attractions for the tourists. The other attractions include beautiful beaches, forests and wild life and landscapes for eco-tourism, snow, river and mountain peaks for adventure tourism, technological parks and science tourism; centres of pilgrimage for spiritual tourism; heritage trains and hotels for heritage tourism. Yoga, Ayurveda and natural health resorts also attract tourists.

The Indian handicrafts particularly, jewelry, carpets, leather goods, ivory and brass work are the main shopping items of foreign tourists.

The estimates available through surveys indicate that nearly forty per cent of the tourist expenditure on shopping is spent on such items.

II. Research Objectives & Analysis

The first marketing initiative of its kind, Incredible India was conceptualized in 2002 by V Sunil (while he was Creative Director, O&M Delhi), and Amitabh Kant, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism. The primary objective of this branding exercise was to create a distinctive identity for the country. This resulted in the iconic "Incredible India" logo, where the exclamation mark that formed the "I" of India was used to great effect across all communications.

- To identify the different ways in which incredible India was marketing and branding India to various nations across the globe.
- To find out the factors that affect Indian tourism.
- To know how tourism campaigns like "Incredible India" creates earnings to our country.
- To identify the significance of the campaigns done by incredible India that has an impact on Indian tourism

INCREDIBLE INDIA ANALYSIS

Parent Company	Tourism Ministry of India
Category	Branding Campaigns
Sector	Tourism and Hospitality
Tag-line/ Slogan	India! Incredible India!
USP	The first comprehensive attempt of the Indian Tourism Ministry to internationally brand India as a tourist destination
STP	
Segment	High-end tourists
Target Group	Average and high-end tourists from various parts of the world
Positioning	It presents India as a tourist destination that is full of surprises
SWOT Analysis	
Strength	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The campaign highlights not only the tourist places in India, but also its cultural and historical heritage 2. The campaign managed to make a powerful visual impact on the viewers. 3. The campaign was featured sufficiently through print

	<p>and TV media and hence had a good reach</p> <p>4. The Incredible India campaign along with the complementary campaign of “AtithiDevoBhava” managed to gain popularity</p>
Weakness	<p>1. Some critics believed that the campaign was meant to appeal only to the affluent tourist and could not appeal to the average tourist.</p> <p>2. The campaign was found to be uni-dimensional by some people.</p> <p>3. Since India is a geographically and culturally diverse country, the campaign could not manage to cover all the aspects</p>
Opportunity	<p>1. The tourism industry in India is flourishing at a rapid rate and the Incredible India campaign has a lot of potential to attract tourists.</p> <p>2. Government spending's on the tourism industry are increasing gradually.</p> <p>3. A wider campaign can be planned leveraging the diversity in India.</p>
Threats	<p>1. Every campaign has its shelf life and so does the Incredible India campaign.</p> <p>2. If the campaign fails to innovate it will lose its appeal.</p> <p>3. The neighboring South-East Asian countries are investing a lot in the tourism industry which can be a threat.</p>
Competition	
Competitors	<p>1. Malaysia Truly Asia Campaign</p> <p>2. Your Singapore Campaign</p> <p>3. Dubai Tourism Campaign</p>
PESTLE	Analysis

Social relationship	<p>Social: Tourism was looked upon as a destruction of the social fabric of a place. But some places like Kerala and Rajasthan have kept balance between their own culture and demand of international tourists and thus have profited handsomely</p>
Legal relationship	<p>Legal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax • Foreign Investment • Eco-tourism policies and guidelines
Economic relationship	<p>Economic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High spending power of International Tourists • Increase in demand for better hotels • Air Travel increase
Political relationship	<p>Political:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism industry is based on Government support and cannot sustain without it. • The main attraction: the vast heritage of India is entirely under Govt. Through Archaeological Survey of India • Policy change has a huge impact on the industry • Political turmoil in the country also leads to the decrease in the tourists
Technological relationship	<p>Technology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It plays a major part in the promotion of a place • Better communication by far reaching areas • Better transportation leads to people visiting many places

III. Incredible India Campaign!

Background

Nation branding is an important and vital concept in today's era of global village. Countries compete with each other to attract the attention, respect and trust of tourists, investors, donors, business delegates, media, and the governments of other nations. Prior to 2002, the promotion of India as a brand used to be managed in a fragmented manner by various forums and delegates at Indian tourist offices located globally. The campaigns lacked consistency, and required a single, unified strategy to promote India as a brand. Against this backdrop, the Tourism Department of India engaged different agencies to create an international campaign. For the print campaign Ogilvy & Mather (O&M); for television commercials and for handling the media account Enterprise Nexus; for creating an Internet presence WPP Group's Maximize India; and for Web site creation Grey Interactive, were roped in.

