
DESTINATION BRANDING: ANDAMANS “EMERALD, BLUE AND YOU”

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Abstract: In India, Andaman and Nicobar Islands present a unique brand of tourism aligned to nature, tranquility, heritage, sports, sea food and many more. Although, there is enough scope for adventure tourism, eco-tourism, beach tourism and island tourism, the archipelago has sadly failed to realize its full potential as a tourism hub for India. The tourist inflow has been growing but not at the desired rate. There is a need for the destination to switch from simple marketing to destination branding. This will help the destination to create the desired image, and influence tourists to visit the islands in high numbers. The core strengths and potentials of AN Islands that differentiate them from other tourist destinations in India are highlighted in the paper. The paper focuses on the usage of images, names and logos in branding the islands. Various suggestions are put forward by the researcher for effective branding the islands which includes launching an effective international marketing campaign like “Incredible India” to promote Andaman as a popular tourist destination. The study comprises secondary data which have been collected from journals, articles and Andaman website.

Keywords: Andaman and Nicobar Islands, branding, destination image, marketing.

Introduction: The travel and tourism sector holds strategic importance in the Indian economy providing several socio economic benefits. Provision of employment, income and foreign exchange, development or expansion of other industries such as agriculture, construction, handicrafts and so on are some of the important economic benefits provided by the tourism sector. India has been witnessing steady growth in its travel and tourism sector over the past few years. The foreign tourist visits have increased at a rate of 4.5 per cent per annum from 7.68 million tourists in 2014 to 8.03 million tourists in 2015 [1].

Incredible India (styled as Incredible India), launched in 2002, a booming international marketing campaign by Government of India, is deemed responsible for the rise in foreign exchange earnings and largely responsible for the increase in tourist arrivals to India. The campaign projected India as an attractive tourist destination by showcasing different aspects of Indian culture and history like yoga, spirituality, and so on. The campaign was conducted globally and received appreciation from tourism industry observers and travelers alike. In 2009, Minister of Tourism, extended the Incredible India Campaign to the domestic tourism sector as well [2]. There has been a continuous increase in domestic tourist visits to all States and Union Territories. The domestic tourist visits have increased at a rate of 11.6 per cent per annum from 1282 million tourists in 2014 to 1432 million tourists in 2015 [3]. Following are some of the unique and beautiful taglines or slogan used by states and Union Territories in India to promote tourism.

Tamil Nadu- Enchanting Tamil Nadu

Kerala- God’s own Country

Lakshadweep- 99% Fun and 1% Land

Manipur- Jewel of Incredible India

Andaman and Nicobar Islands- Emerald, Blue and You

Karnataka- One State, many Worlds

Objectives: The objective of this study is to identify various steps in branding Andaman and provide suggestions for promoting Andaman.

Research Methodology: The present study is conceptual in nature and the paper is purely based on secondary data. The data are collected from journals, articles and Andaman website; in addition, the researcher, being a resident of Andaman, is herself aware about the adventure tourism potentials of Andaman.

Destination Branding: Destination branding is a relatively new marketing concept for the tourism industry, as well as a topic of academic research. Following explains the meaning of destination branding.

- Destination branding is the process of developing a unique identity or personality for a tourist destination and communicating the same to visitors using a name, a tagline, a symbol, a design or a combination of these to create a positive image [4].

