CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This chapter deals with the major findings related to Silk Route awareness, perception, brand development and brand communication. These findings have emerged after data analysis in the previous chapter. In addition, implications and limitations of this study have been discussed. Recommendations for future research and conclusions are also discussed.

6.1 SUMMARY

Tourism in India has observed a significant development over the last few years. Significance of development of travel across the world as well as India has been led by the connectivity term that once evolved in the form of Silk Route. This route is one of the major reasons for trade and cultural exchange between the various countries like China, India, Persia and Rome and has set a historical remark. Whereas shifting trends and choices led the low usage of Silk Route and by the time the concept became dormant and unprivileged part of history. However, the emergence of tourism concept elicits the way to reincarnate the Silk Route for the travel world.

The countries like China and Uzbekistan are already working on the projects of Silk Route development. Whereas Indian scenario is still at nascent stage and needs to understand its privilege of being a part to such historical route that can become an indefinite asset for tourism which further arises the requirement for defining its identity and involvement towards Silk Route. All these factors underscore the need for research to evaluate the awareness and perception of tourists and DMOs about of Silk Route if developed as a tourism brand. Assessment of the latest research on the Silk Route and its related aspects revealed its trade and historical perspective only whereas it’s branding as a tourism
destination needs evaluation and exploration. Present study therefore, endeavors to rectify the
dearth of branding strategies literature.

The changing trends and increased competitive scenario accentuated the need for an
effective destination brand creation, strategy formulation and identity development. As
identified in chapter 1, this thesis primarily aims to identify the destinations that had
remained and are the parts of Silk Route in India. Also it intends to explore the factors that
can be used or may influence for strategic branding of Silk Route as a tourism destination in
India. Numerous approaches were used to evaluate the branding perspective for Silk Route:
tourism literature and statistics relating to worldwide and Indian tourism were reviewed. This
is considered to be an extension of four constructs i.e. awareness, Perception of Silk
Route Tourism (brand/destination), brand development of Silk Route and Brand
Communication. The importance of branding a destination and its identified factors were
examined through a data review obtained from secondary sources discussed in chapter 2 and
all through the thesis all this served to highlight the most appropriate process for attaining
strategic approach to brand a destination as Silk Route (chapter 3).

Chapter 2 of the thesis elaborates the factors required for the branding process of a
destination and further their relevance to the Silk Route. Awareness and perception forms the
basis for the branding of destination because of the approach they affect on the level of
communication and further development. This implies that perception and communication
and awareness studies are a prerequisite to a successful destination branding. At the initial
stage of brand creation, positive perception has been determined to be studied and analyzed.
However, brand management consideration has been conducted and studied in reference to
destination management organizations’ participation and role in destination branding. Also
the brand communication is important to make the tourists attract to a destination(s) and thus
has been considered as one of the important aspects of silk route branding study.

The potential and prospects for tourism along Silk Route has been drafted in chapter 4
of the thesis followed by its tourism benefits and opportunity analysis. This chapter
emphasizes the types of tourism that can further be promoted and developed across the
identified destinations and can be offered altogether as a complete package to the tourists.
This chapter has further been preceded with the analysis of tourism structure in India across the route. For the branding of silk route in India, four support factors have been identified as pillars for branding strategy i.e. market escalation, silk route awareness and communication, silk route development and collaborative efforts and framework which includes policy formation and development.

In 5th chapter of thesis, all the constructs were further selected from pilot study for hypothesis testing. Finally, the awareness of tourists and travel agents about Silk Route destinations in India, and perceived benefits of Silk Route if developed as a tourism destination, was examined and analyzed through primary research survey (chapter 5).

6.1.1 Research Objectives and Research Questions

Moreover the answer of the major research problem was dependant on the fulfillment of six explicit research objectives. The research questions aligned to the research objectives identified are revived and the final data analysis including the summary for research questions and hypotheses tests are summarized and presented as:

1. To study the awareness of tourists and travel agents about Silk Route in India.
2. To study the perception of tourists as well as travel agents about Silk Route tourism.
3. To study the branding strategies for Silk Route as tourism brand in India.
4. To study the effect of brand communication on brand perception.
5. To study the relationship between the brand perception and brand development.
6. To suggest and recommend the various destination branding and communication strategies.

