

Is Incredible India Campaign a reason for growth in tourism? A case study of Madhya Pradesh

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Abstract

Madhya Pradesh rightly known as the heart of Incredible India has so much to offer to the Indian tourism industry. The state is well equipped with three UNESCO world heritage sites, nine national parks and 25 wildlife sanctuaries along with several other diverse tourism attractions. Its potential has been traced only in the last decade with the state government taking some serious measures towards marketing the tourism potential of the state and launching its new tourism policy, claiming to be one of the most progressive policies in the country. The state government following the footsteps of the central government appointed the same marketing firm Ogilvy & Mather which designed the “Incredible India Campaign” the first marketing campaign of its kind by the government of India; to design an advertising campaign for Madhya Pradesh creating a brand image of the state resulting in an increase in the tourist’s inflow. The paper attempts to study the factors which have given rise to the popularity of Madhya Pradesh state as a tourist destination in the past ten years. The case study also aims at an in-depth analysis of how the advertising campaign has helped the growth of tourism in the state.

Keywords: *Incredible India, UNESCO, World heritage Sites, Wildlife Sanctuaries, brand image*

Background

The state of Madhya Pradesh came into existence in the year 1956. Several monuments, palaces, forts and temples and other holy places can be seen all over the state. The state possesses right from historical and cultural heritages to wildlife to holy places and has so much to offer to tourism. The state is equally blessed with natural beauty consisting mainly of a plateau streaked with the hill ranges of the Vindhyas and the Satpuras giving rise to six rivers Narmada and the Tapti, running from east to west, and the Chambal, Sone, Betwa, Mahanadi running west to east. The existence of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity is seen in the state. The famous Sanskrit poet Kalidasa and the great musician of the Mughal court, Tansen, were from Madhya Pradesh.

The state is popular among tourists for Kanha National park famous for Tiger and Barasingha, Bandhavgarh National park, Dhuandhar Waterfall and Marble rocks at Bhedaghat, the hill station of Pachmarhi along with places such as Raisen, Bhopal, Vidisha, Sanchi, Jabalpur, Bhimbetka, Indore and Chanderi for its silk sarees. The state is known for

its pilgrim centers such as Orchha, Mahakaleshwar, Ujjain, Amarkantak, Omkareshwar, Bhojpur, Chitrakoot and Udaipur. The sites of Khajuraho, Bhimbetka and Sanchi have been identified by UNESCO as the world heritage sites. The archaeological treasures at Gwalior, Mandasaur, Bhopal, Rewa, Vidisha, Ujjain, Jabalpur and Indore are also quite popular among the tourists. The state also celebrates large number of fairs and festivals which are quite popular among the travelers such as Shivratri in Khajuraho, Pachmari, Bhojpur and Ujjain, the annual dance festival of Khajuraho, Ramanavami in Orchha and Chitrakoot, Bhagoria Haat of Jhabua, the Malwa festival in Indore, Ujjain and Mandu, Lokrang of Bhopal, the all India Kalidasa festival and the famous Tansen Samaroh. The trade fair at Gwalior is also an attraction. Gwalior carnival is newly introduced festival in 2012. Madhya Pradesh is also a land of several folk dances such as the Kamar tribe performs the Tera Tali, Bhagoriya dance of Jhabua, the Jawara is performed in the Bundelkhand area of Madhya Pradesh, Matki dance, phulpati dance, Grida dance, Maanch, Gaur Maria dance to name a few, each associated with different occasions and having their own style. The government of Madhya Pradesh realizing the potential of the state to become a popular tourist destination and attract large number of tourists appointed Ogilvy & Mather for print media and Mindshare for television as their creative and marketing partners in order to showcase different tourism destination of the state to the entire world through advertising mediums.

