CHAPTER 4
STRATEGIC DESTINATION BRANDING OF SILK ROUTE FOR MAXIMIZING ITS TOURISM POTENTIAL IN INDIA

It is clear from previous chapters that destination brand communication, destination brand development and destination perception are the main constructs of destination branding. This chapter explores major areas of the tourism along Silk Route in India. The objective of present chapter is to induce a defined knowledge of Indian Silk Route destination(s), their cultural, historical, geographical and economic assets that can be used as a foundation to the development of Silk Route as a tourism destination brand. Consequently, this chapter encompasses the sections regarding tourism along Silk Route, i.e. tourism development and marketing the route as a tourism destination or product.

4.1 INDIAN SILK ROUTE TOURISM OFFERINGS

Today, the tourist selects their destination according to the overall quantity of attractions it has to present, perception that the destination and its brand offers through the overall number of attractions (Meža and Šerić, 2014). The stretch of Silk Route has tremendous assets to offer to tourism sector that needs to be reevaluated and justified to contemporary phenomenon. Tourism destination consideration at first relies on the understanding of the types of tourism and related aesthetic benefits it offers. The linkage of India and its various destinations has already been defined in this thesis (i.e. Chapter1), whereas understanding the tourism concept may provide a refined facet of the study. In addition, according to Olsen (2003), from a visitor’s perspective, a critical mass of attractions is needed to overcome the distance and the Silk route’s alignment, its ecological and natural diversity provides a nationwide continuum of tourism offerings. If in particular, the induced Silk Route sites are taken they may contribute to create an amalgamated tourism package which includes:

4.1.1. Historical/Cultural/Archaeological Tourism

Although destinations along Silk Route are bestowed with cultural heritage and archaeological sites, they have potential to serve many tourists from all over the world as one of magnificent segments of tourism yield. Also Kovács and Martyin, (2013) in their
study has defined thematic routes creation as one of the most spreading technique used for the development of cultural tourism, which categorize the tourist attractions in a spatial configuration, additional guide and information to the tourists. Evidences of heritage and archaeological sites found at various destinations of India contribute to such aspect of tourism. The twelve enlisted archaeological sites by UNESCO located in Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi, U.P, Bihar and Tamil Nadu represents such attribute of tourism. Whereas Uttar Pradesh and Bihar state of India is already on the tourism list for Buddhist circuit. The decrepit Safa Kadal Sarai (Kashmir) which once remained a transit point for Mughal who travelled India for trade purpose via Silk Route (Ashraf, 2007). The archeological site of Harwan is also situated in the district Baramulla of Kashmir region and the ancient sites of Hushkapur (present Ushkur), Parihaspora Buddhist Site (Kashmir), 2,000 years old archaeological sites of Amabaran at Akhnoor (Jammu region) elaborate their importance to cite the definition to Silk route in terms of archaeological or heritage tourism.

4.1.2 Religious Tourism

Aligned with the Silk Route, Indian destinations have immense provision for religious tourism and the same can better be understood with the example of tourism Buddhist trail or circuit of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh Region. The four major spots of Kushinagar, Bodhgaya, Sarnath and Rajgir have attracted more than 90% of domestic tourists and more than 83% of foreign tourists to the trail in only in 2012. Moreover, the number increased continuously at all major sites and majorly to Rajgir/Nalanda increased at 48% and 80% by both domestic Indian and foreign tourists (International Finance Corporation, 2012). Such evaluations provide an outline to the provision for tourism development to linked destinations if promoted at the same time. The list does not get limited over these two regions nonetheless the aligned destinations may provide the niche for tourism along the route. The missing strategy and linkage information to Silk Route has made these destinations available to the tourists as religious destinations and not as Silk Route destinations. Promoting such aspect of these destinations may provide way out to introduce the tourism along the Indian Silk Route.
4.1.3 *Adventure Tourism*

This segment is growing at faster rate and in fact it is estimated that on average, 20 lakh people use to take adventure tourism in India (Maps of India.com, 2015). Stretch of destinations along Himalayas offer sufficient avenues for adventure tourism development. Nubra valley of Leh (Ladakh region) offers tourism services like mountain exploration, camel safari, trekking, rock climbing, camping, mountain biking. Shyonk River at Nubra valley also provides the provision for river rafting. In fact, the complete drive of mountainous Silk Route destinations up to the archaeological site of Ambaran at Akhnoor (Jammu region) has potential for adventure tourism which also includes Gurez valley of Kashmir region and Khardung La and Jelep La of Sikkim.

