Destination MAHARASHTRA!

Tourism Blueprint
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Tourism

Definition of Tourism

Tourism essentially is a means to experience a culture, location, language, cuisine and activities different than one’s own. Tourism is a concept, which includes many stakeholders, the main being the tourist. The other stakeholders are the different service providers. The central theme of tourism is the destination or event, which is being visited.

Since tourism is a combination of myriad range of activities and people, an attempt is made to define tourism to understand its scope.

Some of the different definitions of tourism are:

The Oxford English Dictionary defines tourism as “the commercial organization and operation of holidays and visits to places of interest”.

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines tourism as "comprising of activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes."

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines tourists as people "traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes"

The International Ecotourism Society defines Ecotourism as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people"

In a nutshell, tourism is essentially a movement of people from one place to another for the broad purposes of recreation, business, education, adventure, health and pilgrimage.

Why does Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) want to promote tourism?

Tourism is essentially an economic activity when viewed through the lens of the State. However for MNS, tourism goes beyond its economics.

Tourism in Maharashtra is a means to experience its local culture. Maharashtra has its own cultural heritage that needs to be conserved and promoted. Its varied cuisine, dialects and arts and crafts require a platform to showcase it to the world.
Most villages in Maharashtra have potential for tourism but they have inadequate infrastructure to encourage tourists. Add to this the problem of youth migrating to cities in search of better opportunities.

Through the activity of tourism development in Maharashtra, MNS aims improve the basic infrastructure such as roads, transportation, connectivity, water, sanitation and public amenities in rural as well as urban areas.

Locals will be trained to offer their services as local guides, provide home stays, exhibit and sell their local handicrafts thereby making them self sufficient. The youth of these areas will be proud to showcase and promote their heritage and culture and therefore have meaningful work to do, which will contribute to the economy.

Since the economic and cultural aspect of tourism is inextricably linked together, MNS will strive to promote tourism in Maharashtra.

**Current Situation**

**Policy overview**

Tourism industry in Maharashtra comes under the aegis of the Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs. This Department has framed the Maharashtra Tourism Policy 2006 and is aided by incentive programs, land, developmental and coastal regulations.

This policy has entrusted all commercial and promotional activities to Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC). MTDC has identified four thrust areas having highest tourism potential. These are Ajanta-Ellora, Elephanta, Sindhudurg district and Lonar crater. MTDC is also taking initiative in developing forest tourism.

The Government of Maharashtra (GoM) has declared its policy of encouraging private investments in the tourism sector.

GoM and MTDC land or properties can be leased to investors in the tourism industry for a period of 30 years. The lease can be further extended for a period of 30 years subject to financial negotiations.

**State plan outlays on tourism**

The outlay for the ninth five-year plan (1997-2002) was Rs. 175.34 cores. The outlay for the annual plan 2002-03 was Rs. 24.24 crore. The outlay for the tenth five-year plan (2002-07) was Rs. 117.31 cores. The 2011-12 outlay approved by the Planning Commission for the State of Maharashtra was 485.48 cores.

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1 Government of India-Planning Commission-“Approved Annual State Plan –Maharashtra”: 2011-12
The 2012-13 outlay approved by the Planning Commission for the State of Maharashtra was Rs. 508.81 crore²

MTDC proposes to take up certain projects partly assisted by Government of India and the rest by MTDC’s own resources.

**Destinations on offer**

Maharashtra has tourist destinations in almost every district comprising of forts, beaches, sanctuaries, hill stations, pilgrimage centers, World Heritage Sites, festivals like the Ganapati festival and a variety of authentic Maharashtrian cuisine. Some of the destinations are given below:

**Forts**

Maharashtra is home to number of forts which can be distinguished on the basis of their geographical location: Sea forts, hill forts and island forts.

**Beaches**

The entire western Maharashtra has 720 kilometers of Konkan coastline. Mangoes from Ratnagiri and turtles in Sindhudurg district in their natural habitats is a specialty of Konkan tourism.

**Sanctuaries**

Maharashtra has a forest land cover of 54,807 sq. km.³ and tiger reserve land of 3,803.1 sq. km⁴. Melghat, Pench, Tadoba, Sahyadri and Nagzira, Radhanagari and Bor are some of the important wildlife sanctuaries in Maharashtra.

**Caves**

Buddhist and Jain caves in Ajanta, Ellora, Bhaja, Bhedsa, Pandavleni, Pithalkhora and Karla are already a major tourist attraction.

**Hill Stations**

MTDC has resorts at a number of hill stations in Maharashtra: Khandala, Mahabaleshwar, Panchgani, Amboli, Panhala, Matheran and Malshej are some of the famous hill stations.

**Pilgrimage Centers**

Maharashtra is home to some nationally known temples: Shirdi, Kolhapur’s Mahalaxmi, and Mumbai’s Siddhivinayak. The eight Ashtavinayak and three Jyotirlingas - Bhimashankar,

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³ http://envis.maharashtra.gov.in/envis_data/?q=Forests09#fmhfcov
⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger_reserves_of_India
Ghrishneshwar and Trimbakeshwar from the twelve Jyotirlinga temple circuit also have sizeable year-round tourist traffic. Some small towns and cities in Maharashtra are known only for their temples and shrines: Tuljapur, Gangapur, Pandharpur, Alandi, Jejuri and Shegaon to name a few.

Geographical Indications (GI)\(^5\)

A GI is a name or sign used on certain products which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin (a town, region, or country). The use of a GI may act as a certification that the product possesses certain qualities, or enjoys a certain reputation, essentially attributable to their geographical origin. Maharashtra is home to 11 registered geographical indications.

Registered GIs of Maharashtra\(^6\)

1. Mahabaleshwar Strawberry
2. Nasik Grapes
3. Solapur Chaddar
4. Solapur Terry Towel
5. Paithani Sarees and Fabrics
6. Nasik Valley Wine
7. Puneri Pagadi
8. Nagpur Orange
9. Kolhapuri Chappal
10. Warli Painting
11. Kolhapur Jaggery

Geographical Indications submitted for registration\(^7\)

1. Alphonso Mango-Ratnagiri
2. Devgadh Alphonso Mango-Sindhudurg

Arts and handicrafts

Maharashtra has a culture rich in arts and crafts:

- The Warli Art-paintings by the tribals from the Maharashtra-Gujarat border.
- Paithani sarees, Himroo Shawls from Paithan and Aurangabad.
- Ganjifa (a particular type of playing cards) and wooden toys of Sawantwadi
- Ganesh idols of Pen
- Silver jewelry of Hupri

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\(^5\) [http://ipindia.nic.in/girindia/]
\(^6\) [http://ipindia.nic.in/girindia/]
\(^7\) [http://ipindiaservices.gov.in/GirPublic/DetailsGIR.aspx]
Despite having a wide array of destinations and cultural events, tourism in Maharashtra has a number of problems. The tourism potential in the state remains unfocussed and unexploited.

**Concerns and Issues in Maharashtra’s Tourism Sector**

Tourism planning in Maharashtra is haphazard. There are basic infrastructure gaps and tourism infrastructure gaps. Its potential in terms of tourism lies largely unexplored. Not only destinations, but its cuisine and the cultural events are also an untapped tourism potential. There is a general apathy in the perspective of looking tourism. This apathy can be seen from the following shortcomings in the tourism sector.

**Infrastructure gaps**

Roads, Railways and airports, sanitation, water supply and sewerage, electricity, public amenities, eating joints, communication and medical facilities constitute some of the basic infrastructure necessities. Throughout Maharashtra, there are basic infrastructure gaps at various places.

Hotels, eating joints, wayside amenities, public amenities and signage constitute tourist infrastructure.

Poor road conditions, irregular transport facilities and dearth of clean and hygienic rest stops are a standard feature almost all over Maharashtra. This is especially true at pilgrimage sites which are largely populated by domestic tourists.

- Around 50,000 devotees throng to Pandharpur each month during ‘Ekadashi’ alone. Yet, the city offers a mere 54 public toilets, with the capacity of 646 seats, as well as Sulabh toilets at 10 places, with the capacity of 293 seats\(^8\). This figure is far below the expected number of toilets that need to be there. Tere is a shortage of 13000 toilets in Pandharpur.\(^9\) This is not to mention the ‘Ashadhi Ekadashi’ when close to 10-12 Lakhs pilgrims make their way to Pandharpur.\(^10\) Then, these facilities are grossly inadequate. The Ministry of Urban Development has prescribed service level benchmarks for calculation of the number of toilets per household.\(^11\)

- How the present and potential tourist markets perceive the destination beyond its leisure, fun and shopping image in terms of its health and safety have prominence after the bomb blasts at Mumbai and Pune in 2008 and 2010 respectively, the swine flu epidemic in Maharashtra in 2010. The general safety of women especially foreign women is a major cause for concern.

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\(^8\) Pune Mirror: “Privy to Improvements...”: September 18th, 2012


\(^10\) Maharashtra Pollution Control Board: “Pandharpur-Environment Status Report 2005 during Ashadhi Ekadashi”

\(^11\) Government of India-Ministry of Urban Development: “Handbook of Service Level Benchmarking”
**Overload on popular destinations**

Lack of vision is clearly reflected in the development of the tourist destinations, which is being carried out in an unfocussed and haphazard manner. Categorization of destinations could help in planning their development; however, destinations have not been categorized based on the existing infrastructure or carrying capacity. Participation of locals in such development could add great value; however, there appears to be a lack of motivation for such entrepreneurship and innovation in the development of these destinations.

Most popular destinations in Maharashtra are overloaded. MTDC has identified four thrust areas having highest tourism potential. These are Ajanta-Ellora, Elephanta, Sindhudurg district and Lonar crater. Since there is highest tourism numbers at these destinations, only these destinations are marked for promotion by the MTDC. Some other examples of such unfocussed development are:

- Mumbai with its international airport, night-life, beach, Bollywood and shopping is promoted as a primary destination. Other parallel destinations can be developed and marketed to divert the tourist traffic from these destinations. International airports at Aurangabad or Nagpur can take the pressure off Mumbai. Those visitors wanting to do the Ajanta-Ellora-Aurangabad circuit need not go through Mumbai. They can directly take the international flight from Aurangabad.

- Mumbai’s international airport in India is widely used as entry and exit point by international tourists. However out of around 1.08 million tourists visiting Maharashtra only 5-6% of foreign tourists move on to tourist destinations in Maharashtra.\(^\text{12}\) Mumbai was used as a mere entry gate for India to visit other states.

- There is unplanned development, overcrowding at eco-sensitive zones like Panchgani and Mahabaleshwar. Bhandardara in the Sahyadris, Amboli can take the pressure off Mahabaleshwar.

- The Karnala Bird Sanctuary has been a favorite spot for tourists over the years. The Karnala Fort is the main attraction for trekkers. However, the tourism in the area has developed on the line of picnicking with no interest in nature observation and conservation. The carrying capacity of the area has been exceeded by the activity of tourism.\(^\text{13}\)

Choice of destinations for promotion lacks planning perspective. No definite criteria can be seen for promotion of sites and no forethought given to the consequences of destination overloading.

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Lack of cooperation between various agencies

Many contributors to Maharashtra tourism follow their own agendas and work on separate platforms. There is a lack of cohesive vision and planning to guide tourism development. At any given time, several different agencies operate simultaneously in the field of tourism. Some of them are the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC), Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC), Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC), Public Works Department (PWD), the Railways, the Forest Department, the Archeological Survey of India (ASI), different Municipal Corporations to name a few. Besides, there are private tour operators, guides and local entrepreneurs looking to make a profit off the tourists. Their working is disjointed and lacks a dedicated focus.

Lack of cooperation between various governmental organizations involved in tourism creates inconvenience for the tourist. For example: a visit to Ajanta World Heritage Site required the tourist to purchase as many as seven different tickets due to a distinct jurisdiction issue.\(^\text{14}\)

Opportunity

Untapped tourism potential

The potential for tourism at some places in Maharashtra have never been on the radar of policy makers and is ignored by the public at large. They have the potential to become top-class tourism destinations with a little foresight and planning.

Some examples are given below:

- Maharashtra has unique history of forts. No place in the world has so many forts in a single state. The glorious Maratha history of which we are so proud would not have been possible without these forts. Today, these forts lie in ruins. Their history, architecture and their purpose are a unique factor which has not been sufficiently capitalized upon.

- The Alphonso Mango is soon-to-be a Geographical Indication from Ratnagiri\(^\text{15}\) and Sindhudurg\(^\text{16}\). Konkan already exports mangoes worth 13000 metric tones.\(^\text{17}\) Along with exporting large quantities, the Konkan belt could be developed for Mango-tourism by organizing Mango festivals to increase revenues from tourism.

- The Sahyadri mountain range in the Western Ghats as a potential tourist destination is totally neglected. The Sahyadris are a trekker’s paradise. It is a potential hot-spot for nature trails, camping, guided nature walks and trekking. The Sahyadri ranges are even

\(^{15}\) http://pindiiaservices.gov.in/GirPublic/View%20Application%20Details.aspx?AppNo=139
\(^{17}\) http://www.msamb.com/english/export/alphanso.htm
used for preparatory climbing by many trekking enthusiasts before embarking for the Himalayas. A Sahyadri mountain range institute can be established to train and conduct trekking camps on the lines of the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute.

- There are numerous historical ‘wadas’ in and around Pune belonging to Mahatma Phule, Lokmanya Tilak and other eminent personalities. The history of social reform in Maharashtra and even in India cannot be told without a reference to these locations. There is a general air of unconcern about conservation and maintenance of these monuments. If they were to be revived, conserved and promoted properly, a new form of historical tourism can take place.

- Maharashtra has range of interesting and authentic cuisine from all over the state which is not even considered while planning tourism.

This apathy speaks of policy level ignorance about our heritage.

**Economic growth through tourism**

Tourism leads to employment generation as well as the generation of economic activities, which have a multiplier effect in improving the regional income and improving the standard of living. Research studies carried out in the tourism sector indicate a multiplier of around 2.5. It is suggested that visit of each foreign tourist provides employment to one person and 6.5 domestic tourists generate one job.

An investment of Rs.10 lakhs in tourism results in creation of 89 jobs compared to 45 in agriculture and 13 in manufacturing. Further, it is believed the visit of one foreign tourist provides employment to one person. Similarly 17 domestic tourists generate one job in the country.

Tourism has potential for tremendous economic growth. It provides a serious boost to entrepreneurship, the potential for which has not been exploited by our policy makers.

Tourism leads to employment generation as well as the generation of economic activities, which have a multiplier effect in improving the regional income and improving the standard of living.

**Identify a Unique Selling Proposition (USP)**

The state has a variety of destinations and year-round tourism potential, yet no specific destinations are chosen to be the premium offerings from the Maharashtra tourism bouquet. We are suggesting that Forts have the potential to become the identification of Maharashtra Tourism.

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18http://www.himalayanmountaineeringinstitute.com/index.html
Maharashtra has unique history of forts. No place in the world has so many forts in a single state. The glorious Maratha history would not have been possible without these forts. Forts have all-season accessibility and therefore permanent scope for economic growth.

Today, these forts lie in ruins. Their history, architecture and their purpose are a unique factor which should be capitalized upon. Identifying forts as an USP of Maharashtra will ensure that the conservation and maintenance of these forts is regularly done.

**Our Vision**

Maharashtra requires a clear and long-term perspective to look at tourism. This perspective should ensure employment, showcase our heritage and culture and ensure sustainability.

We will emphasize the development of tourism in order to give a boost to the local economy and conserve our natural and historical heritage. It will be our aim to put Maharashtra on the world’s tourism map.

Our vision will be

"To put Maharashtra on the international tourism map by promoting tourism in the state, while ensuring local employment, showcasing culture and history and ensuring ecological sustainability."

**Tourism Philosophy**

Our action plan will have four salient focus areas:

- Maharashtra gets on the international tourist map
- Our heritage and culture is showcased
- Ensure employment and promote entrepreneurship
- Sustain the environment

To put Maharashtra on the international tourist map, we will have to first identify, develop and promote the most unique concepts in Maharashtra from the international perspective. We already have such concepts like forts associated with the illustrious Maratha history background, Mango tourism etc. Such concepts also enable us to showcase our culture.

Ensuring employment of the locals and sustaining the environment are two factors that will require concerted efforts towards achieving this goal.

To achieve this objective, we will need to look at destinations from a fresh perspective and we will begin with the process of development of destinations.

An indicative action plan has been developed to realize this vision.
**Action Plan**

1. One location in each taluka of Maharashtra would be identified to be promoted as a tourist destination.
2. This location will be classified as per the destination category. All the necessary and model norms of the destination prototype will be established at this location. Relevant infrastructure will be established.
3. Locals will be trained to offer tourist guide services, provide home stays and local cuisine, sell local artifacts and souvenirs thereby empowering them to be self-sufficient and promote entrepreneurship.
4. This location will be promoted as a tourist destination.

Similarly all the tourist destinations in Maharashtra will be categorized by destination prototyping.

In order to identify, develop and promote a location as a tourist destination, certain parameters will have to be applied. These are categorization of the location as primary, secondary and tertiary based on its tourism potential and infrastructure.

**Approach to destination development**

The categorization of the location as a tourist destination begins with the place having the requisite tourist potential (hill station, beach, major city, etc.) and with augmentation of basic infrastructure at that destination. The parameters for infrastructure are:

- Road, Rail, Transportation network
- Water, Power
- Wayside Amenities (Accommodation, Eateries, Restrooms)
- Public Amenities at destination (Accommodation, Eateries, Restrooms)
- Tourist Information centers
- Signage

The level of infrastructure for a destination will help to decide whether the destination will be a primary, secondary or tertiary destination.

Destination with potential for tourism but non-availability of basic infrastructure is termed a **tertiary destination**.