The above research objectives were further been elaborated and fulfilled with support of answers to following research questions:

1. Are the tourists and travel agents at the induced destinations aware about Silk Route and its linkage in India?
2. What is the perception of respondents towards silk route as a tourism brand in India?
3. Does respondents’ perception towards Silk Route tourism as a brand affect brand development of Silk Route in India?
4. Is there any relationship between respondents’ Perception (Brand) towards Silk Route tourism and Brand Communication?

These research questions were drafted and elaborated with the help of secondary and primary data gathering and evaluated with methodological standpoint of research process. Summary of the findings of the pretesting are presented in section 6.1.2. Implications are elaborated in a separate section (6.4) and recommendations in consideration to Silk Route that are essential to substitute the identified gaps are proposed in section 6.7. And the overall conclusion of the study is given in brief in section 6.6.

6.1.2 Pretests

During pilot study, four constructs for branding Indian Silk Route used in this study were found to be valid and appropriate for the target sample. Assessments of the Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate of each dimension signified a Cronbach Alpha value more than 0.70 and hence were further used for study analysis. It was also found that providing questionnaire could not generate the appropriate responses, so an additional information pamphlet was added for final survey.

6.1.3 Final Survey

The final survey was conducted in Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Sikkim as targeted destinations to examine the hypothesis of the study. In totality 1650 complete responses were received from Tourists and Travel agents available at these three destinations.

At first more than half of the respondents indicated that they never had heard about Silk Route and same is the case with the respondents who knew about Silk Route but were not aware about India’s linkage to Silk Route i.e. out of 528 number of respondents who had heard about Silk Route, 72% were not aware that India falls in Silk Route (Table 5.3).

After reading the information provided with the questionnaire the respondents were again asked whether they got the basic idea/knowledge about the Silk Route concept. The 1650 respondents selected option “yes” which indicated 14% increment to the responses for basic idea about Silk Route. Also the respondents who are somehow aware about the Silk
Route or have heard about Silk Route have very less knowledge India’s linkage to Silk Route. This indicates the need for creating awareness among tourists as well travel agents so as to develop induced/aligned destinations of Silk Route in its ethnic form in India.

Before the hypotheses analysis, data from respondents who indicated “No” to attainment of basic idea even after reading the information brochure given were excluded from the hypotheses testing. If respondents don't have any clue about Silk Route, they don't have an idea about its branding. In this case, we can hardly investigate any brand strategy or their perception about a brand they are unaware or have not even heard.

6.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

1. Are the tourists and travel agents at the induced destinations aware about Silk Route and its linkage in India?

The study data indicates a very low awareness among tourists as well as travel agents about Indian Silk Route beyond the fact that these travels agents are working/in service from one to twenty years. Low awareness of a brand means consumers do not have any knowledge about the brand (Bowie and Buttle, 2013). It’s a hard earned fact that they have not been informed or told about the basic essence of the destinations (Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Sikkim) and their linkage to historical Silk Route. So before introducing or developing a destination, brand awareness level sets target for type and level of communication or brand development strategies to be employed.

2. What is perception of respondents towards silk route as a tourism brand in India?

The results obtained in this study signified that when tourists and travel agents were asked to tell their perception about tourism, they assumed or perceive about Silk Route if promoted as a tourism brand. Being an underprivileged Silk Route concept in India, the perception towards Silk Route and its impact (perceived) has been studied on 5-point likert scale (where 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree).

