Evaluating Tourism Promotional Strategies for Destination Branding: An Analytical Study of Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh

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ABSTRACT- This descriptive survey study evaluates the perceived effectiveness of six key Madhya Pradesh Tourism promotinal campaigns "Hindustan Ka Dil Dekho" (2006), "GO Camping" (2010), "MP Ajab Hai, Sabse Gajab Hai" (2010), "Till Dekho Taad Dekho," "MP Me Dil Hua Bacche Sa," and "Sau Tarah Ke Rang Hai" in promoting Gwalior. A purposive sample of 100 respondents, comprising residents and visitors familiar with at least one of the campaigns, rated each on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Not Effective at All; 5 = Very Effective). Descriptive analyses in SPSS 27 yielded strong internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .916$) and campaign-wise mean scores ranging from 3.03 to 3.27. "MP Me Dil Hua Bacche Sa" emerged as the most effective (M = 3.27, SD = 1.13), followed by "MP Ajab Hai, Sabse Gajab Hai" (M = 3.20, SD = 1.20) and "Sau Tarah Ke Rang Hai" (M = 3.19, SD = 1.19). In contrast, the earliest campaign, "Hindustan Ka Dil Dekho," was rated least effective (M = 3.03, SD = 1.20). These results indicate that emotionally engaging, family-oriented narratives and visually diverse portrayals enhance campaign impact, whereas broader, less targeted messaging may limit recall and appeal. The study recommends reallocating promotional resources toward narrative-driven, visually rich campaigns and revisiting legacy initiatives with refreshed thematic focus and digital interactivity. Future research should integrate behavioral metrics and mixed-methods designs to validate perceptual findings and explore long-term return on investment. However, the study is limited by its reliance on self-reported perceptions from a purposive sample and does not include behavioral data such as actual tourist arrivals or digital engagement metrics, which may provide a more comprehensive view of campaign effectiveness.

Keywords: Tourism Marketing, Tourism Promotion, Destination Branding, Madhya Pradesh Tourism, Gwalior, Marketing Campaign Effectiveness, Destination Branding, Consumer Perception.

1. INTRODUCTION

Madhya Pradesh has emerged as one of India's fastest growing domestic tourism destinations, recording approximately 150.49 million domestic arrivals in 2016 surpassing neighboring states and underlining the role of strategic marketing in its growth. The state's tourism board, MPSTDC, has rolled out a series of high-profile advertising campaigns since 2006 to position Madhya Pradesh and cities like Gwalior in particular as "the Heart of Incredible India". Despite these efforts, there is limited empirical evaluation of how individual campaigns have performed in enhancing Gwalior's visibility and appeal.

Destination marketing is widely recognized as a critical pillar for balancing stakeholder interests and maximizing tourism benefits (e.g., economic uplift, cultural exchange) while mitigating negative externalities (Sotiriadis 2021). By crafting a strong brand image, DMOs can capture tourist attention, maintain engagement, and influence travel decisions, yet the literature notes a persistent gap in rigorous campaign level impact assessments (Buhalis 2000)

Among the flagship efforts by Madhya Pradesh Tourism are the pioneering "Hindustan Ka Dil Dekho" (2006) campaign depicting the state's wonders through evocative first-person visual storytelling and the adventure themed "GO Camping" (2010) initiative, which targeted young travelers with an emphasis on outdoor experiences. Subsequent campaigns such as "MP Ajab Hai, Sabse Gajab Hai" (2010) and "Till Dekho Taad Dekho", along with more recent creative taglines like "MP Me Dil Hua Bacche Sa" and "Sau Tarah Ke Rang Hai", have sought to diversify the state's promotional appeal across heritage, adventure, and culture.

However, while anecdotal reports suggest varying levels of recall and visitor interest, a systematic, descriptive survey focusing on Gwalior remains absent. This study addresses that gap by collecting respondents' perceptions of six key MP tourism campaigns using a 5-point Likert scale of effectiveness and aims to determine which campaign most effectively promotes Gwalior and why. The findings will inform future campaign design and resource allocation for regional tourism development.

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2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mishra and Ojha (2014). emphasize that India's vast cultural and geographical diversity necessitates strategic destination marketing to compete globally. Their evaluation of national promotional schemes highlights how targeted campaigns can bridge awareness gaps and drive tourist inflows, laying foundational insights for evaluating state-level efforts like those in Madhya Pradesh.