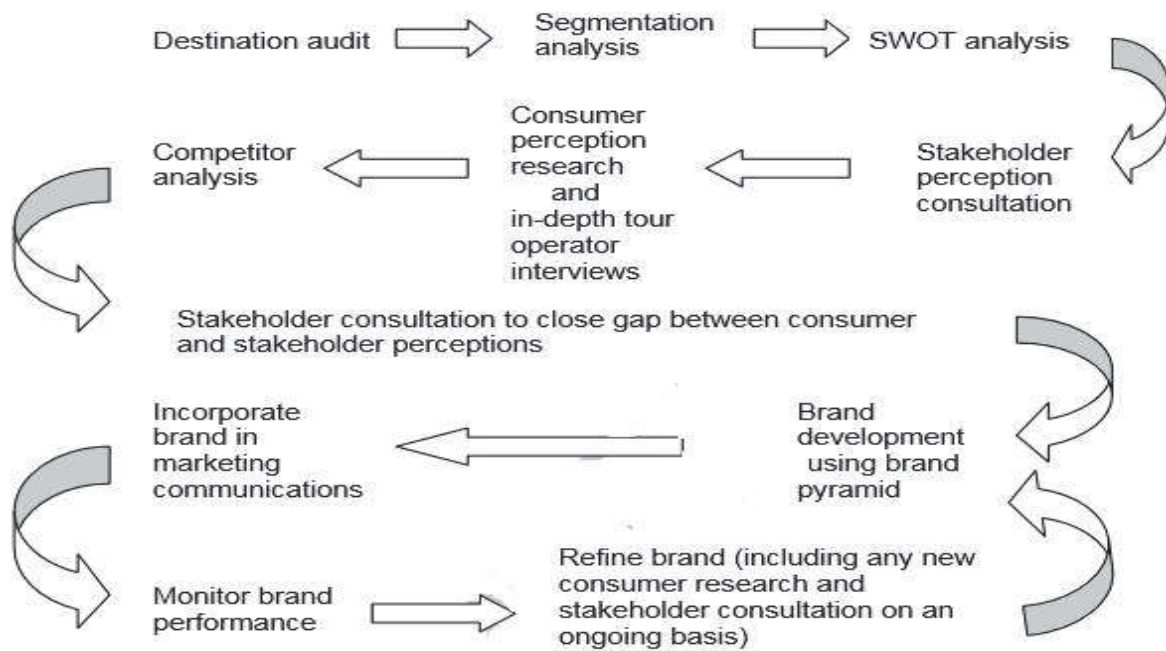
- A destination brand represents a dynamic interaction between the destination’s core assets and the way in which potential visitors perceive them. It really only exists in the eyes of others. It is the sum of their perceptions, feelings and attitudes towards the destination, based on the way in which they have experienced the destination or on how it has presented itself to them [5].

Branding Andamans- Emerald, Blue and You: The Andamans is an archipelago of over 570 tropical islands, of which only 36 are inhabited. Radhanagar beach at Havelock was bestowed with the title of Asia’s best beach in 2004 by the TIME magazine. It is also listed as World’s 7th most spectacular beach on the magazine’s list. Tourism is a major industry in Andaman. Bulk of the revenue earned by the government of Andaman and Nicobar is through the

tourism industry [6]. In 2015 total 3,07,814 tourists visited AN Islands [7]. Islands have been known for its unique and charm attributes unlike any other states in India. The Andaman tropical evergreen rain forests, beautiful silver sandy beaches, serpentine mangrove-lines creeks, marine life abounding in rare species of plants, animals, corals and the like provide a memorable experience to the tourists. Despite of numerous unique features, Andaman has sadly failed to realize its full potential as a tourism hub for India. In 2013, out of 35 states/Union Territories, Andaman ranked 30th in domestic tourist visit and 25th in foreign tourist visit [8]. The islands have the potential

of reaching the top tourist destination with proper marketing and advertising by the tourism department and local tourism service providers. Steps needs to be taken to brand ‘Andamans’ and promote the islands. Branding Andaman demonstrates how it is different from all other destinations and gives the reasons to visit. The present tagline used to promote Andaman tourism is “Emerald, Blue and You”. It defines the green forests and blue sea beaches of the islands. **The Branding Process:** It explains how to develop a destination brand. It sets out the process step-by-step. It includes several models and techniques that are helpful in developing the brand ‘Andaman’.

