

HRD STRATEGIES FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

World over employment in tourism and hospitality has vastly accounted for over 225 million jobs in 2012 which is expected to be over 275 million jobs in 2019. The human resource structure in tourism industry mainly consists of two kinds of service jobs: large number of low-skilled-low-paid jobs and a smaller number of high-skilled-high-income jobs, with few jobs being in the middle of these two extremes. Thus, tourism being a high growth industry and a major creator of value added offers great employment opportunities in future. However, the industry is vulnerable to a variety of economic, ecological, geopolitical, and meteorological factors, apart from the challenges of maintaining high permanent staffing levels. Therefore, the Human Resource Development (HRD) strategies play an important role in the development and retention of talented employees in tourism sector. Against this background the present paper explores the various strategies that can be adopted to develop, retain, and empower human capital for equitable Tourism Development.

Key words: (Tourism, HRD, Human Capital, knowledge deficiency)

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Introduction

Tourism has become the world's largest industry, generating wealth and employment, opening the minds of both visitors and the visited to different ways of life. Worldwide, the industry currently employs more than 200 million people. The most significant feature of the tourism industry in India is its Capacity to generate large-scale employment opportunities; particularly in the sectors like, airlines, hotels, travel agencies, handicrafts, cultural and other tourism-related activities. The industry depends on the quality of manpower. The difficulty has been arising in getting educated, multi skilled personnel who can respond to the requirements of the industry. Salaries paid by the tourism industry are comparatively far less than the other industries like BPO'S, I.T. Tourism sector comprises mostly of small & medium sized enterprises where HR practices are not standardized, lack of professional approach is resulting in high employee dissatisfaction & it reflects a poor image of tourism sector. Inefficient training & development programmes are discouraging the competent & talented people to prefer the tourism industry as career option, resulting in less supply of manpower. Standardized

HR Practices in Tourism development requires a number of HRD strategies for development, maintenance and motivation of human capital. A good manpower planning, job description, job specification, career planning is required at all levels of tourism industry. People working at different levels should be given regular & timely training to improve their skills & abilities. The industry people & government should take the initiative to promote travel, tourism industry amongst young talented generation & attract them to join the industry to earn their livelihood. Corporate Tie-ups must be encouraged to enter into this field to manage & develop it more professionally as they are yet to enter into the tourism field fully, should be. These Corporates need to be given facilities & support by the government to harness the tremendous potential of tourism in India. Improving the quality of Tourism education - The quality of courses in tourism management being offered by universities & institutes need to be improved. The curriculum needs to be revised to meet the continuous changing requirement of the industry.

Worldwide Tourism Industry is growing rapidly. Though some adverse events like world recession have created dampening effects on this industry, yet this industry could cope up the challenges of these sorts. It is human resource of the industry which has been playing a key role in modernizing the industry and to face challenges that has been cropping up from time to time.

Tourism in India is the largest service industry; with a contribution of 6.23% to the national GDP and 8.78% of the total employment in India. The tourism and hospitality sector's direct contribution to the GDP in 2012 was estimated at nearly US \$ 40 billion. 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 environment and architectures of many areas. The Indian tourism industry provides opportunities in specialized fields such as medical tourism, rural tourism, golf tourism, cruise tourism, adventure tourism, eco-tourism and wellness tourism. Human resource within an enterprise is seen as the single biggest cost of most hospitality enterprises around the world (Becker B and Huselid M, 1998). (Gonzalez, 2004) human resource should be seen as an investment rather than cost because it aims at improving the efficiency within the hospitality industry to achieve economic development. This stems from the importance of human resource development in sustaining a business enterprise (Bratton and Gold, 2003). He further argue that, the best practices of human resource management issues in the hospitality industry are employment and security, selective hiring, extensive training, performance appraisals, sharing and diffusion of information, incentives, which emphasizes on promotion and development. The management of this human resources and the role played by human resource specialists vary from employer to employer (Tanke, 2001). As a consequence, there is growing debate on what constitutes human resource development and the extent to which it has been adopted by the hospitality industry (Hughes and Julia, 2002). (Lindsay 2005) defines human resource management as the effective use of a business's most valuable resource, its employees. In addition, choosing effectively the most appropriate personnel is instrumental in forming a specific culture of a business. Moreover, human resource issues are vital, because, it ensures that the organization obtains and retains the skilled, committed, and motivated workforce it needs. (Robert.J 2006) identifies human resource issues to involve the development of high performance work systems, which enhances flexibility and includes rigorous recruitment and selection procedures, performance-contingent, incentives, compensations systems, management development and training activities linked to the needs of the business. The best human resource practices are recruitment and selection from the right source, training and development (Boella MJ, 2000). This suggests that human resource management and planning is a set of interrelated policies with an ideological and philosophical underpinning (Bonzionelos N and Lusheer S, 2007).