With gradual increase in the number of tourists and promotion of that destination, fresh investments are made in necessary tourist infrastructure to attract and facilitate tourists. While these public sector investments are made at the destination, it is a **secondary destination**.
The third phase will begin when a destination has the basic and tourism infrastructure and has graduated to a **primary destination**. Investments will be done at this stage to increase the tourist inflow exponentially.

The increase in tourist inflow will further attract private investment and the cycle will continue till a point where the destination reaches its carrying capacity.

Carrying capacity is a point beyond which any further development would result in negative growth of tourist arrivals. This implies that any further development beyond the carrying capacity of a destination depletes the natural resources and the potential for tourism at that place resulting into it being less attractive for tourists.

At such a point, where a destination reaches its carrying capacity, there will be another similar primary destination ready to substitute the destination in its maturity phase, so that the tourists are retained in Maharashtra and not move towards other states.

The phasing of destinations from tertiary to secondary to primary is explained with the help of ‘Figure 1 – Approach to Destination Development’.
Figure 1: Approach to Destination Development

PRIMARY DESTINATION
Private sector investment in Revenue Generating Tourism Projects

SECONDARY DESTINATION
Tourism department Investments in Tourism Infrastructure Projects

TERTIARY DESTINATION
Public Sector Investment on Basic Infrastructure

DESTINATION A
- Accommodation
- Restaurants
- Other revenue generating tourism projects

DESTINATION B
- Way Side Amenities
- Public Amenities
- Signage
- Tourist Information Centre
- Tour operators

DESTINATION C
- Roads/ Rail/ Airports
- Transportation/ Communication
- Water & Power

TIME
Circuit identification

Most of the tourist destinations in Maharashtra form a part of a larger tourist circuit with other destinations in the vicinity. The destinations will be promoted on the basis of their being a part of a circuit or whether they are stand-alone destinations. Most of the established tourist circuits in Maharashtra are formed by grouping of important destinations in a particular region of Maharashtra like Konkan, Marathwada, Vidarbha and South Maharashtra. Such a grouping essentially encompasses a variety of tourist themes within a single circuit.

For example:

- South Konkan circuit includes beaches of Malvan and Tarkarli, Amboli hill-station, sea forts of Sindhudurg and Vijaydurg and pilgrimage sites.
- Aurangabad circuit comprises of Aurangabad, Paithan, Daulatabad fort, Ajanta caves, Ellora caves and Ghrishneshwar temple.

It is due to this characteristic of tourist circuits of Maharashtra that destinations located around established tourist destinations or circuits will be considered for development on priority.

Destination prototypes

Some model norms have been developed for each category of destinations. These norms provide a guideline for conservation and development of that category of destinations. Such prototyping ensures that tourism is made more meaningful. These prototypes can be replicated at all destinations in that category irrespective of location with some local variation.

While implementing these prototypes, it is assumed that the basic and tourist infrastructure is in place at the location. Prototyping will be done for all destination categories, but implementation of these models would take place on priority only at primary and secondary destinations. Tertiary destinations will be developed on these model norms only after the basic infrastructure is in place.

Besides basic and tourist infrastructure, some general norms will apply at all destinations irrespective of their category. Some of these norms are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1: General Norms at all Destination Categories

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Tourist Information Center at the site to provide the historical, geographical and other relevant information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Trained local guide network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Government approved stalls selling local handicrafts and local cuisine at the premises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ample signboards and directions about tourist attractions, public amenities etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most of these destinations will have accommodation arrangements in the form of hotels, resorts, dormitories, home-stays etc. The accommodation arrangements will be made to suit the budgets of tourists from all economic backgrounds. For example at beach destinations there would be a range of accommodation categories from star resorts, star hotels, beach huts to home stays. Not only accommodation, but the range of activities planned at the destination would also suit different budgets.

The categories for destinations taken up for prototyping are

2. Pilgrimage – Temples, Shrines, Temple towns
3. Adventure- Trekking, Camping, adventure sports
4. Beach Tourism – Water sports, Home-stays
5. Agro-Tourism – Farm visits, Home-stays
6. Eco / Forest Tourism – Wild Life
7. Medical Tourism – Hospitals, Sanatoriums, Ayurvedic treatment facilities

**Heritage destinations**

The theme for this destination prototype is: “*Get Enlightened!*”

Heritage destinations consist of forts, ‘wadas’, historical monuments and World Heritage Sites. The numerous forts and ‘wadas’ are unique to Maharashtra. No other state in the world has so many land, sea and island forts, which have shaped the history of that place. These monuments need to be protected, conserved and showcased and marketed with pride. The history behind these monuments needs to be kept alive through various activities for the tourists.

The following model norms are an indication of how these sites can be developed.

**Table 2: Heritage Destination Model Norms**
1. Conservation and maintenance of heritage monuments as per Model Heritage Regulations issued by Government of India.22

2. Eco-friendly construction of huts and cottages as per Model Heritage Regulations issued by Government of India.23

3. The carrying capacity of the monument or structure will be determined which will limit the number of stall owners, guides and visitors per day.

4. Heritage walkway and trails will be developed.

5. Specially trained guides in the history of the monument to take the visitors on the monument tour.

6. A museum to be established which will showcase the artifacts, cuisine and costumes of the era that the monument represents.

7. The heritage site will be developed to boost history education projects. School, college and educational group tours will be encouraged.

8. Expert talks and story-telling sessions during educational tours highlighting the history of the monument

9. Film screenings and enactment of historical incidents will be conducted periodically.

10. Overnight visitors will be encouraged to participate in activities of the bygone era - sword fighting, horse-riding etc.

Pilgrimage destinations

The theme for this destination prototype is: “Attain Nirvana!”

Maharashtra is a land of saints. Visiting temples and places of worship is part of an annual routine for many worshippers. These destinations are frequented mostly by intra-state populations. Pilgrimage destinations have year-round tourist potential. This presents local employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for locals.

Most of these places are small towns and lack adequate tourist infrastructure. These model norms provide guidelines to improve upon the existing infrastructure and provide employment to locals.

Table 3: Pilgrimage Destination Model Norms

| 1. Conservation and maintenance of temple structure and site premises as per guidelines |
| 2. Adequate provision of home-stay network and ‘dharamshalas’ |


3. Clean and functional public toilets at site or temple town as per Government of India prescribed service level benchmarks\(^{24}\)

4. Ample clean eating establishments around the temple premises

5. Government approved local stall owners to sell hygienic food items and other items associated with worship around temple premises.

6. Crowd management and disaster management strategies and guidelines in place especially during deity-specific special occasions.

7. Adequate water supply and sanitation measures to absorb tourist inflow.

8. Covered area to provide relief from sun and rain around the periphery of temple structure for worshippers to stand in line for ‘darshan’ and perambulations or ‘pradakshina’.

9. Provision of secure and organized counters for removal and safekeeping of footwear outside the temple structure. Employment of locals to manage these counters

10. Provision of shuttle bus service to ply tourists from railway stations/bus stands to temple premises.

**Adventure tourism**

The theme for this destination prototype is: “*Get Energized!*”

Maharashtra is blessed with the Sahyadri mountain ranges nestled in the Western Ghats- which itself is a World Heritage Site. These mountain ranges are home to flora, fauna and are rich in bio-diversity. These ranges provide a fertile ground for trekking, camping and nature walks.

Several trekking groups amateur as well as professional are active in exploring the Sahyadris. They make their own arrangements about transport, food, camping and trekking equipment, waste management and first aid. Adventure tourism will get a massive boost if these facilities are made available at the base camps.

**Table 4: Adventure Destination Model Norms**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Establishment of a central Sahyadri Mountaineering Institute – to conduct trekking camps, safety camps, train trekking guides, demarcate trekking trails, certify fitness tests for trekking enthusiasts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{24}\) Government of India-Ministry of Urban Development: “Handbook of Service Level Benchmarking”
2. Adequate safety norms in place.

3. Local guides to be trained in paramedical skills. Availability of first aid kits, medical center/hospital in proximity.

4. Disaster management units with expertise in search and rescue operations in place.

5. Effective waste management mechanism to preserve the biodiversity

6. Diversion of walkways and paths to protect sensitive biodiversity.

7. Trained lifeguards at water-sports areas.

8. Trained guides to conduct nature trails, camping and trekking.

9. Camping stores at base camp to provide / rent out camping and trekking equipment.

10. Dormitory style and tent style accommodation and basic lodging facilities. Provision of home-stays in villages around the base camp.

11. Clean restaurants and eateries at base camps.

**Agro-tourism**

The theme for this destination prototype is: “Back to basics!”

Agriculture is the backbone of Maharashtra. Agro-tourism is a concept which introduces urban folk to the basics of agriculture and farm life. Tourism planned around this theme has potential to connect urban populations to their roots. Agro-tourism also provides tremendous educational opportunities for urban and even rural school children to participate in basic way of living.

Agro-tourism in Maharashtra is developed and currently functions at Baramati under Agro-Tourism Development Corporation.25

**Table 5: Agro-Tourism Model Norms**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Robust network of home-stays on farms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Exclusive promotion of Maharashtrian cuisine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Clean and hygienic public toilets on farm-stays</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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http://www.agritourism.in/packages.html
4. Guided Crop /Vegetables / Fruits farms visits and tours  
5. Watching domestic animals and to learn how care for cattle  
6. Activities to include feeding domestic animals, cattle, milking the cow and ploughing the field.  
7. U-Pick operations include picking fruit and vegetables.  
8. Agricultural education programs: how to grow sugar cane, grapes, pomegranate, guava, watermelon, tomato and other vegetables.  
9. Visit to Farmers' markets at the village and taluka place.  
10. Organize harvest festivals and ‘jatra’.  
11. Visit to taluka level milk collection centers.  

**Eco-tourism**

The theme for this destination prototype is: “*In the lap of nature!*”

Maharashtra is home to several forests and tiger reserves. Besides Nagpur, there are tiger reserves in Sahyadri, Nagra, Bor and Sindhudurg. Setting up ecological resorts and tourism centers will help to boost the employment opportunities for the locals and also maintain and the resort.

**Table 6: Eco/Forest Tourism Model Norms**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Availability of guides trained in biodiversity to conduct nature trails and camping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Effective sanitation and sewerage system in place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Establishment of core zones, buffer zones and tourism zones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Plying of eco-friendly vehicles in the last one kilometer of the destination to avoid noise and air pollution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Limit the number of visitors, stall owners to preserve the ecological balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Green-star rating for resorts and hotels in the premises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Activities to include bird-watching, hiking, diving, kayaking, participating in cultural events and photography to name a few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Use indigenous, locally produced and ecologically sustainable materials for tourism activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Medical tourism**
The theme for this destination prototype is: “All is well!”

Medical tourism is a growing sector in India. Advantages for medical tourists include reduced costs, the availability of latest medical technologies and a growing compliance on international quality standards, as well as the fact that foreigners are less likely to face a language barrier in India.

There is scope to develop medical tourism in Maharashtra due to the number of specialty hospitals and clinics. The different streams of treatment include setting up special Ayurved and homeopathy based clinics as well.

### Table 7: Medical Tourism Model Norms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. International healthcare accreditation to certify level of quality for healthcare providers and programs, hospitals, primary care centers, medical transport, and ambulatory care services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Establishment of health tourism providers - facilitators and developers of medical tourism, which brings into play a number of issues that do not apply when a patient stays within their own country of origin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Trained liasoning agents between hospital and potential client/patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Medical ethics to be followed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. High quality and comfortable vehicles to transport patients to and fro from hospital and railway station/airport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Basic, yet clean and hygienic accommodation arrangements for care-givers / family / relatives accompanying the patient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Beach destination

The theme for this destination prototype is: “Get soaked in leisure!”

A beach destination is mainly a leisure destination. Tourists from all budget categories frequent beach destinations all year round. There will be different categories of accommodation to suit different budget sizes - from luxury star rated hotel to home-stays.

### Table 8: Beach Destination Model Norms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Provision for water sports and water-park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Trained water sports instructors and lifeguards at the beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Water sports equipment on hire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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4. Theme beaches on the lines of coconut grove, mango orchard or turtle creek

5. Promotion of mangoes during season.


7. Robust network of home-stays on the beach.

8. Star category resorts to cater to the affluent class

9. Provision of tent-stays

**Human resource development**

Tourism is a people-centric activity. The quality of experience the tourist has is highly dependent on the ‘human resource’ element. Tourism falls into the service industry which essentially implies that people engaged in this trade deal with people and cater to their needs. Hence, the people in the tourism industry need to develop skills for dealing with tourists and to develop a knowledge base, which has to be constantly updated of the facilities available to the tourists.

The human resource requirement of Maharashtra tourism will be assessed to know the gaps in terms of human resource, training needs and a plan will be made to fill in those gaps. One way in which this gap-analysis can be done is by looking at the requirements of each destination category, or destination category analysis.

The training to be provided will be relevant to the destination category being addressed. Each category of destinations will be analyzed and assessed individually. Each destination category will require its own human resource training personnel to fit its particular needs. For example:

a) Heritage tourism and pilgrimage tourism guides would need to have good knowledge of history and geography of the destination and knowledge of arts and crafts of that region

b) Adventure, beach, eco-tourism and agro-tourism sites would require nature and biodiversity experts

c) Beach and adventure tourism destinations would require trained lifeguards

This will open up vast opportunities to train and qualify students to take on robust careers in the travel and tourism industry in Maharashtra. It will mean setting up specialized tourism institutes in the state that provide expert training.
Marketing strategy

A good promotion campaign will attract tourists on a sustainable basis only if it is backed by good accessibility to destinations, tourist infrastructure and tourist retaining capability. Before evolving a strategy for promotion of tourism industry in Maharashtra, it is essential to decide the destination prioritization and the target audience for each destination and theme of suggested projects in that destination. It is also important to set marketing objectives for each destination.

The marketing strategy would be based on the following criteria:

1. Destination prioritization based on
   - Circuit identification
   - Time of implementation
   - Targeted investment inflow
2. Target customer’s
   - Location (foreign/inter-state/local/weekend)
   - Income group
   - Purpose of travel (pilgrimage/ leisure/ business/special Interest/nature)

Information access to tourists

Access to information on tourism products in Maharashtra would be the first step to increase tourist numbers. As seen from the criteria in marketing strategy, potential tourists can be targeted based on their location, income group and purpose of travel.

There are several avenues for information access on tourism. All avenues should be considered to reach potential tourists. The marketing plan will dictate how each avenue would be leveraged to reach target customers.

- Website: Most foreign tourists rely heavily on websites to plan journeys. Maharashtra tourism can set up a robust website which can function as a one-stop information center for all travel requirements in Maharashtra.
- Road shows and exhibitions at different locations
- Tourist information kiosks at railway stations, airports and bus stands
- Newspaper articles
- Tie-ups with private tour operators
- Publishing a Maharashtra travel guide every year

Policy direction

In order to implement this action plan, policy level changes will be due.
Tourism Task Force

A Tourism Task Force at the State Government level will frame the policy based on the vision provided.

This task force will have bring together and guide the different implementing agencies working in the tourism sector on one common platform. All these agencies - MTDC, MSRDC, MSRTC, PWD, the Railways, the Forest Department, the ASI and the different Municipal Corporations will need to interact and have a common purpose while carrying out their agendas on Maharashtra tourism under a single stewardship of this Task Force.

This task force will have sub task forces to carry out the action plan. These may look like this:

- Destination Development Task Force
- Investment Planning Task Force and private sector participation
- Human Resource Task Force among other things will be responsible for local entrepreneurship development and travel and tour operator coordination.
- Marketing Strategy Task Force

Role of MTDC as a regulator

Since tourism is a profit-making activity, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) needs to be a facilitator rather than a property developer. Privatization can ensure that the business becomes a viable prospect. MTDC can lay down guidelines for operations of private players. MTDC needs to facilitate rather than compete with private players.

For example-the guidelines should ensure that the tourism industry emphasizes on culture conservation, generating local employment and boosting local economy. It can specify criteria for gradation of tourist offerings in order to cater to all classes of tourists. This can ensure that the destination/circuit becomes accessible to all classes.

Establishing a State Trust

As a state, we should be proud of our varied heritage and culture. The onus lies with us- the citizens and the local governing body to conserve, maintain and promote the local sites. As tourism is mentioned in the State list, Maharashtra needs to be proactive in the conservation and promotion of its heritage icons.

A State Trust established along the lines of The National Trust, UK\textsuperscript{28} will be a charitable organization that will identify places of importance to the state and aim to protect them through conservation, redevelopment and beautification. These places then will be open for all. The State Trust will care for places of historic interest or natural beauty and promote the long-term care of these places for the benefit of the citizens of the state.

\textsuperscript{28} http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/what-we-do/
The State Trust will care for the historic houses, gardens, coastline, forests, beaches, farmland, plants, nature reserves and villages. The repairs and maintenance of these sites and monuments would be sped up. Dependence on the Centre for funds will be reduced. Marketing and promotion of GI items will happen proactively.

This Trust will have a set of guidelines to help decide which acquisitions to consider for conservation such as places of local importance outstanding for its natural beauty or natural or historic interest; properties under threat from deterioration, demolition, alteration or development that would be harmful to its character or environment or properties of state importance whose distinctiveness transcends local importance. An integrated approach to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage while maintaining these properties and places will be taken.

Distinction between the State Trust and the ASI will be that the State Trust will be funded through crowd sourcing or crowd-funding. An appeal will be made to the people of Maharashtra to contribute towards the rejuvenation and renovation of these places, spaces and properties. Contribution can be in any form such as donations, donating time, donating skills and efforts to help maintain the properties and spaces. Once the place or property is renovated, it will be open for all citizens and tourists.