4.1.4 *Eco-Tourism*

Eco tourism activities are supposedly inclined towards nature and wildlife preservation. Indian Silk Route destinations of J&K and Sikkim have preserved nature amidst Himalayas and are the vicinity of unexplored sites. Such dispersed destinations in the country delineate the ecotourism from east to west part of the country. It is not only these particular sites or destinations like Nubra (Leh, Ladakh), Gurez (Kashmir), Zuluk or Jelep La Pass (Sikkim) that can serve the market with eco tourism practices but the whole region of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh (Jammu & Kashmir state) to Sikkim have the potential for such segment development. As an example, Sikkim has been declared as “Eco-Tourism Destination” by the Tourism Ministry (Government of India) at a national conference organized at Gangtok on December 6, 2009 (Government of Sikkim, 2010).

4.1.5 *Wellness Tourism*

Indian Silk Route destinations are also inclined to add compliments to this segment. Availability of mineral springs, natural herbs etc. at theses destinations may provide different health and benefits to the tourists. The hot water sulphur springs of Nubra valley (Ladakh) and Sikkim offers wellness tourism amenities as sulphur is reputed to cure skin infections and contain other medicinal properties (Manhas and Kour, 2014). Furthermore treks of Ladakh valley, Kashmir valley and Sikkim, pilgrimage and meditation centers of Buddhist circuit that offers the retreat to tourists who travel either for wellness or escape purpose.
4.2 TOURISM POTENTIAL IDENTIFICATION

India’s linkage to Silk Route has already been discussed in previous chapter whereas its potential identification can better be understood with the knowledge of various halts or points or destinations aligned with it. The Silk Road, with its historically renowned name or brand, emerged as a precious resource to be fabricated and developed (Chan and Bauer, n.d.). Considering the tourism potential of the Silk route destinations in India, it has a variety to offer to the tourists of every taste and choice. For the nature and adventure lovers Nubra Valley that lies on the ancient Silk Road that joined the medieval land of Leh (capital of Ladakh), to Central Asia, offers a great opportunity (Rommi, 2010). Moreover Jelep-la was one of the regularly utilized route for trade and the opening of Jelep-la additionally with Nathu-la, would induce a momentum to trade and industry activities (Harris, 2008).

While Uttar Pradesh consists of numerous religious as well as historically famous destinations which attract tourists, the region of Bihar is endowed with of a circuit of Buddhist temples that has huge potential for tourism (Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Report, 2012). In a report submitted to Ministry of Tourism and Government of India in 2012, ILFS (Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services) has analyzed the tourism potential and increase in tourism trend by the Buddhists’ destinations at Uttar Pradesh till 2008 (Refer to Fig. 4.1 and Fig.4.2).

![Tourist Arrival in Buddhist Destinations - U.P.](chart.png)

**Figure 4.1: Tourist arrival trends in Buddhist destinations, Uttar Pradesh**
These estimates (Fig. 4.1 & 4.2) indicate that the three destinations including Gaya (Bodhgaya) Kushinagar, Rajgir and Sarnath are the major sites that enlisted a large figure of tourist visits (including both foreign and domestic) (ILFS, 2012). Whereas, the sites as Sravasti, Sankisa Kapilvastu and Vaishali are also potential destinations that should be developed and promoted as to make the travel along this circuit more vibrant for tourists.

Furthermore analyzing above given data in totality (Table 4.1) for the future tourism potential of these destinations as a circuit may serve to be positive track towards the development process altogether, i.e. Sarnath, Kushinagar, Kapilavastu, Saravasti, Sankisa, Gaya, Bodhgaya, Rajgir & Vaishali (Refer Table 4.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Total no. of Tourist Arrivals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>104337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>3975660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>4906276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>8011444</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Total no. of Tourist arrival at Buddhist destinations of U.P and Bihar