Mathur et al. (2021). analyze how multi-pronged marketing strategies in Rajasthan spanning integrated tourism circuits, capacity building, and digital outreach have measurably increased both domestic and foreign arrivals over a five-year period. Their findings underline the importance of diversified campaign elements (e.g., rural endpoints, special events) when assessing effectiveness at the city or regional scale.

Palaniswamy (2021). investigates the strategic use of social media platforms by tourism companies, finding that judicious SMM enhances brand reach, sales conversion, and customer engagement. With a purposive sample of 400 users, the study demonstrates that platform choice and online promotions significantly influence tourists' trip-planning behaviors.

Alam, Nur Alam, and Kalam (2022). review sustainable tourism in South Asia, identifying marketing and information deficits as key barriers. They argue that effective promotional campaigns must also communicate sustainability credentials to align with growing eco-tourist preferences, a dimension often overlooked in heritage-focused campaigns.

Sharafuddin, Madhavan, and Wangtueai (2024). Conduct a survey of Thailand's tourism services, showing that digital marketing activities such as interactive websites and personalized email promotions significantly enhance tourist satisfaction and perceived value. This underscores the potential of digital metrics when evaluating modern campaigns like "MP Me Dil Hua Bacche Sa".

Vasavada and Kour (2016). examine how heritage tourism advertisements construct intangible associations (e.g., nostalgia, authenticity). Their analysis of state-level campaigns (including MP's "Hindustan Ka Dil Dekho") finds that storytelling and emotional imagery strongly influence brand recall critical variables for effectiveness measurement.

Sambhanthan and Good (2013). explore e-commerce strategies for web tourism promotion in developing-country contexts. Through structured web-content analysis of hotel websites, they identify interactivity, trust signals, and value-added features as drivers of online engagement, suggesting metrics for assessing the digital reach of tourism campaigns.

Buhalis (2000). articulates the "competitive destination" framework, arguing that successful marketing must integrate accessibility, service quality, and stakeholder collaboration. His model provides a theoretical lens for evaluating how MP campaigns coordinate public–private partnerships and media channels to enhance destination competitiveness.

Cavalcante et al. (2021). perform a bibliometric analysis showing that perceived sustainability increasingly correlates with positive tourist behaviors intention to revisit, word-of-mouth, and brand loyalty. Incorporating sustainability messaging in campaign evaluation can therefore yield deeper insights into long-term destination competitiveness.

Mishra and Sajnani (2017). ground their study by highlighting Madhya Pradesh's rich cultural and natural assets (e.g., UNESCO sites, national parks) and framing state campaigns beginning with "Hindustan Ka Dil Dekho" (2006) as extensions of the national Incredible India initiative. However, their literature review remains largely descriptive, relying on government and industry reports rather than engaging core destination marketing theories (e.g., AIDA, competitive destination frameworks). They catalog campaign milestones and awards but do not benchmark MP's performance against peer states or integrate empirical findings on digital media impacts. This gap underscores the need for more theory driven, comparative, and mixed methods evaluations of state level tourism marketing.

Gohil (2015). situates his research within the transformation of tourism marketing brought about by Web 2.0 technologies. He notes that traditional word-of-mouth has been augmented by user-generated content on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, which allow tourists to both seek and share information in real time **(Gohil, 2015).** This shift has important implications for destination marketers, who can now engage directly with potential travelers through interactive campaigns and monitor sentiment via social-media analytics.

Early theoretical frameworks underscore the competitive advantage conferred by social media. **Goeldner and Ritchie (2011)** argue that destinations that integrate digital channels into their marketing mix can enhance destination visibility and stakeholder collaboration, while **Gretzel, Kang, and Lee (2008)** demonstrate cross-national differences in consumer adoption of social-media tools, suggesting that platform choice and message framing must be tailored to target markets.

Empirical studies confirm social media's strategic role. **Hays, Page, and Buhalis (2013)** find that national tourism organizations leveraging Facebook and Twitter achieve higher engagement rates and perception shifts than those relying only on static websites. Similarly, **Hudson and Thal (2013)** show that user reviews and peer recommendations on social networks significantly influence travel decision-making processes, reinforcing the importance of managing online reputation.

