

# **“Intervention of destination management organization’s in tourist destinations for branding, image building and competitiveness – a conducive model for Karnataka”**

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**Abstract:** Destination Management Organization (DMO) is a technical body which is supported by the Host Government. DMO’s initiate a standardized procedure to market a destination by attracting right quantum of tourist, to synergizes activities on tourist destinations. DMOs are also perceived as marketing organizations designed to bring buyers (visitors) in contact with marketers (providers of tourism products and services). DMOs can flourish with Destination marketing as a proactive function. Visitor centered approach to the economic and cultural development of a destination will balance & integrate the interests of visitors, service providers and the community. Core DMO functions are to market the destination as attractive to visitors (i.e., generating prospects) through marketing and promotional activities like, branding, advertising, media production, etc. Providing suppliers with market intelligence plus cost effective access to distribution channels are other functions. The interest also will be on providing some level of support to the visitor at the destination and the future of DMO’s will be as a dominant and most influential body to manage a Destination evolving into a "total destination management system". The DMO will become the ultimate source of strategic intelligence and grow as a communication centre for a destination. The research identifies to impart value creation in a networked environment through DMOs in order to enhance a new paradigm for competent destination management and thereby to build on the professional competency through DMOs to foresee the future challenges. Thereby, the DMO community will be sought after by Govt. institutions & large corporations for information and leadership.

**Keywords:** DMO, Visitor Centered Approach, Destination Branding and Management

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## **1. Concept**

DMO: Non-governmental technical body is a voluntary in nature. These are supported by the Host Government. DMO is a body to initiate a standardized procedure to market a destination by attracting right quantum of tourist, to synergize activities on tourist destinations. DMOs are also perceived as marketing organizations designed to bring buyers (visitors) in contact with marketers (providers of tourism products and services). DMOs can flourish with Destination marketing as a proactive function. Visitor centered approach to the economic and cultural development of a destination will balance & integrate the interests of visitors, service providers and the community. Core DMO functions are to market the destination as attractive to visitors (i.e., generating prospects) through marketing and promotional activities like, branding,

advertising, media production, etc. Providing suppliers with market intelligence plus cost effective access to distribution channels (tour wholesalers, travel media and online channel) are other functions. The interest also will be on providing some level of support to the visitor at the destination (information leaflets and visitor centers).

## **2. Future**

Destination Management Organization will be a dominant and most influential body to manage a Destination evolving into a "total destination management system". The DMO will become the ultimate source of strategic intelligence and grow as a communication centre for a destination. The DMO community will be sought after by Govt. institutions & large corporations for information and leadership.

### 3. Review of Literature

Pestek & Nikolic (2011) speaks of innovative means of promoting the city of Mostar as a potential tourism destination and to do so by tapping the existing products and develop new tourist brands so as to build on a city brand. They state the importance of image building as they focus on enhancing tourist interest through traditional products. Therefore, to transform a destination it is essential to convert destination product into destination experience and destination marketing into destination management to bring about accelerated tourism development it is essential to turn to strategic management and to build a trademark and destination brand that has quality and meets the need of locals and tourists. The resources show that Mostar has a tourism nature of short stays and furthermore Mostar, has the advantage of not being seasonal in nature, by developing an innovative model it can prolong tourists stay especially by through exploiting the tourist products with the aim of creating and positioning the destination. Mostar does not make full use of its existing potential as it can develop a range of tourist activities such as, cultural, historical, religious, eco-and agro tourism, adventure as well as gastronomical tourism. Therefore, the study reveals that the 'new' consumers seek novel experiences that cater to his individual needs; it also saw that this is the main reason for the European market to fall back on package tours. Thus, the model is built on constructing a competitive and successful destination addressing products that offer innovative new forms of tourism. The paper states that the key factors of a sustainable destination is positioning, quality and efficiency based on these factors, needs of the consumers have to be addressed, by implementing an innovative approach it creates interest and influences the customer to visit, also by creating a feeling of 'unexpected pleasure' it would satisfy the consumers and thus create loyal customers. On the light that gastronomical tourism is gaining popularity on the global front as well as the logic of indigenous products and way of life reflect the regions culture this unique aspects should be the innovative front that the city of Mostar should adopt. They authors state that innovative means of food consumption will arouse the feeling of uniqueness, adventure and this would be imbibed in the urban and rural space. In addition, that about one third of the tourists engage in shopping the availability of food and traditional souvenirs can convey a positive image of the destination. Thereby on creating a completely new and challenging product "aestheticised cultural goods" it would throw open a niche market to stand out against competitors and survive in the global market. Thereby innovative brands contributed by the stakeholder will result in drawing full tourist satisfaction; besides this it is pertinent to gain the trust amongst the public and private players so that they deliver results to the innovative tourist model. They also debate that the innovation needs to be through slow intervention of reconstruction and development of the industry, so that there is holistic management of the tourist destination. By introducing destination management

