



Sindhudurg's Syndrome: A Paradox of Paucity Amongst Plenty and Call for Sindhudurg's Branding: A Strategic Solution

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Abstract: Branding in colloquial language is considered as synonym to marketing, product development etc. the researcher in this paper has made an attempt first to decipher this myth. Tourism business boasts to be the creator, of highest number of direct and indirect employment as well as it makes up the largest slice of the national GDP. In spite of such glitter, this sector demands that it must be dealt with caution and care. One of the major challenges faced by this business is that if the tourists destinations are not managed and promoted properly, sustainability cannot be assured. The destination will lose interest in the minds of the tourist, there will be erosion in the number of tourist arrivals at such destinations and ultimately destination will face the threat of getting stagnated, depleted and gradually will be only a history. The second attempt made by the researcher is to highlight the importance of branding as one plus strategy in promoting sustainable tourism business. Branding can prove as a very effective and efficient tool to attract tourists to such well branded destination. Branding can offer plethora of benefits, both monetary as well as psychological to each and every segment of the stakeholders associated with this business. This paper is conceptual in nature and researcher seeks the help of the conceptual frame work of brand image for tourism industry to suggest this frame work for the development of brand image of Sindhudurg district as a sustainable tourist destination of choice equally for domestic as well as international tourists.

Key Words: Branding, Sustainable, Colloquial, Depleted, Plethora.

1. Introduction:

The success of any product, tangible or intangible depends upon scientific blending of many factors. One of the major components that assure this success is the percolation of a particular brand (in a particular segment) in the minds of the consumers. Larger the base of consumers and deeper the percolation in their minds, higher would be rate of success. The success of a product depends on branding i.e. $*Sp = f(B)$

Where Sp = Success of a Product, f = function and B = Branding.

*(Source: Conceptualized by Author)

Branding is a tool, a gambit, a philosophy to gain place in the minds of the tourists and conquer their hearts. The game of marketing is to ensure consumer satisfaction. Satisfaction is defined as the pleasure that you feel when you do something or get something that you wanted or needed to do or get. It is given by the relation

$$*St = Pv + Pa$$

Where St = Satisfaction, P = Perception, v = visualized and a = achieved

*(Source: Conceptualized by Author)

Thus satisfaction is a feeling of contentment over the fulfillment of some perception of the consumer. Branding thus plays the vital role firstly, of developing positive perception in the



minds of consumers and secondly delivering the perceived product. The cumulative effect is 100% satisfaction.

2. Definition of terms:

- 2a) Product:** A product can be classified as any tangible or intangible item of utility to the user. The tangible products are called goods and the intangible ones are called services. The production of products both, tangible or intangible involve certain amount of costs involving, money, time and labor. These products are therefore, sold at a price by the producer. The price is determined by the producer or price regulating authority like the government or the market forces prevailing during the period of sale. The price is also determined by the quality, quantity type of raw material used and other such characteristics involved with the particular product. Every product that is produced has its own life during which it provides the necessary utility to the user, thereafter, it has to be refurbished, re-launched or re- invented to relate to the changing tastes, preferences of the modern consumers without losing its core values.(Times, 2021)
- 2b) Brand:** American Marketing Association defines (1960) brand as “A name, term, design, symbol, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from competitors.” In other words brands are a means to differentiate from the competitors (or future competitors (Mishra, 2012)
- 2c) Branding:** According to definition Retrieved from <https://heidicohen.com/30-branding-definitions/> “Branding is endowing products and services with the power of a brand” (Kotler & Keller, 2015) define, the process of giving a meaning to specific products by creating and shaping a brand in consumers’ minds is called branding. It is a strategy planned by the firms to help the consumers identify their products and manufacturers and give them a reason to choose their products over the competition’s, by clarifying what this particular brand is and is not. The objective is to attract and retain loyal customers by delivering a product that is always aligned with what the brand promises” (Cohen, 2011)
- 2d) Marketing:** Dr. Philip Kotler defines **marketing** as “the science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desires. It defines measures and quantifies the size of the identified market and the profit potential. It pinpoints which segments the company is capable of serving best and it designs and promotes the appropriate products and services.” (Kotler, 2011)

