

Human Resource Development in Tourism Industry

1.Y Chitra Rekha,

Asst.Professor

2.C.S.Saiprasad Reddy

,Associate professor

Narayana Engineering College, Nellore.

ychitrarekha@gmail.com,csspreddy@gmail.com,9704070060,9866179179.

Abstract:

Tourism has emerged as an important socioeconomic activity. It is an important international industry and a leading economic driver of the 21st century service sector. Human Resource Development (HRD) is central to the sustainability-oriented tourism development initiative. It has been observed that over the years, there has been a change in the demand and supply pattern of human resources for the travel industry, with the demand in favor of more educated and specialized personnel. However, the development of human resources in tourism is subject to a number of obstacles, and is severely lagging in terms of professionalism. There is no evidence of any kind of HRD approach being followed by the tour operators/travel agencies. Skill shortage within the industry is an outcome of short-term management and lack of investment in people. The tourism workforce appears to be "uneducated, unmotivated, untrained, unskilled and unproductive". Thus, there is a need to enhance the image of the industry personnel through standard human resource management and development practices, which require the cooperation of the people involved in the tourism business. In this Paper an effort has been made to shed light on problems and challenges of HRD in the tourism industry in India.

Keywords: *Human Resource Development, Tourism management.*

Introduction:

Tourism has emerged as an important socioeconomic activity. It is an important international industry and a leading economic driver of the 21st century service sector. Human Resource Development (HRD) is central to the sustainability-oriented tourism development initiative. It has been observed that over the years, there has been a change in the demand and supply pattern of human resources for the travel industry, with the demand in favor of more educated and specialized personnel. In the current global work environment, all global companies are focused on retaining the talent and knowledge held by the workforce. All companies are focused on lowering the employee turnover and preserving knowledge. New hiring not only entails a high cost but also increases the risk of the newcomer not being able to replace the person who was working in that position before. HR departments also strive to offer benefits that will appeal to workers, thus reducing the risk with the help of HRD (Human Resource Development).

The Indian tourism product

India has spectacular natural and cultural tourist attractions and a rich cultural heritage that is over 5,000 years old. There are thousands of monuments and archaeological remains for tourists to visit and enjoy. The remnants of one of the most ancient river valley civilizations of the world, the Indus Valley Civilization, are found in India.

The Taj Mahal and 16 World Heritage centers' and several national heritage sites are located in India. The historical sites and ancient monuments have an architectural grandeur that makes them tourism attractions.

The topography, natural resources and climate are also diverse. There are land-locked mountainous regions, lush valleys and plains, arid desert regions, white sandy beaches and

islands. India's cultural diversity is unparalleled, with a kaleidoscope of races, languages, religions, customs and traditions found throughout the country.

Indians have embraced almost all the major religions of the world and India itself has given rise to five religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikh and Tauhid-i-illahi of Akbar. Showing hospitality to visitors is a national tradition. The lifestyles of Indian people are varied and display a cultural uniqueness. Local and national fairs and festivals are full of colour and spectacle.

India has some of the best beaches in the world and many are still unexplored, such as the Andaman and Lakshadweep Islands. Central India has many wild life sanctuaries with countless varieties of flora and fauna.

The geographical diversity of India provides opportunities for outdoor and adventure sports activities, with something for all tastes and interests and every level of experience. Major adventure tourism activities range from trekking and skiing in the Himalayas, river running along the Ganges, water sports in Goa, trout fishing in Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, heli-skiing in Himachal Pradesh, and wind surfing, scuba diving and yachting in the Andaman and Lakshadweep Islands.

It has been said that there is a fair or festival each day of the year in India. Important fairs and festivals include the Pushkar Fair in Rajasthan, the Crafts Mela at Surajkund, Holi in North India, Pongal in Tamilnadu, Onam in Kerala, Baisakhi in Punjab, Bihu in Assam and dance festivals at Khajuraho and Mamallapuram. There are also many forms of handicrafts and arts. Bharatnatyam, Odissi, Kathakali, Mohiniattam are some of the most popular forms of classical dances which have their origins in various states. Every dance form has a precise vocabulary of emotions that are displayed by gestures that range from simple moves to complex choreography.

India is a treasure trove of handicrafts. Handicrafts from all over India can be found in shopping plazas and stores, on streets where shops sell specialty goods, and local lairs set up overnight can offer exotic choices. Another delight found in India is the cuisine. Each region has

its culinary specialty and the recipes are written with expertise and beautifully represented in extensive literature. Thousands of restaurants offer samples of exotic food to suit all tastes. The variety of architectural styles is vast and provides diverse chronicles of cultures and history.

Economic Significance of Tourism

Travel and tourism have emerged as significant economic and social activities in the modern world with enormous economic impact. They are seen as a valuable means for economic development and employment creation, particularly in areas that are rural or less developed.

The most significant feature of the tourism industry in India is its capacity to generate large-scale employment opportunities. It offers the potential to utilize natural resources and adds value to the local architectures and environments of many areas. However, a special feature of tourism is its ability to employ large numbers of women and young members of the workforce. Most job opportunities come from airlines, hotels, travel agencies, handicrafts and cultural and other tourism-related activities.

Some of the services required in the tourism and hotel industries are highly personalized, and no amount of automation can substitute for personal service providers. Human resource development in the tourism industry normally includes manpower training in two main areas: (1) the hospitality and catering sector and (2) the travel trade and tourism sector.