organizations they can link all the active players of the industry and thereby develop tourist products and turn tables by means of this strategic shift.

Zupanovic (2010) proposes a strategic model for Montenegro, where during the study period there was a global economic slowdown, the paper seeks to postulate a six stepped model so as improve the potential tourist inflow effectively. It stresses on the concept of cluster making, and forming a destination management organization for each cluster. Emphasis is laid on the significance of tourist's inclination towards tourist destination which the paper terms as clusters, therefore the only means of survival is linking the various levels of the diversified tourism product, and instigating coordination, which is done so through the means of key criterions such as on the lines of where development can be initiated at these destinations. The study further goes to cluster the various destinations based on these criteria's, the key aim is towards repositioning, based on this aim specific policy and strategies are required to form a management structure, implemented through DMOs. These DMOs have several targets to meet and aims to achieve; they have to coordinate between the regional organizations as well as represent the interests on both the national and international level, moreover to build a good rapport between the public and the private sectors. The next step in the model is so as to enhance the human resource on an operational and management level. On establishing both a strategic and functional model, forming an infrastructural model is the next step, this is done on the lines of remodeling the accommodation capabilities they focus on tourism infrastructure in the resort market, resort destination and resort property. A plan so as to properly formulate the investment plan, where sustainable, economic, environmental development is initiated, a responsible distribution of financial resources is called for moreover it is to bring in integrated systems of information where key investors are brought together through Investment Support System. Hence the project can gain funds from either public sector or private sector, or through a public private sector partnership, besides this there should be proper monitoring of the financial resources. The next step is to bring about yield management and to use this tool so as to bring about the match between supply and demand of customers into perspective. Therefore these models call forth immense adaptation, especially in the face of economic crisis.

Saraniemi (2010) studies into a country's National Tourism Organizations (NTOs) ability to carry out its goal of developing a destination brand. The study describes the destination brand building activities to relate between the processes of destination branding and image building. Research made on the lines of destination brand management, have adopted several perspectives from general branding literature other recent studies show that there is important and useful similarities between corporate branding and service branding. The case study explores the image building activities of destination branding at a country context, the actor in this case being NTOs, the study also investigates into the aspect a specific market for

branding by the country. It takes into account the efforts made by NTOs over three decades, and describes its image building abilities. The main findings of the study was depicted in the form of two models, based on upon image building and identity branding, self analysis of the destination image is often the first activity of the branding process, data collected from the case study depict that attempts have been made to brand or to strengthen and promote the country's image but they face a lack of coordination from the side of the stakeholders who want to promote the destination in their own way, there also were a number of issues relating to management, it was also identified that NTOs structure, strategy and culture play a very significant role. It was also observed that there was a significant cooperation between stakeholders and NTOs previously but as years advanced such activities dwindled down. To the stakeholder's image building process, help customer identify the brand to the image. Therefore it was clear that destination branding includes image building. Therefore, the case concluded that there was a need for a co-created destination branding process that described in detail the various branding activities undertaken by a particular NTO; it seems that the branding approach of branding in the destination NTO makes a big difference between image building and branding.

