

## Human Resource Development in Tourism Industry-An Analytical Framework

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### ABSTRACT

Tourism basically being a service business, a developing destination must take the necessary steps to build a pool of efficient trained people to fill various jobs, which will be created subsequently. A variety of jobs will have to be created to look after and manage various tourist services. The rapid growth rates in the industry have a direct impact on tourism employment and human resources development in terms of demand for professionals, specific skills and related training and education facilities. The need to develop and train the required human resources in various segments of the tourism industry has been widely recognized. This paper identifies that Development of Indian tourism would require HRD strategies focusing on sustainability based industry practices, tourism development, value systems and behavioral patterns among all the stakeholders.

**Keywords :** *Tourism Industry ; Human Resource Management; Development*

### Introduction

The importance of Human Resource Development for Tourism Industry is increasingly being realized. There is a need to mobilize the human resource with the purpose to enable them to participate in the task of organizational development and nation building. Mobilization would include the need to develop the human resource, their skills, knowledge, attitudes, so that they can achieve competently the predetermined goals. Obviously the efficient and professional management is pre-requisite of successful tourism development. Having equal importance, however, is the quality of staff training, which is often relatively neglected during the early stages of tourism sector development. Tourism basically being a service business, a developing destination must take the necessary steps to build a pool of efficient trained people to fill various jobs, which will be created subsequently. A variety of jobs will have to be created to look after and manage various tourist services. Special attention, therefore, will have to be given to the needs of manpower and personnel to be trained and rendered qualified for the various tourism professions. Special care has to be taken to ensure that there is expansion of facilities and services. In case of a developing country, it will also be appropriate to study at this stage the volume of manpower required for activities complementary to accommodation industry in general and service sector particular.

In spite of having a lot of tourism potentials India's share of global international tourism is relatively small in volume about 0.40% of world tourism. The sector is in fact is expected to generate around US\$42.8 billion (INR 1897.7 billion) by 2017, according to an industry research the amount of foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow in hotel and tourism sector during April 2000 to April 2013 was worth US\$ 6664.20 million. Foreign tourist arrival (FTA) during the month of June 2013 stood at 0.44 million as compared to FTAs of 0.43 million during June 2012, registering a growth of 2.5 percent and the domestic tourism is expected to increase by 15 percent to 20 percent over the next few years.

While planning for human resources development, programs should be established to screen and train prospective employees so that they could acquire both attitudinal as well as technical skills. Attitudinal characteristics contribute to an employee's success in tourism position and include pride, flexibility, adaptability and judgment. Technical skills required for equipment operation and maintenance, financial management, food and beverage, and personnel management etc. In order to determine the need for various personal required, a staff planning exercise may be done. This involves a series of steps, which include job analysis, preparing job description, job specifications and preparing staff forecasts. This sequence of activities leads to a detailed forecast of exactly what types of persons, with what specific qualifications and skills will be required at all major facilities within the tourist destination. All this helps in determining the development of requisite education and training programs within the country for local residents. This will also help in determining whether there is a need for trained personnel from other countries and also whether local people are to be sent for training elsewhere. This paper identifies that Development of Indian tourism would require HRD strategies focusing on sustainability based industry practices, tourism development, value systems and behavioral patterns among all the stakeholders.

### **Human resource challenges in tourism industry**

The rapid growth rates in the industry have a direct impact on tourism employment and human resources development in terms of demand for professionals, specific skills and related training and education facilities. The need to develop and train the required human resources in various segments of the tourism industry has been widely recognized in Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP, Nov 2005). The United National Development Program Report 1996 charged all ASEAN members and Indo-China with relatively poor human resource development (United Development Report, 1996). The UNDP-1996 report ranked 174 countries throughout the world according to a "human development index" based on factors such as adult literacy, education, per capita GDP and life expectancy. None of the ASEAN members was ranked among the top 20 countries. Progress has been made

on four main issues (identified at the Intergovernmental Meeting on Tourism Development held in 1996), but they still require consideration in view of the constraints that are still found in human resources development. The four main issues are:

- a) Shortage of qualified human resources
- b) Gaps in the availability of tourism training infrastructure and qualified trainers and teachers
- c) The lack of attention given to the conditions of work in the tourism sector and
- d) The ongoing need for long term national strategies and policies covering human resources development in the tourism sector.