The Incredible India campaign was launched with a lot of fanfare in September 2002 with the intention of promoting Indian tourism globally. The Experience India Society (an association of hoteliers, tour operators and officials of Ministry of Tourism) and the Government of India jointly funded the first phase of the campaign spanning an initial three months. Global attention was captured by telecasting the campaign over CNN, the BBC and other popular television channels across the world. The focus of the campaign was on showcasing characteristic Indian features such as Ayurveda, yoga, wildlife and the Himalayas, through print and web media.

Brand Mission

The brand proposition arrived at after a lot of deliberation was as follows:

To project India as a unique opportunity for physical invigoration, mental rejuvenation, cultural enrichment and spiritual elevation, along with other developments that make India a modern state with a state-of-the-art infrastructure.

BRAND–INCREDIBLE INDIA!

The three distinctive aspects of the campaign were:

- Showcasing India as an incredible mix of diversity, culture, beautiful people and great destinations.
- Communicating the spiritual flavor that India offers, and that no other country can.
- Educating the rest of the world about the history of India, where one of the great civilizations originated.

Brand communication

Television commercials as well as print advertisements directed every prospective tourist to the Web site www.incredibleindia.org. The final decision taken by tourists is not an impulsive one. They generally take time, weighing different options, and then choose a destination. Hence, the site had to be an attractive one and moreover, a functional Web site, where tourists could plan their trips, book tickets and hotels, and check out the different available programmes.

The Web site which had catered to Indian tourism earlier, www.tourismofindia.com, was attractive at first glance, but with hastily

collected information that, by no stretch of imagination, could be considered concise. It had no media room, a video segment that did not work, many images that did not open. Hence, diverting traffic to this site for building India as a tourism brand would have been a disaster.

Approach-Strategy

Highlighting unknown facts about India

India has a broad base made of diverse cultures, religions, and destinations. For a foreign tourist, India generally ends at this statement. So, it was very important to highlight unknown facts about India—its history, many geographical marvels, monuments, religions, mythology, its different cuisines. This would raise the curiosity of tourists about various destinations and instil in them a desire to visit the place.

Targeting high-traffic Web sites

As mentioned before, the main communication channel for the brand was to be the Internet, so the site was promoted through high-traffic Web sites. Various web banners informing about a particular destination in an attractive fashion were put on a lot of high-traffic Web sites so that the visitor would be prompted to visit the site 'Incredible India'. This increased the hits on the Web site manifold.

Inception of the campaign

Travel and tourism is the most online researched product. Hence, the Ministry of Tourism conducted a thorough review before creating and launching the Incredible India campaign. The research focused on identifying the information needs of the traveler—the various online tools used to obtain information; the times of the year when travelers come to India from different parts of the world; and the duration of the time spent in India.

The brand strategy was devised in order to maximize the results of the campaign. The online path was chosen for this brand. Hence, leading travel portals, travel sections in newspapers and magazines, online and offline travel agents, and leading search engines were identified. Following this research, the brand 'Incredible India' was launched in March 2002.

The journey of the brand

The brand was launched initially on a theme-based campaign. A particular theme was promoted through each advertisement, the idea being to create product differentiation in the minds of travelers—that what they could get here in India in its purest form was something which would not be available anywhere else in the world. Different themes like Ayurveda and religion were promoted.

Along with the campaigns mentioned so far in this chapter, destination-based campaigns were introduced, since destinations greatly outnumber the themes which can be promoted. Each destination would have a different set of themes and hence would be unique in some sense. Thereby, there was something on offer for every type of tourist. For example, Kerala was promoted by using its natural backwaters as its unique selling proposition (USP). It was projected as a place where one could enjoy nature, relax, experience the marvel of Ayurveda.

The result of the campaign

The Web site was launched in ten days with more than four hundred destinations covered. Over 75 banners were used for the campaign. The click-through rate on Indian sites was 1.2 per cent, for the international campaign it was 0.45 per cent, with the majority of traffic coming from the US and Europe.

Taking the campaign forward

Local languages are important for connecting with the local residents of any country. So it was decided to create different advertisements for different places. This increased the brand visibility to a large extent since there are many countries where the percentage of non-English speaking people is high. India as a tourism destination is known to everybody and everybody wants to come here. Often, it is only a lack of information that holds up their final decision. So, putting up sites in local languages was a very intelligent step.

It was also decided to use the site for the entire booking process and not just for providing information. The tie-ups with travel agents, hotels, and airlines were strengthened, and tourists could book their whole trip on the site itself.