3. Difference between:

3a) Product and Brand

Laymen use both the terms i.e. product and brand at par, however, there is a distinct difference between these concepts:

- i) Every product is a goods or service manufactured by the organization with the prime objective of selling the produce in the market. A brand is creating the distinct entity like logo, symbol, name or some unique form to ensure that such product can be uniquely distinguished among the competing products available in the market.
- ii) Products satisfy the needs of the customers. Brands on the other hand don’t just satiate customers’ needs but they satisfy customers’ wants.
- iii) Products can be duplicated, copied with ease, however, it is never possible to create exactly same or twin brand.
- iv) Products belonging to a particular category perform same function and fulfill similar needs of the target customer. Brand on the other hand creates a unique feeling that’s distinct from other brands.
- v) Products are created by organizations while brands are created by the customers’.



- vi) Product with the passing of time faces the challenge of becoming obsolete. Whereas, brands are long lived. With the passing of time brand gains more flavor.
- vii) One does not fall in love with products, but, we fall in love with brands.
- viii) Products comprise of functions, ingredients and needs. Brands comprise of promises, emotions and wants. (Surbhi, 2018)

3b) Marketing and Branding:

Explaining the difference between marketing and branding precisely would be arduous task even for those who are in this. However one must have the clarity of these concepts to tap the potential of the product and market thereby achieve the desired goals.

- i) It would be very apt to differentiate marketing as the difference between moon and sun. Moon is an attractive rock that orbits the planet earth and reflects the light of sun. That is marketing, whereas, Sun is the source of light, life and warmth. That's what exactly a brand is.
- ii) Marketing is the message conveyed by the organization while a brand is who you are.
- iii) Marketing is secondary activity and Branding is the primary activity.
- iv) The organization own their marketing on the other side brands are owned by the consumers.
- v) Marketing is how. Branding is why.
- vi) Marketing is short-term. Branding is long-term.
- vii) Marketing is micro. Branding is macro.
- viii) Marketing defines tactics. Branding defines trajectory.
- ix) Marketing drives periodic sales. Branding drives an enduring reputation.
- x) Marketing is the reason someone thought to buy in the first place. Branding is the reason someone buys.
- xi) Marketing generates response. Branding builds loyalty.
- xii) Marketing extracts values. Branding creates value.
- xiii) Marketing is the doing. Branding is the being. Bottom of form. (Newsletter, n.d.)

4. Objectives:

- i) To study the concept of branding and its significance in tourism industry.
- ii) To have clarity of the terms sustainability
- iii) To understand pin-pointed difference between brand management and product management.
- iv) To comprehend distinct difference between branding and marketing.
- v) To give suggestions for effective strategy for resource mobilization in tourism.

5. Limitations:

- i) This research is purely based on secondary data.
- ii) Due to limitation of words of the paper there is restriction on elaborate explanation.

6. Method of Data Collection:

The researcher relied mainly on secondary data, collecting information from research papers, reference books, various reports, theses, newsletters, dictionaries, thesaurus etc.

7. Review of Literature:

- ❖ Iryna Markina, and Mariana Drogomyretska, in their paper, "The Role of Branding in the Sustainable Development of Tourist Destination" have highlighted the importance of branding in promoting the tourist destinations. They have advocated that branding facilitates developing a positive image of a particular destination in the minds of the consumers that is distinct from the image built by the competitors. Branding portrays an image that matches with the psyche of the tourist consumers that motivate to visit branded tourist destinations. (DROGOMYRETSKA, 2014)



- ❖ Marcello Risitano in her thesis “The role of destination branding in the tourism stakeholders system. The Campi Flegrei case 1” has analyzed the impact of branding of a particular tourist destination in Italy. She through her study has authentically proved that branding helps to attract tourist to any tourist destination and develop their loyalty. (Risitano, n.d.)