Further, four factors were extracted by factor analysis that indicated the perceived benefits held by respondents towards Silk Route tourism if developed or
promoted as a brand i.e. economic benefits/impacts (Mean=3.69), Social benefits/impacts (Mean=3.71), Cultural benefits/impacts (Mean=3.67) and Induced benefits/impacts (Mean=3.53). In fact authors like Crandall (1994); Farrell and Runyan (1991); Mathieson and Wall (1982); Andereck (1995); Ap and Crompton (1998) in their studies have provided these items as dimensional scales to tourism development process. In particular political relations attain a high degree of agreement by the respondents (Mean=3.78) followed by boost in trade relations (Mean=3.76), increase in quality of life (Mean=3.76) and economic growth (Mean=3.76). Overall respondents’ perceptions are highly inclined towards economic (Mean=3.69) and social benefits (Mean=3.71) of Silk Route tourism. However many researchers like Witt (1990); Tosun (2002); Weaver and Lawton (2001), etc. have identified both negative and positive tourism impacts but the preliminary stage perception always levied on benefit or positive impacts of tourism at a destination (Kim, 2002). So the result can also be said to be aligned with the literature.

3. Does respondents’ perception towards Silk Route tourism as a brand affect brand development of Silk Route in India?

The third question of the research addresses the impact of Perception about Silk Route as a tourism brand on its brand development. This relationship was examined through the hypothesis 2 (Perception towards Silk Route Tourism has a positive impact on Brand Development). The regression results indicated a relative and high degree of correlation among two factors (.761) (Table 5.28). However 57% of variation is explained by regression. Also the results defined a significant unit of increase/change 0.761 in Perception of respondents towards Silk Route by the change/increase in brand development of Silk Route as a tourism destination. Obtained outcome is inclined to Butler’s theory (1980) of first phase of tourist area cycle of evolution i.e. destination development which indicated the positivity to be perceived by the authorities and tourists at during the first stage of development of a destination for tourism. Further, the positive sign of coefficient of correlation signifies a positive impact of Perception of respondents (including economic benefits, cultural benefits, social benefits and induced benefits) towards Silk Route on its
Brand development (Table 5.30). Moreover, Kim (2002) also defined the association among perceived tourism impacts on tourism development at various stages. On the whole this hypothesis is supported with assessment and indication of potency and course of the relationships among two dimensions of perception about Silk Route as a brand and brand development.

4. Is there any relationship between respondents’ Perception (Brand) towards Silk Route tourism and Brand Communication?

This research question addresses a positive relationship between Brand Perception towards Silk Route tourism and Brand Communication (H1). For attaining the outcomes for this hypothesis of the study regression analysis was conducted. Results indicated a positive relationship of tourism Perception (Silk Route) and Destination Brand Communication. The regression equation indicates 51% of change in Perception about Silk Route brand is due to change in communication among tourists as well as travel agents as a tourism destination brand (Table 5.25). Further, the Positive sign indicates a direct as well as a positive relationship among the Perception towards Silk Route and Destination Brand Communication which include Brand Familiarization (BC1), Brand Recognition (BC2) and Brand Endorsement (BC3) (Table 5.27). However the result is reliable with Kim (2002) argument that if the people in a society negatively perceive the impacts of tourism, such negative feelings will further be communicated to other tourists or people of community and all the efforts of tourism developers for destination development may become useless and vice versa. In other words, the study findings indicate the statistical connotation of the relationship among brand perception (perceived impacts of Silk Route tourism) and brand communication, which are supported by the previous studies and available literature.

6.3 DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Overall, the results of this thesis indicate a positive relationship between the perceived impact of Silk Route tourism (as a brand) and brand communication, meaning that as tourists as well as travel agents’ perception of the positive economic, social, cultural and
induced impact/benefits of Silk Route tourism changes with the change or increase in its brand communication. Findings also suggest that along with the communication, silk route development is also affected by perceived impacts of Silk Route as a destination which means more the authorities or tourists perceive the benefits/positive impacts of a brand more positively the brand will be developed.

6.4 IMPLICATIONS

Brand strategy and research has been pervasive in products and tourism service areas whereas the same concept has given very little attention in terms route(s) like Silk Route context especially in India. The study contributes to the body of knowledge and understanding, through entirely new research concerning the branding strategy and potential analysis of Silk route in India. The main objective of this study is to examine the branding strategy concept to the Silk Route as a complete circuit or destination package.