Semerçöz, Fatih; Dönmez, Dilek; Dursun, Meral; (2008) Relationships Between Destination Management Organizations And Destination Stakeholders- A Research In Regions Of Marmara, Aegean And Mediterranean In Turkey defines stakeholders and understanding relations, potential for cooperation and threats between stakeholders, as an important factor for destination management. Emphases on relationships between Provincial Directorates of Culture and Tourism and their stakeholders in three region (Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean) in Turkey. The paper highlights findings such as; Governorships, Municipalities, Provincial Authority appear to be the most important three stakeholders in all three regions. It reflects a bureaucratic structure in destination management.

A National Framework for Best Practice - Destination Management Planning (2007) *Australian Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism* describes on Destination Management Planning (DMP) is a management system that provides a tourism organization with the tools to produce sustainable and competitive tourism in a destination. It is inclusive of all practices and principles as specified in: Destination Development Planning, Destination Marketing, and Destination Management. The Process of DMP is on researching & analyzing of the current situation and performing a gap analysis, identifying stakeholders who could have an interest in or an ability to influence the outcomes of the DMP process for the destination, identifying the stakeholders' interests and abilities to participate in the DMP process, determining the key strategic objectives of the Destination Management Plans (DMPL), evaluating the consistency of the outcomes of the DMPL, establishing the leadership roles necessary to implement the development, management and marketing

activities identified, identifying and acquiring additional resources required to implement the DMP activities, monitoring and reviewing the progress made in the implementation of the DMPL against agreed objectives etc.

The benefits of DMP are: improved destination competitiveness resulting in increased visitation and yield, increased visitor satisfaction resulting in repeat visitation, controlling the environmental impacts of tourism and contributing to the destination's economy with enhanced community support, creating effective partnerships between tourism and the other sectors and resulting in continuous improvements and constant refreshing of the destination's brand value.

Presenza, A., Sheehan, L. and Ritchie, J.R.B. (2005) 'Towards a Model of the Roles and Activities of Destination Management Organizations' *Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Science* examines various views of DMOs as a Destination Marketing Organization & Destination Management Organization. It tries to propose a model that describes the possible activities of DMOs as belonging to an External Destination Marketing (EDM) function or an Internal Destination Development (IDD) function. Conceptualizations & descriptions are offered of EDM & IDD, and their respective activities. The World Tourism Organization (2004) defines DMOs as organizations responsible for the management and/or marketing of destinations and generally falling into one of the following categories:

- National Tourism Authorities or Organizations, responsible for management and marketing of tourism at a national level;
- Regional, provincial or state DMOs, responsible for the management and/or marketing of tourism in a geographic region defined for that purpose, sometimes but not always an administrative or local government region such as a county, state or province; and
- Local DMOs, responsible for the management and/or marketing of tourism based on a smaller geographic area or city/town.

Presenza, Angelo., (2006) The performance of a tourism destination- who manages the destination? Who plays the audit role? The paper examined the different aspects of the tourism destination by investigating the relationship between local government authorities, destination management organizations, and destination auditors. It aimed to describe the particular role of destination audit, while acknowledging that destination management was an important component of tourism destination. A case study approach was adopted based on an Italian destination named Abruzzo Region. It conceptualized on destination audit which facilitates to improve the performance, competitiveness, and sustainability of a destination as governed by a vision for the destination. Assess the reliability and validity of the information from market research reports, economic impact studies, and advertising conversion studies. Destination Audit Process (adapted from Ritchie and Crouch, 2003:254), determined the

destination's vision, goals and objectives. The analysis of the tourism destination highlighted how some Italian tourism destinations interpreted the destination audit concept to create specific organizations that are called "Osservatorio Turistico Regionale" (OTR). OTRs support the tourism destination manager by choosing the best tourist politics through understanding, studying, and diagnosing all important factors that contribute to the development of a competitive and sustainable destination and, at the same time, by examining the output of the marketing activity of the destination. OTRs have become essential to the development of a system of relations between different stakeholders of the tourism destination and represents a good tool for comprehensive, systematic and periodic data-elaboration and for reducing the tourism's complexity. This can help the destination policy-makers to improve the network's politics in the destination. Enables a shift from an approach limited to the tourism phenomenon to a multi-disciplinary approach that includes all elements of the destination.