**Guiding Principles to Develop Tourism**

In realizing our objective to put Maharashtra on the world tourist map and provide employment to locals, there are certain principles that we will follow. We want to boost the economy of Maharashtra through tourism. In doing so, we will follow some guiding principles that will help to keep the implementation of vision on track.

**Promote meaningful tourism to conserve heritage**

Tourism in Maharashtra will be made meaningful. It will enrich the mind and the visitor will go back completely satisfied. We can make tourism in Maharashtra meaningful by

- Maintaining complete **factual information** about the destination.
- Emphasizing the **historical importance** of the tourist attraction. Erect signboards, train accompanying guides about the history of the place to impart knowledgeable information.
- Emphasizing the **geographical importance** of the tourist attraction – this must be done at places where Maharashtra has Geographical Indications. Showcase the produce or the handicraft. For example, a trip to Kolhapur would be incomplete without buying the ‘Kolhapuri Chappal’.
- **Display the local arts**, crafts, music, dances, paintings, sculptures if any.
- Promote the **local cuisine** through local food festivals, stalls near the destinations and home-stays.
- Showcase the lifestyle of the locals, their daily routine, local games, past-times,
beliefs, occupations through home-stays. Create ‘walk-through-history’ trails like the one at Ganapatipule known as Prachin Konkan.\(^{29}\) (Refer to “Best practices in Maharashtra”)  
• Collect and impart trivia, legends, stories and little-known facts about the destination or tourist spot to the visitor.  
• Conduct house tours of nationally and internationally famous locals. Example – Mahatma Phule ‘wada’ at Pune.

Thus,

• The experience of pure leisure travelers will be enhanced.  
• Repeat travelers will have a reason to come back for more.  
• The adventurous can explore the trails and roads on their own based on the information provided.  
• Those tourists who generally prefer to go with the flow will get a complete destination experience.

**Care of environment and carrying capacity**

Criteria and indicators of sustainable tourism for hotels, tour operators and rural tourism/ home-stays will be finalized. Development guidelines will be drafted to ensure no haphazard development occurs. Once a destination reaches its carrying capacity, it will be systematically phased out and a parallel destination shall take its place. At such a point, where a destination reaches its carrying capacity, there will be another similar primary destination ready to substitute the destination in its maturity phase, so that the tourists are retained in Maharashtra and not move towards other states.

To achieve a tradeoff between the negative and positive impacts of tourism on environment and heritage monuments, each project will be evaluated on area specific criteria rather than having a blanket plan for the entire state.

**Promote local entrepreneurship**

Local people should be at the core of all development – protecting land, property, livelihood, and culture. There should be a pride in “Being Marathi”. Any tourism activity carried out in Maharashtra should first and foremost boost the local economy. At any tourist destination/circuit, the stakeholders – guides, local businesses, and tour service providers should be Marathi.

Tourism in Maharashtra has a huge potential to boost entrepreneurship. It will be the goal of tourism to make the local stakeholders self-sufficient through different avenues such as

• Training the local people to be tour operators, guides and interpreters.

\(^{29}\)http://www.prachinkokan.com/
• Promotion of authentic Maharashtrian cuisine through locally sourced ingredients.
• Having a robust network of home-stays.
• Exhibiting and selling the local handicrafts.
• Training the farmers to organize village-tourism.
• Peripheral businesses that feed into tourism should be owned by local Marathi citizens

One such model is already functioning at Kelichapada tribal area at Jawhar taluka in Thane district at the Kalmandavi waterfall.30 (Refer to Best practices in Maharashtra)

Conclusion

Tourism development is a continuous process and Maharashtra has a long way to go if it needs to be showcased to the world.

Basic policy level changes will be made in order to begin the process for change. The vision will be crafted with creativity and free thinking. It will take into consideration our heritage and the local environment at grass-root level.

Maharashtra tourism industry needs to provide scope for local entrepreneurship. This will provide a dynamic environment for the local communities to grow and become one of the powerful tools of economic growth. Only when we reflect the aspirations of the local communities in the vision, will the motivation for entrepreneurship come from within.

We will strive to inculcate the culture of tourism for our citizens because we believe that tourism has the potential to change the character of Maharashtra. With this faith, we present this blueprint.

Best practices in Maharashtra

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30http://www.baif.org.in/pdf/Kelichapada_Tourism_Centre.pdf
**Walk through History trail**

**Prachin Konkan**

Prachin Konkan is a life size museum set in a three-acre campus in Ganapatipule depicting life as it was in yester years in Konkan.

A guided tour in the museum takes one through various aspects of life in Konkan in the past. The museum elucidates the social, economic, cultural and religious background of Konkan and puts on display the grandeur of the history of Konkan region. With sculptures of the Maratha hero 'Shivaji Maharaj' depicting historical moments, and models of the amazing sea forts in the Konkan region, the museum brings the ingenuity of the Konkan people to fore.

Sawantwadi in Konkan is famous for the wood artisans and their handicrafts in wood. Prachin Konkan has a counter for exhibiting the wooden handicrafts, the first of its kind in Ganapatipule, where tourists can purchase memorabilia and souvenirs.

It is believed that there are trees assigned to each astrological sun sign. In Prachin Konkan there is a 'Nakshatra Baug' - a garden of trees for each zodiac sign.

Set in a green locale the museum is also a paradise for bird watchers. The trees in the museum are home to many species of birds of the region. The museum also attempts to introduce the birds and fish found in this region by way of a small exhibition.
Community led tourism generates employment

Village Kelichapada

Kelichapada is the typical tribal village located at a distance of 5 km from Jawhar town in district Thane of Maharashtra state. This part of the Western Ghats has a pleasant climate, mountains, valleys, forests and a unique tribal culture. The place is an abode of Warli, Kukana and Kolcha tribes. The entire tourism activity is hosted by the local tribal communities. The Kalmandavi Paryatan Seva Samiti is a village level representative body of all tourism service providers of village Kelichapada.

This activity is part of overall efforts of BAIF-MITTRA to promote the livelihood support activities in tribal villages for the benefit of tribal communities. BAIF –MITTRA has helped the communities by facilitating the process of formation of groups of various service providers and building their capacities and skills to offer “good quality” “paid services” to tourists and visitors

The main Attractions and Activities offered to the tourists include:

1. Home Stay with Tribals( warlis, kuknas) with all basic amenities at Kelichapada
2. Tribal Art and Craft demonstration –traditional craft papier-mâché –
3. Tribal Art (Dances performance by groups : - Tarpa, Dhol, Kathkar & Dakbhakti)
4. Traditional Cuisine –served by local women’s group
5. Visit to Kalmandavi waterfall and adventure activities
6. Entertainment includes local games, bullock cart ride and participating in local agricultural operations
7. Nature trails to get a glimpse of tribal life and nature in village
8. Exposure visit and information on rural development activities of BAIF- MITTRA through campus tour and field activities
Bibliography

2. Government of India-Department of Culture, Ministry of Tourism and Culture: “National Tourism Policy 2002”
4. Government of India-Ministry of Tourism and Culture: “Kerala’s Approach to Tourism Development –A Case Study”
Case Studies

1. "Nation Branding: a case study of Singapore" studies the strategy of tourism branding for Singapore as it examines the nation branding concept.

Maharashtra would like to go from being just another tourist destination to being "Destination Maharashtra" by establishing its own identity as separate from India. This case study will help to understand the concept of branding of a nation and decide how to apply it for Maharashtra.

2. "Local Economic Benefits of Ecotourism: a case on Parambikulam tiger reserve in Kerala, India" examines the local economic development of tribal communities in forest areas.

Maharashtra tourism will be promoting local entrepreneurship and employment. This case study is an ideal example of how to achieve both within the parameters of ecotourism.
Local Economic Benefits of Ecotourism: A Case Study on Parambikulam Tiger Reserve in Kerala, India

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**JAMES MANALEL, Professor, School of Management Studies, Cochin University of Science and Technology, Kerala, India

ABSTRACT
Ecotourism is increasingly recognized as a community development tool with significant economic contribution. This paper examines local economic development of destination communities especially the tribals in forest regions through a case study of Parambikulam Tiger Reserve in Kerala, India. The study explores the benefits (economic & non economic) enjoyed by local community members through active participation of ecotourism programmes. It also reveals that community intervention in ecotourism has helped to reduce their excessive dependence on forest resources for their livelihood. Moreover the Park authorities and communities have made strong foundation for ensuring other dimensions of sustainability like conservation of natural and cultural resources for an enhanced well being.

KEYWORDS: Parambikulam, Economic sustainability, Livelihood

INTRODUCTION
Ecotourism today has emerged as an important segment of tourism industry. It is considered as a distinct form of tourism development by replacing the conventional 'mass tourism', having strong moorings in sustainable, equitable, and community based efforts for improving the living standards of local, host communities living on the fringes of natural settings. Studies show that nature tourism is one of the largest growing segments of tourism where ecotourism occupies a prominent position with 20-34 percent growth per year since 1990 (TIES 2006). Ecotourism accounts for a large share of some countries’ gross domestic product particularly in developing countries, and contributes to the livelihoods of large segments of the population. Ecotourism is a reflection ecologically sustainable tourism seeking to contribute to the conservation and management of environmentally and culturally fragile areas by strengthening the management capability of all stakeholders involved. It also provides opportunities to enhance environmental management and reduce damage to the environment (Kangas et al., 1995). In fact, ecotourism contributes to sustainability of all dimensions i.e. socio-cultural, economic, political and environmental, fixing criteria for the purposes of evaluation and monitoring of project success (Christ et al., 2003). Community based participative management of resources maximizes the benefit to the needy who sacrifice their resource for tourism development. In this case the local people © South Asian Journal of Tourism and Heritage
become the focal point of resource appropriation and benefit sharing. This is achieved through the establishment and operationalisation of committees, partnerships, and other resource sharing mechanism that provide local inputs to the public, like protected area managers, conservation groups etc. Such democratization of development interference should be started from the grass root level. In ecotourism, often identified as locally initiated planning and management, the key factor for its success is this democratization process (Ross & Wall 1999).

As noticed in the empirical evidences, most of the tourism resources, particularly nature bound is located in remote and virgin settings where the indigenous communities reside. So tourism should be a source for their livelihood also. In certain regions it is considered as one of the prime sources for indigenous mountain communities to enjoy their rightful share in the exploitation of their exclusive resources. Studies show that 15-20% of the tourism industry or around US$ 70-90 billion per year is accounted from mountain resources. Contribution to tourism is substantial in remote areas (Ritchie 1998) as natural features of these exquisite regions create biodiversity hotspots, which are sought after for health, wellness, contemplation and meditation. The cultural values of these remote areas which are inherent to the aboriginal communities are innumerable and are manifested in the form of costume, architecture, arts, festivals and other community engagements (Williams et al., 2001).

Economic sustainability is a core aspect of all development initiatives. Ecotourism ultimately seeks to contribute to the wellbeing of the community both directly and indirectly. This is achieved not necessarily by altering the existing/ traditional practices of livelihood like farming, fishing, handlooms etc., but more often by sustaining such activities. If we consider all the facets of travel as an ecotourist we can see that it is more than a journey for rest, relaxation, and recreation. The other benefits of community based ecotourism particularly in rural areas providing income to communities, discouraging migration to urban areas, and maintaining biodiversity etc., are widely acclaimed. It is also observed that ecotourism touts on the non-exploitation of local peoples’ resources. For instance, East Africa has had significant ecotourism economies for many years. Another notable example is Kenya and its national parks which are regarded as the world’s foremost ecotourism destinations, meet the livelihood aspirations of good number of its local people (Edgar Allan Amador 2004). Appreciation for and desire to learn about local ecosystems and peoples is very much part and parcel of ecotourism. Ecotourism is also ideally characterized as small scale economic activity run by locals, and, therefore, has come to be regarded by many as a development strategy that has the dual advantage of benefiting the local economy while simultaneously protecting the local natural and cultural capital (World Ecotourism Summit Final Report 2002). Tourism development and conservation should meet at a point which will not compromise each other through proper planning by involving the local communities, government and the private players. Hence an integrated framework of nature conservation and tourism development, which will combine the destination sustainability, and encourages the local community to support the conservation and livelihood programmes needs to be framed. Ecotourism can support protected areas in conservation and livelihood requirements of destination communities if managed in a manner in which direct economic benefits will accrue to local communities (Manalel & Vinodan 2009).
METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this paper is to make an investigation into the economic sustainability of the destination communities through the organization and marketing of ecotourism products in the context of Parambikulam Tiger Reserve (PTR) located in Kerala, the southernmost state of the Indian subcontinent. The study had the following hypothesis: (a) The local communities at the reserve area have significantly benefited out of ecotourism operations particularly in gaining uninterrupted employment, (b) ecotourism project helped them to reduce the excessive dependency on forest for livelihood and (c) cumulative improvement through economic intervention has helped to improve the environmental and social dimensions of sustainability in PTR. The study is based on primary as well as secondary data. Primary data were obtained for the investigation through direct personal interviews (semi structured) with the officials of the Parambikulam Tiger Reserve (PTR) and through focused group discussions with the Eco Development Committee (EDC) members who are the backbone of the ecotourism programme at PTR. Telephonic interviews were also made before finalising the study. The reports of PTR and various articles on ecotourism and other newspaper reports and information from websites were also entertained for this purpose. The study was conducted during the period from April 2009 to February 2010. The main objective of this study as already pointed out was to highlight the economic sustainability of the destination through ecotourism programmes. Other dimensions of sustainability are also briefly explained because sustainability is always destination specific and interlinked.

PROFILE OF THE AREA

Parambikulam Tiger Reserve (PTR) is the second and most recently (on 17th February 2010) declared tiger reserve in central Kerala, the southernmost provincial state of India. PTR is situated in Palakkad district of Kerala state. Geographically it is located at Latitude 10°20 N and Longitude 76°35 E.

Figure 1: Parambikulam Tiger Reserve

PTR, a well-managed Protected Area (PA) in the country is the home of abundant herbivore population which in turn supports a substantial population of predators like tigers.
and leopards. Records shows that there are variety of Mammals (39), Amphibians (16), Birds (268), Reptiles (61), Fish (47), Insects (1049), and Butterflies (124) in the reserve. The sanctuary lies between the Anamalai hills and Nelliampathy hills of Tamil Nadu and Kerala states respectively. There are seven major valleys and three major river systems in and around the reserve. Apart from the natural rivers and streams, the PTR possesses three man-made reservoirs namely Parambikulam, Thunacadavu and Peruvavipallam. Geologically this PA is famous for the Hornblende biotitegnesis and charnockites.

**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

PTR has adopted different management strategies for resource management, regulated or judicial use of natural resources and preservation of endemic flora and fauna of the region. The livelihood of the local community members especially tribal and other landless communities are also the concern of the reserve authorities. In order to meet their needs all conservation and management programmes are arranged in such a way, which will bring economic benefit to all such communities. There are two important scientific conservation and management programmes envisaged to meet the sustainability of the protected area:

- **Zonation:**

  The PTR has been divided into three major zones for its effective management viz., core zone, buffer zone, and tourism zone. These zones are made based on the parameters such as biodiversity indices, improvement in the profile of vegetation and ease of management.

  **Core Zone** is meant to preserve it as undisturbed natural habitat, which ensures total protection against all forms of biotic interferences. The scientific studies and research activities with proper sanction and without destructive sampling techniques are permitted. Limited activities with close monitoring of park authorities are also permitted in this zone.

  **Buffer Zone** meant for improving the habitat with rigid protection and for restoring naturalness, supports better floral and faunal diversity. This area is meant for upgradation into core zone after achieving the desired level of diversity. The area is planned for natural regeneration status in the degraded natural moist-deciduous and dry-deciduous forests by augmentation. Meeting of Fuel wood requirements of local tribal population and collection of small quantities of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) for sustaining the tribal hamlets are also entertained.

  **Tourism Zone** is to provide educative experience regarding nature and wildlife conservation to the discerning tourists. Different ecotourism activities are organized (see statement given below) in this zone to provide livelihood opportunities to the dependent tribal communities.

**Eco Development Programme:**

Eco-development is basically promotion of long-term sustainable use of resources while caring for biological and cultural diversity. The Eco development Committee's (EDC) are working as vehicles for ecotourism and eco regeneration programmes under the Forest Development Agency (FDA). They Plan and promote alternative income generation activities, which are economically viable and ecologically sustainable, for the community members by imparting skills and awareness programmes for them. They also establish a peaceful and successful man and wildlife coexistence. Provision for amenities and improvements in existing land use pattern are made on an urgent basis under this scheme.
Formation of community development framework such as SHG for employment and savings among local community members are also ensured.

**ECOTOURISM PROGRAMMES**

Ecotourism operations which were started in PTR in the year 2006 offer a unique ecotourism opportunity to the visitors. These programmes envisaged at PTR are aimed to fulfill following objectives:

- Ensure the maximum participation of local tribal communities in eco-tourism as guides and interpreters and other possible means.
- Provide alternative source of livelihood to majority of tribal families.
- Study the carrying capacity of the sanctuary in terms of tourism and to device appropriate strategies.
- Maintain and optimally utilize the existing tourist facilities and to create additional eco-friendly infrastructure to meet future demands.
- Provide educative and enjoyable experience to visitors.
- Spread the message of nature and wildlife conservation to the masses.