6.4.1 Managerial implications

The nature of planning becomes complex when the destinations are intact with each other along a route that has its own identity. This study provides tourism planners with valuable information about the awareness level of tourists and travel agents about the Silk Route concerning specificity of increasing their awareness level about Silk Route as well as its linkage to India.

This study offers tourism authorities with potential information regarding explicit elements related to perception of the impact of Silk Route tourism if developed as a brand in India, its development and communication process as a brand.

Findings of this thesis are of immense significance to Indian tourism development and management authorities to give a new or renewed dimension to the destinations intact with Silk Route. Tourism along the Silk Route must be developed not merely on the analysis of its benefits but also according to the unified measurements for creating it as a distinct brand. However, the concerned destinations have already been on the tourists’ priority for various purposes but their identity and emergence under single concept of Silk Route may
provide a newer concept of tourism like route tourism, circuit tourism etc. in Indian tourism terminology.

6.4.2 Theoretical Implications

Most considerable implication of this study is the finding of determinants for branding for Silk Route and its destinations with the particular sub dimension involved with the perceived impacts of Silk Route tourism, and that overall Silk Route brand development and its communication domains.

Also, the findings defined the factors that form branding strategies; are multi-dimensional and vibrant. This study presented the influence of perceived impact of tourism along Silk Route on its development as a destination brand; and that communication of Silk Route as a brand may affects overall perception positively through its involved channels or constructs.

The study demonstrates the Silk Route as complete tourism brand and also focuses on benefits of developing tourism along such contemporary route. On the other hand, the also study defines a constructive approach of various factors required to develop Indian Silk route as a tourism brand.

The breakthrough of the direct effect and relationship of three dimensions of Silk Route branding gives a cue to the linkage to each other and also the channelized or strategic approach to Silk Route branding.

Present study adds to the academic/theoretical expansion in tourism aspect by validating the importance of communication theory and the development of a travel route perspective thus defining tourists’ as well as stakeholders’ (travel agents) perception towards its tourism. When tourists as well as stakeholders/destination management authorities perceive the positive outcomes (impacts) of tourism, then they will support for tourism brand and its development and similar is the case for Silk Route. The findings also demonstrated the required factors and elements for developing the Silk Route as a brand and further communication process that could set a base for developing brand strategies for Silk Route in India.
6.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

All the precautionary steps were taken to make sure that the objectivity, reliability as well as validity of the study be maintained, however some limitations could not be ruled out. These limitations need to be considered for any future references regarding the findings and implementations of the study. The major limitations include the following:

- First limitation includes the sample population of this study involved tourists and travel agents available at the three targeted destinations. However, if the local residents be involved, the results might vary.
- Moreover, if the investigation was extended to involve industry people or other stakeholders in the study, there may be difference in perceived impacts of tourism levels, Silk Route development.
- The study is conducted only Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Sikkim (India). For future research, it is suggested to branding practices in other Silk Route destinations as well. Besides, comparison between different destinations can also be examined.
- Further, the study is limited to three destinations and can be extended in other destinations as Bihar, Delhi, etc.
- In addition, the survey was conducted only on the three destinations. It is possible that if the study was further extended to conduct analysis on the other Indian destinations that are also a part of Silk Route, perception for the Silk Route tourism might vary and the possibility of change in direction of relationship with other two dimensions i.e. brand development and brand communication.
- The major drawback is the lack of personal contact with some of the respondents like travel agents in few areas of Ladakh region as field visit was not possible due to some weather conditions.
- The study is cross-sectional in nature and need to be extended to include longitudinal data in future.
6.6 CONCLUSION

Concept Silk Route tourism destination has levied on concepts of inclination of wide tourism products and service availability such as rich history, culture, archaeology as well as religious and natural sites. However, emergence of alternatives has dramatically changed the scenario of trade and thus ultimately there led a shift from Silk Route to other travel options. As a consequence the term became dormant with historical perspective only. At present destination branding is a generally adopted phenomenon in tourism development. It has emerged as a coherent dimension to create and develop destinations and make them available to the tourists. However, the adoption to the concept becomes much tricky when the term route emerges. The theoretical framework adopted in this study became a preliminary base for the analysis. It relies on the attaining the knowledge of Silk Route as a tourism product which can further be branded and consequently offered in the tourism market. As a consequence, the theory of destination branding can be also applied to Silk Route. Even it has also been considered underpinning term for the development of trade as well as cultural and traditional exchanges but considering the modernized approaches to the renewal and increase in demands for the new concepts, tourism concept in contrast to Silk Route may prove to be a significant remark.