All these above discussed destinations are a part of Silk Route their tourism arrival along the circuit is forecasted for the year 2016 using the least square method Time series “T- Factor” is applied (Refer Table 4.2).
As $\Sigma y = na + b\Sigma x$, 
$\therefore a = \frac{\Sigma y}{n}, \frac{16893380}{4} = 4223345$
Also $\Sigma xy = a\Sigma x + b\Sigma x$
$\therefore b = \frac{\Sigma xy}{\Sigma x^2}, \frac{249651937}{20} = 12482596.85$
Hence $y' = (2016) = 4223345 + (12482596.85) (11) = 141531910.35$

The above given interpretation (table 4.2) to the tourist arrival gives a brief idea about the tourists’ arrivals at circuit of Buddhist sites in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh that falls in Silk Route map. In order to calculate the trend value ($Y'$) for a particular year 2016, the value of “a” and “b” is needed, which is calculated after applying the above statistical formulas like Summation of x and xy. It has been seen that the services and facilities available at this region, posses the potential of serving 141531910.35, thus indicating the tourism potential to be gained by the destinations.

Consequently, where developed sites need updated and renewed services, these impending sites aspires for more concentration towards necessary tourist resources and marketing aspects. More particularly, they need to be marketed as Silk Route destinations, which have been a major aspect of their existence. Analysis of tourism potential at the Silk Route destinations may not only promote the related or induced destination but also serve in raising the development graph by the direct or indirect economy generation through tourism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>No of tourist arrivals</th>
<th>Deviations from 2006.5</th>
<th>x</th>
<th>xy</th>
<th>$x^2$</th>
<th>$y' = a+bx$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>104337</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-313011</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-33224445.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>3975660</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-3975660</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-8259251.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>4906276</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4906276</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16705841.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>8011444</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24034332</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>41671135.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>16893380</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>249651937</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 (forecasted figure)</td>
<td>141531910.35 (obtained after applying the least square method of time series for calculating the trend)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above discussed potential findings only emphasizes the perspective tourism assets and resources the Silk Route destinations could offer to the tourists whereas the requirement for understanding the explicit development formula, drawing key elements for success and preparing the development framework is paramount important. The basic idea for discussion of these cases is to go beyond the theoretical findings and to provide the practical foundation and clarity for development of comprehensive planning strategy for development of Silk Route as a tourism destination.

4.3 EXAMPLE CASE STUDIES

4.3.1 Route 66

Established in 1926 by Federal Highway Act as an implementation to the movement along better roads the Route 66 (also known as Will Rogers Highway) with its attractions attracted thousands of tourists to California as a tourist destination of the West. It has remained choice for local American tourists from the postwar era. It was established with the purpose of connecting diminutive and less developed towns of Middle West, detoured with previously constructed roads (e.g. Lincoln and Dixie Highway), with the developed East part of USA. The road formed a stretch between Chicago and Los Angeles covering approx distance of 2488 miles (i.e. 3940 kms.) and passes through eight federal states: California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri and Illinois (Banić-Grubišić, 2012) (Refer Map 4.1).

Map 4.1: Route map of the Route 66
Source: Dunn (2015)
Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the importance of Route 66 turned low for road travelers as they moved to a more proficient stretch with well developed express highway system that was started in 1956 (Listokin, 2011). After Post World War II era Route 66 became a cultural icon for tourists (Carden, 2006) as it regained its tourist interest with the development of new establishments like motels and restaurants and other infrastructural and amenities development. In present scenario, tourists spend 38 million dollar per year in communities along Route 66 in accordance with preservation through revitalization programs; approximately 2400 employments are generated every year and fiscal initiatives directly associated with route add about 127 million dollar annually to the state GDP (Listokin, 2011).

4.3.1.1 Development Initiative along Route 66:

As the significance for cultural tourism is constantly growing within the overall tourism marketplace (Nagy, 2012) tourism along this route represents an interesting phenomenon for culture together with tourism studies. Studies related to self-drive tourism phenomenon has so far focused on the financial characteristics of such movements and examined its function in the regional growth (Sivijs, 2003; Taylor and Prideaux, 2008). In terms of Route 66 tours, travelers spend their major time in traveling and their whole driving turns out as a destination (Listokin, 2011). Kibby (2000) has elaborated Route 66 as an example for heritage site conservation where tourists get motivated by melancholy for a popular-culture history. The preservation and revitalization efforts have been conducted across the Route 66 representing the continuous concern by the various authorities of the state to make it sustained in the travel market since 1987 which first lend the mark for formation of Route 66 Association of Arizona and hence was further followed by the foundation of Associations for Route 66 in Missouri, Illinois, and Oklahoma (1989); Associations for Route 66 in New Mexico, Kansas, and California (1990) and Association of Texas Old Route 66 (1991).