PTR is one of the emerging ecotourism destinations in the country with a bundle of attractive product profiles. Most of these packages are endemic to Parambikulam like eco meditation, elephant song trial, forest tram way trekking, full moon census etc., which are all organised by local tribal communities and operated through nine EDCs (Table 1) of the Forest Development Agency (FDA), Parambikulam. The FDA executive body headed by its CEO is looking after all ecotourism activities. The uniqueness of PTR attracts thousands of visitors not only for rest, relaxation and hard core ecotourism activities but also for education and research activities. The Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology Centre and Salim Ali Gallery are repositories of in-depth knowledge particularly for studies on endemism of Western Ghats.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Trekking</th>
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<th>Day Package</th>
<th>Nature Education</th>
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<td>Machan World</td>
<td>Veetikkunu Island Nest</td>
<td>Kannimara Safari</td>
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<td>Peep through Watch Tower</td>
<td>Eco meditation</td>
<td>Tribal Symphony</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karianshola Trail</td>
<td>Thelilikkal Nights</td>
<td>Dolmen Trial</td>
<td>Parambi Cruise</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elephant Song Trail</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolmen Trail</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: From the records of PTR.
TRIBAL COMMUNITY & ECOTOURISM

Tourism and indigenous people are one of the widely discussed topics on different issues like the exclusion of indigenous people from destination development, loss of cultural identity and so on. It has been argued that indigenous people and ecotourist both value the resource, as they are seen in relatively virgin areas, which gives opportunities for studying admiring and enjoying the nature and culture. As an enterprising effort ecotourism can establish a sustainable relationship for the improvement of the welfare of such communities in various ways through participation, resource sharing frameworks, development of livelihood opportunities, conservation of resources, both cultural as well as natural (Hinch, 2001). As Fennel (2003) pointed out, for a successful tourism development, the aboriginal people must be allowed to take control despite all ill elements working against their intervention in mainstream developmental process.

In this context PTR is not only an ecotourism spot which offers multiple products but also the home of four different indigenous communities viz., the Kadar, Malasar, Mudvar and Malamalasar, and as such their active intervention deserves great emphasis. Linguistically these communities are classified as Dravidian (www.parambikulam.org). These four ethnic groups are settled in six colonies (Table 2). The tribes inhabiting this sanctuary are known for their medicinal practices since time immemorial. This practice has so far remained secretive and guarded within the family circle. It is also noticed that though this ethno-botanical knowledge has been passed on from generation to generation, much of it has been forgotten due to non-practice. Owing to these reasons, documentation has also become a tough task, though initiatives are underway to compile and document the information offered by the traditional medical practitioners and the elders in these tribal settlements.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK

It is recognized that community development is based on the locally initiated, through a location or site specific approach to find alternative solution for the issues they face by using the synergy existing between community members and the community resources. As Bujold (cited in Fennel, 2003) defined community participation is a process by which efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve economic, social and cultural conditions of communities.

The present study has shown that the project initiated at the destination under study has met the various dimensional requirements of ecotourism like nature based product, minimum impact management, and environmental education, contribution to conservation and contribution to community both directly as well as indirectly. As mentioned ecotourism programmes are operationalised through Eco development Committees (EDC). EDCs which are created for planning destination operations in association with forest and wildlife department through FDAs and they also undertake the maintenance and management of the various ecotourism products. The necessity of having separate ecotourism committees is to ensure that all matters related to the development of tourism are given deserving interference of the local community in their resource utilization. Following are the roles mainly played by these EDCs:

- Fixation of priorities in tourism development of the region and give direction in this regard
- Management of ecotourism destination based on sustainability principles
- Establishing a fair and equitable benefit sharing mechanism
- Adhering and endorsing all rules and regulations for sustainability at the destinations
- Ensuring a participative management in contrast to the conventional top-down approach of development
- Setting a platform for consultation with other stakeholders
- Realizing the possibilities of coordinating with industry as well as government departments.

In PTR group of local community members are mobilized from different tribal settlements in and around the reserve. These communities traditionally depended on the forest for their livelihood. They extracted fuel wood and other materials from the forest as and when they wished. They also mobilized Minor Forest Produce (MFP) from the forest and sold in the nearby market. Implementation of ecotourism projects at Protected Area mobilized their social synergy for the common good and made them to adopt alternative sources of income by participating in these programmes. The community welcomed these projects and is actively participating in the ecotourism programmes through their membership in all the EDCs. At present 503 members (Table 2) are participating the ecotourism operations in the six different settlements. For the successful conduct of ecotourism operations nine EDCs were formed till February 2010.

**Figure 2 : Settlement based community participation in ecotourism**

![Bar chart showing participation by individuals and EDC members in different settlements](image)

Source: From the records of PTR.

All EDC members are equipped in almost all ecotourism and allied activities. They do engage on rotation basis or on mutual understanding in the various activities. However, as education interpretation is a vital component of ecotourism activities it needs specially trained people to showcase the natural and cultural endemism of the destination. In PTR a special group of EDC, called *naturalist EDC*, was formed exclusively for the specific ecotourism operations like nature interpretation, bird watching etc.

While examining the composition of EDC members (Figure 3) we can see that 88 percent (i.e. out of 503 EDC members 444) are tribal category. The remaining 12 percent are from Parambikulam Aliyar Project (PAP) colony which consists of the displaced community due to
the Parambikulam Aliyar Project, a hydel power project under the Government of Kerala. These displaced communities also deserve to be assisted since all of them belong to Below Poverty Line (BPL) category of the Government of Kerala.

**Figure 3: Tribal & Non-tribal participation in ecotourism**

![Pie chart showing 12% tribal and 88% non-tribal participation in ecotourism]

Source: Computed from the records of PTR

**LOCAL ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES**

The need for individual benefits to each of the different stakeholders of ecotourism destinations such as tour operators, conservationist or protectors, destination or park managers and local communities can never be overstated. Ecotourism according to Steele (1995) is the tool for both intra and inter regional upliftment through direct, indirect and induced benefits. It is also considered as an alternative livelihood source to the destination communities who are normally dependent on the subsidized goods and services offered by the government which unfortunately are disappearing due to the free market polices of developing and transforming nations.

One of the major criticisms against tourism particularly ecotourism is the leakage of revenue from the underdeveloped destination to the tour operators of developed nations. This is very much true in the case of ecotourism destinations in developing countries. Studies show that there are two major types of leakages. Firstly, cross border leakages where revenue earned by the tour operator outside the country by showcasing the virginity of unexplored area within a developing country is remitted out of the country. According to Lepp (2002) an estimated 55% to 85% of tourism revenues are lost in leakage before it reaches the destinations, particularly by meeting the travel expenses and classified or graded accommodation outside the vicinity of the destination. Secondly, intra regional leakage, which occurs within the country, or state, where the operators are from the outside of the destination and the destination communities are not part of such tour planning. In intra regional leakages tour operators are located in the capital city of a state or metros where destination communities have least access.

As mentioned earlier, it is impossible get rid of all leakages of ecotourism in the context of free market regime. So an appropriate regional specific alternative arrangement is the need of the hour. A locally sustaining economic (livelihood) means are the *sine qua non* for the existence of the underprivileged communities. Such initiatives should not compromise the
needs of future generation to come. Hence, intervention which promotes conservation of natural resources through economic incentives can fill up the gap due to the declined or disincentives in traditional forest dwelling operations like collection of non timber forest produce or minor forest produce etc., which are the bread and butter of aboriginals and marginalized sections of the society. PTR gives such site-specific local answer to a global question where the destination communities are the key players in maintaining and managing locally available resources based on sustainability parameters. Emphasis is being given to livelihood improvements, conservation of natural and cultural resources through various means and at the same time reduce the dependency on traditional forest based, unsustainable resource consumption. Economic sustainability basically is a measure of the economic contribution to the local community as far as the site specific studies are concerned measured on the basis of number of employment created during a particular year, how many entrepreneurial operations are initiated and the indirect socio economic benefit derived by the community. The tourist flow to the PTR is showing that there is an upward trend every year (Table 3) with an average 12 percent increase, giving a substantial boosting to the revenue generation. While analyzing the revenue generated by PTR through ecotourism activities it is found that the multiple product profile of the destination could attract a good number of tourists and generated substantial amount as earnings through entrance fees, and fees for various products and services.

**Figure 4 : Tourist Arrivals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24609</td>
<td>27628</td>
<td>30223</td>
<td>38514</td>
<td>40280</td>
<td>45009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source : From the records of PTR

**EMPLOYMENT PORTFOLIO**

As discussed employment opportunities offered by a site specific development programme is one of the most important yardsticks for the assessment of economic sustainability. In PTR while taking stock of employment we can divide available options, based on the involvement of EDC members as services providers and their intervention in enterprise creation for producing and selling eco friendly and other destination specific products, into two categories, viz., ecotourism services and ecotourism enterprises.
• **Ecotourism Service**

Community based quality ecotourism services are one of the deciding factor of destination sustainability. Well-equipped (knowledge and skill) community members can manage the available resources very effectively by selling their services to the tourists. PTR has organized a number of such activities to community members to involve them in the most efficient manner in the following areas:

- **Guiding & Interpretation:** For guiding and interpretation the PTR has trained 90 EDC members, out of whom 75 are from the naturalist EDC. Bird watching and wildlife interpretation are some of the much sought after hard core ecotourism products of PTR, which gives ample scope for regular employment to the local community members.

- **Sightseeing Programme:** Sightseeing is one of the major components of revenue generating source of ecotourism destination. The programme is mainly catering to the soft ecotourist who are not inclined to scientifically approach the destination for serious learning or interpretation. They club light entertainment for rest and relaxation while touring. Normally they are general tourists who adhere to the rules and regulations of the destinations, visit the parks and enjoy the peripheral products of ecotourism. In PTR there are five safari vehicles with a capacity for 13 members each and these are arranged to take the visitors inside the reserve. The local people who accompany the group escort and brief them.

- **Destination Cleaning:** Clean and hygienic environment will boost the destination image and this is normally operationalised by infusing the concept of 3Rs-- Reuse Reduces and Recycle. The various stakeholders of the destinations including the visitors are exhorted to adhere to environment friendly practices through oral and written media throughout the destination. Despite these efforts, it is necessary for EDC members to divide the regions into sectors for regular cleaning operations, normally on rotation basis or to be done by those not immediately required for hardcore tourism operations. The collected waste is then processed/ recycled.

- **Forest Watcher:** Protection of forest resources from outside intervention is inevitable for destination sustainability. Sons of the soil are the best protector of their resources. The strategy of social fencing (Jattan and Pratima 2001) which has been conceived in the reserve area has helped to restrict illegal and other unwanted interventions by deploying the EDC members. PTR has trained 100 EDC members and deputed them at various locations as forest watchers. They are entitled to avail a salary of Rs.162 plus Rs.30 as variable dearness allowance. It is pertinent to note that the amount paid to the forest watchers are not financed from the fund raised from ecotourism operations, but rather it comes from the amount earmarked for forest protection. During our discussions it was revealed that the active involvement of community members in protecting the forest area through their direct intervention paved the way for substantial reduction of antisocial activities like poaching and felling of faunal and floral varieties of the project area. It was also noticed that legal offences were drastically reduced during the last four years and in the year 2009 only one such incident was registered.
• **Ecotourism Enterprises**

Ecotourism enterprises are owned and managed by the community, and they take care of their resources according to the market situations and sustainability principles like conservation, education and awareness programmes about the special features of the destination while showcasing the product’s uniqueness. The study shows that PTR is endowed with a variety of options to engage their community members.

- **Honey Processing:** Tangible products also play an important role in adding value to the destination image. Minor forest produce like honey is one of such tangible products available in the pristine environment of nature reserve offering livelihood provision to the community members. The EDC members collect honey and process it in a safe and hygiene environment and sell it to the nearby market. Approximately 54 (50 for collection & 4 for processing) EDC members are engaged in this process at PTR.

- **Paper Carry Bag Production:** All ecotourism destinations of Kerala are declared as plastic or litter free zones. In order to ensure this they normally undertake awareness programmes among all destination stakeholders and also source alternatives to induce the local people as well as the tourists to use environment friendly carry bags. EDC members (4 of them) mobilized materials through the FDA and produce carry bags to maintain the destination pollution free.

- **Bamboo Handicraft Production:** Mountain economies have unique features in its product varieties and mode of operation. Bamboo related products are one of the traditional occupations of aboriginals in India. Diversification in traditional operations especially in making souvenirs and handicrafts has enabled them to meet the changing tastes and preferences of customers. Tourist destinations can attract good number customers for such products. PTR offers an array of such products produced by EDC members. A six members group were found to do the collection and processing of bamboo.

- **Organic Farming:** One of the model operations of PTR is the engagement of community members in organic farming. Poopara EDC has been organized to produce organic products, which are available in and around the PTR. The members do the collection of forest products especially spices and produce various value added products. This is one of the major ventures where around 50 EDC members were engaged and it was found to be having substantial chance for expansion. Recently the PTR has availed quality control certification for these products.

- **Balm Production:** Enterprising nature, culture and heritage as livelihood option are gaining popularity particularly in tourist destinations. Balm production is one such activity where the blend of nature endemism and the cultural aroma of indigenous medicinal practices exist. Widely acclaimed Parambikulam medicines for various ailments are well protected and practiced in a wider scale under ecotourism programmes. In this medicine unit 120 traditional medicinal practitioners are engaged.

- **Parambikulam Dhara Project:** An innovative programme initiated by PTR to make destination more clean and green. The project is to provide safe and pure drinking water to the visitors for a nominal amount of Rs.5. The EDC members collect water from the reservoir nearby, purify and bottle it. It helps to avoid water bottles carried by visitors,
which is one of the biggest polluting subset in almost all destinations. Five members of the EDC are engaged in the collection, purification and sale of water.

- **Sales Outlet:** All the eco products produced by EDC members are being sold in the Eco shop run by FDA Parambikulam. There are three eco-shops operated by EDC members under FDA, two are located at Parambikulam and one at Malampuzha. Apart from this fixed selling points, the community members actively participate in all the forest related exhibitions throughout the state. All products are priced moderately by FDA, the pricing strategy being made in consultation with the EDC members.

- **Tailoring Unit:** As a part of the expansion of economic opportunities of tribal people, PTR authorities identified alternative sources of subsistence beyond the boundary of ecotourism or traditional jobs. They identified mainstream jobs like tailoring for engaging women who are not able to get hard core destination jobs. It was pointed out by the officials at PTR that they have already trained five EDC members for this job. It was also noted that such initiatives have tried to reduce the community member’s dependence on the forests.

The practice of assessing the site-specific example for measuring its economic contributions basically focuses its employment contribution directly and indirectly to the locality. Before proceeding to the employment contribution and its related impacts on the destination it is imperative to have a glance on the revenue generated during these days (Table 3). As mentioned earlier, ever since the ecotourism programme was initiated in the year 2006, there has been substantial increase in the flow of tourists to PTR. This has also been accompanied by a substantial increase in income as well. Official sources pointed out that introduction of various products and well-planned organization of programmes is responsible for this.

*Figure: 5 Revenue Generated during 2004-09*

*Source:* From the records of PTR

**EMPLOYMENT GENERATED**

Uniqueness and vividness in resource and its skillful appropriation paved the way for the development of various ecotourism products which has given numerous options for employment for community members at Parambikulam. This differentiation and enhancement was able to cater the local economic requirement to a certain extent particularly to meet the basic requirements of the people. In the present study we can see
that existing ecotourism operations could give employment to all the (six) tribal settlements of the region and other deserving communities like the PAP colony.

While discussing with officials and later on with community members it was noticed that they were unanimous in agreeing to the fact that ecotourism has helped them in different ways. To the officials the PTR project has helped to better manage the destination with local support by reducing the excessive dependence on forest materials for livelihood by linking economic incentive to the conservation and tourism operations. The community members felt that since the inception of the ecotourism programme they were getting different options for jobs, even though its magnitude and availability may be varying due to the seasonality and other local factors. Even then out of 442 tribal who are the members of the EDCs 117 i.e. 26.4 percent of local community members are getting regular jobs. If we consider the seasonality of tourism and due to the problems of their own like physical inability or injury or other ailments the remaining member may not be in a position to get jobs regularly. This needs to be investigated in detail. By and large, based on all these considerations it is estimated that an average of 37 percent of the tribal people are engaged in income generating activities. The official record says an average of 264 effective working days in a year since 2006, the ecotourism programme could provide to its members. As discussed earlier, ecotourism jobs are created through ecotourism services as well as enterprise development. In both cases waged employment is offered to the community members. During consultation it was informed that depending up on the participation and nature of job a monthly minimum wages of Rs.2500 and a maximum of Rs.6000 are being distributed to the participants. From the records it was also confirmed that approximately Rs.400, 000 (yearly) was earmarked for payment of wages, excluding the payments to watchers on a monthly basis. It is also important to mention that both men and women were engaged in ecotourism services and there was no gender discrimination in payment of wages.

**INDIRECT BENEFITS**

Apart from the employment and other direct benefits availed from direct engagement of communities in ecotourism activities the community could avail a number of other incentives and facilities. These incentives had both financial and non-financial components. The following are some of the most important among them:

- **Educational Incentive:** The change in material condition of households impacted the schooling of children of EDC members. According to the officials of PTR there is a notable change in the attitude towards education from the tribal hamlets which has led to an increase in their school attendance. The distribution of free uniforms, umbrellas and books to the children of EDC members played an important part in this.

- **Loan & Financial Assistance:** In order to meet the exigencies loans and financial provision were made available to the community members. The FDA had arrangements for helping the EDC members through thrift and savings. The community members could avail loans up to ten thousand rupees in case of emergencies. The repayment schedule was to be decided on the basis of the amount advanced. Financial assistance for medical treatment (both inpatient as well as outpatient) is available not only to the EDC members of Parambikulam but also to other people who are members of EDC of other destinations. For instance it was reported that lump sum assistance was given to an EDC
member from Waynad (not part of the PTR) for his medical treatment.

- **Insurance Coverage**: By considering the riskiness of the job and other security reasons the FDA initiated insurance coverage to the EDC members. As per the modus operandi the FDA and the individual member should contribute Rs.100 each for this purpose. The programme has been implemented in association with the National Insurance Company of India Limited. The scheme provides medical claim that would cover all hospital expenditure.