The first marketing campaign 'Hindustan Ka Dil Dekho' was launched in 2006, later in the famous 'Eyes' Campaign – 'Hindustan ka Dil Dekha' came in 2008. The third advertisement 'M.P Ajab Hai Sabse Gajab Hai' was launched in 2010, wherein through the hand shadowgraphy, the destinations were described. Also called the 'Go Camping' aimed at promoting regions such as Bhopal, Pachmarhi, Mandu, Orchha, Jabalpur, Tamia, Amarkantak, Shahdol, Dewas, Panna, Bhind and Panch as adventure sites and various online campaigns to highlight the state as the heart of incredible India. The state has also won the best state in 'Tourism Promotion and Publicity' category by Today's Traveller Awards in 2010. In 2010 another campaign was launched in which people are seen welcoming tourists in the same way we welcome people during the festival of Holi. The colours get spread in slow motion and take the shape of various tourist attractions of the state such as the Kanha tigers, Khajuraho sculptures, Mandu's Jahaz Mahal, Sanchi Stupa and Ujjain's Mahakal Aarti. Recently in 2016 another campaign in the same line has been launched called as 'MP mei dil hua bacha sa'.

The advertisement is trying to draw a relationship between the way a toddler looks at the toys for the first time and stay amazed, similarly a tourists comes to Madhya Pradesh and gets surprised looking at the temples in Khajuraho, Sanchi Stupa, Ujjain Mahakal etc. A cot with a rotating dice on it is used to showcase different places of the state. Customized toys made of tin and painted in the Gondha art form are used to showcase different locations, culture, forts, people, dresses, wildlife, textile, religion, womenfolk, markets and marble mountains. All this is done under the flagship of the 'Incredible India Campaign'; the first international marketing campaign of its kind by the government of India formulated in 2002 by V Sunil, Ex Creative Director, O&M Delhi, and Amitabh Kant, Ex Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism. The objective of this campaign was to create Brand India and give Indian tourism a distinctive identity.

The phrase "Incredible India" was adopted as a slogan by the ministry. This campaign was the first conscious effort made by the ministry of tourism to promote Indian tourism industry worldwide. Another campaign named "Atithi Devo Bhava" under the same flagship

campaign was launched in order to sensitize the local Indian population about the good behaviour and etiquette when dealing with foreign tourists, preservation of India's heritage, culture, cleanliness and hospitality. Various other schemes such as Swachh Paryatan mobile app, Swachh and Prasad financial assistance schemes etc have been launched parallel with this campaign. Ministry of Tourism commenced its International TV Campaign (2009-10 – Extended to 2010-11) for Europe and Americas region, which finished in the first half of the 2010-11 and in December, 2010, the Ministry launched its International TV Campaign 2010-11 – Europe under its international incredible India campaign. The state has won several awards during the recently held National Tourism Awards on July 30, 2016 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi such as the best state for comprehensive development of tourism, monuments of Amarkantak were declared the best maintained and disable-friendly monuments, heritage walk of Bhopal won the best heritage walk award and Art Ichol a destination in Madhya Pradesh won the best innovative tourism project as it provides a platform for the creative individuals to promote and share their work of art in a picturesque environment.

Literature Review

Tourism is becoming an important economic activity, a driver for development and is the most dynamic forms of social and cultural exchange worldwide. There is a strong need to improve the accessibility to various natural and cultural heritage sites along with the development of tourism products. The destinations having potential for heritage tourism are marketed using those heritage sites and the tourism products are shown as supplementing travel activities at the destination (Graham Brooks, 2011). Tourism is also gaining popularity in India with a share of 6.6 percent in the country's GDP in 2012 and 39.5 million jobs. The growth rate of 7.9 percent from 2013 to 2023 has been predicted for the industry. Both domestic and international tourism is expected to grow over the years leading India to the third rank among the countries with the fastest growing tourism industries in the world. It becomes important to respond to the changing needs of the industry in order to get maximum benefits of the development of the industry (IJMSS, 2015).