Other major advents the history of this route were the formation of National Historic Route 66 Federation for preservation of Route 66 throughout the United States in 1995. The survey for historic assets in the city of Mexico (1994) and Illinois (1995) and Arizona by different authorities and federations added more features to this process. The main advantage can be accounted by the nomination and reauthorization of Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program in 2009 (Listokin, 2011). Overall it was for more refined
approach of route development different preservation and maintenance programmes like The National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, Main Street Program and National Scenic Byways Program were adopted. All these initiatives were taken with the prospects:

1. To generate a directory of financial and Technical support for discovering and classifying historic assets and subsidize their rehabilitation;
2. To recognize the challenges faced by the local community;
3. To support main street communities across the road considering their benefits and preservation of their resources;
4. To ensure participations and funding in development of establishments along the route;
5. To ensure historic conservation, marketing, development of essential resources and infrastructural expansion of the road to alleviate tourists’ movement (such as roadside rest areas and interpretive centers);
6. To Revitalize the tourism along route and make it sustained in the tourism marketplace.

4.3.1.2 Success Factors:

Route 66 depicts a strong relation among culture, tourism development and rehabilitation of sites intact along the route. It sent a significant remark to concurrent places extending primary socio-economic benefits to communities and tourism industry of United States. One of the major factors is its marketing considerations adopted by the authorities like promotion through blogs, movies or TV advertisements etc. and adoption of contemporary tourism forms like drive tourism has made its recognition and identification easy for the tourists thus inculcating efficient choice perspective in their mind. Overall, the Route 66 has played its vital role for strategic development and diversification for tourism sector of the adjoined destinations. The contribution of various institutions and efforts made by the aligned states since 1985 added continuous newer dimensions to Route development and promotion. It offers a setting of bravura stretch and assets to tourists.

Although the concept of Route 66 is little different from Silk Route which represents the world’s connectivity and is being considered from historical being developed in other countries, the Route 66 gives a representation as an exclusive, highly
flourishing and sustained destination from tourism viewpoint. This case study of the Route 66 thus highlights the key dimensions for the route illustrating associations between major characteristic such as heritage preservation, promotional reformation, support practices by organizations, individual and collaborative framework by intact regions for the route in USA.

4.3.2 Tourism Routes of South Africa

South Africa is consisted of several reasonably famous and developed routes for tourism, such as the Midlands Meander of KwaZulu-Natal and wine routes of Western Cape (Lourens, 2007; Rogerson, 2009). According to a report given by Wines of South Africa (WOSA) (2015), South Africa positions on seventh number in overall wine production and produces 4.2% of the world's wine. In terms of world wine production which overall consists of sixteen wine routes located in Northern and Western Cape. These wines routes comprise the Wellington Wine Route, the Tulbagh Wine Route, Paarl Vintners, the Constantia Wine Route and Breedekloof (WOSA, 2015) (Refer Map 4.2). In terms of tourism approx 43 percent of all foreign tourists visiting Western Cape, travel only through the Cape Winelands (SWAIS Report, 2015) thus generating the thematic link to the route. The major objectives of opening of such kind of routes are: increasing attention, knowledge, cooperation expansion, fresh marketplace, packaging, development, decrease expenditures, protection, regulating the trends, etc. (Nagy, 2012).

Map 4.2: Map of Midlands Meander, South Africa
Route situated in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa, with its topographic borders expanded from Hilton (which lies to the south) to Mooi River (lies to the north) which is approximately 70 kilometers and in the west, approx. 40 kilometers to central Drakensberg and 30 kilometers east towards the Karlkloof indigenous forest and Curry’s Post (Lourens, 2008) remained famous among tourists as Midlands Meander. The route offers beautiful attractions as a tourism destination with its basic product contributions like arts and crafts, rural products and picturesque countryside environment (Mathfield, 2000). The Midlands Meander majorly attracts wealthy white tourists from South Africa (Snowball and Courtney, 2010).