8. Potential of Sindhudurg district to develop as an emerging tourism destination:

8a) Profile of Sindhudurg District:

S.NO.	PARAMETER	DESCRIPTION
01.	Status	First Tourism District of India.
02.	Established	May 01, 1981.
03.	Location	North 15°37' to 16°40' latitudes and East 73°19' to 74°13' longitudes.
04.	Situation	Surrounded by on west is the Arabian sea, on east lies Sahyadri hill range as well as Kolhapur district, on the northern side is Ratnagiri district, on southern side we have border of state of Goa and Belgavi district of Karnataka state is on south- east.
05.	Area	5207 km ² .
07.	Population (2011 census)	According to the 2011 census Sindhudurg district has a population of 849,651, roughly equal to the nation of Qatar.
08.	Density	163 inhabitant's p.s.km.
09.	Growth Rate	2.21% (2001-2011)
10.	Sex Ratio	1037 females for every 1000 males which is second highest in Maharashtra,
11.	Literacy rate	85.56%.
12.	Language	Malvani (local), Marathi, Hindi, English
13.	Tourist Attractions	Land of 5-S i.e. Sun, Stars, Sea, Sand and Spirituality This part of the globe must be the god's most favorite region because almighty has bestowed upon this land the fertility and rich nature comprising of rivers, lakes, 121 kms. of seacoast, beaches, forts, temples, fairs, Sahayadri hill range, rich bio-diversity, 24x7x365 days of greenery and pristine air.
14.	Transportation	Well connected by Roads, Railways, Water and Air. Gives domestic as well as international access.
16.	Tourist Season	Every season offers distinct activities and engagements.
17.	USP	Unique Culture, Cuisine
18.	Slogan	"Yeva Konkan Apalch Asa"

Source: Compiled by Author

8 b) Sindhudurg District - Paradox of Paucity among Plenty: A Syndrome

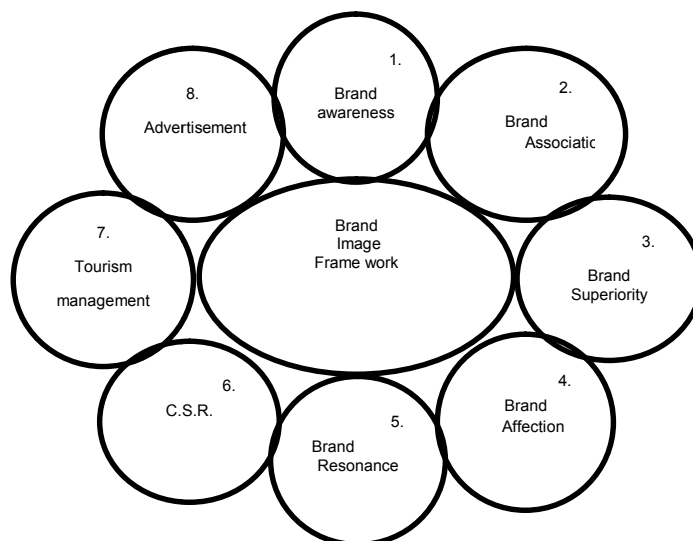
Analysis of the profile will make the Sindhudurgian proud and others jealous looking at the partiality done by the almighty. God must be in great mood to bestow upon his choicest blessings to this part of the planet. The bounties are unlimited. This region has such great potential that the district can take pride in telling every tourist, “You name it and the district has it.” This region has long history and tradition for the posterity to boast. Since 1981, it has the privilege of being the first tourism district of India. Tourist flock to the friendly neighborhood Goa passing through this district. Much water has gone by in the past 37 years, but one is left to wonder whether Sindhudurg is really a tourist destination or a gateway to Goa. This district has everything that other populous tourist destinations have. Goa, Kerala have the same Arabian Sea, similar climate, unique culture and cuisine, in spite of all abundance and synonymy, what lures the tourist to go again and again to these states? What

paucity does Sindhudurg district have? What are the gaps? What lacunae? The researcher after diagnosing the problem comes to conclude that Sindhudurg is facing the problem of branding syndrome. Hence facing the paradox of paucity among plenty

