

## Higher Education and Skill Development - A challenge for Tourism Industry in India

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### Abstract

The service sector in India has remained the most vibrant sector in contribution to national incomes, trade flows, FDI inflows, and employment generation. Despite the exciting future of Indian tourism there are many manpower challenges faced by this industry. Lack of skilled and trained manpower is the crucial challenge for the long-term development of the industry. Due to this, significant numbers of tourism establishments have faced difficulties in meeting the quality standards. Therefore, quality education, institutes, vocational education, higher education, research and training in this field have to be incorporated.

The purpose of the paper is to investigate the challenges that are being faced by the tourism industry, in the context of higher education and skill development programmes. The paper is an attempt to find out the advantage of higher education and training in the tourism industry.

**Keywords:** *tourism industry, hospitality sector, higher education, skill development, human resource management.*

### INTRODUCTION

India tourism is vast and varied, it requires professionally trained manpower to develop and promote the resources of tourism in the global market. Indian tourism industry has capacity to generate large-scale employment opportunities but due to inadequate and inefficient higher education and skill development programmes the HR practices are not standardized. This discourages the talented and competent people to opt the industry as a career option which is resulting in poor supply of manpower. People who did certified diploma course, graduate in tourism out of them 40% of them are pursuing career in other service sectors due to poor salary packages or non standardized skill development programmes. This creates shortage of manpower in this industry. To bridge the gap between demand and supply of skilled manpower by attracting and retaining is the major issue in the tourism industry of India. The industry wants highly skilled and trained professionals. People working in the hotel industry play significant role in ensuring that every occupant or tourist has the best possible stay. But the hotel industry in India is often criticized as a sector with poor employee management practices which is the cause for poor employee relation, poor performance, low pay and high labor turnover. All these pitfalls are mainly on account of poor HRM practices. A change is needed not for the development of hotel industry alone, tourism and hotel industry also will benefited from such a change.

### ➤ **Tourism Industry in India**

Tourism is a multibillion industry in India as it is the third largest foreign exchange earner after gems, jewellery and ready made garments, thus it is the right vehicle for the development of the economy of developing countries like India. The industry is highlighted for vast business opportunities; it employs large number of people associated with of hotels, transportation, travel agencies etc.

Since 1966, the ITDC has been engaged in developing necessary infrastructure for the development of tourism opportunity in the country. The Department of Tourism was formed to promote domestic and international tourism in the country.

The tourism industry has a great potential for further development as it is the fastest growing service sector in the country. According to World Tourism Organization estimates, India will lead in South Asia with 8.9 million arrivals by 2020.

The Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management is an autonomous body established to impart education in tourism and travel management, The National Council for Hotel management and Catering Technology provide trained personnel to the industry.

### ➤ **Tourism industry in Make in India \***

- The contribution of the tourism industry is INR 2,178.1 billion to the country's GDP in 2013. This is expected to rise by 7.5% to INR 2,341.45 Billion in 2014
- The foreign exchange earnings from tourism have recorded a growth rate of 2.2% USD 18.13 Billion as compared to 17.74 Billion in 2012.
- The industry is a big employment generator. Every USD 1 Million invested in tourism creates 78 jobs.
- India is the 16<sup>th</sup> most visited country in the world, with a share of 1.56% in the world's tourism receipts.
- Domestic tourism contributes to three-fourth of the tourism economy
- There is a renewed focus on skill development "in the sector-21 government run hotel management and catering technology institute" and 14 food craft institutes have been established to impart specialized training in hoteliering and catering.

### ➤ **Agencies working for the development of tourism in India\***

- Ministry of Tourism, Government of India
- Hotel Association of India
- Association of Tourism Trade Organizations, India
- Federation of Hotel & Restaurants Association of India

- Indian Association of Tour Operators
- Travel Agents Association of India
- India Tourist Transporters Association

*\*source: Make in India*

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- To identify the benefits of education and training in tourism industry
- To determine the causes where the tourism industry lacks competent professionals in terms of knowledge, learning and training.
- To identify the issues and challenges of tourism in India
- To suggest ways of developing the skills in staff of tourism industry

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The data is collected from secondary source the reference books, journals, various reports of Ministry of Tourism, government of India, articles and websites. For further study the data will be collected from primary and secondary sources.