Online 360° approach

The campaign was run across high-visibility sections on Indian and international sites. Innovative site captures and road blocks, along with bigger-size creatives, resulted in a click-through rate ranging from approximately 20 per cent on a creative on an Indian site to almost 5 per cent on an international site. The campaign utilized mobile marketing through SMS contests, using innovative media such as DVD advertisement inserts to connect with potential customers, and digital brochure inserts in popular Tech magazines.

A direct marketing approach was taken by inserting Incredible India postcards as inserts along with tickets wherever possible. A series of campaigns in different languages was released to build up the brand Incredible India.

Contests

One of the major activities which 'Incredible India' still does is set up contests on various themes and destinations, for which it gets good

response from the people. The contests help the brand in many ways. First, the people who enter these contests give their contact details and their travelling preferences, thereby providing a ready database which can be used for customer relationship management. This information can also be used to convert a casual visitor to the site into a potential tourist. Second, consumers are happy since they get free fully-paid vacations, gift hampers and other prizes. This helps enhance the overall brand image.

Contests garner good word-of-mouth publicity since people who participate regularly get into discussions with others regarding the questions. This generates interest and develops a competitive spirit in people, increasing the traffic on the site and the number of potential travellers. It is an efficient way to interact with consumers. Through contests, the brand communicates a lot of information about brand India which is instrumental in achieving the objectives of the site. This approach had a tremendous impact. The traffic on the Web site increased by over 350 per cent, and the data transfer of over 150GB was maintained consistently during the campaign.

IV. Conclusion

The major objective of the champagne Incredible India was to making India as a brand and they had succeeded in the same by the marketing strategy they had adopted. India is one of the most attracted destinations for travelers. Incredible India was truly incredible. Indian Tourism Industry has a strong relationship with the economic growth of the country. As GDP continues to increase, it enhances investment

in basic infrastructure like transport system, which is a vital support to tourism in India.

Closely associated is the hotel industry in India, which has added to the growth in Indian tourism since 2004. India has become one of the popular tourist destinations in the world. Of course there has been the government's support through its "Incredible India" campaign, which showed new light to foreign tourists.

With lot of imagination and ideas the Indian tourism sector is gathering momentum and is set to have not only large numbers of foreign tourists but also make a big share in the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Government appears to the significance of this sector in earning valuable foreign exchange as also enabling greater employment. As new destinations develop the tourist inflow is anticipated to increase.

V. Suggestions

- Public Transportation should be improved especially the bus stand or railway stations should be well maintained in our country.
- Providing better accommodations to tourists. Building luxurious 5 star hotels in all major cities should be done
- Holding big sporting events, like cricket or soccer world cup to attract tourists.
- Coming up with real good websites that prospective tourist can visit and possibly make reservations online.
- Safety is another major concern for any tourist, domestic or international.
Tourist spots and destination areas are points of high congregation of people and have to be provided with safe and convenient access, parking facilities, pedestrian movement and congregation spaces, tourist infrastructure facilities for boarding and lodging, civic services, tourist shopping, leisure and recreational activities depending on the location, attractiveness and projected tourist demand for such facilities.
- Making the marketing tools and promotional tools even more strong
- Employment of trained personnel should be done..
- Research work should be carried out for the betterment of the Tourism industry.
- Infrastructure should be concentrated and developed even more by creating a balance between the tourism related activities and the local environment. This is particularly the case in

developing countries. Here the impact is strongest because they must develop an infrastructure that preserves the existing unique cultural characteristics and also promotes all-round socioeconomic development. At the same time, they should also preserve and enhance their physical environment in order to promote tourism.

- Development of non-traditional areas such as a) trekking b) winter sports c) wild life tourism and d) beach resort tourism should be done to exploit the tourism resource of the Himalayas, the vast coastline with sandy beaches and abundant sunshine and wildlife to attract more tourists and to lengthen their period of stay in the country.
- Restoration and balanced development of national heritage projects of both cultural, historical and tourist importance to exploit advantages of India's unique place as a cultural tourism destination and to utilize tourism as a major force in support of conservation of national heritage.
- The only sound basis on which any programme of tourism development can be formalized is the complex of natural or man-made attractions that an

area can offer to visitors. This resource base is often neglected, or taken for granted without organizing a complex systematic inventory or analyzing its special merits, potential and constraints.

- Also working on Eco tourism projects should be enhanced a bit more to increase the traffic of tourists.

Despite the fact Incredible India campaign has promoted India as a royal, luxurious, relaxing destination for tourists, it has failed to change India's image. Unhygienic food, poor drinking water facilities, frequent electricity cuts are the various factors which are visible to every traveler coming to India.

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