9. Strategy for Developing Sindhudurg as Brand for Tourist Destination:

Much water has passed in past 38 years since Sindhudurg district was declared as the first tourism district of India. This destination and the stakeholders could not take the advantage of retaining tourist going to Goa. In all these years one can observe that the numbers of tourists are increasing over the period, but this growth is restricted to few pockets, more than 99% of tourist are domestic and of these large majority belongs to natives. Even though efforts are taken to ensure growth and development of this region something is missing. Some spice is lacking, something is falling short in the recipe.

The paper envisages a conceptual framework for building brand image of Sindhudurg district as a tourist destination. This framework focuses on eight areas. First six avenues comprise of the precursors and next two are the mediators that would provide the necessary impetus for boosting the brand image.



Source: (Adapted from Latif et al. (2014 & 2015). Problems and Perspectives in Management, Volume 14, Issue 2, 2016) (Wasib Bin latif, Md. Aminul Islam, Idris Mdnoor, Mahadzirah Mohamad, 2016)

9.1 Brand Awareness:

The first step for any action is the awareness about that particular concept. Brand is a distinct and concrete identity about a product. It means the possibility that tourists are acquainted about the life and availability of the product. Awareness would also be understood as the magnitude to which tourists precisely associate the brand with the specific product. A rigorous exercise is necessary for understanding the real DNA of this district and only then a strong image can be sketched to create awareness about the destination in the minds of the tourists. There are three types of brand awareness as argued by Kapferer:

i) Aided awareness. ii) Unaided Awareness iii) Top of Mind Awareness (Immediate brand recall) (Haaften, 2017) (Wasib Bin latif, Md. Aminul Islam, Idris Mdnoor, Mahadzirah Mohamad, 2016)



9.2 Brand Association:

It is an association which the tourists develop in their mind about the brand. It really does not mean the benefits that can be sought but it is more intangible in nature. Such associations are nurtured on the basis of the perception that the tourists have about a particular product. Brand associations can be positive or negative. The organizations must at all costs avoid negative associations. Brand associations can be established by adopting various techniques like logos, color scheme, jingles, mascots, features of the product, price, and tourist experience. One can say that the products brand association is strong if the customer demands the product by its brand name rather than general or generic name (Guide, n.d.) (Wasib Bin latif, Md. Aminul Islam, Idris Mdnoor, Mahadzirah Mohamad, 2016)

9.3 Brand Superiority:

It is universal truth that there are no facts. There are only perceptions. One school of thought advocates the importance of product and other focuses on the brand. The products can give very limited mileage in winning the marketing war in the cut throat competing world. Brands well- built can give the winning edge because brands build appropriate perceptions. Products can be imitated, improvised but perception is near to impossible to be copied. The success mantra proposes that timing is very important. Hence brand leaders always strive to be first than to be better. Similarly the brand leaders also believe it is better to be different rather than trying to be better. No brand can be superior unless the product is market leader and vice versa. Al Ries, said, "Having a Better Brand Is Better than Having a Better Product". And "Perception Isn't Always Half the Battle; Sometimes It's the Entire Battle". (Ries, 2014) (Wasib Bin latif, Md. Aminul Islam, Idris Mdnoor, Mahadzirah Mohamad, 2016)