This study has been designed to explore the field of development for Indian Silk Route and to identify the strategies which can be followed to establish it as unique tourism brand. To be in market and demand, as any tourism products it also requires recognition. As a brand, considering the complexity of Silk Route and the range of stakeholders and tourists it can be evaluated to other destination brands. Accordingly, branding routes like Silk Route adopts many of its techniques from destination branding. Primary research was designed to know the awareness level of tourists and travel agents of three targeted destinations about Indian Silk Route. This revealed very less knowledge about the Silk Route and also its linkage to India, which further led to inculcate the knowledge and awareness and its significance in tourism market. The review of literature and primary research identified brand perception, brand communication and brand development as perspective dimensions for branding Silk Route in terms of tourism. Present study significantly adds to the literature inclined to define an outlook of Silk Route as tourism destination brand.
The outcomes of present study provide several details for respondents’ perception regarding the impacts of tourism along Silk Route if developed and further its overall influence and relationship with development and communication of Silk Route as a tourism brand. Elaborated on the basis of previous studies, various perceived tourism benefits/impacts were verified that determine the destination brand differently especially Silk Route. The analysis indicated the elements that affects and compiles the tourism perception among tourists and travel agents.

One of the basic postulates of developing the Silk Route as a brand is that it develops from a strong representation and perception generation. This representation should induce positivity in the tourists’ mind and can easily be recognized in the market. However, the destination with influential positive perception has a prospective for gradual development. Further an effective perception creation of a brand is not possible without effective brand presentation. Influential portfolio and information dissemination of a brand extends an influential image to the consumers thus providing a lead to the brand development like Silk Route. Hence, there is a necessity for a constant development strategy for redefining its unique selling propositions aligned with contemporary definitions of tourism like route tourism etc.

The important propositions of this descriptive work includes the defining of factors that have an influence on perception of respondents about the Silk Route tourism in India as well as those elements which comprises its brand communication i.e. brand familiarization, recognition and brand endorsements that further led foundation for successful branding for Silk Route in Indian tourism market.

Raising awareness of Silk Route as an attractive tourism destination(s) by tagging the region’s activities and lodging facilities under one platform may help to create effective and efficient distribution channels to promote otherwise veiled service providers at these destinations in India. On the whole, it can be concluded that if branded as a top tourism product, the Silk Route boasts a well-developed tourism market. Its rich history, distinct cultural heritage, architecture and drive charm may provide a defined tourism asset to Indian travel-trade market. Not only this, it may also help to provide a collaborative approach to
Indian destination development and may add a new perspective of tourism to the destinations that have lost their originality or identity. And also, the lost definition of India’s connectivity to Silk Route gets refined. There is also a need to identify target markets, their perceptions, motivations and requirements – and the ways in which Silk Route network can attract them – through market research and analysis. Furthermore, developing the tourism circuits is on the policy considerations of the Indian Tourism Organization but a concentrated strategy for the development and sustenance of Silk Route is required.