- **Health Programme**: In association with National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) of Government of India the FDA has made all necessary arrangements for availing primary health care facilities for the EDC members. The programme is meant for all tribals with special emphasis being given to women and children.

- **Training**: In order to inculcate basic hospitality skills to EDC members, FDA has arranged special training programmes. The course covered various aspects in the areas of hospitality such as, how to receive the guests and make them acquainted with the local customs and practices. Awareness and educational programmes on foundations of tourism operation or tourist orientation and session on Spoken English were also part of this programme. Special training on bird watching and interpretation has also been arranged for the EDC members.

As mentioned earlier, there are other factors, which are relevant to the study particularly while discussing the local economic benefit of a site-specific evaluation of an ecotourism project. It includes increase in earnings, sense of social cohesion or belongingness, enhanced self esteem among community members, relief from pressure of local money lenders etc. From our field interactions it was also revealed that EDC helped the members to improve collective responsibility, collaborative capacity and networking for production and sale of various ecotourism products. Well-regulated destination management practices including the formulation of rules and regulations have helped to ensure sustainability, and also to reduce undesirable practices like poaching etc. to a great extent.

**LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Before this study is concluded it has to be clarified that certain assumptions have been made in this study to identify the extent to which ecotourism creates employment opportunities to local communities such as all visitation to this site is considered as ecotourist and all tourism related economic activities is accounted as ecotourism. Another limitation is that the assessment of local economic benefit of ecotourism is confined to six tribal settlements and one PAP colony only. Direct and indirect economic impacts on other local people have not been considered as the officials at the PTR had informed that all forest dependent communities were settled in these six colonies.

**CONCLUSION**

Ecotourism, no doubt, is a significant tool for local regeneration and development of rural/remote areas. The relevance of such locally organized programmes initiated in PTR is even more important in a rural setting where alternative employment options are very limited as well as the ownership of protected areas is vested with the state, where the local communities have only limited access in it for engaging income generating activities. Another important fact is that most of these protected areas are the habitats of indigenous
people. As cited by Hinch (2001) it is very important that a significant share of economic benefit from ecotourism should accrue to them. Not directing a fair share of benefits to them would be grossly unethical under the core ideologies of ecotourism. Hence, there should be a mechanism to ensure proper delivery of community benefit, community involvement, and provision to keep the ‘legal status’ of the land and ‘aboriginal title’ and also to limit involvement of market forces to maintain a sustainable scale of operations at the destinations. Overall the evidence from the present study are supportive of all the three hypothesis formulated. The experience of PTR in terms of employment and income generation in comparison to the host population is not insignificant. The ecotourism programme could generate good number of employment opportunities to the local people. For this purpose several entrepreneurial initiatives have been taken to accommodate the destination communities. It is also found that these initiatives are not exclusive or complete. There are a lot of areas which needs to be explored to enhance the level of participation of the people. The indirect benefits from this ecotourism project are also invaluable. So it is evident that such experiments will provide useful insights to the policy makers and destination managers to organize ecotourism destinations for economic as well as environmental sustainability.

Annexure:

**Table 1: Eco development committees at PTR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eco development Communities</th>
<th>No. Of Members</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugam Colony EDC</td>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kadas Colony EDC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fifth Colony EDC</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAP Colony EDC</td>
<td>59 (Non Tribal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poopara Colony EDC</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth Dam Colony EDC</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kariakutty Colony EDC</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalist EDC</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watchers EDC</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>503</strong></td>
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</table>

*Source: From the records of PTR.*
Table 2: Tribal Settlement & Ethnic Identity of PTR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of the Settlement</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Families</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
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<td>Malasar tribe</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>309</td>
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<td>Pooppara</td>
<td>Muduva tribe</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Colony</td>
<td>Malamalasar tribe</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kuriarkutty</td>
<td>Kadar tribe</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earthdam colony</td>
<td>Kadar tribe</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadas colony</td>
<td>Kadar tribe</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>277</strong></td>
<td><strong>1200</strong></td>
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Source: www.parambikkulam.org

Table 3 Tourists Visited & Revenue Earned (2004-2009).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No of Tourists</th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>International</th>
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Source: From the records of PTR.

REFERENCE


Joppe, M (1996) Sustainable community based tourism revisited, *Tourism Management* 17(7) 475-479


Nation branding: A case study of Singapore

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by

Yee, F. Woo
Bachelor of Science
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2000

A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment
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Master of Hospitality Administration
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Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
June 2009
ABSTRACT

Nation branding, or country branding is a relatively new concept. The purpose of this paper is to develop a case study of Singapore as a nation brand. It will first review the conceptual foundation of nation branding and study nation branding application. This study will use the case study approach to gain insight into nation branding concept and inspect Singapore as a nation within the parameters of nation branding. The specific objectives of this paper are to first review the conceptual and theoretical foundation of nation branding by leading researchers in the marketing field; second, to examine and define nation branding and discuss its challenges. Thirdly, this paper discusses why Singapore is ideal for nation branding.

Nation Branding: A case study of Singapore

By

Yee F. Woo

Dr. Billy Bai, Committee Chair

Associate Professor of Tourism & Convention Administration

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
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PART ONE

Introduction

Nation branding is the branding of a country, and it can either attract or dispel tourists. Generally speaking, destination branding is the marketing of tourist destination and its objective is to sell the attributes of the destination. With nation branding however, the country would prosper further in the long run for it enhances not only the competitive advantage against competitors, but also improves the country’s economy on the overall. Furthermore, the perception gap between the brand identity (projected by the country) and brand image (perceived by the rest of the world) will be reduced through nation branding. Nation branding is a collaborative effort of the country’s people and the government to help build the nation’s brand. Every country has its own reputation, brand image, brand identity, and brand value. The people, tourism, culture, governance, economic strategies (exports, investment and immigration), could and would contribute to the country’s image. The efforts put forth in all these areas will help build or destroy (with bad decisions) the nation’s brand equity or brand value.

Singapore is an Island with 63 islets, located at a strategic location at the Malay peninsular between the Indian and Pacific Ocean. The Port of Singapore is one of the busiest in the world. Singapore is a city-state with an approximate size of 271 square miles with little natural resource. For such a small country, it has established a foundation to welcome million of visitors internationally. This is in part due to the country’s marketing effort of its destination through the Singapore Tourism Board; and also owing to the country’s visionary leader, the founding father of Singapore-Mr. Lee
Kuan Yew. Singapore, though small, has its place in the world map. Singapore is ideal to nation brand because it has most of the elements of nation branding.

The Singapore Tourism Board has adopted different policies and strategies to promote and champion Singapore. It includes brand taglines like *Uniquely Singapore*, *New Asia, Surprising Singapore, Instant Asia, Green and clean city*. According to Yeoh, Tan, Wang, and Wong (2002), the previous campaigns were branded according to the “then” social, economic, and political conditions of Singapore. The varied branding has led Singapore to deal with different socio-economic condition at those time periods. In the early 1970s, Singapore had experienced slowdown in manufacturing, and as a result the focus on tourism was enhanced. In the 1980s, the economic slowdown led to ‘sacrifice’ the “natural, historical and cultural attraction” to do what was necessary to ultimately benefits the local economy (Yeoh, et al, 2002, p.5.). This demonstrated that the national culture was reactive rather than proactive.

Since 2004, Singapore Tourism Board has launched a national campaign called *Uniquely Singapore* and the tagline is placed on several of the Singapore public transports (buses mainly), as well as on several of its marketing collateral to tourists from all over the world. Yet, if one were to ask the locals if they find anything unique about Singapore, the locals would have to think hard what’s unique about their own country. This is an indication that though the campaign is widespread internationally, it has not reached Singaporeans regarding what is unique about Singapore. The premise is simple, if people are not aware or cognizant about the uniqueness of Singapore, how are they
going to be apostles of the *Uniquely Singapore* brand identity. Singaporeans do not perceive Singapore as unique. If so, what about the perception of tourists, do they feel that the projected image was delivered? What about the tagline *Uniquely Singapore*, did it trigger a negative impression from tourists, as they recalled the tagline, “my country is unique and different too”? Under destination branding, the marketing collateral rolled out was over brand, and as a result, the campaign produced a fragmented message loosing its brand identity. Additionally, it did not create the competitive advantage from its competitors in South East Asia such as Malaysia, or Hong Kong.

*Purpose*

The purpose of this professional paper is to develop a case study of Singapore as a nation brand destination. It will provide a snapshot of the historical review of the branding in Singapore. The specific objectives of this paper are to first review the conceptual and theoretical foundation of nation branding by leading authors in the marketing field; second, to examine and define nation branding and discuss its challenges. Third, this paper discusses why Singapore is ideal for nation branding.

*Justification*

A review of literature shows that there have been numerous published articles on destination branding but there is few, if any, research on nation branding of Singapore. Nation branding is a relatively new concept, and it requires more understanding on this subject matter. The case study intends to explore the elements of the conceptual framework in nation branding, and to gain a better understanding of Singapore. There will be a discussion if there is a gap between what it says (promotion message) and what
it offers. This study may be of interest to the Singapore government to identify the area of improvements on the existing campaign; to discover and accentuate the campaign strengths, and diminish the campaign weaknesses so as to create a strong brand identity; and expectantly sustain competitive advantages over the neighboring countries.

**Constraints**

This paper utilizes a case study research approach, as it addresses a contemporary issue. This study can only be exploratory and descriptive in nature, and cannot be generalized. This information gathered relies primarily on secondary research (literature review), and informal discussions. The lack of information and the paucity of affirmation from the STB cannot validate the types of perception survey done in the past. Marketing collaterals (brochure, video clips, and website) related to the *Uniquely Singapore* brand was used to analyze the content of the campaign to study the brand image. Such technique is deemed appropriate in the study of tourist advertising. Given the stated limitations, this study will serves the purpose of gaining insights into nation branding and familiarity on the subject matter for later investigation.

**Glossary**

*Anholt Branding Hexagon.* Simon Anholt is an expert in nation branding. He is also recognized for the “Anholt Branding Hexagon” where it has six factors to measure each country’s brand image by combining the six dimensions: Exports, Governance, Culture and Heritage, people, Tourism, and Investment and Immigration. (nationbrandsindex.com)
Brand. A “Brand” is a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of all these elements that is intended to identify the goods or services of a seller and differentiate them from competitors. (Kotler et al, 2006).

Brand essence. The brand’s promise expressed in the simplest, most-single-minded terms. For example: Volvo is equivalent to safety. The most powerful brand essences are rooted in a fundamental customer need. (Brandchannel.com, [n.d.])

Brand equity. The Brand equity refers to the value of the brand. (Dinnie, 2008)

Brand familiarity. Brand familiarity means how well customers recognize and accept a company’s brand. (Perreault & McCarthy, 2003)

Brand identity. A unique set of associations the brand aspires through the minds of the customers. It is an implication of promise from the brand name to the customers. (Brandchannels.com, [n.d.])

Brand image. The set of beliefs consumers hold about a particular brand. (Kotler et al, 2006).

Brand Value. The brand value lies in the trust of a brand name - for quality and reliability, a form of guarantee for its reputation - a promise the brand delivers, and the service it provides to the consumers - training of staff to deliver customer service. (Anholt, 2005)

Competitive advantage. Something that gives a firm, or a person or a country an edge over its rivals. (economists.com [n.d.])

Destination brand. Destination brand is a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination. It further conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the
destination. It also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience. (Ritchie, J.R.B, & Ritchie, R.B., 1998)

*Place branding.* Place branding is “a conscious use of publicity, and marketing to communicate selective images of a specific geographic localities or areas to a target audience” (Gold and Ward, 1994, pg 2). It is also branding a place or destination through a variety of ways such as advertising, direct marketing, personal selling, websites, brochures, public and media relations and through the cooperation of destination marketing organizations with journalists, event organizers and filmmakers.

*Nation branding.* Simon Anholt coins the phrase “Nation branding”, and it is use interchangeably with place branding by many these days.

*Reputation asset.* Simon Anholt used the term reputation asset during an interview. From his description, reputation asset is the asset of the brand. The brand is beyond strategy and it is how a country builds its reputation through the various faculties of running a nation.
PART TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review here would focus on branding, and the different forms of branding that would eventually lead to the conceptual framework of nation branding. The different types of brand definitions will be described, and explained to review and understand the depth of various types of branding. These terms would be substantiated by the varied literature reviewed to further understand the subject matter. Subsequently, it will discuss the nation brand identity, image, positioning, nation brand equity, and country of origin (provenance). All of these would lead to the conceptual framework of nation branding. Lastly, it will discuss the types of challenges that nation branding face.

Brand and Branding

Brand

A brand is defined as a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of all these elements that is intended to identify the goods or services of a seller and differentiate them from competitors. And brand image is the set of beliefs consumers hold about a particular brand (Kotler, Bowen, and Maken, 2006). Simon Anholt (2003), on the other hand argues that brand is intangible because it has brand value as outlined in his book Brand New Justice. The brand value lies in the trust of a brand name for quality and reliability, a form of guarantee for its reputation, a promise the brand delivers, and the service it provides to the consumers. The latter requires the training of staff to deliver customer service (Anholt, 2003, p10-12). According to Gilmore, (2002), successful
branding is when the nation continuously builds on the existing identity. These efforts “incorporate, absorb, and embrace a wide variety of activities under one graphic identity to form and project a multi-faceted yet coherent, interlocking and mutually supportive whole” (Gilmore, 2002, p282).

Brand value is intangible, it appeals to the consumer emotion to trust the brand name, with an implicit promise and with a certain reputation (Morgan, Pritchard, and Piggott, 2003). The authors further presented that consumers use their emotions to choose one image over the other and that leads to making a lifestyle statements. When consumers make choices on products and destinations, they use their emotions to choose one image over the other. The selection usually is an expression of their individualities, reflecting their lifestyle, and reinforces certain association. Souvenirs, postcards, and videos are mementos that activate the experience. This further demonstrates travel and tourism “is a highly involving experience, extensively planned, excitedly anticipated and fondly remembered.” (Morgan, et al, 2003, p.286) According to Anholt (2003) “brand names save consumers time, effort and worry” because the trust of the brand name provides a form of guarantee for quality, the reputation is put on the line (Anholt, 2003, p.12).

A brand is an entity that offers value to customers based on features above and beyond its functional performance (Knox, 2004). The brand values differentiate the offer and are the foundation for customer’s preference and loyalty. In an attempt to explain “Brand marketing in transition”, Knox offered the example of the European consumer
goods companies willingness to pay large premiums for the companies they acquire as a means to enhance the product portfolio and expand the geographic territory. This demonstrates the power of branding, an indication where a brand has achieved a certain status with its brand equity, and/or brand value. A branding consultancy firm called Interbrand had conducted a survey in 2003; *Most Valuable Global brands* and found that “the intangible assets of 100 global brands” are worth close to a trillion dollars (Anholt, 2003). This enhances an important point, and that is a brand has brand equity, which is a valuable asset.

*Branding*

Branding is the act of creating brand awareness of a product, corporation or a name. This can be done through focusing on the brand value or attributes so as to differentiate against the brand competitors and promote these competitive advantages through different media to a target audience. Branding can be a difficult process because it is an “integrating business practice” (Hahn, 2007). The ownership of the brand must incorporate the belief into the corporate culture, communications, product and services. The business decision should reflect that belief, and all employees should champion the brand. This overall integrating practice is not only difficult but also an ongoing process. Hahn proposed four-core discipline in the *ID Branding Framework* when building a new brand. It includes (1) brand strategies, (2) brand identity, (3) brand management and (4) brand experience. This framework is meant to reveal weaknesses, helps to identify needs, avoid ordinary and monotonous campaigns. Fundamentally, the framework provides an all-inclusive foundation to build and manage an enduring brand over a period of time.
Branding critics believe the result from branding means higher prices because the cost of advertising is passed down to the consumers. They also think advertisement is misleading and manipulative preying on the naiveté’s or simpleton (Cebrynski, 1998). There is a distinct difference between advertising and branding. Advertising is a paid media, a tool to call attention to a product or service; while branding is the act of incorporating and integrating brand strategies to get the potential prospects to see you as the only one that provides a certain solution to a specific problem (Lake, 2009). When advertisement becomes misleading or manipulative, consumers essentially feels misled and deceived, and that eventually violates the trusts of the consumers, and ultimately looses the brand identity. The customer’s perception of a brand (known as perceived value) must somewhat meet the expectation of the value (perceived quality) and both of these must exceed the costs of buying or owning (perceived sacrifice) a particular brand (Knox, 2004).

Different types of branding

There are different types of branding. There are product branding, organization branding, and destination branding. The latter is sometimes called place branding, and currently termed nation branding. Destination branding, place branding, and nation branding relates to the branding of destinations but with slight variation. Many scholars use these three terms interchangeably to describe the branding of a place.