Incredible India Campaign designed to advertise tourism destinations of the country on the world platform when analyzed using the Fishbein Multi-attribute model shows good response of the tourists towards most of the elements of the campaign, confirming that the campaign has been successful in portraying India in front of the foreign tourists. Heritage sites' getting the highest score proves that Indian history attracts the foreign tourists most. India as a tourist destination is also been rated high by the tourists (Bikramjit Rishi, Abhilasha Singh, Kaushal Misra, 2013). Social media is becoming a popular tool for creating awareness, advertising, building and image, brand loyalty etc. even in tourism. It is used for building destination reputation and spreading information about the destination and services provided expecting an increase in the tourist flow (Dr. Neerja Gohil, 2015). Globalization has given an opportunity to participate in the world market and for nation branding. Although the Incredible India Campaign is more of an imagination and lacks reality but still it has played a major role in building a perceived image in the minds of the individual people and thus results in a positive effort towards nation branding (Sanjiv Vijayend Balgobind, 2013). It is always argued that the nation branding campaigns are mostly a reflection of the imagination of those being branded and Incredible India Campaign is tend to follow the same line and the visuals used in the advertisement tend to reinforce an stereotype and primitive picture of India (Finola Kerrigan, Jyotsna Shivanandan, Anne-Marie Hede, 2012). The improving economic conditions in India will lead to the introduction of various types of tourism and the

domestic sector is expected to be the major beneficiary of this development. Madhya Pradesh being very popular among the domestic tourists, the tourism development corporation of the state will have to play a major role in identifying and developing new destinations (Robert Jan Baken and Suresh Bhagavatula, 2010). Madhya Pradesh has huge potential for tourism development. The state government with proper planning and implementation can help in improving the social economic conditions in the state and result in balance growth at all levels of the society (Devendra N. Pandey, Satyendra Kumar Mishra, Sandeep Kumar Shukla, 2014). The Madhya Pradesh government realizing the importance of sustainable and balanced growth of tourism is eyeing on increasing the private investments in the sector and a sustainable tourism growth. Also for cultural heritage the principle of “First Conservation Later Tourism” has been adopted by the state. Public Private Partnership has been given due importance in the policy (M.P Tourism Policy, 2014).

Madhya Pradesh has all the resources to become a popular heritage tourism destination, giving tourist an experience of nature, history and local culture. Tourists are different in their taste and likings thus a niche has to be identified, tourists are always looking for destinations with wide range of activities and the same has to be provided in order to attract large number of such tourists (Manjula Chaudhary and Abhishek Aggarwal, 2012). With the policy measures adopted by the state government for developing adventure and leisure tourism facilities, it was among the 10 tourist destinations in 2008 taking such specific measures (KPMG, 2013). The structural equation model shows that the promotional measures using different media options like TV, Magazine, Newspaper, Radio, Website, Magazine etc. and even the campaigns adopted by the Ministry of Tourism are having a positive impact on the minds of the tourists (Jeet Dogra, 2016).

The specific state tourism campaigns are seen as more systematized than the central campaign as their campaign are focusing on particular tourism destinations and what they can offer. The central campaign must include the aspects of safety and security along with the tourist attractions, as almost all tourists are concerned about it (Dr. Nripendra SINGH, Ms. Sunaina AHUJA, Alexandru NEDELEA, 2012). City branding along with destination branding is important for India and before taking this it is important that issues like poor infrastructure, safety issues, hygiene, communicate facilities need to be improved. The reason behind a slow growth in tourism is the gap between the projected image and the reality. There is a need for some real development of tourism services and related activities on the ground level along with branding and marketing (Abhilasha Chauhan, Anupriya Kaur, YajuluMedury, 2015). The foreign tourists are coming to India even when we lack tourism facilities of the international standards. The gap between what is promised what is provided has to be filled so that tourist could return. India should try and market itself as a tourist destination of the future using technology, better staff training, innovative marketing techniques and better customer relationship management. The marketing campaigns should not try and create a false image of India but provide the real pictures (Dr. Sultan Singh, Prof. M. S. Turan, 2006).