The paper identifies the existence of 4 main levels of complexity: complexity resulting from presence of large number of players, complexity resulting from interactions & influences between different sectors, complexity dependent on the stakeholder relationship dynamics and complexity dependent on the interactions between different levels of governance.

Buhalis, Dimitrios (2000) *Marketing the competitive destination of the future* Tourism Management, 21 (1). pp. 97-116. ISSN 02615177 describes on the emphasis on the requirement to develop a monitoring system for local destinations. The monitoring system should be characterized by an increasingly closer relationship between planning, management and control, and by a flexible structure able to be relevant to any development or management plans. The monitoring system should be able to: Evaluate over time the phases of development of a local tourist destination, Make comparisons with other tourist destinations, Be a support for defining strategies and planning. The phases to be followed during the monitoring phase are: Evaluating the strength of tourism in the destination, Evaluating the phase the destination has reached in the tourist area life cycle and paying attention to eventual possibilities/opportunities for development in new areas, Evaluating the possible strategies (innovation, diversification, increased competitiveness of consolidated products), Evaluating strategies to develop niche products or target wider markets, Defining and prioritizing actions. The monitoring process therefore provides a support system for effective decision making. The process helps to track the strategic route undertaken by a destination, and evaluating the actual situation in the light of the effective decisions adopted and implemented.

Carlsen (1999) debates that in the light of increasing tourism destination competitiveness the limitations of the traditional approaches needs to be overcome by new approaches and proposes the systems approach for tourism destination planning and management. The tourism system is an open system as it responds to changes in the

environment, mainly due to the underlying fact that tourism development and natural environment are interconnected and that the tourism system is dependent on the environment, such that change in one component invariably brings about change in every other component of the system. This nature of the tourism systems creates major implications to tourism planners and destination managers. Carlsen thus argues that in the Leiper's approach on tourism system it does not depict the nature and extent of this influence. The tourism system is multidisciplinary as various aspects fall into the study of tourism. The systems thinking is therefore stressed upon as it is the very base of realizing the sectoral and temporal nature of tourism development, it also facilitates the study on the impacts of tourism leading to tourism planning and implementation, which is nothing but destination management. Further he emphasizes that the systems thinking identifies the interdependence and interrelatedness of all the elements within a system, the tourism system being open, it must be said that tourism managers have to adapt to not only internal factors but also external factors. The study is backed by the use of soft system methodology to meet problems faced by island states, it speaks of seven steps to determine and solve real world problems, and it also facilitates an understanding of policy implementation as well as planning decisions and actions. The researcher concludes that there remains a want of understanding between the impacts of tourism on tourist destinations as uncontrolled tourism will have negative impacts. Therefore, it is important to comprehend the tourism system so as to negate rise of issues. The soft systems approach is applicable in small island state where the system can be easily modeled and relationships can be drawn.

Morrison, Bruen, and Anderson (1998) ascribed five primary functions of a DMO as an economic driver generating new income, employment, and taxes contributing to a more diversified local economy, a community marketer communicating the most appropriate destination image, attractions, and facilities to selected visitor markets, an industry coordinator providing a clear focus and encouraging less industry fragmentation so as to share in the growing benefits of tourism, a quasi-public representative adding legitimacy for the industry and protection to individual and group visitors; and a builder of community pride by enhancing quality of life and acting as the chief 'flag carrier' for residents and visitors alike.