The difference between product branding and corporation branding

Branding a product is different from branding a corporation (Hatch and Schultz, 2001). The difference requires positioning the whole corporation rather than on a
product. Knox (2004) agrees that marketing an organization is at a broader level and the traditional four “P’s” approach cannot be applicable to branding a corporation. Balmer (2001a) presents the differences between corporate branding to product branding in numerous characteristics (see table 1). The first and most obvious is that brand focus is on the company rather than the product. Second, the chief executive officer (CEO) rather than middle manager manages the brand. Third, the corporate brands relate the attraction and support to all organization stakeholders (i.e. organization, community, investors, partners, suppliers, and others). Fourth, the brand efforts go to the entire company rather than the marketing department. The communications mix is the fifth contrasts and it involves the total corporate communication. The time horizon is the sixth characteristics and the corporate brand is as long as the life of company rather than the life of the product. The final difference is the corporate brand takes on a strategic role while the product brand takes on a functional role (Balmer, 2001a). Hatch et al proposed a strong brand name first taps into corporate decisions made by the different stakeholders such as the top management, employees and business associates or community. The success of a corporate brand comes from a framework that links strategic vision, organization culture, and corporate image to be the foundation of the corporate brand (Hatch & Shultz, 2001). Brand is usually build around the corporation’s reputation for its offerings, quality, including service. The outcome of successful brands is several years of investment and strategic planning. (Simones and Dibb, 2001).
Dinnie (2008) has presented that the original application of branding on a product has revolutionized to service branding and corporation branding. And both service and corporation branding has in turn evolve into nation branding (see figure 1). It is easy to draw similarities in branding a corporation and a nation. The focus attention will be on the nation, the country leader will manage it, and the process would involve multiple stakeholders. The brand would be delivered by the nation; the communications mix would become total nation communication. The time horizon would be the life of the nation, and it is a strategic importance to the nation. The table below is adapted from Balmer (2002) “How corporate branding differs from product branding” to draw similarities in branding between corporate brands to nation brands.
Table 1
A Comparison Between Corporate and Product Brands
Adapted from Balmer (2002) to draw similarities in branding between corporate brands to nation brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Corporate brands</th>
<th>Nation brand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus attention on</td>
<td>The company</td>
<td>The nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managed by</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Country leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention and support</td>
<td>Multiple stakeholders</td>
<td>Multiple stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivered by</td>
<td>Whole company</td>
<td>Entire nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication mix</td>
<td>Total Corporate communication</td>
<td>Total nation communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time horizon</td>
<td>Long (life of company)</td>
<td>Long (life of nation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>Strategic</td>
<td>Strategic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to note here that the past decade or so, many marketing practitioner have applied corporate branding techniques on nations (Anholt, 2007), and it had worked on some nations. Spain and New Zealand have had successful branding campaigns while Britain had not. The success of nation branding depends highly on how cohesive the branding process is, and the amount of continuous effort put forth. Moreover, it is not for the faint hearted or those who seeks immediate gratification. Rather, it is for those who have patience and endurance to invest in the future livelihood of the nation.
Destination branding, Place branding, & Nation branding

The term destination branding has evolved over the years. Destination marketing, simply said is the marketing of tourist destinations. Traditionally, this is done by destination marketing organization (DMO), a business entity that promote destination to increase the number of visitors. It is still in use in various parts of the world where the nation’s airline would champion the country. The role of DMOs has always been the forefront promoter of any destination. Unless the DMOs take a more active role in the area of branding and promoting the brand, otherwise, the larger operators and transportation companies (such as the airlines) will take what they think is appealing to the market and dilutes the destination brand identity. DMOs are most effective with niche markets (Morgan, Pritchard, & Pride, 2004).

Various authors in the marketing field have different definitions for place branding. Place branding is defined as an “extremely complex, and highly political activity that can enhance a nation’s economy, national self-image and identity.” (Morgan et al, 2004) Gold and Ward (1994) define place branding as a deliberate attempt to use publicity and marketing effort to communicate a specific message or images of a particular geographic location or areas to a selected target audience. While Simon Anholt describes that “place branding encompasses measuring that identity, evaluating its strengths and weaknesses and building and communicating differentiating and winning characteristics.” (Anholt, 2009) Meanwhile, Skinner defined place branding as:
“a place’s promotional activities, contextualised in the domain of marketing communications, marking the place with a distinct identity in the minds of the various target groups targeted by the incorporated place, from an inside-out approach, assuring the place’s multiple stakeholders, in partnership, manage and communicate the place’s brand identity to a wider world as they wished it to be presented.” (Skinner, 2008, 923.)

Branding is very costly, it is therefore critical to get the right branding from the onset. Furthermore, the adopted branding proposition must have the potential to evolve during the branding campaign. Good destination branding must be original, different, sustainable, believable, and relevant (Morgan & Pritchard, 2002. p.68-72). The authors presented five phases in destination brand building. (1) Perform a market investigation, analysis, and strategic recommendations, (2) Brand identity development, (3) Brand launch and introduction: communicating the vision, (4) Brand implementation, (5) Monitoring, evaluation and review.

It is important to mention that many authors, consultants, and even governments have used the terms place branding or destination branding to describe the branding of a country (Anholt, 2008) but the fact remains this description is no more than a “product” (destination) promotion, public relations (media communications), and corporate identity like a product or corporation.
Nation Branding

Nation branding is a relatively new term but not a new concept. Countries have always branded themselves in one way or another. Each country’s tourism governing body has always marketed its place as a destination to tourists. In the effort to review literature for this paper, there were hundreds of articles on destination marketing, and as years progressed, the concept developed further into place marketing or place branding, and eventually nation brands, and nation branding. It is natural to deduce that the terminology of nation branding derived from terms like “destination branding” and “place branding.”

Destination branding is a term for tourism promotion. Tourism boards from all over the world use brand management to promote their destination, articulating the wonders of their country, and how hospitable they would be (Anholt, 2007). Country branding or Nation branding (a more appropriate term) is the branding of a country and it involves the people of the country or the nation to develop and build the brand. Nation branding add more dimension to the destination attributes, it encompasses the intangible brand value to build brand equity onto the brand identity. Place branding is an umbrella term for “branding nations, regions, cities, towns and villages.” (Anholt, 2007) For the purpose of this paper, it is necessary to note that different authors use these terms interchangeably.

Country as brand

The public policy of a country can be a consequence to a country’s image, just as the nation’s history, famous citizens, art and culture are all sub-brand factors to the brand
image (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). The authors pointed out that for those countries that do not consciously brand its nation would still activate an image on people’s mind. Those perceptions most likely are stereotypes, dated, impressions rather than reality or facts. The country images could influence people to purchase, invest, and travel, and the media and entertainment industry play a vital role in shaping people’s perception of the destination. The product country of origin is part of the country’s brand. Interestingly, what was originally a legal requirement to a country (such as America) to list the country-of-origin have became an indication to consumers as part of the evaluation of a product or destination. The authors advocate nations to manage and control their branding especially when a country wants to achieve global marketplace (compete for tourists, tourism receipts and foreign investments, and talented people). To design a country’s marketing strategy, the authors suggests one must first evaluate one’s own brand image against the competitors’ image. To produce an effective brand, the message has to be real, straightforward, engaging, unique, and convincing. A catchy slogan and visual images would help. In improving a country’s negative image, it is easier to generate new and positive associations. Every country has its own unique selling proposition, and hence it attracts different types of tourists. The marketing message must be very specific and to whom the target message should reach. Depending on the destination’s unique features, you build upon the strengths. If there are none, countries then build attractions or promote events that are attractive to tourists. Tourists are drawn to destination that offers the best value, or the most benefits and conveniences (Kotler & Gertner, 2002, p249-259).


Why countries should get into nation branding?

Kotler et al, (1999) suggested four critical reasons explaining why cities should brand themselves. These four reasons are also applicable to a nation branding because every nation go through the same process just as a city would but in a wider context. These adapted reasons are: (1) Countries has to adjust and adapt to stay highly relevant and current due to changes in the global environment. (2) As time changes, country evolves due to urbanization. A strong brand would withstand difficult times to deal with urban decay and negative publicity. (3) Countries are more competitive these days for affluent residents and tourists. To sustain competitive advantage, countries are now more attentive to become a more attractive destination for tourists. (4) Self-governance and local funding is the final reason. Countries these days understand the power of creating international events to place them on a world map. It is also through these efforts, that different types of funding (advertisements, live telecasts’ fee, tickets revenue, food and beverage, hotels, etc) can be generated.

There are five objectives for nation branding. Nation brand itself to (1) stimulate export growth, (2) increase inbound tourism for tourism receipts, (3) attract foreign investment into the nation, (4) enhance political influence internationally, and (5) manage negative stereotypes. All of these play a role to the brand identity and brand image (Dinnie, 2008).

Brand Identity

Brand identity is the identity of the brand, something that truly is, or a representation of the brand, the brand essence (Dinnie, 2008). It is the identification that
distinguishes something apart from another. The author also believes that there is a gap between brand identity (the identification of the brand) and brand image (the consumers perception of the brand). Many authors in the past proposed a variant of components to build the brand identity. Martin Roll (2006) for one has proposed five components in developing brand identity. The first component is *brand vision* – a document (usually is an internal document) that clearly describes the brand goals (what has to be achieved in order to achieve the brand identity) for future directions within a certain dateline. The second component is *brand scope*, a brand vision statement stipulating the potential market segments and categories. The third component is *brand positioning*, an aggregate perception of the consumers. Fourth is the *brand personality*, a component that connects the brand to the consumers emotionally through the brand’s personality. Finally, *brand essence*. It is the “heart and soul” of the brand. This distinguishes the brand apart from the other and allows it to stand out against others.

Meanwhile, Chernatony proposed similar components. Brand Vision, brand culture, positioning, personality, relationships, and presentations are components to build brand identity (Chernatony, 1999). Brand vision is clear and specific directions. Brand culture is the core values of the brand existence. Brand positioning emphasizes on the functionality of the distinct competence that differentiates a brand. The relationship from this process (employees, consumers, and other stakeholders) reinforce the brand values, personality and positioning. Prior to presentation of the brand identity, brand has to be coherent to persuade all stakeholders to buy in. Chernatony argues a brand vision can be conceptualized into three components – the desired future environment, brand value and
brand purpose (Chernatony, 2000). A brand vision is a communication of a brand with a single voice with clear direction that people can understand, adopt it, and passionately follow that vision. To achieve a cohesive brand, it involves a three-step process (Vergo & Chernatony, 2006). The authors proposed the Delphic brand Visioning model to produce a strong, cohesive brand. The first step is to get different stakeholders to come up with collective vision for the nation. This model recognizes that there will be a diverse range of views from different stakeholders and hence require brand steerers (likely to recognize the benefits of the brand) to help narrow the vision to the core image. The second step is to refine the vision to achieve a higher level of alignment towards the brand. The final step is when the vision is single, coherent, recognized and adopted by people.

Brand identity and brand image are two different constructs (Nandan, 2004). The brand identity begins with the brand name, while the brand image originates from the consumer perceptions. By this distinct difference, they are very dissimilar. On the other hand, these two concepts are crucial for developing brand loyalty, and in this case, are important components to building the nation brand.

**Brand Image**

“A nation’s brand image is its most valuable assets” (Anholt, 2005). Anholt emphasizes the brand should be seen in context, not the message. He believes if the context were positive, the negative message would still be seen in a favorable way. Brand image is the perceived image of a brand from an individual. The set of beliefs consumers hold about a particular brand. (Kotler et al, 2006). The perception of the
brand image of a destination varies from one individual to another. In “The Meaning and Measurement of Destination Image”, the authors Echtner and Ritchie believes that many people have an image of a destination even though they had never visited that place. Various media induce the perception of the images gathered in that person’s mind. The formation of the brand image includes the different media exposure like advertisements and promotions; friend’s opinions, news reporting through TV, radio; or the Internet, newspaper; or through popular culture such as movies, or literature. These impressions formed accentuate two critical points. First, even when people have not visited that destination, the exposure of various means of promotion and championing of a destination helps individual form an impression. Second, if and when a trip is made to that destination, it is likely for that perception to change after the visitation. It is a natural process where people would measure their own satisfaction (subconsciously) if their expectation were being met based upon their prior image of that destination. It becomes vital that the design of the marketing and promotional strategies of a destination must be an accurate message of what it says and offers. It is important to measure the base image, and evaluate the strength’s and weaknesses of the existing image. It is important to note that if a perception survey is done, then it allows the group of visitors who has a preconception of the destination to be categorized (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003).

The conceptual framework of brand identity and image involves a multidimensional view of three stages (Dinnie, 2003). In constructing the nation brand, individual nation would selectively focus on the identity (tangible and intangible) to best describe the nation brand (history, icons, territory, sports and so on) in (1) Nation brand
Identity. These components should represent the nation’s brand essence, “the heart and soul” of the nation. To communicate the brand identity, country could use communicators such as brand ambassadors, marketing communications, cultural artifacts and even past accomplishments in sports, or products as (2) Communicators of the nation brand identity as a way to communicate the nation brand identity, to deliver the (3) Nation-brand image. The audiences would include domestic and external consumers, domestic and external firms (inward investors) and government media (See Figure 2).

![Diagram of nation-brand identity and image](source: (Dinnie, 2008), p. 49.)

*Brand Positioning*

Echtner and Ritchie (1993) defined “positioning involves creating the appropriate image of the product in the minds of the consumers in the targeted markets” with no exception to tourism destinations that includes states, regions and countries. The authors
believe that establishing and managing a suitable destination image are vital to successful positioning and marketing strategy.

The brand positioning strategy begins with the stakeholder (tourists, international consumers, foreign investor) defining a superiority declaration (competitive advantages) for others to believe with reasons (Quelch and Jocz, 2004). Unambiguous positioning helps nations to succeed. A good positioning platform (tagline, slogan) can help carry the core brand identity, brand essence and image across to the receivers without distorting the message. Hence, this message has to be clear, consistent, competitive, and credible (Jobber, 2004). In recent years, some nations have come out with bland and generic positioning platforms without any differentiating claims for their destinations such as Malaysia, Truly Asia, and Amazing Thailand. Establishing distinctiveness is the key task in brand positioning (Dinnie, 2008).

The nation’s image is a factor in buying decisions these days. (J. O. Shaughnessy & N.J.O. Shaughnessy, 2000). Projected image can influence destination positioning, and ultimately the tourist’s buying behavior (Govers, Go, & Kumar, 2007). Govers et al. proposed projected tourism promotion should extend the destination true identity because the secondary marketing materials serves to form the perceived image in the consumer’s mind prior to the actual visitation. Should the destination be chosen, the actual experience if differs from the perceived images, will lead to the tourists dissatisfaction. The authors concluded that media in general could influence other and form destination image, but the primary source of information (word of mouth and recommendation) given by travel agents, friend and relative have a higher impact in helping tourists
deciding the destination. The most significance of findings is perhaps the tourism promoters’ effort (DMOs, and tourism board) was not as effective as compared to a national incident. A case in point used by the authors was the “Royal Funeral raises Britain’s Profile” in 2002. Through the Queen’s mother funeral, it did raise Britain’s tourism up in Cumbria by about 20% even though Cumbria was one of the worst areas to visit due to hands, mouth and foot disease. The authors contributed that the “temporal environment or situational influences can have a dramatic short-term effect on perceived destination image.”

Many countries spend millions of dollars to nation brand themselves. And not all countries are successful. Bravo Spain succeeded, yet Cool Britannia did not. What sets them apart? Gilmore (2002) explained Spain succeeded because of various reasons. Other than advertising and promotion activities at a regional and national level, Spain had done more to reposition for its new and modern identity and image.

“Its branding effort incorporate, absorb, and embrace a wide variety of activities under one graphic identity to form and project a multi-faceted yet coherent, interlocking and mutually supportive whole…Spain continues to take an active approach to maintaining its brand going forward.”

Cool Britannia was a pun phrase for “Rule Britain” and have originated from Tony Blair. It was popularized in the midst of 1990s and it was to represent the modern Britain, a forward thinking nation, and a world leader that is creative and innovate. It was
supposed to encapsulate the national spirit at that time. However, the tagline was not well received by the public. Critics call it cynical and snobbish, while others think that the tagline was a designer concept and the single phrase would not be able to truly capture the essence of the Britain brand identity that was built with history, culture and traditions, especially when all of these meant differently to individuals.

*Brand equity*

Brand equity refers to the value of the brand (Dinnie, 2008). Brands have value, and prominent brand equity suggests consumers have high level of the brand awareness, are familiar with the brand, and maintain a favorable impression to the brand image, perceive the brand is of high quality and are loyal to the brand. (Keller, 2003, Kotler, Bowen, & Maken, 2006). Brand equity can influence purchasing decision. The consumers in their own mind have a perceived value of a certain brand; a ranking (in their opinion) where they think one brand value is better or higher than the other. A hotel room in Ritz Carlton to Four Seasons for example. Brand equity can also be build upon (Farquhar, 1989). This view is similar to Anholt’s value of provenance.

*Provenance and country of origin*

The country of origin “Made in [country name]” is the value of provenance, and helps build the country’s brand image. Provenance ultimately benefits the country’s economic, cultural and political future (Anholt, 2002). Dinnie (2008) presented the evolution of nation branding is derived from the national identity and country of origin to converge into the homogenization of markets and increase sense of national identity, that eventually lead to the emergence of nation branding (Dinnie, 2008).
**Simon Anholt's nation branding and competitive identity**

Simon Anholt, is an expert in place branding (Kahn, 2006) and was also known to coin the phrase “nation branding” in 1996 to describe the branding of a country. In an interview with Lee Hudson Teslik of Councils on Foreign Relations (CFR), Anholt simplified the definition of nation branding as applying corporations’ branding to countries but with slight differences. The first is reputation asset; the brand that comes with the country has an asset. The second difference is the focus of managing (behavioral aspect) the nation’s image through a collaborative effort to work towards the fundamental “common” image. This requires the government officials, corporations (for profit or nonprofits), or other stakeholders to be consistent with what the country represents (CFR, 2007).

Nation branding (to Anholt) is not just about tourism but rather a collaborative effort of the various faculty such as the promotion of tourism, investment and trade, plus public and cultural diplomacy”, (Kahn, 2006). For this reason, Anholt prefers to use the term “competitive identity” to “nation branding” because managing the brand name of a country concerns the reputation of the nation, and it involves the national identity, policies, and economics of competitiveness. Competitive identity differentiates one nation to the next with its competitive advantage in the global market. Globalization has changed the world. The world becomes smaller because it is easier to reach via technology (telecommunications included) and transportation. The result is a one world, one market scenario. This lead to a more competitive market for tourists, consumers, investors, entrepreneurs, international sporting (the Olympics for example) events,
international media, talent and so on. National image matters, and nations should be concerned because the reputation of a country becomes the integrity of the nation, generating trust from its existence in the world, and the respect earned from all of that. In essence, the brand identity of a place becomes the competitive identity of the nation.