#### ➤ **ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN TOURISM INDUSTRY OF INDIA**

- Unfavorable Working Conditions
- Wage System
- Employment Security
- Lack of Opportunities and career advancements
- Educational issues and challenges
- Lack of Training
- Poor Government Policies on Tourism
- Lack of safety and Security policies

The terrorist activities in the country have had an adverse effect on the tourist arrivals in India, harassment of tourist in some places

- Corruption
- Crises in the Country
- Legal framework and policy
- International economic environment
- Social issues
- Technological changes
- Environmental issues

- Lack of sound marketing and promotional strategies
- Poor maintenance of historical properties
- Non standardizations of fares
- Demand and supply gap

### ➤ **HIGHER EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

Does the higher education and training in tourism industry meet the need and expectation? Despite rapid growth in tourism industry, the higher education still faces some uncertainties in terms of the content and quality of graduates in terms of skills; this restricts the employment opportunities for tourism graduates. In the context of Indian tourism industry higher education and training faces a great challenge for the human capital development.

The industry has to be more focused on how the tourism and hospitality sector responds to the demands of the future labour force rather than how the industry demands for the qualification

A fundamental change in focus will only come through a greater emphasis on education, learning, and training and Best Practice in Human Resource Management.

The seasonal nature of the industry can be a major cause for high staff turnover because as just being a stepping-stone to another career/sector adds to the problem and the manager don't want to invest in training. The turnover can be considered as a major obstacle for the development of the industry, as the enterprises of tourism and hospitality sector are forced to recruit new staff and they do not get to build knowledgeable and innovative organizations.

#### **Skills and Qualities required in tourism industry:**

- Good communication skills with presentation skills
- Good services needs to be provided to the customer to win their trust and to serve the business better.
- Friendliness in these sectors is very necessary to help in the growth of business.
- Needs to be manipulative to understand the mindset of the customer/client and sell the solutions according to the requirements of the clients.
- Need to be outgoing, so that overall attitude remains positive, to serve the customer/client better.
- Verbal fluency
- A person should be up-to-date regarding the policies of the industries. Proper knowledge of available facilities and services are very important to work in this field.
- Person with skills of decision making, solving problems, working effectively within the team and lead the team from tough waters is must.
- It is important to appreciate that people around the world have different ways of doing things.

- the ability to create a rapport with people of different ages and different cultures
- Leadership
- Artistic and Creative skills are also highly valued and required in certain tourism careers

### **Skill gap**

- Inadequate ability to handle customers (Individual and/or Corporate) with wide range of needs.
- Inadequate ability to handle complaints
- Lack of adequate IATA qualified personnel
- Inability to handle the situation during the crises time – such as change in tickets, sudden changes in travel schedules.
- Lack of adequate presentation skills.
- Inadequate management skills.
- Lack of adequate geographical knowledge (especially in case of international travels) leading to higher turnaround time.
- Need for better time management
- Inability to maintain a cordial relationship with the corporate clients, leading to misunderstanding.
- Insufficient creativity in designing new products based on the customer requirement.

### **Need for the skill development in tourism industry**

To train the specific tourism occupations (e.g. travel agents, cook, etc.) the educational institutions have developed general tourism diplomas and degree programs .Although the level of formal education has improved, the industry is still categorized by unskilled or low level of skilled workforce as compared to the other sectors. Tourism is experiencing a skill gap. The main cause behind the gap is retaining the qualified employee.

Due to the seasonal nature of industry most tourism employers do not have skilled human resource professionals. Furthermore, the majority of the occupations and businesses are found in accommodation sector and restaurants (food and beverages). Many smaller businesses in the industry struggle to get staff.