Figure 1: The Branding Process [9]



1. Destination Audit: Audit of Andaman’s core assets has to be undertaken. Prioritize these assets in terms of those that appeal to the main market segments. For example, adventure activities in Andaman, scenery, marine life, visitor experiences, and so on. How powerful are these compared to other destinations? In order of priority, which assets are the strongest and most appealing for visitors? Identify the core current and potential visitor segments in order of priority, and then identify which assets appeal to most important visitor segments.

2. Segmentation Analysis: It is important to identify and prioritize the key market segments for Andaman. These will drive the brand development. If one of Andaman’s greatest strengths is its sandy beaches, then one of the main market segments will be those who are interested in beaches. It therefore follows that beaches will feature in some form as an important element of the destination brand. Knowing

the main target segments and prioritizing them will guide consumer research, because these are the people whose opinions about Andaman matter most.

3. SWOT Analysis: The greatest strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and Threats of Andaman needs to be analyzed and prioritized. The major strength of Andaman is that it is blessed with natural beaches, islands and marine life. Lack of infrastructure, improper connectivity between the islands and lack of international flights are the weaknesses of tourism industry in Andaman. There are opportunities for tourism in the islands as government is opening three to four islands in order to boost tourism and with the incoming of international flights, the number of tourists will also increase. Tsunami and cyclone are the major threats facing Andaman tourism.

4. Stakeholder Engagement: Stakeholders are people who have an interest in the way in which the

destination presents itself. They comprise mostly people who live in the destination and people who deliver the destination experience to visitors, such as the inbound travel trade, hotels, attractions, transport companies, politicians, regional and local authorities, national, regional and local organizations, such as conservation, arts, culture and heritage bodies, as well as ordinary residents and the media. The key stakeholders should be included from the beginning of the brand development process. The purpose and value of the brand should be explained to stakeholders and their perceptions should be obtained about Andaman.

5. Consumer perception Research: Research amongst visitors to understand how people view Andaman is one of the single most important steps in brand development. This enables to understand how Andaman is perceived by people who have visited the islands. It enables to identify Andaman's greatest strengths, its weaknesses and any obstacles to progress. Understanding people's perceptions about Andaman can most effectively be done through qualitative research, usually in focus groups and in-depth individual interviews. This will reveal the gap between perceptions about Andaman and the reality. And it will enable to address any misperceptions as the brand is developed.

6. Competitor Analysis: Understanding where Andaman stands in relation to its competitors is critical. There is wider scope for adventure activities like scuba diving, snorkeling and sea walk in Andaman unlike any other states in India. There are various clean and unexplored beautiful beaches in Andaman which can attract more tourists.

7. Brand building Model: The Brand Pyramid of Andaman-The aim of this model is to find answers to the following questions on behalf of potential visitors:

- What are the main things I like about the destination 'Andaman'?
- What sort of place is it?
- How does it make me feel?
- How would I describe it in one sentence?
- What makes it different from all other destinations?

The brand pyramid elicits Andaman's brand essence and values, which should be run through all marketing activities by the Tourism Organization, and ideally, by service providers in their own marketing communications. The Brand pyramid of Andaman is depicted below:

Rational Attributes: It describes Andaman's main assets.

Emotional Benefits: It shows visitors' 'emotional take-out' from Andaman.

Brand Personality: It draws the summation of Andaman main character traits.

Positioning Statement: It shows Andaman's strongest competitive features- What makes it stand out from everywhere else?

Brand Essence: It highlights Andaman's essential nature and character.

8. Integrating the brand into Marketing

Activities: Integrating the brand into marketing activities means being clear about the strategic message that needs to be communicated. The strategic message is based on Andaman's brand values. This can be achieved by reflecting the brand values in imagery, symbols, logo or taglines (example in websites, brochures, advertising, marketing campaigns and TV advertising). The advertisements below illustrate how Andaman brand values have been incorporated into marketing campaigns. Beaches, Islands and adventure activities are clearly and effectively conveyed in this advertisement from its 'Andamans- Emerald, Blue and You' tagline.