The article highlights EDM Functions which includes all activities aimed at attracting visitors to the destination: Direct sales, Scopeable blitzes, Trade shows, Advertising, Familiarization tours, Web marketing, Events & festivals, Co-operative programs, Direct mail and Publications & brochures. The IDD Functions are encompassing all forms of activities to develop and maintain tourism at the destination Visitor Management with Information / Research, Coordinating Tourism Stakeholders, Crisis Management, Human Resource Development, Finance & Venture Capital, Resource Stewardship, Quality of the Visitor Experience. The eventual Discussion in the article analyzes the DMO & its activities over time. It identifies

gaps in activities & amends the strategic plan for the organization. DMOs can be used to perform a destination audit. The article compared with disparity in the activities of different DMOs. At the conclusive end DMO must assess its environment & select the most appropriate set of activities relative to its primary purpose & resources.

#### 4. Research Gap

The primary gap is to impart value creation in a networked environment through DMOs in order to enhance a new paradigm for competent destination management and thereby to build on the professional competency through DMOs to foresee the future challenges.

#### 5. Need of the Study

Although, India is not a recent entrant in promoting tourism, it is poised to emerge as a major global player. India offers world-class attractions that can be made competent by attaining high visitor appreciation and systematic marketing effort by the service vendors. Nevertheless in the process, the difficulty lies in leveraging a rationale foundation to initiate collective marketing on behalf of the suppliers. The underlying principles that trademark is professionalism and excellent customer service. The need also foresee the role of various stake holders in promoting tourism thereby uplifting the Indian economy in a more methodical process. The government can play a lead role in prompting DMO to form a government-industry affiliation to strengthen the Indian tourism brand overseas. Efforts will be made to launch uniformity to market travel products. And the potential for this is huge.

For getting an exceptional growth, India needs to lay a wider role in developing an integrated tourism system to share a globally competitive edge. This creates India to

pull over for Value creation and also building professional competency. The purpose of the study also necessitates that a rationale foundation can be created to initiate collective marketing on behalf of the suppliers. Further it reallocates the supremacy for the benefits of the community. Thereby, destinations need to confer additional attention on management, conservation and to channelize innovative patterns for effective citizenship and high economic benefits. The main purpose of the study is to explore the misperceptions carried by the organizations in India especially the private participants (Travel agencies, tour operators etc.) with reference to the application of DMO concept and to suggest the government of Karnataka the significance of DMO & thereby seeking their support.

Hence the thrust could be leveraged by promulgating effective tourism system thereby, enabling a wider sphere for a better proximity to global success. Considering all these factors the investigator felt the imperative need to undertake the present study of the various independent variables impacting the growth of DMOs in India.

#### 6. Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is focused on Karnataka by determining the role of DMO's (destination management organization) in building destination competency and thereby drafting a conducive model as a strategic plan for Karnataka's government.

Karnataka is blessed with many fascinating worlds with ageless monuments, world heritage sites, lush green forests, amazing wildlife, spectacular waterfalls, romantic hill stations, timeless temples, pristine beaches, exhilarating adventure sports and vibrant art & culture. The length and breadth of Karnataka has spellbound by every facet to benchmark its resources while being highly competitive in the global map.

**Typology of Tourism Resources in Karnataka**

Heritage & Religious Karnataka	Wilderness & Adventure Karnataka	Coastal Karnataka	Natural & Cascading Karnataka
Aihole	Agumbe	Gokarna	Abbey Falls
Badami	Anshi NP	Karwar	Chikmagalur
Belur	Bandipur NP	Kaup	Coorg
Bidar	Bannerghatta NP	Malpe	Gokak Falls
Bijapur	Bhadra WS	Mangalore	Iruppu Falls
Chitradurga	Bheemeshwari	Marawanthe	Jog Falls
Halebid	BR Hills WS	Murudeshwar	Kemmanugundi
Hampi	Dandeli WS	St. Mary's Island	Nandi Hills
Mysore	Dubare		Shivanasamudra Falls
Pattadakal	Kabini		
Somnathpur	Kodachadri		
Sravanabelagola	Kokrebellur BS		
Srirangapatna	Kudremukh NP		
	Nagarhole NP		
	Ranganatittu BS		
	Yana		

## 7. Significance of the Study

The study is highly significant to various stake holders like government bodies, private participants, NGOs & the local community. The government bodies entail the benefits by becoming an ultimate source of strategic intelligence & can grow as a communication centre for the destinations. The private participants will be able to methodically progress by standardizing the services and facilitating the same to the tourists in a more systematic manner. NGOs benefit by effortlessly coordinating with private participants & local community to connect the services in the most appropriate way. The local community drives the ultimate benefit by having a synthesis between resource utilization & economic gains.