The varying level of skills required and the tradition of limited or no stress on formal training and education, (Messenger, 1992), the presence of large number of small, independent and family owned units' (Parsons, 1996), and the relative lack of planned development of tourism. Added to these are other interrelated concerns, such as the impact of changing demographics, skills shortages, labour turnover, failure to attract quality school and college leavers, the poor image of the tourism industry as an employer, uncompetitive rewards and poor working conditions, religious and cultural taboos to employment in tourism, failure of education-providers to meet industry's needs and failure to recognize long-term human resource benefits in the face of short-term priorities.

The dynamic nature of the tourism industry further complicates the situation. Human resources development in the tourism industry also suffers from a divergence of views held by the key players, such as employers, training providers and employees. Employers did not see the business benefit of investing in their employees who were often part-time, temporary and viewed as low caliber. Employers and entrants perceived tourism jobs as having little status, low pay, and poor conditions. Training providers perceived tourism businesses as being apathetic about training and provided what they could rather than what really was actually required.

The indifference or lack of concern is felt mostly in the context of the institutional framework for HRD in tourism. The question of what should be the training inputs can be best described as chaotic. As Brogan (1994, p. 553) states, training providers tended to deliver courses in areas where they had skills, rather than in what the market required'. Added to this is the lack of co-operation and communication between tourism education and industry, which has led to the prevalence of 'student-centered' courses rather than 'industrially-centered' courses. Lack of properly trained instructors has always been a major issue at all levels of tourism education and training.

**Tourism Education in India:**

Presently, travel and tourism education institutes are beginning to gain ground in the country. In the public sector, these centers offer to train manpower for the lower levels generally. In 1962-1964 four institutes were established, one in each major metros of Delhi, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, to train candidates for the middle management and craft levels. These centers aim to provide skilled labour for specialized areas of cookery, housekeeping, restaurant, counter service, bakery and reception. Two decades later (in 1984) a National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology was formed under the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, which gave a big impetus to the four established craft institutes. Today, there are 16 Hotel Management Institutes and 15 Food Craft Institutes to the country's credit. These centers of training have the approval of the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), an autonomous, approving body. More importantly, some of them also have the support of the UNDP/ ILO to modernize and provide expensive training equipments, besides embarking upon faculty training programs. The latter factor is largely responsible for making these training programs really effective by being more professional and in-tune with the changing times.

Another government organization, officially designated as the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM), offers short-term courses in travel and tourism. This institute has three regional chapters in Delhi, Lucknow and Trivandrum with its headquarters in Gwalior. Although the IITM started on a 'low profile', it has recently picked up by launching specific policies for a healthy development of the industry and hence education and training subsequently becomes one of its obvious concerns. The institute now accepts the responsibility of meeting the manpower needs of the industry. All this while, the Institute was offering short-term courses for the lower level jobs. It also initiated a long-term Management Development Program for the employees of the tourism industry. The course structure was mostly borrowed from programs conducted elsewhere in the world. Hence its degree of application to the tourism industry remains questionable. Of late the IITM has launched two other courses in 1995-namely, Diploma in Tourism Management (of 14 months duration) and Diploma in Destination Management (8 months duration). While the success of both these courses remains to be assessed, the institute is seriously working towards improving education and training programs. For this concern, a number of seminars/workshops have been organized to identify the problems and seek viable solutions." Additionally, having identified the needs of the industry for trained manpower for various job levels, the institute has charted out its action plan in three phases. The first phase was marked by the launching and running of short and medium term courses. The second phase introduces the inclusion of educators' training program. The third phase involves

the initiation of a research unit for a holistic growth and sound base of the industry. However, the institute is still in its early development phase when not much can be commented on its performance, yet since the start has been made on sound and rational footings, the IITM invokes substantial hope for the future.

Between the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Indian Universities began venturing into the area of vocational education. Introducing tourism programs was certainly a big step forward as no formal education was offered so far in this discipline anywhere. Admission to these courses was generally after graduation. These courses are housed in the premises of already existing departments (generally those of management/ commerce/ history/archaeology/ geography) and later as they gain momentum, they are granted an independent status. In an endeavor to reach more and more people most of these universities have initiated this vocational education through correspondence programs (Distance Learning Programs). Also, very recently the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has included Tourism Management to its list of available programs.

Today there are approximately 30 national universities offering a Masters' Diploma in Tourism Administration (MTA). These MTA programs often emphasize principle-based education. However, the syllabus includes spoken knowledge of at least one foreign language. Also the last quarter of the course entails specialization in either hotels or travel agency management. A study of the content and process indicates fairly peripheral industry orientation and almost negligible analytical skill development throughout the two-year training programs. Liaison between the industry and training may be lacking in several cases.