Suggestions for Branding Andaman:

1. The Tourism Organization should launch a new and effective international marketing campaign like 'Incredible India' which can attract more number of tourists.
2. Andaman Islands should be promoted in national channels as states like Gujarat, Kerala and Rajasthan Tourism are being promoted in television.
3. Islanders should be the proud ambassadors of 'Brand Andaman' and be stakeholders in promoting Andamans as an all season unique tourist destination across the globe.
4. Social media like facebook, youtube and twitter should be extensively used for promoting Andaman.
5. Andaman can hold the position for host venue of various national and international water sports activities and create awareness about the Islands to the people.

Conclusion: There is a need for branding Andaman in order to attract more tourists in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The islands are having numerous unique features unlike any other states in India. The Tourism Organization and the stakeholders should come forward in branding Andamans in the global market. This will boost tourism as well as sustain the economic development of the Territory.

Figure 2: The Five Stage Brand Pyramid illustrating the Andaman tourism brand

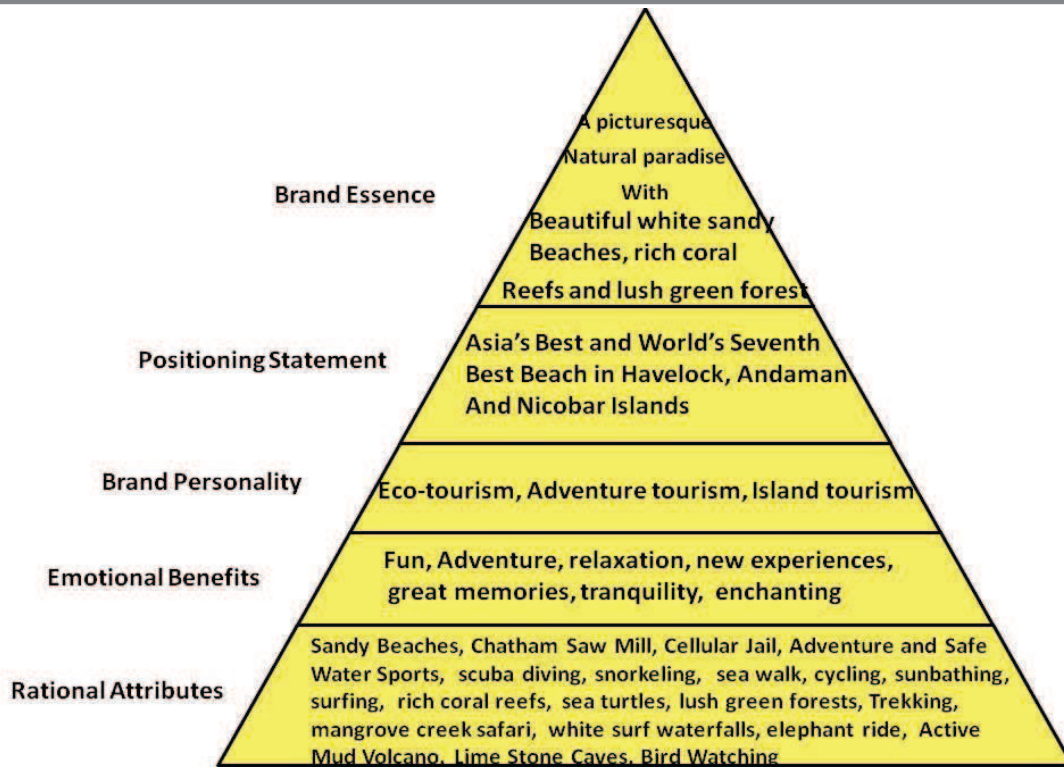


Figure 2 explains the five stage brand pyramid of Andaman starting from the bottom towards the top. Five stages are explained below:

Figure 3: Applying the brand values- Marketing Communications :



Source: www.andamans.gov.in/Brochures

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