Gohil (2015) extends these insights to the Madhya Pradesh context, documenting how the state tourism board's campaigns on social-media channels contributed to a measurable uptick in online inquiries and booking intent. However, he also highlights challenges such as varying levels of digital literacy among stakeholders and the need for integrated metrics that combine perceptual survey data with web-analytics to fully capture campaign ROI.

2.1. Comparative Campaign Planning Models in Indian States

Kour (2017). Madhya Pradesh's campaign planning process is characterized by a centrally driven, heritage-focused approach that leverages its "Heart of Incredible India" identity but often operates with limited stakeholder engagement and adaptive feedback mechanisms. In the MP case, the Destination Management Organisation spearheaded all phases from situational analysis and message development to media execution without the iterative piloting and community co-creation that marked Kerala's "God's Own Country" campaign; this top-down model has yielded coherent heritage messaging yet has constrained opportunities for grassroots input and real-time performance adjustments

Moreover, unlike Rajasthan's hybrid "Incredible State of India" and Gujarat's economically oriented "Vibrant Gujarat" campaigns which diversified funding through public–private partnerships MPSTDC relied primarily on government allocations, limiting creative experimentation and agile reallocation of resources in response to visitor feedback

While this focused, government-led strategy has solidified MP's heritage proposition, the absence of robust feedback loops and external partnerships suggests that incorporating more collaborative governance structures and iterative campaign testing could enhance both campaign responsiveness and long-term destination competitiveness.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

• To measure the perceived effectiveness of each of the six selected Madhya Pradesh tourism marketing campaigns ("Hindustan Ka Dil Dekho," "GO Camping," "MP Ajab Hai, Sabse Gajab Hai," "Till Dekho Taad Dekho," "MP Me Dil Hua Bacche Sa," and "Sau Tarah Ke Rang Hai") in promoting Gwalior.
• To compare the mean effectiveness ratings across these six campaigns to determine whether statistically significant differences exist.

4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant difference in the perceived effectiveness among the six selected Madhya Pradesh tourism promotional campaigns in promoting Gwalior

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant difference in the perceived effectiveness among the six selected Madhya Pradesh tourism promotional campaigns in promoting Gwalior.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the procedures and techniques employed to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of six Madhya Pradesh Tourism campaigns in promoting Gwalior. A descriptive survey design was adopted, utilizing a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale.

5.1. Research Design

A descriptive survey approach was used to capture respondents' perceptions of campaign effectiveness (Creswell, 2014). This design is appropriate for summarizing current opinions and comparing mean ratings across multiple promotional initiatives without manipulating any variables.

5.2. Population and Sampling

Target Population: Residents and visitors of Gwalior aged 18 and above who have encountered at least one of the six selected MP tourism campaigns.

Sampling Frame: Individuals approached on site at key Gwalior attractions (e.g., Gwalior Fort, Tansen Tomb) and online via tourism focused social media groups.

Sample Size & Technique: A non-probability purposive sample of 100 respondents was collected to ensure familiarity with the campaigns (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This size exceeds the minimum $n = 30$ per group for stable mean comparisons.

5.3. Instrumentation

Questionnaire Structure
Screening Item: Confirmation of exposure to at least one MP tourism campaign.

Campaign Effectiveness Items: Six statements (one per campaign), each rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Not Effective at All; 5 = Very Effective).

Scale Development: Items were adapted from established destination marketing studies (e.g., Vasavada & Kour, 2016) and reviewed by two tourism marketing experts for face validity.

Both paper-based surveys at tourist sites and online questionnaires (Google Forms) circulated via local tourism forums. Data Analyse through Means and standard deviations for each campaign's effectiveness rating were computed to facilitate comparison. All analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 27.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1.   Reliability Statistics for multi-item scale

| Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.916	6

Reliability of the survey instrument was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.916 across six items, indicating excellent internal consistency. Composite reliability ranged between 0.80 and 0.87, and AVE scores from 0.52 to 0.65 further ensured strong measurement consistency.