In the private sector, professional training is extended by hotel chains and well established travel

Organizations, namely Oberoi and Taj groups of hotels and SITA and Trade Wings travel companies. These enterprises focus on training manpower specifically for their organizational needs. A number of private institutes offering professional education in Business Management/Administration, which have recently mushroomed and are thriving, have also identified the growing demand for tourism professionals. The programs offered by these institutes are at par with the MTA course of the universities, and are better known as PGDTM (Post- Graduate Diploma in Tourism Management). However, these have to seek the approval of the AICTE for the purpose of credibility and standard assurance. The acquisition of such a guarantee can also be sought from a national university or even an international accrediting body. The PGDTM programs also extend over a 2-year period and claim to inculcate managerial skills into the fresh graduates. By way of training, the students have industrial exposure of approximately two months which is an integral part of the curriculum.

**Professional Credibility:**

The question that arises now is how far these tourism programs of the private and public sectors have succeeded in meeting the skill demand for professionals in the Indian tourism industry. The answer is uncertain for the demand aspect is not ascertained. Until very recently, the tourism trade was not a business of note and hence it did not even acquire the status of an 'industry'. Whatever facilities and services were being provided was scattered and structurally unorganized. Even the demand for personnel was very limited, except for the unskilled. However, globalization and its ramifications for tourism have changed attitudes and consequently the government is currently enthusiastic to take the initiatives necessary for its growth.

Despite major drawbacks, a large number of education centers have foreseen the need for manpower for this industry and initiated hospitality/ travel/tourism courses. Given the conditions, the results have been substantially good, if only in terms of education. Training for these students has always been a problem owing to the unstructured and obscure nature of the industry. Most of these courses provide a broad scale theoretical base. This is particularly true for the private sector institutes. Yet, in spite of classroom exercises, most of the students generally suffer from job dissatisfaction as their learning is hardly ever applied in the industry. It has been often observed that the fresh recruits are kept occupied with the mundane routine tasks that have low professional standing for prolonged period.

Further study of this so-called miss-matching exposes a number of factors responsible for the existing situation. The problems identified were found ingrained in the attitudes of the students, industry and education/training centers. To begin with, the students who opt for travel/hospitality careers are not really aware of the 'professional' commitments of the industry. This is one of the reasons that triggers off a number of problems such as unacceptance of unsociable work hours and/periods, long and strenuous work days, intense activity and nervous tension and, last but more importantly, the psychological constraints arising from customer-servitor interaction. These conditions bring about a lot of job dissatisfaction. Until the student is mentally prepared to accept these realities of the hospitality industry, service in this stream is an embittering experience. This feeling of dissatisfaction takes on a more acute dimension of disgust and frustration when the work of the employees is not viewed with dignity. This indeed is a social problem of greater magnitude, especially in India. In other words their work ethics are not well defined or self-addressed, or they lack competence. No amount of training can incubate motivation sufficient for satisfactory performance.

The second set of problems pertains to institutional inconsistencies. Both the public and private educational institutes are unable to turn out quality professionals

owing to their constitutional irregularities. The public sector education/training centers are all too engaged with paperwork and other ancillary pre-occupations so that their involvement in the cause for training is generally half-hearted and often negligible. Apart from this, the bureaucratic functional interference generally hinders the healthy progress of these centers.

In the case of private sector training centers, it is obvious that courses are offered and run essentially for profits. Because of this, they adopt a diversification strategy, so as to amass as much revenue as possible. With objectives such as these, the institutes very often compromise selection criteria on students for the course, standards for imparting education, library facilities, the education/training process and the recruitment and upgrading of the teaching staff. Concessional laxities on these vital parameters of education jeopardize not only the reputation of these institutes but also sabotage the careers of unwary students. The course structures are rarely updated and seldom matched with the needs of the industry. Training and practical know-how is only marginal, as these aspects of the grooming process are comparatively costly in terms of practical labs and industrial visits. The sporadic field trips are often undertaken with a dominating spirit of holidaying rather than learning. In some cases, to ensure the survival of these centers, the students are given preference over quality of discipline and codes of conduct. Also, in many cases the educators involved in imparting training/education are not fully qualified to do so. Since the discipline is relatively new, the services of the faculty have to be borrowed from other disciplines. As a result of this they are unable to relate to the tourism industry, resulting in a poor delivery method.