4.3.2.1 Success Factors:

The launch of Stellenbosch Wine Route in April, 1973 gave a thrust to wine tourism across South Africa (Stellenbosch Wine Route, 2008). The success such subject accompanied was the significance of creating an image in the market, thus incited the ray for development to other undeveloped routes (Hall et al., 2000).

The major point of success for Midlands Meander is aligned with the foundation of Midlands Meander Association (MMA) which led the tourism industry to focus on specific niche market and defined marketing consistency and alliances. Being an entirely private sector funded route exemplifies the efforts conducted in co-operation with the public sector by the Association in branding, development, marketing and local planning issues (Rogerson, 2004).

On the whole these international tourism routes provide a beneficial insight to development and branding structure of Silk Route especially in India along with issues effective management of the route and its destinations. The tourism structure and success factors employed by authorities in USA’s Route 66 and Wine routes and Midlands Meanders provide a directional essence for tourism development along Indian Silk Route along with its branding and sustenance like analysis of opportunities for tourism along Silk Route, provisional tourism structure and benefits of tourism development etc. as discussed in the other sections of this chapter.
4.4 OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS FOR TOURISM ALONG SILK ROUTE

Tourism has emerged an ideology for development of a destination (Manhas et al., 2014). Being a linked attribute of tourism destinations, the Silk Road may serves as a drapery of assets blended with distinctive & exotic assets of archaeology, natural environment, culture from different historical backgrounds, people etc. from all over its stretch. Regardless of its position as a global connectivity icon, its basic essence has always been neglected and without which the identity of Indian destinations and its varied culture could also be considered almost incomplete. Moreover, Silk Route has not been much discussed in academic research and is seen from the perspective trade, travel, and cultural exchanges etc. which if carefully defined, are all linked to tourism terminology of modern day.

The Silk Route can be changed from a compilation of different destinations to an exotic travel experience to facilitate and motivate various tourism divisions through which economic and other benefits can be generated and thus make a reckonable rejuvenation of the historical aspect of the said route. At the end of a route, a tourist attraction helps to bring attention to those destinations on the trip that would not have attracted travelers as solitary destinations or in their position as conventional entrance point to a region (Moulin and Boniface, 2001). Thus, the main concept of developing the tourism along the Silk route is simple, namely that of the connecting together a sequence of tourism resources for promoting domestic tourism and motivating tourists to take a trip from one destination to another destination (Lourens, 2008). In fact, defining the Silk Route along with tourism may provide a new dimension and vision to development authorities. The Silk Road economies are just beginning to tap into it (UNWTO, 2009) and in fact some initiatives to promote Silk Route has already been considered by other countries like a opening of a modernized farm of silk worm of little Greek town in Soufli and Egypt’s Red Sea coastline possess some of the premium asset of scuba diving in the world where Indian cruise liners once deliver their consignments of silk (UNWTO, 2007). Rogerson (2004; 2007) has added that routes can be served as product or theme based and in context to this Silk Route serves to both the concept of tourism.

Developing Silk Route on tourism grounds make it ideal for cross-border or regional investment opportunities as clustering or grouping could change the proportional benefits of the individual areas into the viable improvement of the entire region; which
means, the lack of a particular source in one region could be compensated by that of the collaborated locality or area, attaining competitive benefits of the entire cluster as the region now possesses all the essential resources to arrange and to install the resources effectively and efficiently (Banić-Grubišić, 2012). Meyer (2004) has developed the policy findings and emphasizes induction of support systems, regional philosophy and management, resources’ development and participation of local community, advertising and an explicit focus on pro-poor perspective as basic fundamentals for successful tourism development along a route. Being another factor to develop tourism routes, Meyer (2004) added the dispersal concept with the objectives:

1. To decrease stress upon central parts where major destinations are situated by alluring tourists somewhere else;

2. To diffuse expenditure from tourism resources as tourists signify spending authority, and if they are attracted and drawn to new area, their visits will serve innovative prospects to businessmen and generate supplementary service opportunities. Therefore, motivating visitors to move into a destination’s sphere, induce economic advantages in those destinations and supply employment and other benefits;

3. To enhance the entire beauty of a tourist destination by offering ‘new’ characteristics of the tourist site to its tourists, therefore defining a framework for improved marketing approaches, with the objective to raise duration of stay & overall expenditure.