Objectives

1. To study the factors affecting the growth of tourism in Madhya Pradesh.
2. To understand the impact of the advertising campaign on Madhya Pradesh Tourism.
3. To study the future of Madhya Pradesh as a tourist destination and why the number of international tourist arrival is still quiet low in the state.

Research Methodology

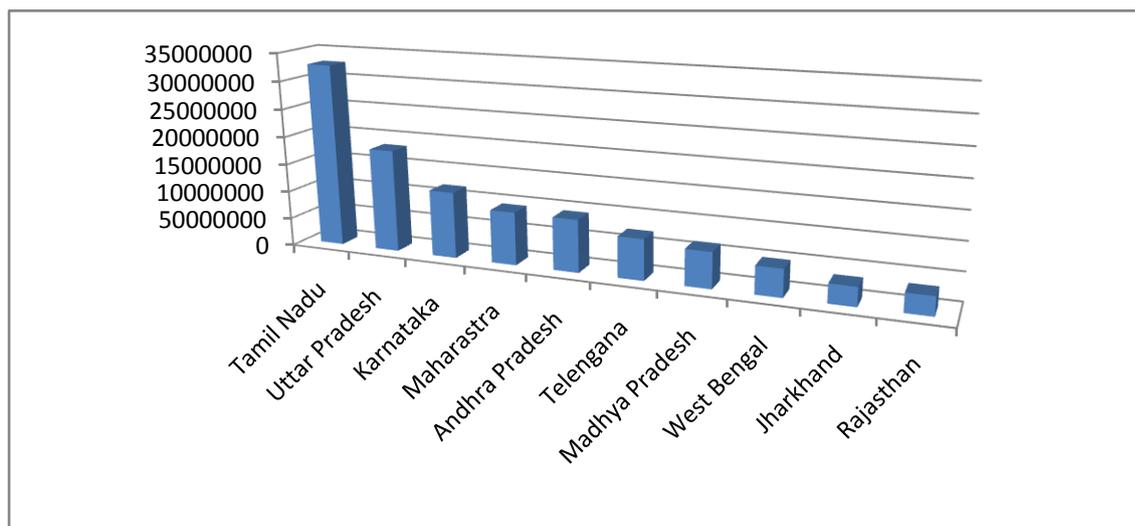
The case study is analytical and exploratory in nature. Therefore, secondary data is used from various sources such as Research Papers, Annual Reports, Journals, Government Websites, Websites of Ministry of Tourism and Madhya Pradesh Tourism, Newspapers etc. The data collected is analyzed and studied to reach conclusions and draw inferences.

Discussion

The state of Madhya Pradesh has a series of resources which can attract tourist in large numbers. The state is fully equipped with tourist attractions of all kinds from natural to manmade resources. You can see forts, palaces and other monuments of historical importance in almost all parts of the state. The importance of tourism in the state has been realized only recently, with the state government taking some serious measures to promote the industry within the state. The state with its aggressive marketing campaign and encouraging policies is able to make a name on the tourism map not only in India but also abroad. The state is continuously marketing itself on the national and international platform via participating in and organizing travel marts, conducting heritage walks in different parts of the world, exhibiting in the trade shows.

The marketing campaign of Madhya Pradesh tourism has won so many awards for the state during the recently held tourism awards and in the past as well. The factor affecting the growth of tourism in the state along with the marketing campaign and efforts from the government is the fact that Madhya Pradesh is the heart of India and is extensively rich from cultural and archaeological point of view. We have seen some serious efforts from the tourism department of the state even the tourism budget which was 15 crore in 2004-05 has now increased to 154 crores. The government is seen on taking several efforts to promote tourism.

This has resulted in some increase in the tourists flow in the past few years and the tourists especially the domestic market is seen giving importance to Madhya Pradesh for tourism. The government is also giving a lot of emphasis on training and development and is running various skill development programs such as 'Earn while you learn', 'Hunar se rozgar' etc. The industry has shown favorable results in the domestic sector but is still lagging behind on the international front. The state is although fully equipped with tourism resources but it has not been able to exploit its potential fully.