#### **Increase Employability:**

The need for skills, knowledge and vision is being felt more and more today. With new offers and services emerging in tourism, the need for adequately qualified staff becomes even more critical. Thus, training and development plays an important role in developing professionalism in the business of tourism and travel agency operations. In fact, it is only exceptional learning and performance that will create a world that works better. Those employees who keep themselves informed of pertinent knowledge and competence in the workplace learning and performance field will excel. And, those employers who focus their efforts on developing human potential will survive in the long run. In other words, the need of the hour is employability skill-set (Pattanayak, 1998).

An educated and trained workforce is essential if India wants to develop and maintain a viable economy. From an individual perspective, preparation is the key to employability. Sound decisions regarding initial education and training are important, but people actually need to continue learning throughout their lifetimes. Education and training are very important for individual progress and for the future

of society (Sharma, 2006). One of the unwavering messages of the Bible is that Christians are to be diligent, skilled, and faithful in developing their talents. Education and training are two of the primary ways we become good stewards of our talents and, therefore, become excellent in our work and set good examples for others. For many adults, further education and training may not seem like an available option. Even if formal education courses are not obtainable, expanding their knowledge daily should be the goal for those who want to develop and use their talents in the workplace. Many career strategy experts agree that unless people continue to develop their skills they are likely to find themselves left out of the workplace. The employability of the potential workforce remains a concern and there could be future shortage in upcoming sectors like tourism and retail. Workforce shortage fuels attrition rates and unprecedented salary increase, whereby forcing companies to resort to unethical practices of poaching manpower. This could erode India's competitiveness in the global market.

The Indian Government needs to take strong, positive action to focus on training, job creation and responsible development in collaboration with the private sector. Training programs that are responsive to community needs and the varying needs of India's diverse workforce need to be designed and implemented across. For those seeking a job for the first time, or for those looking at the possibility of doing something different, all of these changes mean opportunity, an opportunity to acquire, update or transfer skills which can open the door to employment. To benefit from or respond to the changing job market, the people have to be trained to ensure that their skills are in line with the opportunities of the job market, both now and in the future (Ashraf & Mathur, 2003).

The concept of Employability has recently gained ground in the corporate world in the wake of economic reforms, and the emerging tendency towards public-private partnerships. Business enterprises have been trying to develop competitiveness in the globalized environment by focusing on labour flexibility through multi-skilling, high performance work systems, increased productivity, adaptability and innovation of new products and services. (Sharma, 2006) Two interrelated key aspects determine employability in the long run - training measures and competence development. Competence and on-the-job skills development can be measured by a number of indicators. Key indicators, besides investment by the companies in additional training, relate to the job content and these are the ability to learn by being allocated to challenging work or being allocated to work that matches personal abilities. Training can be aimed at short-term company needs or at general skills and competence development. In the perspective of future employability, the key challenge is how to equip people better for change in both current and future jobs. Employability is a broad concept and means adaptable and

updated competencies and labour market-oriented behavior for every person participating in the workforce. Most usually, the employability policies combine training, further training, re-training, career advice, placement and incentives or subsidizing programs. In general, employability entails key aspects of access to (permanent) employment, advancement within employment and sustainable employment.

For the vulnerable group of non-permanent workers, key factors for employability include the impact on career development, in terms of a transition into permanent employment, occupational mobility and employment security. To open up opportunities for transition into permanent employment, targeted training and competence development are required.

### **Suggestions:**

There are some suggestions which require immediate attention from the policy makers, industry people and educational institution to raise the level of the industry to international standard and make it attractive as a career option for the young talented generation and professionals.

### **Pre-employment Training**

A sustainability oriented approach to pre-employment training involves the forecasting of skills requirement, both in qualitative and quantitative terms, and provision of a relevant infrastructure in locations where these personnel would be required. The training inputs and methods would need to have a strong underpinning of sustainability values and practices. Some of the major issues in the pre-employment training domain include the coverage of tourism within the school curriculum. Structure of vocational and professional courses and qualifications. Academic qualification in tourism and hospitality and links between education and tourism industry. These issues are important in the context of sustainable HRD practices and hence merit analysis in the Indian situation.

### **Vocational and Professional Courses**

It is widely held that the provision of vocational and professional courses in tourism and hospitality has to be carried out by sector- dedicated institutions and programs, as these have the most prominent role in meeting the industry's human resource needs. As the STRU (1998, 23) report points out, however, the major issue confronting the provision of education and training in tourism and, in particular, the structure of such provision, is one of appropriate matching between the current and projected needs of the tourism sector and the duration, level and focus of the education and training which is available. A multitude of stakeholders with conflicting and diverse views (Brogan, 1994) make the situation more difficult. Human resources development strategies with manpower planning as the starting point would help in streamlining the system and avoiding conflicts. However, there

are a number of examples of vocational band professional streams of tourism training organized and managed by dedicated institutional systems in many countries in an effective manner.