In addition, defining the development process along the Silk Route may raise the prospect for the intact or induced destination as clusters create opportunities for consolidation of products, which improves the experience of the tourist and increases the competitiveness of the destination as a whole (Mathfield, 2000; Meyer, 2004). The basic purpose of tagging the tourism concept to Silk Route is connecting mutually the sequence of tourist resources and attractions available for the induced destinations in order to encourage domestic tourism by encouraging tourists to travel from one destination to other connected destination covering the complete route. In extension to this, the other perspective of taking the concept can be redefined the concept with the already known destinations in the tourism market with newer terminologies (like Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Sikkim) and their linkage to Silk Route got faded with the due
course of time. As a first priority, it is important to identify the destinations linked to the Silk Route so as to step further for the tourism enactment. The development of Silk Route as a tourism brand will provide a visual mechanism to overcome the limitations of collaborative contribution and differences of interests.

4.5 TOURISM STRUCTURE ALONG SILK ROUTE

One of the most significant efforts towards the development of Silk Routes in India is its significant contribution to enlist the details of various Silk Route sites in UNESCO world heritage. The definition of tourism along Indian Silk Route is directly or indirectly linked to the organizations engaged in destination development that are intact to it. The main organizations that could work for such concept development may include public sectors, public/private partnership, private sector etc. The public sector consists of organizations like the Ministry of Tourism, Tourism reception centers of the states or destinations intact, the Archaeology Survey of India. According to De Villiers (2000), route system or route networking is the simplest source of development & planning and the most efficient method of promoting tourism, whilst this also has numerous advantages for tourists and in Indian perspectives such partnerships may consists of the Indian Tourism development Corporation (ITDC) and Destination Management Organizations of states identified as a part of Silk Route. Also the private sector organizations like Indian Hotel Association (IHA) and Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), etc can give beneficial contribution to raise the profile of Silk Route in Indian tourism sector. The UNESCO and ASI has already taken up their role for identification and excavation of various Silk Route archaeological and tourism sites in India as they are considered part of the Silk Route, and may further attract millions of tourists and providing a major thrust to national economy.

4.6 PILLARS FOR SILK ROUTE BRANDING

- Market Escalation

Market reinforcement is first initial step to redefine the concept of Silk Route as a holiday destination brand. However, it includes creating Silk Route image in tourism markets or tourists to induce for perceiving Silk Route as a just historical route; branding Silk Route as a tourism route as it has an amalgam of varied products that are not eminent in one product. Furthermore, collaborating the assets
may not only offers the multiplicity but also transmits to increase the demand among high-yield tourists by focusing on alternate tourism attractions like the escape, drive tourism and familiarization tourism characterized by longer stretch of travel and length of stay. Whereas the advancement towards this stance cannot be exactly be figured nevertheless, India’s support for the Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM) which is one of the significant steps towards the Silk Road initiative (The Hindu, 2015), gives a cue to such initiation by Indian government.

To seek a significant position in tourism markets and enhance market dimensions to categorize futuristic aspects by expanding its aura of awareness, sees a prime importance to Silk Route development. And analysis of these propositions further requires recognition by the government and the private subdivisions so as to secure financial assistance for Silk Route’s regional and international development and marketing as an example Silk Road Fund of $40 billion has been declared and the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB), of which India is one of the founding members, is expected to support One Belt and One Road Initiative (BRI) projects (Saran, 2015) led by China. In order to disseminate information about Silk Route and its induced destinations, India authorities need a volunteered advancement so as to distinguish and characterize its identity in tourism market.