According to Anholt, and the place image

All nations have its own brand (Anholt, 2002), and places get their brands from public opinion (Anholt, 2008). People usually conjure up an image or multiple images when a country is being named. If you talk about France, people would think romance, the Eiffel Tower, perhaps even fashion. The perception varies from one to another because it highly depends on individual experience and/or association through either experience or media exposure (magazine, Internet, word of mouth, or other means). Products and services, corporations and even the country’s inhabitants contribute to the country’s image. In terms of product and services, it is the provenance or the country of origin that strengthens the country’s image. Consumers perceive a product with a “Made in Japan” better than a similar product “Made in Vietnam”. Corporations’ way of doing business reflects on the integrity and business ethics, as well as employees’ efficiency. The citizens of the nation contribute to the impression given to the countries they visit through their behavior and actions as well as the tourists’ experiences. Provenance plays a part to the brand equity, and it can reinforce the brand image.

Anholt further explains that to launch a global brand requires self-belief, panache and chutzpah. It involves objectivity to see what others see and accept that perception;
government support; and constant investment in the place brand itself. The latter effort requires the stakeholders’ synergies to cooperatively commit to building the provenance. These stakeholders could be government, corporation, or its people. An example in Singapore would be the FORMULA 1™ inaugural grand prix in 2008 with its first ever night race on a city circuit in Asia. This event though has only 40,000 international visitors but the live telecasts of the event at various parts of the world have placed Singapore on the world map. Ong Beng Seng (a property developer), Birnie Ecclestone (owner of the F1 brand), and the Singapore government collaborated to make the F1 event possible. Building provenance for a nation is similar to building brand equity, where the value of the country’s name is tied to the overall brand’s image in the market.

The brand image is synonymous to the country’s reputation (Anholt, 2008). A country with poor reputation (uncultured, backward, or even unsafe politically) find their marketing effort inefficient because the perception of the public opinion is low, hence less likely to be chosen as a destination for vacation or business travel (Meeting, Incentives, Conventions & Exhibitions -MICE). Countries with positive reputation (culture, forward and politically safe) gain easier entry to the global marketplace with doors open, trust gained, respect given along an expectation that quality and competence workers will be there to meet the needs.

Anholt is recognized for Anholt-GfK Nation Brand Index (NBI), and it is based on the same six categories to measure the global perception of a country. The nation brand is how others perceive a country. It is an important concept because a well-built and
constructive nation brand provides a critical competitive edge. For this reason, it is important for countries to understand how publics perceive them across the nations. The NBI is an analytical ranking where 25,000 people were polled worldwide on their perceptions of the cultural, political, commercial and human assets, investment potential and tourist appeal of 50 developed and developing countries. It is an index of national brand power, a barometer of global opinion. The NBI essentially measures the perception individually in each of these categories. The six categories together form the *Nation Brands Hexagon*.

The NBI measures the power and appeal of a nation’s brand image, and tells how people around the world see the character of that brand. This information can be useful
because it help to find out where the nation’s image is in people’s mind. It also serves to evaluate if its image is consistent to the project image and if there is a gap between the image and the actual experience. If a gap exists, the negative word-of-mouth would jeopardize repeat visits, not to mention the tourists would become the nation brand terrorists.

*Conceptual framework to a place image*

There are three conceptual frameworks to place brand. Kotler et la, Gilmore, and Anholt. The framework from Gilmore and Anholt has similarities, while Kotler’s framework varied slightly.

Country should take on a more conscious effort in branding because country images draw out identifications, affect evaluations and purchase decisions. Additionally, countries compete for tourists, foreign investments and talented people. Kotler et al (2002) proposed five strategic approaches to brand a country. A country has to first perform a SWOT analysis to evaluate the nations’ strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to define the country’s objectives. The second approach is to choose a specific direction (from industries, personalities, natural landmarks, or historical events) for distinctive branding. The third approach is to expand upon an umbrella concept that covers its separate branding activities with consistency. Allocate adequate funds to finance each branding activities that would be highly relevant to create a greater impact is the fourth approach. The last approach is to create export controls to ensure exported products are trustworthy and meet the affirmed performance.
Gilmore (2002) assimilated the framework for corporation for country branding as well. The brand sits at the center (heart of the nation), where it represents the core values and ideology. It is the reason of existence and its reputation in the world. The spirit of the people consists of values, and it stands as a guide to the strategic decision-making, acts as a driving force and motivating its people in the different factors (environment, resources, culture, history, economy and people). The values represent the nation’s belief system and it evolves with times and adapts to technology or caters to the changing needs of the market trends. Countries can utilize this model to nation brand, without fearing producing a homogenized brand because it is the people, and their spirit that makes it unique to each individual nation (Gilmore, 2002 & Anholt, 2002).

![Figure 4. A framework for country branding Adapted from corporations to country branding (Gilmore, 2002), p.286.](image)
Place brand provides trust, quality assurance, which set in motion for new sub-brands entry in the marketplace (Anholt, 2002). Anholt, (2008) articulated six basic paths to build a place image. Naturally, *tourism promotion* is the first because it has the largest budgets in branding the nation. It is also the first place tourists would seek pre-trip information prior to the actual vacation. *Exports* (products and services) are image ambassadors when the country of origin is unambiguous. Government *Policy* (domestic or foreign) has an impact on a place image as well. Domestic policy will be reported on international media while foreign policy affects other nations. Diplomacy is needed when dealing with foreign policy. *Investments* (foreign investments) and the ability to attract the talent pool is another route to strengthen a place image. Cultural events and activities (Opera, or famous authors) can raise the place image. The country’s inhabitants and citizens can also affect the image especially with their mannerisms or behavior when they are overseas, as well as on how they treat the tourists. International celebrities, or high profile leaders, sport stars can elevate the image as well.

*The challenge of nation branding*

It is now more critical than ever to create a unique identity for destination because it is now more competitive for survival in the global market place (Morgan and Pritchard, 2004). The authors believe there are four major challenges - limited budget, little management control, and political pressures with consideration to stakeholders. External environment factors such as economic downturn, natural disasters and pandemics can affect the tourism industry drastically.
Quelch and Jocz has presented the nation brand challenges. One of the challenges includes the people buying in to nation branding and is cynical to the idea. Another challenge is when the tourists’ visit the destination and found the reality does not match the projected image from the pre-trip information gathered prior to trip, the gap will lead to disappointment and they will become brand terrorists. This would lead to low repeat visitation and damage the brand image indirectly. Local governors and mayors have different objectives to promote their own region and cities rather than the nation. Lastly, the government cannot control the flow of information through the Internet that shape the national image.

Anholt, (2008) argued that even if the nation could all get together to speak in one voice, that solves only part of the solution. It is not sufficient to enhance the national image on the overall. The challenge is to have all of the stakeholders (government, corporations, people, and so on) to become committed and dedicated to the development, and help build the nation’s image. On top of that, everyone (different stakeholders) has to partake a proactive role to take charge to fulfill the commitment independently to improve the image with an impact. Each of these groups (tourism, brands, Policy, Investment, culture & People) has to embrace an attitude that they make a difference when they contribute towards the common goal (build the nations brand). People will notice the new and/or improve image. The author advocates that the government’s initiative must carried out with a real purpose or it would be mistaken as propaganda. This would waste taxpayer’s money. Management of the country’s reputation should be a nation policy, and not a campaign for the tourism board, or a political activity. The
most efficient of corporations would embrace the brand strategy as their business strategy; a nation should do the same by incorporating the brand strategy into their policymaking.

Tourism in Singapore

Tourism revenue is critical to the hospitality and service business in Singapore. According to the Yearbook of Statistics, Singapore 2009, the tourism industry contributes to 5.74% of Singapore’s GDP for the year of 2008. Without tourism revenue, Singapore as a nation will suffer drastically as S$ 14.8 billion (STB, 2008) of tourism revenue is substantial to the economy and a small country like Singapore, not to mention the number of jobs it creates within the tourism industry. Singapore has no natural resources, so the citizens become the resource. Human resource is the key to the service industry such as: Healthcare services (which promote medical tourism), education services (positioning Singapore as the educational hub for South East Asia) and tourism (which generates hundreds of thousands of jobs in the hospitality industry). The hospitality industry includes a wide range of service-oriented businesses such as hotels, F&B, tourist attractions, the upcoming Integrated Resorts (Casinos), and theme parks.

It is critical for Singapore to position itself well in the tourism industry, especially during the present global economic slowdown. Travelers who can afford to travel during this time will be more selective than usual. Their destination choice will be based on their unique preferences and desires. Competition is fierce among neighboring countries within South East Asia particularly during the economic downturn. Singapore has position itself as a “compelling leisure and business destination” (Mr. S. Iswaran, 2008).
Singapore has grand plans in the pipeline. The international *Cruise terminal at Marina South* is due to start in 2010, two nature-themed attractions in Mandai would be ready by 2010 and the *Garden by the Bay* opens in 2011. In 2008, the Singapore government along with the property development tycoon Ong Beng Seng and Formula One owner Bernie Ecclestone have launched the first ever night circuit race in Asia. The inaugural race has placed Singapore on the world map. This agreement was for five years with the option to renew the next two years after its fifth year. Singapore will be hosting the first Youth Olympics Games in August 2010.

The Minister for Trade and Industry of Singapore, Mr Lim Hng Kiang announced on January 11, 2005 that STB would be responsible for the Tourism 2015 goals. STB would take charge to increase the visitor arrivals to 17 million tourists, increase tourism receipts to S$30 billion, and create 100,000 jobs in the service sector within Singapore by 2015 (STB, 2005). This initiative will be funded with S$2 billion Tourism Development Fund to achieve three key focuses. The first is to strengthen Singapore as a Meeting, Incentives, Convention & Exhibitions (MICE) destination. The second focus is to make Singapore a leading destination for leisure in Asia by enriching tourists with unique experiences and matches the “Uniquely Singapore” branding. The last focus is to build Singapore as a high-end quality destination for tourists to come for healthcare and education services (STB, 2007).

Singapore was a colony of Britain since 1823, and eventually became a self-governing state in 1958. The Singapore Tourism Promotion Board (STPB) was set up in
In 1964, one year before Singapore became an independent nation. Since then STPB has been promoting Singapore as a destination, and also keeping records of the number of visitors that came into Singapore. In 1965, only 98,481 tourists visited Singapore (Singapore Travel News, 1979-1980). In 2008, Singapore has welcomed 10,116,500 tourists. (Yearbook of Statistics Singapore, 2009). The increase of tourist arrivals every decade (see below table) shows that Singapore, as a destination is getting more and more attractive. This is partly due to the marketing effort, but major contributions were made by the government developing Singapore from the third world to the first world and adding new tourists attractions.

Table 2
Visitor Arrivals from Singapore

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitor arrivals (000)</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1324</td>
<td>3031</td>
<td>7136</td>
<td>8943</td>
<td>10115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Receipts (S$m)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>3653</td>
<td>11697</td>
<td>10871</td>
<td>14800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Yearbook of Statistics, Singapore 1990, 2009
Economic and Social Statistics, Singapore 1960-82
PART THREE

Introduction

The case study will examine why Singapore is ideal for nation branding. It will first discuss the branding history of Singapore and further discuss the weaknesses of the Uniquely Singapore campaign. This section will explore the Singapore’s brand identity, image, and positioning for nation branding. Through this discussion and implication section, there will be attempts to recap what it takes to nation brand, and further discuss if Singapore should take the nation brand conceptual framework, and address how this approach would help Singapore as a whole.

Research methodology

This paper utilizes a case study approach for this topic. Most of the research came from published information in the public domain. The review of literature, analysis of the current STB brochure and other case studies is appropriate for this exploratory study. The key term for this research started with destination marketing, and through several review of such articles, had broaden to include place branding and eventually country branding and nation branding. Thorough research has led to Anholt’s nation branding or competitive identity model and further research revealed that Singapore has certain elements in place and the brand identity and image has not yet achieved a cohesive brand status. Success in branding Singapore is vital to the development of Singapore as a tourist destination if it wants to achieve the 2015 Tourism goal. It is a natural next-step for Singapore to embrace the nation-branding concept.
The Uniquely Singapore campaign was launched with a two-prong effort. The first is to promote Singapore as a destination to tourists. Secondly, the campaign is meant to have the citizens be tourism ambassadors to champion the unique features of Singapore. Informal discussions with taxi drivers have provided information to two issues. First, to establish if these taxi drivers serves as a tourism ambassador, and second, what were the common comments from tourists about Singapore. Both of these two issues relate to the perception of the Singapore identity, brand image, and as a result affect the tourism industry.

*Case study of Singapore.*

The nation brand identity is the brand essence (heart and soul) of the nation. It identifies and distinguishes one country from another. There is a gap between the country’s identity and the country’s image. The country identity is projected while the country’s image is perceived. To acquire the country’s identity, it requires the nation (people) to visualize a brand vision that clearly describes the nation’s goal with clear objectives and it has to be achieved within a certain set dateline. In 2005, the Minister of Trade and industry, Mr. Lim Hng Kiang announced that by 2015, Singapore would welcome 17 million tourists and try to achieve S$30 billion of tourist receipts annually. To meet this objective, Singapore is in an ideal position to nation brand. Nation branding essentially helps a nation to further the nation’s economic growth by focusing on the nation’s identity and brand image. Nation branding is complex, and the public policy of a nation is significant to the country’s image. The nation’s image becomes the reputation of the country.
Many locals commented on the branding of Uniquely Singapore that was rolled out on March 9, 2004. The locals do not see the word “unique” as capturing the essence of Singapore because every country is unique in their own ways. Henderson (2006) argued the word “unique” as bland, regular, and over generalized. It is a word that “applies to every destination”. The author states that the marketing effort will not be able to convince tourists that Singapore is “unique” through normal media communications (Henderson, 2006, p270). Henderson also revealed that Singapore has been known in the past as “staid, restrictive, boring, conservative, too strict with nothing much to do on a tiny Island.” (Henderson, 2006, p.267) The features STB highlighted in the “Uniquely Singapore” campaign existed in other countries such as Malaysia, or Hong Kong. The bland tagline did not create any competitive advantage over any neighboring countries, not to mention other competing countries in the global market.

The branding history of Singapore

Singapore is made up of a group of Islands, and even though it lacks any natural resources, it is one of the most affluent and stable countries in Asia. This is due to its strategic location linking the Indian and Pacific oceans, and is the gateway to South-East Asia through its shipping routes. Singapore is one of the world’s largest and busiest seaports in the world. It is a nation of multi-cultural backgrounds but is united by the use of the English language. Singapore’s belief in education, technology advancement and enterprise has made Singapore into an education hub, and an attraction of medical tourism as well as a place for foreign investment (Boniface & Cooper, 2005).
Singapore is a young country with only a 43 years history as an independent republic. Singapore declared independence from Malaysia in 1965. In 1968, then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew had the foresight and vision of naming Singapore “The Garden City”. The two key reasons for the concept was to first woo investors. It was a subtle approach to convince potential investors in the early years that Singapore was an efficient and effective place because continuous maintenance will reflect conscientious. The second reason was to soften the harshness of life and to raise the morale and pride of the surroundings (Lee, KY, 2000). In 1968, Singapore was ahead of the times when PM Lee Kuan Yew had the vision to incorporate the “green and clean” message into the environment while developing Singapore. More importantly, PM Lee must be given the credit for being a visionary leader. He was able to strategically place Singapore as a destination and concurrently build Singapore into where it is today: a country with strong infrastructure that is modern, and politically safe. Singapore went from being a third world country to first world country in the span of about 30 years.

Singapore has place brand itself since the beginning. Former PM Lee Kuan Yew initiated the practice of branding Singapore since 1965, the STB placed a new brand on Singapore every decade or so to keep Singapore as an attractive city for tourists to visit or revisit. Each of these branding messages market Singapore in more advanced ways. They adapt to the needs of the visitors while maintaining the core message such as “East meet West”, “Multi-racial community”, and “Business hub”.
Singapore’s branding message has changed many times over the years. In the beginning, Singapore was known as the Lion City. A term coined by prince Sang Nila Utama. In 1819, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles signed a treaty with Malaysia on behalf of the British East India Company to develop Singapore as a trading post. In 1867, Singapore became a British crown colony. According to the “Singapore, The Encyclopedia” (2006), Singapore during the 19th century had cleared the jungle to make way for agriculture, and urban growth, it had wiped out all the green. The colonial government had attempted to introduce street planting but was halt by World War II. In 1963, Mr Lee Kuan Yew brand Singapore “Green Singapore” to attract foreign investment. Resources were allocated and dedicated to building a natural environment for Singapore during the 1960s and 1970s. Active planting of trees and shrubs were planted along roadside, vacant plots of land, and new development sites to beautify Singapore and provide a better natural environment for the citizens. In 1967, “The Garden City” campaign was launched (Singapore: The Encyclopedia, 2006)

Chang (1997a) reported that Singapore had changed the branding message three times before settling on “Instant Asia” between the 1960s and 70s. In the 1985, the message was “Surprising Singapore” and astonishingly, there was very few literature found on this campaign. The only literature found on this campaign was a booklet and a poster. Singapore Tourist Promotion Board (STPB) published the brochure, and it was given out to tourists during that period of campaign. In it, geographical information was briefly given, the country was described as a modern destination, multiracial cultural, and promotes both Indonesia and Malaysia as destination for further exploration for the
tourists. The brochure also promotes Singapore as a place for different world cuisine, as well as recommending some local food. The last theme promoted in this brochure was the multi-racial traditions. The poster of the Surprising Singapore campaign was in Sepia tone, with an image of a trishaw driver with a tourist couple sitting on it looking at Clark Quay, with the business district landmark (Shenton Way) as a backdrop of the poster. This projected image has a “traditional feel” (because of the use of sepia effect), and yet it is contrasted with the modern building as a backdrop. The waterfront (Clark Quay) is one of the elements used in urban tourism.