Therefore, it is necessary to find the creative and innovative approaches to training and development.

### **IMPORTANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SECTOR**

- As with any industry, the people working in tourism industry need to have knowledge and skills.

- Seminars and conferences at regular intervals provide students with valuable real world experience, developing their skills and helping boost their credentials.
- An Organization gets the best results from a training program by targeting specific areas that need improvement.
- While investing in new employees by providing learning opportunities, they may be inspired to do more than the minimum required of them. Adequate and appropriate training broaden the ability to determine the potential superstars who might be shaped into leaders.
- Employee development is essential in providing a consistent level of guest satisfaction over time.
- Providing ongoing attention to training and development affects your business's ability to remain competitive.

### **Initiatives of ministry of Tourism**

According to press information bureau

- Ministry of tourism has tied-up with Ecole Htelier de Lausanne, Switzerland for improving quality of hospitality education
- The foundation stone for setting up of Indian Culinary Institute has been laid on 2-09-2014
- Planning to set up the Sector Skill Council(SSC) to regulate and promote hospitality and tourism related education and skill development in the country
- In Hunar Se Rozgar Tak scheme, 11367 persons have been trained till to Aug.2014
- The Ministry of Tourism had organized 3 month Tourist Facilitator Training Course at Indian Institute of Tourism & Travel Management at Noida to overcome the problem of shortage of Chinese speaking tourist guide

### ➤ **SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATION**

- For the improvement of training at the national level, the industry has to introduce new ways of teaching and establish a better link of the capacities of schools, training centers, universities and enterprises with the support of the social partners and the tourism organizations.
- It needs to bridge the gap between training system and learning processes in order to improve the knowledge transfer between the educational system and the industry.
- Promote tourism as a viable career opportunity with flexible working hours, part-time options, and regional employment opportunities.
- Encourage tourism operators to increase focus on education, training, and development



to ensure people have the technical skills, customer-service skills, and interpretation skills.

- Flexible training solutions between businesses, educational institutions, and other industry training organizations.
- Organizations have to take adequate precautions for the safety of the employee
- To attract personnel, Tourism Careers Campaign to enhance the attractiveness and improve the image of the tourism industry.
- Involvements of employees with the development of training programs to avoid the unnecessary cost of training budgets
- At customer service training, the employees are taught how to address visitors in both positive and negative situations and ensure the guests enjoy their stay and depart with plans to return.
- The organization should divide the training objectives knowledge, skill and attitude. The training methods should match with the above three components.
- Exchange program with foreign institutes, for both the students and faculty.

## CONCLUSION

There is a need to take on the workforce for the better hospitality and service quality in the hotel sector of India, so that the satisfied guests visit again. This will only be possible when the standardized service is delivered. The tourism industry can go a long way but it only depends on the strengthening of HR area. Manpower is the key to growth of any industry. We cannot ignore the recruitment of the skilled man power in tourism industry.

The success of any course lies on its course curriculum and contents. The content of the higher education needs to be reframed according to the external and internal environmental needs Tourism industry has a tremendous employment potential but has still failed in attracting good candidates. Thus the education in tourism needs to be promoted well to attract the students. Due to lack of clear direction in teaching of the tourism course the students are not able to fit well into the industry because they are not able to apply what they had learned at the institutions.

The industry stake holders need to ensure that there should be strategic skill development programs like timely inputs and refresher courses for the workforce in to the account for long term vision and growth. Lack of experienced faculty in the tourism discipline is another major concern which is needs to be addressed. Refresher courses should be organized for the faculties because they need to be updated for the skill development of the workforce, Human resources departments have to put emphasis on it for the long term success. Training and skill development programs can become more innovative in times of economic instability through the use of technology and self catering programs that employees monitor themselves. Tourism and hotel

sector can also look at other industries for ideas while developing new training programs as a way to have a competitive advantage.

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