- **Silk Route Awareness and communication**

  Continued growth in the tourism sector is associated with progress in consumer awareness related to community benefits and a hygienic, safer and supplementary environment friendly tourism segment (Middleton and Hawkins, 1998; UNWTO, 2001). So to determine a clear development strategy towards the Silk Route, awareness and communication to targeted market is perennial process. According to Pride (2002), creating the relationship between brand and customer is based on the communicating the tangible brand attributes, which give them the reason to believe in brand and this necessitates an operational framework to guarantee efficient communication between the authorities and tourism market so as to induce the awareness of the said route. And this may help to avoid the fragmentation between the already defined perspective of the destinations and their basic historical aspect and origin. Ample information and advertising and
promotion of any tourism along a route initiative are seen as an important
foundation for flourishing route tourism (ECI Africa, 2006). On the contrary to
this, awareness of induced destinations of Silk Route also relies on the fact that
tourists are aware of these destinations but not in the actual sense of their relation
or linkage to Silk Route but as religious or historical destinations (like Buddhist
circuit). From the development point of view, it requires revitalization of
knowledge among stakeholders and communities to further disseminate awareness
and communications about Silk Route connectivity among tourists and
stakeholders for they have been considered as crucial requirements for attracting
tourists and ensuring its extensive sustainability (Meyer, 2004).

- Silk Route Development

Achieving the tourism support and market competitiveness again requires the
development criteria for destination in aligned with Silk Route, which ultimately
depends upon to increase expenditure by tourists at the intact destinations, to
enhance viable benefits and to diversify Silk Route's demand. However, the
staggering nature of holidays, the complex necessities of tourists and the
enhancement of the circumstances that promote tourism development are
evidently contributing to this procedure (UNWTO, 2001). The positive aspect of
this for the India is that at individual level, the induced destinations of Silk Route
like Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar etc. are already at the development
stage of tourism but the renewed aspect of Silk Route is foremost important so as
to create a distinct image of all these aligned destinations all together as a tourism
route. These can be achieved through creation of logo and taglines, developing
lesser known destinations, expanding its portfolio and promoting emotional appeal
of Silk Route among tourists which further leads to create decision making aspect
to travel a nation as a tourism spot (Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000). And it can
further be made possible by primary and secondary touring agencies to divert
frequent international travelers (FITs) by providing tailored and compact travel
programme with distinction.

Innovative product development and the provision of support infrastructure
has been discussed as a fundamental element for successful routes development
by Meyer (2004) and if taken in consideration to Indian Silk Route, such entities
are already available at some of the induced destinations and sites like Buddhist
circuit of U.P and Bihar. The determinants of destination policy, development and planning consists of eight sub-elements which provide a definition to tourism structure, vision and values, branding strategy and brand positioning, competitive analysis and collaborative approach, scrutinizing, evaluation and reviewing (Chan and Bauer, n.d.) and all these serves as an essential to direct the destination authorities to develop it in aggressive and better sustainable means (Ritchie and Crouch, 2000) and accordingly the Indian tourism sector needs to focus upon investment in different as well as compatible tourism products and services of Silk Route to sustain the market competitiveness. UNESCO in cooperation with the Archaeology Survey of India (ASI) supported project for identification of Silk Route sites in India has updated the list of twelve concerned sites in different states including southern area which has been tagged as Maritime Silk Route. Combined enactment by these authorities and tourism organization may serve a networked approach in between the identified destinations of Silk Route. A major factor is its ability to create regional initiatives based on joint strategic vision, as elaborated in the initiative for the Silk Route development and guidelines given by UNWTO Silk Route Action Plan 2012-2013.

Collaborative efforts and framework

The formation and management of a destination brand have been elaborated in terms of a need for collaborative endeavors among various stakeholders (Morgan et al., 2002). Although a destination brand is an optimistic result of accords and collaboration (Prideaux and Cooper, 2002) and when it comes to the point of a route, cooperation among the authorities of interlinked destinations stands much necessary for successful and sustainable tourism. Indeed, pre-conditions for establishing a route are leadership and the establishment of a superior-quality outline of association between government and private enterprises, the particular tourism organization and local commission (Lourens, 2008). Differentiation of practices or thoughts towards tourism may lead again lead to create a gap in the awareness process as well as development process of Silk Route as according to Crouch and Ritchie (1999) tourism brand which has a vision for tourism, shares this idea with the stakeholders, recognizes its potencies and flaws, develops and apply suitable strategies, would be more competitive regardless of its initial amount of assets and resources. Additionally, a great advantage of cooperation is
that it can lessen the possibility of sending out contradictory messages that could arise some misalignments in how e.g. a city would like to be perceived (Rungo and Ulbæk, 2011). In order to define and analyze the potential, benefits and obstructions in collaboration for a development of sustainable tourism along Silk Road, it is essential to first evaluate its existing potential and the potential actually perceived by stakeholders involved in the process.