6.7 SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of conclusions and implications drawn in this chapter (section 6.6 above), the present section represents recommendations under various sub points and further research. There is a requirement for marketing to create the awareness in an accurate and refined pattern of what the Silk Route has to offer as complete as a tourism brand in India. If a gap exists between process of all the destination development i.e. process may vary from one to another destination, there is an alternative way that the process can be first analyzed at individual destination level and then the process may be modified to collaborative level with more analytical and representative level for whole of the stretch and further brand and marketing attempts can be made to redefine such connectivity source (Silk Route) to tourism market. In addition to this, it is also important to:

1. **Destination(s) location identification:** Identification of major destinations or sites of Silk Route is required to make them enlisted to the tourism list. As a consequence of insistent and continuous competition, it is important for Indian tourism authorities that Silk Route appealing tourism dimensions be identified and developed to their fullest improvement. Archaeology Survey of India is already working on such track but such initiative must be supported and substituted by local travel and development authorities as they might be better aware about such destinations’ locations. Recognition and identification of destination brand serves to differentiate the brand from others. Logos and taglines serve to differentiate and define the uniqueness of product or service brands in the market and further help to identify the brand in the market. So to make the Silk Route as a brand, there is a strong requirement for
creating the logo and tagline for creating the image among tourists and hence to make them perceive destinations’ aspects like facilities, services, etc. Hence, the expansion of Silk Route portfolio with respect to tourism point of view will also reveals its identity to the tourism market or targeted segment.

2. **Analyze the tourism potential of the induced destinations:** Tourism potential of such destinations also needs to be analyzed and evaluated so as to maintain the destination sustenance and define their present and future market position. Silk Route as tourism products has been discussed and projected as complete tourism package, which has been analyzed with the available literature and other informational sources and was confirmed with the results obtained and analyzed in this study in terms of the branding and perceived tourism benefits. Moreover, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar has already in the priority list for its Buddhist circuit. Also on the other side, Sikkim tourism authorities have already highlighted Nathu la pass and Zuluk valley for silk route connectivity. However, certain other induced destinations as in Kashmir, Ladakh etc. need to be analyzed in support of their tourism potential and their aspects for influencing the future market. These include the Buddhist sites of Parihaspora and Ushkar of Baramulla district (Kashmir, J&K), Ambaran archaeology site at Akhnoor of Jammu district (Jammu, J&K), that are almost at phase of extinction and if developed and highlighted in terms of Silk Route may serve to tourism in a great way.

3. **Increase awareness and communication of the Silk Route destinations among tourists and local community:** As for any product or destination, awareness among customer or tourists is foremost important. Destination assets and elements should be highlighted to receive tourists’ attention through various awareness creation practices. Promotional campaigns and initiative towards marketing of Silk Route destinations should therefore be done by the usage of various marketing techniques and sources like T.V, brochures, newspapers, social media etc. Also all the amalgamated aspects of the silk route as a tourism product should be considered and represented with one title as one route with vibrant assets. All marketing and promotional efforts should be
done in contrast to conjoint destinations’ representation through regional and international representative institutions. Attention should be given on how to put this process effectively so as to renew the concept of Silk Route as a complete destination or tourism brand. Findings of this thesis have shown that attractive logos and taglines and guide books and highlighting the same in various research conferences and media sources are the most vital elements for brand communication that could further make tourists and travel agents familiar with such perspective.

4. **Define the benefits of tourism development at regional, national as well as international level:** Development and selling propositions of a product always depends upon benefits it offers to ultimate customers. The benefits of tourism development across Silk Route should be conveyed to the regional development authorities so as to keep pace with the brand processing of Silk Route in the tourism market and making in renewed at more positive way. This thesis defines the overall benefits of silk route tourism development however the benefits analysis at particular destination or regional stage is recommended and suggested to achieve in depth knowledge and examination of the concept.

5. **Redefine the concept:** Refinement of the Silk Route needs to be done so as destinations that are already on the tourism list but their relation to Silk Route went missing or less highlighted gets clarity to the tourists’ and development authorities. Elaborate the silk route’s linkage along with the destinations as Buddhist circuit or marketing these places under the Silk Route’s tagline that will restore the chronological aspects of these places as well of silk route. It may be quite difficult or tricky to redefine the already marketed destinations or sites with some other name or notion for which Buddhist circuit sets a suitable example. In extension to this celebrity endorsement and umbrella marketing has been identified as important factors to communicate which can be more effective source of brand communication and awareness creation and redefine the concept of such places at initial stage of branding.
6. *Facilitate and generate investment opportunities to develop the Silk Route tourism:* Policy formulation and regulation for promotion and development silk route sites are required to make it ease with Silk Route tourism brand creation. However, investment options like Asian Development Bank’s initiative to promote and help silk route destinations, must be sorted if possible. Such practices may serve as an add-on approach to put the silk route on Indian tourism map and policy formation for complete route.