## 8. Objectives

- To study the role of DMOs in synergizing destination activities
- To highlight the existence of DMO or DMO activities at governmental level.
- To analyze the current practices and mechanisms of destination management in Karnataka.
- To examine and conceptualize the role of the agents of development (Public & private, Host community & Voluntary bodies) in destination marketing for Karnataka destinations.
- To develop a strategic framework for effective role of DMOs in Karnataka.
- To create a strategic model that would strengthen DMO and the tourism activities.
- To establish measurable parameters as standards to DMOs activities evaluation.

The above objectives could be attained as:

- The role of DMOs in synergizing destination activities can be attained from reviewing the available literatures on other destinations where the DMO activities are initiated.
- The existence of DMO or DMO activities at governmental level and the current practices and mechanisms of destination management in Karnataka can be measured by interrogating the government bodies or officials through personal interviews.
- The role of the agents of development (Public & private, Host Community & Voluntary bodies) in destination marketing for Karnataka destinations can be ascertained by personal interaction with the Public & private participants, Host community & Voluntary bodies.
- A strategic framework for effective role of DMOs in Karnataka could be measured by preparing a conducive model for ascertaining DMO functions can be broadly assessed and thereby a strategic model could be evolved which would strengthen DMO and the tourism activities.

- The research also would establish measurable parameters as standards through DMO activities to build Karnataka destinations competency.

## 9. Methodology

The study will focus on exploratory & descriptive modes for the purpose of achievement of objectives. Primarily a review on pertinent literature with respect to DMO's at global level will be crucially examined.

The process of research includes two broad segments of data collection:

1. Primary Data Collection
2. Secondary Data Collection

### 9.1. Primary Data Collection

Analysis of government bodies making policy and planning for tourism will be examined. A clear understanding and a closer assessment on the two sided perceptions- both the service provider and the service taker has to be analyzed through various methods like structured & non-structured questionnaires, interviews - both of the tourist & the travel vendors will be conducted. Discussions and interviews will be organized with planners, decision makers and developers with an aim to formulate appropriate developmental plans & policies for the feasibility of DMOs to flourish in Karnataka.

### 9.2. Secondary Data Collection Will Include

The data gathered from libraries of research centers, universities, management institutes and others by referring to books, journals, magazines, travel guides, travelogues, monographs etc emphasizing mainly on the DMO usage in different countries and its implications to tourism development.

## 10. Sampling Technique

Procedure for sampling adopted for the research is non-probability sampling technique namely judgmental sampling as the items for the sample are selected deliberately; since the choice concerning the items remains supreme.

## 11. Outcome and Implications

The outcome of the study is to offer assistance to the host government in order to facilitate the implications of DMOs in destination Management. At the outset the research also enables to act as a facilitator in order to advice & educate the private participants in destination marketing. A synchronized effort in destination management through appropriate destination planning and development will enhance measures for destination branding.

The implication of the study entails upon:

- Establishing DMOs to standardize the procedures for destination development.

- Setting up benchmarks for destination branding.
- Deterring business entities which does not foster the standards set by DMOs.
- Developing a yardstick to ensure the set objectives are adhered.
- To propose corrective actions during the non compliance by the participants.
- To incorporate the implications of DMOs in strengthening the academic curriculum.

## 12. Scope for Further Research

Determining the specialized areas of DMO from the demand and supply perspectives can be thoroughly examined to enhance destination competency.

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