4.7 IDENTIFICATION OF BENEFITS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Keller (2000) has defined the assumed benefits as one of the characteristics of successful brand strategy. However positive image, idea or perception held by tourist about a destination is associated with the projected benefits or utilization values (Sumco and Richardson, 2011). Besides the regional cooperation among Silk Route destinations, benefits of tourism can be counted from increase of cross border cooperation with the countries it is linked like China at one end and Pakistan at the other. Such process may majorly benefit the border areas of India as these areas are generally less developed in terms of economy than the national average, so this tourism product or generally tourism, emerges as a potential development alternative (Kovács and Martyin, 2013). Revival of tourism across Silk Route would fetch fiscal flow and also raise confidence among the regions beyond discretion as it represents an outline for a complex tourism presentation of a small region and connects the tourism products in the region which just alone do not represent a special tourist attraction (Hanusz, 2009).

Tourism has been identified as one of the important economic activities in 70 percent of developing countries (World Bank’s World Development Indicators, 2004). Tuning the Silk Route tourism in India relies with important considerations to extend the financial benefits more extensively and spatially by developing tourism amenities, behavior and services all along tourism routes in such a way that it will ease tourist expenditures at these halt positions in order to facilitate supplementary income and employment, both straightforwardly and ultimately (Meyer, 2004). Opportunity creation can better be explained by the example of CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) agreement 2015 between China and Pakistan which led to investment of $46 billion in Pakistani infrastructure as Pakistan is already a part of China’s Silk Road Economic Belt project, whereas such consideration or initiation is still not been elaborated by India’s side.
Furthermore, the potential benefits of tourism development across Silk Route can be seen with the perspectives of:

- **Flourishing tourism across borders.** Connectivity of north-eastern and the eastern states of India could be tapped with the Chinese and Tibetan regions for creating avenues to cross cultural tourism and border tourism thus may increase the revenue for both the nations. In pursuit of this, Nathu La pass (Sikkim) exemplifies a more valuable connectivity source. Instead of being confined to one destination, tourism development of Silk route will extend the avenues for the intact destinations to acknowledge their collaborative potency.

- **Developing a sourcing point.** Aligned destinations of Silk Route will become a sourcing point for intermediary products for lesser developed destinations especially for remote areas by the involvement of community. The example of development of route tourism in Africa provides a support to the statement as it offers the opportunities for the involvement of poor communities in Africa (Lourens, 2008) for efficient tourism resource or service production.

- **Third markets accessibility.** Collaborations and partnerships in context to tourism development may help India in accessing other or third markets like China, Pakistan and Afghanistan by extending international/national tourism network across the Silk Route. Whereas, to influence the source markets there is a requirement to generate interest by developing and promoting the destinations. For example, in 1987 India was the only major non-Communist country to have been permitted by the Soviet Union to release a diplomatic situation in Central Asia to facilitate during the Festival of India, which was held in 1987-88 (Mukerji, 2012). Such initiative also gives cue to the Silk Route tourism initiative and development process, thus making it available and known to other countries as well.

This implies that there is scope for tourism across Silk Route and justify India’s appeal beyond the regions to integrate more varied tourism products such as archaeological, religious and wellness etc. Though the identified destinations of India like Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh etc. are already growing in tourism sector. Since these destinations’ authorities have individual approach to tourism development, the Silk Route concept needs strategic definition. This is vital for the tourism demand and for
India to shift from differentiated tourism practices towards new collaborative and coordinated tourism practices to satisfy and approach varied market sections. A creative approach to cite these benefits and opportunity linkups in terms of tourism along Indian Silk Route needs to be redesigned in making them available to tourists. Availability of above discussed resources and opportunities if more evaluated and discussed may give a rejuvenated scope for Silk Route along with the benefits of tourism. It is also a point of consideration that tourism authorities for particular destination development may differ in their approach depending upon the case which may consists all diverse activities such as the development of accommodation, tourism accessibility structure and other related activities. Because of amalgamation of so many resources and related assets; coordinated approach by the authorities is also important to ensure actual representation of the Silk Route as a complete tourism product as it subsists in veracity.
REFERENCES