In 1996, the “New Asia – Singapore” campaign was adopted for the next seven years. The focus was to promote Singapore as a tourism hub for the Far East and Australasian region ([from China to New Zealand) STB also champion Singapore as the tourism capital of South East Asia (Ooi, (2004). In 1997, STPB made a conscious effort to change its name to Singapore Tourism Board (STB) to recognize the significant change of the tourism industry that shapes the modern Singapore (Yeoh, Ser, Wang & Wong, 2002, p4). Singapore wanted to be the regional hub and also wanted the world to see the country as New Asia. According to Ooi, 1300 departing tourists were surveyed and the respondents were asked the impressions they have of Singapore and their preference of Singapore’s alternate brands. From the literature review of many articles on branding, the approach of asking the tourists of alternative brand would go against the approach of branding. National branding should come from the nation’s values, not based on visitor perception of what Singapore should be. Every tourist has different
perception based on his or her actual experience and individual background. Shouldn’t the focus be from within other than from outside? This practice invites bias criticism.

Table 3
Singapore branding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time period</th>
<th>Singapore’s tagline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Since Singapore was found</td>
<td>The Lion City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>The Garden City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>Instant Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Surprising Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>New Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 – present (June 2008)</td>
<td>Uniquely Singapore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Uniquely Singapore”

In the STB’s Annual Report 03/04, A New Brand for Destination Singapore, STB launched the latest branding campaign, “Uniquely Singapore” to much fanfare. It is an attempt to update and contemporizes the image of Singapore. The new brand emphasis is on Singapore’s distinctive blend of rich culture and the modern attributes that could enrich the visitors by offering unique and diverse experiences. Capitalizing on Singapore’s credibility for efficiency and quality, it hopes to capture the Singapore Unique Selling Prepositions (USP) and reinforce the country sustainability.

The new brand was designed to be “compelling, differentiating and bold” to differentiate itself from other destinations. It was meant to utilize Singapore’s credibility
to inspire not just STB, but also the industry partners and Singaporeans alike to share a common voice, reverberating the tourism industry’s core messages. According to STB, the process of developing this brand required a meticulous evaluation of the Tourism Board, and its existing industry business strategies, product offerings, service delivery and the Singaporeans’ perceptions. In other words, it targets the tourists as well as the locals.

The intended brand message extends beyond promoting Singapore to the world. It is about creating more awareness among the Singaporeans of the simple things in their lives that could be distinctive, enriching, and interesting for tourists. The whole idea is to encourage Singaporeans to become the country’s tourism ambassadors.

According to an STB employee, “Uniquely Singapore speaks of a destination that offers a unique blend of the best of the modern world and rich cultures to deliver enriching experience. The brand position differentiates Singapore as a premier destination, offering a unique array of enriching experiences from traditional cultural experience to innovative modern arts performances, all delivered with a high level of service quality, reliability and efficiency.” The employee also briefly mentioned STB had done a perception survey in the past but was not able to provide the results or the questions asked. STB has six categories to the survey: (1) Awareness, (2) Correct Associations, (3) Perception level of those who are aware and those who are not aware of the slogan, (4) Resulting impact on all other brand health measures, (5) Comparison of
slogan scores against main competitors, (6) Evaluation of results versus the specific measures of what Uniquely Singapore represents.

*The Weakness of “Uniquely Singapore”*

In a marketing collateral downloadable from the Asian Tourism website, STB brands Singapore as a city like no other, because it is easy to appreciate its people, its “state-of-the-art” infrastructure, and always something new happening everyday.” The opening of the brochure markets its destination attributes as “unique” because of its people, landscape, place in the world, and passage through time”. The brochure also promotes Singapore as a destination for culture (Esplanade Theatre, festivals, and local art scene), food (Hainanese Chicken Rice and Chilli Crab), shopping (malls, shops and market), business center (conventions - MICE) and water city (cruises).

Mr. Lim Neo Chian, the Deputy Chairman and Chief Executive of the Singapore Tourism Board in the launch of “Uniquely Singapore” campaign tried to explain why or what is unique about Singapore. To STB, “Singapore merges the best of the East and the West, combines modernity with rich old traditions. Singapore fuses Chinese, Indian, Malay, and other cultures with its foods, and is an island inhabited by 4 million people who are multi-racial, multi-religion, and multi-lingual harmoniously. (STB Speech transcript by Mr. Lim N.C., 2004). If the brand identity of the “Uniquely Singapore” campaign was meant to capture the essence of “unique”, then it did not achieve it completely because it did not capture the uniqueness of Singapore, the message was generalized and did not create much differentiation from its neighboring country. In terms of multi-racial, multi religion, and multi-lingual, America could contend it. In
terms of being modern, Hong Kong is conceivably more modern than Singapore if not the same. Furthermore, Hong Kong has also positioned itself as a shopping and business center, and with an abundance of nightlife to boast (Calantone, Benedetto, Hakam, Bojanic, 1989). So, what Singapore offers is not unique to tourists. This creates a gap between perception and reality (Anholt, 2008). In terms of food, Malaysia has similar food like Singapore. According to Anholt (2008), national image is “not created through communications and cannot be altered by slogan such as Malaysia - Truly Asia” (Anholt, 2008, p212). This is “product-style” marketing effort, and it does not help Singapore as a nation project a consistent image. A bland tagline is generic branding; it does not create a distinctive proposition, and is basically ordinary. It is definitely not worth the millions of dollars countries pay these days for branding a country.

A place or destination is different in branding from a product especially not when it involves the reputation of a country. The government should always observe their global image in countries they aim to target. The stakeholder should collaborate together and agree on a national stratagem. In developing the strategy, it would involve many intricacies and can be a long drawn out process. If the stakeholders could unite as one, pin down the purpose and objectives, and fulfill the process, it would reflect the will of one nation. Finally, the hardest thing to do for the country’s reputation is perhaps to continuously maintain the reputation in every sector (Tourism, exports, culture, people, brands and policy).
Singapore has also position itself for urban tourism. Exactly what attract tourists to cities? Places like Paris, New York, or Singapore? Ruetsche (2006) explained tourists are attracted to different elements within urban areas. People are attracted to historic district with rich cultural background like landmark, buildings, and the local character of a place. A waterfront attracts tourists because of the visual appeal and the “something to do” activity. Business travelers that visit Singapore for MICE would also take the opportunity to take some time off for leisure travel as well. Festivals and Events such as the Film Festivals and Olympics attract tourists as well. Shopping and F&B though is categorized as secondary element of tourism, it still play a very important part to the tourism industry because visitors still need to eat as part of their vacation time, and shopping souvenirs for colleagues, friends and family in very subtle ways tell their friends where they recently spend time for their vacation. Conveniences and the urban standard of living probably attracts tourists because it is the comfort level that people can easily adjust and adapt to when they are away from home. It is important to note that through developing Singapore as a destination for urban tourism, many of the redevelopment projects such as Chinatown has “lost its original character and aesthetic elements” (Yeoh et al, 2002).

**Implications and Discussion**

*The brand identity of Singapore*

Singapore is a very young nation, and because it is young, it has flexibility and is not bound by cultural traditions. It is also because it is infantile; it has the ability to build many things from scratch (Gilmore, 2002). Gilmore also thinks that because it is smaller, it is easier to manage its citizens who are more patriotic and would serve the
country and fulfill the brand name. For the same reason that it is young, it lack experience in certain areas. The lost of original identity through urbanization, the lack of attractions due to limitations of natural resources, the inflation on cost of living has made Singapore expensive and no longer a destination of good buys (contrary to Surprising Singapore campaign), the level of service rendered out in the service industry are inconsistent in the hospitality industry (hotels, F&B, and retail) with a scarcity of good professional MICE organizers (Cheong & Khem, 1988).

Singapore is a young country, and though it has some form of identity, the identity is indistinct. This is reflected in the STB brochure.

Singapore has much strength. It has achieved a multi-racial and multi-cultural society living in harmony and as a result provided an environment that is politically safe and stable. The super infrastructure, and modern superstructure, makes Singapore a clean and green place. Tourists have been associating Singapore with qualities like: a shopper’s paradise; excellent hotel facilities; and a nation of educated citizens.

It is important to point out that the government is aware that the service sector needs major improvements and has invested S$100 million recently to spearhead the second phase of the national initiatives called “Go-the-Extra-Mile for Services” (GEMS). GEMS allow management executives of small & medium size enterprise to receive training to perpetuate the service culture within individual organization. The first phase of the GEMS movement was launched in October 2005 to train the front line employees to provide better service. The government later found out that the first launch was
inadequate because the upper and middle management did not adopt the service culture. Hence, the government had to start the second GEMS initiatives. This is an example of having a reactive culture, and it is usually normal for a collective society. Singapore needs to take a proactive approach in managing not just the brand image for the tourism sector but also the five other sectors.

_Singapore’s image_

Wan and Hui (2003) identify few implications and conclusions through their study in _Singapore’s Image as a Tourist Destination_. It is a challenge for the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) to differentiate Singapore from its neighboring countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong, or Taipei because Singapore is urbanized and is categorized as a modern city-state-country. In terms of architecture style, Singapore is contemporary to the point that there was little distinction between buildings with heritage versus new modern buildings especially when it is compared to the aforesaid countries. The structured survey done by Hui, and Wan (2003) revealed otherwise. In that study, 131 tourists participated in the survey at the Singapore Changi Airport. The results stood out against the Singapore Tourist Board claims. Only 16.7% of the tourists thought that Singapore has a diverse culture and people. This highlighted that the local culture has the lowest mean score and the authors explained that it is contributed to the fact that Singapore is more urbanized, with many modernized building and few unique architecture building that reflects Singapore heritage. Additionally, Singapore has little focus on scenic views and as a result of this fact; Singapore should not position itself in direct competition with other neighboring countries that has those advantages. In the same findings, it suggests that Singapore is strongly perceived s being politically sound
(mean at 4.5), safe and convenient (mean at 4.5) and clean (mean at 4.2). The authors recommended STB to use these factors as part of the promotional packages. The authors also revealed that Singapore is a relatively good place to shop and to find good food and had proposed promoting “Singapore Food Festival” and “The Great Singapore Sales”. Other suggestions included segmenting different regions to market Singapore especially when results of the findings reflect that the tourists from different country of origins have different perceptions of Singapore. The authors finally concluded more work is needed to ascertain the key determinants of Singapore as a tourist destination. Under the destination branding, the marketing collateral rolled out was over brand, and as a result, produce fragmented message loosing its brand identity (Choate, 1997).

The brand positioning of Singapore

In 2008, the Nation Brand Index (NBI) ranked Singapore as the 24th with a score of 53.7. Although Singapore did not reach the top ten lists, it is an accomplishment on its own to be listed at the 24th position because Singapore is a small country with no natural resource. Singapore did not get to where it is now on luck but rather on the country’s leadership and careful strategy.

In the Memoirs of Lee Kuan Yew, From Third World to First: the Singapore Story 1965 – 2000, Mr. Lee wrote about his effort to build Singapore since its independence in 1965 from Malaysia. Singapore came a long way, from a country with poor resource, hinterland to a strong infrastructure in a span of 30 years. The strategies to plan, the years of patience, and the efforts it took to build were remarkable. The Singapore Army was built from scratch in 1965 so that citizens can protect their own
country. In 1963, the Housing Development Board (HDB) was initiated to provide families the opportunity to own their home with affordable homes build as a means to create stability. In 1968, the idea of building Singapore to be the financial center within 10 years was sowed, and later came into fruition in 1978. The government ruling party that was voted in backed in 1959 has a mission to establish a clean and effective government and it is still its mission these days. The clearing of the illegal hawkers that would create road chaos were given proper hawker license in 1971 and only then, Singapore was able to reclaim back its roads. The Singapore government have ensured all the children of Singapore be given a proper education with subsidized school fees. And because a lot of its citizens were educated, the level of competence improves as a nation. Additionally, Singapore keeps pace with present times, and it evolves with changing needs. Take the service industry for example; to encourage a more service-oriented industry, the government has created more Service awards to recognize the service industry through Go-The-Extra-Mile-for-Services (GEMS). In terms of tourism, Singapore recognized the lack of natural beauty and replaces the lack of it with man-made beauty like a clean and beautify skyline. One of the things tourists do not see often is the constant maintenance of these buildings, roads, and the green environment. This is part of Anholt’s theory of building provenance for the nation, it takes time and patience to build, and whatever that was done in the past, has now become part of the country’s brand image.
Conclusions

Summary

Based on Anholt’s competitive identity, there are six pathways: tourism, brands, policy, investment, culture, and people. If one were to evaluate Singapore in each of these pathways, one can see that Singapore has some of the elements in place but it lacks certain cohesiveness. The Singapore government has invested time and money to nurture all of these sectors. In the tourism sector, even with the Uniquely Singapore campaign, the stakeholders need to buy into the concept that nation branding would help the nation prosper further. Think of it this way, in a hospitality corporation, to deliver excellent service, each and every one of the employees has to believe in the hotel vision statement. The frontline employees must buy into the corporate culture and the management has to embrace the culture as well. Every department of the hotel needs to work together to render great service. If the sales team tells the hotel guests how great the hotel is, and the front desk were rude, the hotel guest would be dissatisfied. In other words, every stakeholder of the country has to work towards the common goal so that the country’s brand has the ability to compete in the global market. The brands of export product and services in Singapore are limited partly due to the high cost of living here. The “Made in Singapore” products are in the biomedical science, chemicals, electronics, precision engineering, and transport engineering sectors. In culture, Singapore focuses on performance art (Theatre, and Dance) more than Visual arts. The museums in Singapore by and large focus on Asian art, and the contemporary art scene lack luster. If Singapore wants to compete globally, it has to have an open mind. In investments, Lucus Arts and Microsoft has set up offices here and most recently, Singapore has anchored Marina Bay
Sands and Resort World as the two mega integrated resorts. In governance, it has been competent but there is a lack of communications. Individual agencies have their own mission and they pull away from each other. If nation branding was adopted, these agencies will have to more cohesive.

Singapore should embark on nation branding because it has many elements somewhat in place. Singapore tries to stay current and relevant; and it evolves with the present global environment. Singapore is competing for affluent residents (investment) and tourists. Singapore has hosted the first F1 event and will be hosting for the next few years, and is also working towards hosting more international events like the Youth Olympics in 2010. All these efforts are to increase inbound tourism for tourism receipts, attract foreign investments, enhance political influence internationally, and seek to stimulate export growth. By and large, Singapore should take on nation branding to position itself to compete in the global market.

As discuss earlier, the present brand identity of Singapore is indistinct. Singapore needs to define its own brand identity. From that identity, have all the stakeholders work towards a cohesive brand. There should also be a flow of communications to share a common goal. Transparency is essential in this communication process to keep things on track.

_Suggestion for future research_

Singapore need to identify and recognized its own identity. Without clarifying this, nation branding is not possible. Singapore has some form of identity but it is quite
difficult to pin down what it is because it is still in the growing stage as a nation. Having said that, Singapore should first research, and find out what is the public’s view on Singapore’s identity. While doing perception survey on tourists provide an insight of what the tourists think of Singapore, it seems that there is a lack of information regarding the perception of its citizens. On the STB website, there was a write up on how the branding of Uniquely Singapore came about. It appears that the “trade” people (people within the tourism sector) were interviewed, and these trade people thought positively about the campaign. In hindsight, the interviews should be extended to include lay people to get a well-rounded view. After all, it is the laymen that make up the bulk of the nation.

As mentioned earlier, Singapore has little distinctiveness to separate itself from Malaysia, Hong Kong, and other neighboring countries. However, Singapore has a distinct strength, and it is politically safe and sound. Research could be done to ascertain how to portray this in the branding campaign. Additionally, the Singapore public transport is another strength because it provides great convenience to get around. The Mass Rapid Transport is phenomenal. It is safe (unlike Paris), it is clean (unlike New York), and it is easy to use. The food court in Singapore is unique. It offers good, affordable food in a clean and cool environment. This is a feature quite unique to Singapore.

There is a strong case to argue for the nation branding of Singapore. The initial research and surveys conducted thus far is not in depth enough and does not provide a
good and thorough understanding of the brand identity of Singapore. To successfully compete in the global market, nation branding is crucial. To successfully nation brand, Singapore will require more foundation data.
REFERENCE


http://www.simonanholt.com/Publications/publications-other-articles.aspx


https://www.stbpassport.com/boardroom_mar09_s1.aspx


Appendix 1

Offices of STB

Americas
   New York, USA
   Los Angeles, USA

Europe
   Frankfurt, Germany
   London, UK

South Asia
   Mumbai, India
   Delhi, India
   Chennai, India

Middle East
   Dubai, UAE
   Destination Marketing & Promotional Activities
   Middle East – Destination Ad Campaign

Greater China
   Beijing, China
   Shanghai, China
   Chengdu, Sichuan, China
   Guangzhou, China
   Hong Kong, China

Taiwan
   Taipei, Taiwan

ASEAN
   Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
   Bangkok, Thailand
   IndoChina, Vietnam

ASEAN (INLANDS)
   Jakarta, Indonesia
   Medan, Indonesia
   Manila, Phillippines

Oceania
   Sydney, Australia
   Auckland (Marketing Representative), New Zealand