7. *Develop a cooperative approach:* Cooperative or collaborative auras like Public Private Partnership should be drawn that makes financing for small local supply operators available for increasing tourism supply, and local entrepreneurship o as to generate a motivational perspective towards silk route site(s) promotion and development.

8. *Create a separate research unit:* Authorities need to learn from international examples like Route 66 (USA) and Tourism Route of South Africa (discussed in Chapter 4) where specific agencies are formed by the governments for development, preservation and promotion of such highways to attract more and more tourists to their native land. Both the routes are carrying their own identity among travelers. A specialized and separate research and development unit for more refined process and initial tourism business development analysis if possible should also be created if possible.

6.8 FURTHER RESEARCH

This section aims to emphasize prospects for further research. Suggestions have been given in context to Silk Route’s branding as tourism destination image in India, and their application may be seen in the context to other tourism market as well. It is suggested that branding of a silk route research, which includes both qualitative and quantitative techniques be conducted in all other Indian destinations. These include the Bihar that has been a major part of Silk Route and shares a major portion of Buddhist circuit, and then other sites identified by archaeology survey of India such as Delhi, Punjab.
The perception of visitors may vary among visitors and travel agents. However, overall perspectives have been taken and analyzed. It is recommended, therefore, that future perception study should focus on single segment. This would present the information regarding the types of differentiated benefits perceived by the tourists and travel agents of particular intact destination of Silk route so as to fill the analyzed gap of knowledge and indicate if a particular or differentiated pattern of development efforts are required. Concurrently, the study may also provide an insight to investigate the information regarding destination uniqueness and potential in more elaborated manner. The outcomes of such study would provide destination authorities of Silk Route to find further segments that need to develop and maintain and market so that sustenance of such tourism asset may be maintained from a long term perspective.

The differentiation of development patterns and lack of information makes it difficult for the authorities to create silk route as tourism brand in an aligned manner. The lack of attention paid to the sites related to Silk Routes and need for renovation and development of sites (historical or religious), may also weaken the developing process of Silk Route tourism in India and in fact may delay the whole process. Whereas the sites like Buddhist sites of U.P and Bihar have been marketed with religious perspective, to turn down their identification to Silk Route linkage needs a well distinct identity and marketing approach and, therefore, it is recommended that auxiliary research be carried out on this perspective.

Complexity of literature and consideration about the destination branding has influenced the study on the formation of silk route as a tourism brand; it is recommended, therefore, that research related to visitation patterns and choices (selection of a destination) be undertaken. This thesis was carried out and examined by the responses of travel agents/tour operators and tourists; it is worth taken a research on the local community (at a destination) and other institutions as well and how they perceive the various dimensions of silk route development.

From the knowledge view point, the results of this thesis reveal a very low level of awareness of Silk Route and its related destinations in India. When provided with relevant information, respondents revealed positive attitude towards the silk route as a tourism brand
and the majority of respondents depict good conception of the brand dimensions and benefits. It gives a specific clue to provide a well elaborated information source to the tourists as well as to the destination management authorities to make them get attract to and motivate them for contributing towards participating in Silk Route development and brand process. Perceptions of respondents are more positive towards the Silk Route tourism, however the other perspective including negative should be assessed and evaluated at the beginning so as to avoid negativity in future. While the various destinations are involved and tagged in Silk Route with various element and convictions, the considerations of all these assets are important for Silk Route as a tourist destination, the results suggest that they work as facade of a wider term, which may appeal to tourists all together. Promotion of all these destinations and sites are recommended. Also the identity has been revealed as a major setback to its definition. It is therefore better to promote the Silk Route destination under a single tagline and logo with definite identity reflection.
REFERENCES