Sources: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. India Tourism Statistics 2014

Top ten domestic tourist generating states in India of 2014

Madhya Pradesh stands seventh among the top ten domestic tourism generating states of 2014 in the country with a percentage share of 5.6 percent but when it comes to international tourist's arrival the state is not even among the top ten states. The state is rapidly becoming popular among the tourists and especially the domestic are heading towards the state in large numbers. The major reason behind this is its unique promotional campaign along with its cultural heritage and recent improvements in infrastructure. The advertising campaign effectively showcases Madhya Pradesh as a destination for religious, ecotourism, rural, adventure. These campaigns are able to attract the attention of the tourists.

The infrastructural development includes, marketing initiatives, new tourism products and the development of some new and improvement in the existing tourism infrastructure. The international tourist arrival is quiet low in the state. The main reason behind this low inflow is the lack of proper infrastructure. Although some development has happened in the recent past but it is not up to the mark and not as per the international standards. Poor transport facilities and lack of better tourism facilities are also some of the reasons. The state is fairly well connected with road and rail network but the condition of roads, public transportation becomes a problem.

The state of air transport is also poor in the state with only two international airports i.e. Indore and Bhopal that too for the namesake as only domestic flights are operational. The government is giving further push to the industry by introducing some new concepts like Caravan tourism and giving importance to water sports, film tourism. The government is working on improving the interstate connectivity, MICE infrastructure in the state, circuit developments (Sanchi, Khajuraho, Mandu, Gwalior, Orchha, Mahewshar), marketing & promotion and investment facilities in the state. The state government is looking forward towards an investment of Rs 1,300 crore from public and the private sector for the up-gradation of tourism infrastructure. The government is further focusing on developing rural tourism around the heritage sites and wildlife tourism due to the six sanctuaries the state has besides religious and cultural tourism. Eco-tourism, MICE and heritage wedding segments are also given a lot of attention. Developing way side amenities including cafes, restrooms, parks, parking, facilities etc is also on the list of the MPSTDC. The state aims at developing Khajuraho and Orchha as international MICE destinations and a growth of 20 percent is expected this year from 8 crores (both domestic and international) in 2015.

Conclusion

The state of Madhya Pradesh has a huge potential to be on top of the tourist destination list in India. The government is also doing a lot in terms of marketing, promotions, giving financial assistance and encouraging tourism activities within the state in all the ways possible. The problem that lies here is the execution on the ground level. The potential can only be harnessed to its full extent when Madhya Pradesh can provide its tourist what is been promised and in the right measure. The issue arises when tourist see a very colorful image of the state in the advertisements but when they reach their physically, the place looks different. There is an urgent need of developing infrastructure in terms of good hotels, quality of roads, air connectivity. Bringing in innovation and introduction of some newer concepts to stand different along with preserving the original is also primary to tourism development.

Findings

- The state has huge potential for tourism development and the government has realized the importance of tourism industry in the state.
- The government is set to attract private players towards the industry in large scale.
- The international tourist arrival is quite less in the state as compared to the domestic tourist arrival and the government needs to do something about it.
- It is seen that the government has realized the importance of advertising in tourism and thus launched a massive add campaign few years back.

- The government policies, infrastructure and marketing all play their respective roles in the growth and development of the industry and none of these can be given a back seat.
- The government is working towards improving the state of overall infrastructure in the state but still a lot has to be done to reach the international standards.
- Air connectivity is still a major cause of concern for the state.
- Government is really coming up with some good incentives for new entrants and also the existing once in the industry through their policies. Eco tourism has gained importance.
- The growth rate of national tourist arrival in the state is good and shows a positive sign for the sector. It is indicated that the domestic tourists are choosing Madhya Pradesh for travelling for different reasons.
- The sector is on a path of growth and development. If the government and other stakeholders continue with the same efforts.
- The government is undertaking several measures for improving the state of tourism in the state. Several areas are being explored.

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