HRD in Tourism Industry

Gupta (2003) mentions that tourism is a major social phenomenon of the modern society with enormous consequences. Promotion of the tourism generates a plethora of both economic and social benefits, infrastructure development, and social integration. Tourism as an economic sector has challenges to meet the needs of trained and educated manpower for various facets of tourism management.

Ashraf and Pooja Mathur (2003) point out that there is an increasing demand of human resources who can plan, design, develop, manage, promote tourism or even train manpower to run agencies, to operate tours or even to act guides.

The customers are increasingly becoming more discriminatory and look for more quality services. Globalization has added a further dimension of awareness amongst the tourists. There is increased competition from all areas. A tourist expects to be guided on convenient travel, places of destinations to be visited, comforts, care, social customs practiced to avoid annoyance to the local population, availability of preferred food, use of scarce funds.

HRD has emerged as a major factor to determine competitive advantage for tourism industry. A trained right human resource enables to provide the right context to a tourist. The sub-system has a role to create a resource of skilled, trained personnel for the range of tourism activity. Tourism requires trained human resource as managers on one side, and staff to carry out both front office and back office operations. Leaving aside some large organizations such as chains of hotels which can afford to set up their own training schools, it becomes the responsibility of the central regulators to create an infrastructure of training schools and provide a choice of professional courses to create trained manpower.

New demands have emerged on tourism in this age of international traveler and internet. The trained manpower needs to be exposed and educated in understanding the management function, behavioural aspects of conduct and encounter, relationship management, comprehensive understanding of the human nature, knowledge about the unique demands of a customer coming from a foreign country, knowledge of IT, exposure to money transactions, handling of grievances and professionalism.

A capable HR manager in tourism is instrumental to implement the central policy, create a climate of trust, and openness through his professional conduct. Apparently when such trained manpower is available, there is also going to be an impact on policy making. Professional advice would now improve the quality of such policies

HRD in tourism: a role for government

Government should be better to make good country then tourism come there and look beauty and charming there. When tourism goes back to their country then they say another people about beauty, charming and lover's people. Government gets credit of our people and tourism. Business is better than before. The Ministry of Tourism is the nodal agency for the formulation of national policies and programmes and for the co-ordination of activities of various Central Government Agencies, State Governments/UTs and the Private Sector for the development and promotion of tourism in the country. This Ministry is headed by the Union Minister for Tourism and supported by Minister of State for Tourism.

The administrative head of the Ministry is the Secretary (Tourism). The Secretary also acts as the Director General (DG) Tourism. The office of the Director General of Tourism {now merged with the office of Secretary (Tourism)} provides executive directions for the implementation of various policies and programmes. Directorate General of Tourism has a field formation of 20 offices within the country and 14 offices abroad and one sub-ordinate office/project i.e. Indian Institute of Skiing and Mountaineering (IISM)/ Gulmarg Winter Sports Project. The overseas offices are primarily responsible for tourism promotion and marketing in their respective areas and the field offices in India are responsible for providing information service to tourists and to monitor the progress of field projects. The activities of IISM/GWSP have now been revived and various Ski and other courses are being conducted in the J&K valley. The Ministry of Tourism has under its charge a public sector undertaking, the India Tourism Development Corporation and the following autonomous institutions:

- **Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM) and National Institute of Water Sports (NIWS)**
- **National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT) and the Institutes of Hotel Management.**

Constraints

- The major constraint in the expansion of international tourist traffic to India is non-availability of adequate infrastructure including adequate air seat capacity, accessibility to tourist destinations, accommodation and trained manpower in sufficient number.
- Poor visitor experience, particularly, due to inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor hygienic conditions and incidents of touting and harassment of tourists in some places are factors that contribute to poor visitor experience.

Role and Functions of the Ministry of Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism functions as the nodal agency for the development of tourism in the country. It plays a crucial role in coordinating and supplementing the efforts of the State/Union Territory Governments, catalyzing private investment, strengthening promotional and marketing efforts and in providing trained manpower resources. The functions of the Ministry in this regard mainly consist of the following:

Policies of Government includes:

- Development Policies.
- Incentives.
- External Assistance.
- Manpower Development.
- Promotion & Marketing.
- Investment Facilitation.
- Planning. Co-ordination with other Ministries, Departments, State/UT Governments.
- Regulation.
- Standards.
- Guidelines
- Infrastructure & Product Development.
- Guidelines
- Human Resource Development
- Institutions.
- Setting Standards and Guidelines.

- Publicity & Marketing:
- Policy.
- Strategies.
- Co-ordination.
- Research, Analysis, Monitoring and Evaluation
- International Co-operation and External Assistance
- International Bodies.
- Bilateral Agreements.
- External Assistance.
- Foreign Technical Collaboration
- Legislation and Parliamentary Work
- Establishment matters.
- Vigilance matters.
- Implementation of official language policy.
- Budget co-ordination and related matters.
- Plan-coordination and monitoring.

Conclusion:

Tourism receipts are growing strong in Asia, contributing a considerable amount to GDP in many countries. As the region looks forward to the next century, the challenges of infrastructure development, environment protection policies and above all, the shortage of skilled manpower, both at craft and management level in the tourism industry, loom large. The need for trained and skilled staff is one of the most pressing issues facing the ASIA region at present. Each country has developed strategies at regional and national levels. These strategies must be implemented to alleviate the shortage of trained manpower for the tourism industry. "Travel and Tourism" has always been an integral part of the Indian tradition and culture. 'Atithi Devo Bhav' (The Guest is God) and 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (The World is One Family) have always been the bywords for Indian social behavior. The Improvements of tourism industry with the help of HRD is possible along with the involvement of Government.

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