In India this stream is looked after by two national level bodies, namely, the National Council of Hotel Management (NCHM) and the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM). The 16 Institutes of Hotel Management (IHM) and 15 Food Craft Institutes (FCI) cater to the human resources requirement of the hospitality sector, with the IHMs training personnel for the skilled, supervisory, middle management and training positions and FCIs offering training in specific crafts. However, the out-turn is far short of the industry requirements, in spite of the supplementary efforts by private sector institutions. The IITTM offers Diploma programs at its headquarters and through its regional chapters for careers in the tourism and travel sector.

Regional institutions, such as the Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel Studies (KITTS), in South India, offer their own Diploma and Certificate courses to cater to the human resources requirements of the tourism industry in the region. The KITTS has been successful in developing a variety of courses dealing with specific operational and management areas of the tourism industry in the region, including entrepreneurship development programs.

### **Academic Qualifications**

As far as India is concerned, tourism became part of higher education only in the 1990s. The relevance of the curriculum, the lack of uniformity of the courses and acceptance by the industry, however, are major issues here. Another major issue confronting tourism education in the universities is the lack of qualified and trained teachers, which leads to inadequate training of the students and their unacceptance by the industry. It could be argued that the students thus trained would have doubtful competence in the practical aspects and hence would have to be trained all over again by the employers, which would be better done by recruiting fresh graduates with soft competencies from the general stream. However, a more streamlined and situation-specific approach to curricula design along with a concerted effort to train the trainers would enable the existing university education system to be effective. Initiatives by IITTM and NCHM could be helpful.

### **Corporate tie-ups between Education and Industry**

The major beneficiary of all HRD initiatives is the tourism industry, as well-trained personnel, would contribute to its competence, productivity, profitability and sustainability. However, industry's support of HRD, especially at the pre-employment level, has not been very encouraging. There is also the issue of the poor image of the industry as an employer, characterized by poor pay, status and working conditions, which has been a deterrent in attracting good talent. Juxtaposed to this is

the often heard grievance of a lack of industry orientation in tourism training programs. Industry and education partnership alone will be able to redress these problems.

Collaboration between education and industry would involve the working together of professional and trade associations, national, regional and area tourist boards, and awarding bodies, and would take many forms, such as: awards, scholarships, and sponsorship, formulation of professional standards, joint research projects, training delivery, curriculum development, and sitting on steering committees (STRU, 1998). The UK examples of 'Education Business Partnerships' (EBP) and 'Understanding Industry' are organizations working closely with the education sector, facilitating collaboration in a wide range of areas.

### **Human resources development at the local level**

A very important strategy for sustainability oriented HRD is the training, development, and employment of the local people by the tourism industry. As this would help localize the benefits of tourism, the problems of neocolonialism could be reduced to a great extent, especially if the training initiative could be started sufficiently early to equip the locals to occupy senior positions too. An example of such an initiative is the 'Back of beyond micro model for human resources planning and development program of the Taj Group of Hotels in India (Mahesh, 1993, p. 31). The strategy involves assessment of manpower requirements long before opening of the hotel and then targeting the local people for recruitment and training for most of the jobs in the hotel. A series of training programs is carried out equipping the locally selected employees in all necessary skills, both hard and soft. This results in negligible or no attrition, savings on expensive advertisement and recruitment campaigns and moreover in having a more disciplined, loyal and responsible local work force. This is a strategy worthy of emulation by all the sectors of tourism industry, as it would localize benefits and employment, and create more favorable and responsible attitudes and practices in the industry.

### **Conclusion:**

HRD is now gaining more importance and attention in global tourism, especially with a discernible growth in tourism and tourism education initiatives world-wide. With the gaining of more experience and better understanding of tourism and its development and management, HRD is bound to be the centre of future tourism planning and development programs, in both the developed and developing world. In India the situation is exacerbated by the absence of properly conceived and executed HRD programs. Development of Indian tourism would require HRD strategies focusing on sustainability based industry practices, tourism development, value systems and behavioral patterns among all the stakeholders.

Introduction of tourism at the school level on a more extensive basis throughout the country, provision of vocational and professional courses based on the assessment of actual skill requirements of the industry, streamlining of the tourism education at the university level, especially in terms of course contents, delivery and industry responsiveness are some of the strategies to be adopted by the Indian tourism for HRD at the pre-employment level.

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