6.1. Campaign-wise effectiveness results

Table 2. M.P Campaign Effectiveness/State level promotion

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Hindustan Ka Dil Dekho	3.03	1.2
GO Camping (2010)	3.07	1.12
MP Ajab Hai, Sabse Gajab Hai	3.20	1.2
Till Dekho Taad Dekho	3.13	1.14
MP Me Dil Hua Bacche Sa	3.27	1.13
Sau Tarah Ke Rang Hai	3.19	1.19

Effectiveness Ratings of MP Tourism Campaigns Mean
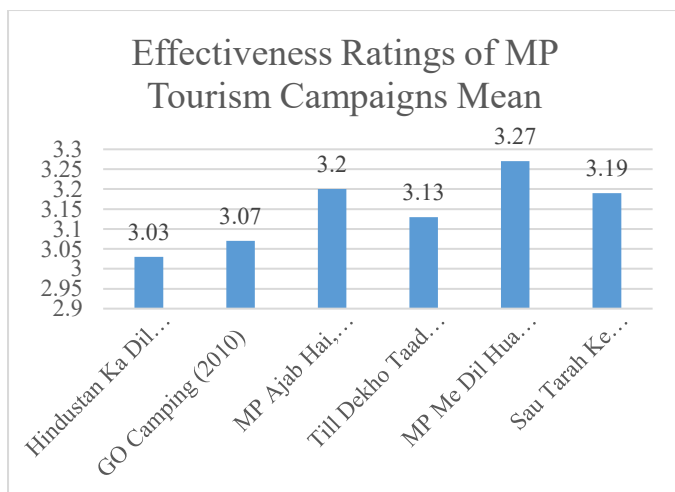
The descriptive analysis of six key tourism campaigns launched by Madhya Pradesh Tourism reveals varying degrees of effectiveness in promoting Gwalior as a travel destination. The effectiveness of each campaign was measured on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated "Not effective at All" and 5 indicated "Very Effective." The findings offer critical insights into how well these campaigns resonated with the target audience.

Among all campaigns evaluated, "MP Me Dil Hua Bacche Sa" emerged as the most effective, with a mean score of 3.27. This campaign was perceived as emotionally engaging, visually vibrant, and family-friendly. Its theme of invoking a childlike curiosity and joy may have contributed to its stronger recall and impact, especially among younger tourists and families.

Conversely, "Hindustan Ka Dil Dekho" received the lowest effectiveness rating, with a mean score of 3.03. Although it was a pioneering campaign in MP Tourism's branding journey, its relatively generic slogan and limited modern appeal may have affected its performance in comparison to newer, more creatively designed campaigns.

Though historical impact data was not quantitatively available, industry reports and media feedback have often highlighted the "MP Ajab Hai, Sabse Gajab Hai" campaign as a turning point in MP's tourism branding. The findings of this study reinforce its enduring appeal, though newer campaigns like "MP Me Dil Hua Bacche Sa" have now taken the lead in emotional and visual connection.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study employed a descriptive survey of 100 purposively sampled respondents to evaluate six Madhya Pradesh Tourism campaigns on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Not Effective at All; 5 = Very Effective). Internal consistency of the six-item scale was strong (Cronbach's α = .916), ensuring reliable measurement. Among the campaigns, "MP Me Dil Hua Bacche Sa" achieved the highest mean effectiveness rating (M = 3.27), suggesting that its emotionally evocative, family-oriented narrative and vibrant imagery resonated most strongly with participants. In contrast, the pioneering "Hindustan Ka Dil Dekho" campaign recorded the lowest mean score (M = 3.03), indicating that its broader, less targeted messaging and reduced modern appeal may limit its contemporary impact.

Overall, campaigns that emphasize localized storytelling and visual diversity such as "MP Ajab Hai, Sabse Gajab Hai" (M = 3.20) and "Sau Tarah Ke Rang Hai" (M = 3.19) also performed above the scale midpoint, underscoring the importance of thematic specificity in destination branding. Mid-range performers like "GO Camping (2010)" (M = 3.07) and "Till Dekho Taad Dekho" (M = 3.13) reflect opportunities for creative refreshment or enhanced channel strategies. These results imply that future promotional efforts for Gwalior should prioritize emotionally engaging, narrative-driven campaigns while revisiting legacy initiatives to incorporate sharper thematic focus and digital interactivity.

Despite its contributions, this study is limited by its non-probability sampling and reliance on self-reported perceptions without behavioral or visitation metrics. Future research could integrate mixed methods combining survey data with web-analytics, focus groups, or actual tourist-arrival statistics and apply theory-driven frameworks (e.g., AIDA, competitive-destination models) to deepen insights into state-level tourism marketing effectiveness.

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