9.4 Brand Affection:

Means the potential of a brand for gaining positive reaction from the tourists as an effect using the product. Brand affection is judged to be the tourists' favorable or unfavorable evaluation of a brand. It involves lot of mental values like emotions mixed with brand image which are related with brand personality. There are many ways to measure brand affection such as the way (4D) which contains namely distinctiveness, differentiation, defendable, desirable. It needs to be pointed out that a brand must be distinct from all tourist products and services which the target tourists are met with. In this way, by its unique and differentiated communication, the brand can have wide and powerful competitive advantage, and its strategies and assets express clearly individuals' real intentions. Brand also should have a unique power by presenting brand equity. (Wasib Bin latif, Md. Aminul Islam, Idris Mdnoor, Mahadzirah Mohamad, 2016)

9.5 Brand Resonance:

"Brand resonance can be understood as the relationship that a consumer has with the product and how well the consumer can relate to it. Brand resonance requires four pre-requisites viz. Brand identification, brand establishment, stimulating response, building strong response. In order that the prerequisites are accomplished six brand building blocks must be followed:

- i) **Brand Salience:** means how well the customer is informed about the product and the frequency with which it is induced while taking purchase decision.
- ii) **Brand Performance:** would refer to how appropriately the product is performing and the extent to which the need of the consumer is satiated.
- iii) **Brand Imagery:** means the nature of image that gets created in the minds of the consumer.
- iv) **Brand Judgment:** suggests the decision taken by the consumer regarding the product in relation to perceived quality, Credibility, consideration and superiority.
- v) **Brand Feelings:** means, what are the feelings of the consumer and how he is emotionally attached to the product?



- vi) **Brand Resonance:** This is the final level. It means the psychological bond that the consumer has established with the product.”(Jargons, n.d.) (Wasib Bin latif, Md. Aminul Islam, Idris Mdnoor, Mahadzirah Mohamad, 2016)

9.6 Corporate Social Responsibility:

Business Dictionary defines CSR as "A company's sense of responsibility towards the community and environment (both ecological and social) in which it operates. Companies express this citizenship (1) through their waste and pollution reduction processes, (2) by contributing educational and social programs and (3) by earning adequate returns on the employed resources.” Jhon Elkington coined the term ‘Triple Bottom Line’ as a tool to assess CSR. People suggest fair and just labor practices. Planet refers to sustainable environmental practices and profit means the economic value created by the organization. CSR acts as a valuable guide for the company to decide what it represents to its consumers. (Wasib Bin latif, Md. Aminul Islam, Idris Mdnoor, Mahadzirah Mohamad, 2016)

9.7 Tourism Management:

Tourism management refers to the executive function of enterprises, associations and public authorities that market tourism services for potential consumers. (Wasib Bin latif, Md. Aminul Islam, Idris Mdnoor, Mahadzirah Mohamad, 2016)

9.8 Advertisement:

The main objective of advertisement is to create product image and directly pursue customers to purchase product. Advertisement plays a key role to build a product position into the marketplace. Tourism marketers use advertising media to establish and occupy a product position into the mind of customers. (Wasib Bin latif, Md. Aminul Islam, Idris Mdnoor, Mahadzirah Mohamad, 2016)

10. Conclusion:

In this perspective, along with antecedents of brand image which is moderated by the degree of advertisement that enhances brand image for tourism industry.

If we look at both the concepts superficially, product and brand appear to be synonymous. The paper has highlighted in depth the distinctness between the two terms. Of the two Brands is a wider term. A product gets ingrained in the minds of consumer only because of its brand. Brand is not just a name but an image associated with reliability, credibility and quality that give sense of contentment to the consumers. To conclude in the words of Cheryl Burges “A brand is the reason to choose. Similarly Al Ries quotes, “A **brand** is a singular idea or concept that you own inside the mind of a prospect.”

11. Suggestions:

- i) Meticulously work out the uniqueness thoroughly of Sindhudurg district.
- ii) Develop appropriate and motivating mission and vision statement that will help to develop appropriate brand.
- iii) Scrupulously implement the strategy for building brand image.

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