Human Capital and Tourism Industry

People are the primary resource in tourism, because all tangible and intangible tourism products are delivered through the people working in the industry. In the era of more technology and increased competition, the range and variety of products and services is likely to undergo considerable change. In this context, the quality of human resources will be even more vital. The needs of the industry must be addressed through innovative strategies that include development of multiple skills, service-oriented attitudes, and skill training and cross training. The basic objective of human resource development will continue to enhance efficiency and increase the capabilities of all individuals who provide tourism services. International and domestic tourism is likely to increase in the years to come. Therefore, there is a need to plan for the future, so that tourism grows in an orderly fashion and Indian people are able to reap the full benefits of this activity. The immense growth in the Indian tourism industry can be attributed to several factors. The boom in Indian economy has resulted in more disposable income in the hands of middle class, also, increasing large number of people to spend money on vacations abroad or at home. India is also a booming IT hub and more people are coming to India on business trips. The future of tourism industry in India is definitely excellent but, there are several human resource challenges faced by the industry. Human resource challenges faced by the tourism industry are;

Skilled Workforce

Indian tourism industry is facing a shortage of skilled manpower and there are many obstacles as far as development of human resource in tourism industry is concerned. The people working in tourism industry are either less educated or uneducated, unmotivated, unskilled, and unproductive and these are due to unattractive salaries and working hours. In India the salaries paid by tourism industry are comparatively far less than salaries by the other industries like IT, call centers, retail, banking, insurance, finance. Tourism sector comprises most of the small and medium sized enterprises. In these enterprises the HR practices are not standardized. Lack of professional approach that is vision, clear career path, secured and long term employment, growth opportunities, learning, development, quality of work life is resulting in high employee dissatisfaction and attrition resulting in poor perceived image of hospitality and tourism sector. Inadequate and inefficient training and education programme are discouraging the competent and talented people to think about the industry as a career which is resulting in less and poor supply of manpower. The major challenge to the tourism industry in India is to bridge the gap between

demand and supply of skilled workforce through attracting and retaining the talented skill to serve the industry.

HRD Practices- Non-Professionalism

The HRD practices still lack professionalism in most of the organizations in the tourism industry. Less salaries, long working hours, improper career path, lack of professional growth, lack of training and development, quality of work life and improper work life balances are the key issues in tourism industry which need to be addressed by the industry

Service provider's knowledge Deficiency

Travel service providers in India engage in a limited type of business like ticketing, hotel bookings, automobile services. Very few provide rail services and even fewer provide travel insurance or cruise bookings. Despite the growth of credit card use, only few travel agencies accept credit cards. Also the other value added services are not popular due to lack of knowledge or skill of the service providers.

Tourism and hospitality-Education Skill

The tourism and hospitality courses taught at different institutions are not designed as per the needs of the industry. The tourism education courses lack practical orientation. Guest faculty from the industry are available in big cities but, when it comes down to other cities a rare industry interface is available also the course curriculum does not give emphasize on soft skills and personality development which is very essential to perform efficiently in the job. The courses offered are providing the basic level knowledge of tourism, the courses curriculum designed are hybrid in nature covering travel and tour operation, hospitality, airline, and cargo management but, it lacks specialization in any specific field. Hence the curriculum must be restructured and redesigned to bridge the gap..

Policy Implications

1. Human Resource Development-

Training in travel and tourism has been a neglected area in India. Most staff members employed by the agencies are trained on the job. There are only a few institutional arrangements for training and most are operated by the government. Private sector training institutions with varying levels of competence have been established in recent years, but unfortunately there services are not properly rendered. There should be more emphases on training for employees

mainly employed in specialized areas of tourism activities such as winter sports, water sports, trekking and wildlife tourism.

Some of the services in the tourism and hotel industries requires high degree of personalization. No amount of automation can substitute for personal service providers. HRD in tourism industry normally includes manpower training in two main areas; Hospitality and Catering and Travel and Tourism sector. The hotel and catering sector is now highly personalized. Customer satisfaction is the prerequisite for a smooth and successful operation in the hotel industry, requiring professionally trained and highly skilled personnel. According to the requirement for additional hotel rooms, the number of personnel needs formal training in the hospitality and catering sector. In order to develop training program to meet the requirements of the travel agencies. It is important to identify the services expected by clients such as airlines, hotel and travelers. The attribute agencies are expected to include product knowledge, knowledge of trade and business practices, high quality staff, effective marketing, and good communication. Hotels expected the following services from the agencies like ticketing, hotel bookings, automobile services, travel information and guidance, tour packages.

2. Education improvement

There is need to improve higher education in the area of hospitality because, existing curriculum cover only the basic requirements at the entry level. There should be a system of continuing training in order to upgrade skills and managerial abilities. Further assessments are needed, in co-operation with the hotels, in order to identify requirements and shortfalls **3.**

3. Professional HR practices

Tourism development requires a number of HRD strategies aimed at tourism industry. Personnel practices of sustainability, sustainability based work culture, professional ethics and operational practices are basic to sustainability in tourism. The HR practices still lack of professionalism in most of the organizations in the industry. Less salaries, long working hours, improper career path, lack of professional growth, lack of training and development, quality of work life and improper work life balance are the key issues in tourism industry which need to be addressed by the industry in order to reduce attrition, however good manpower planning, job description, specification and proper career planning is required at all the level of the organization. The industry stakeholders need to ensure that there should be a strategic selection of the workforce taking into the account the long term vision and growth and the workforce employed must posses

the required certification, degree, or diploma in tourism or related discipline as may be the requirement in order to qualify to work in the industry. People working at different level should be given regular and timely training inputs and refresher courses to improve their skills and abilities, according to the changing needs and requirements of industry.

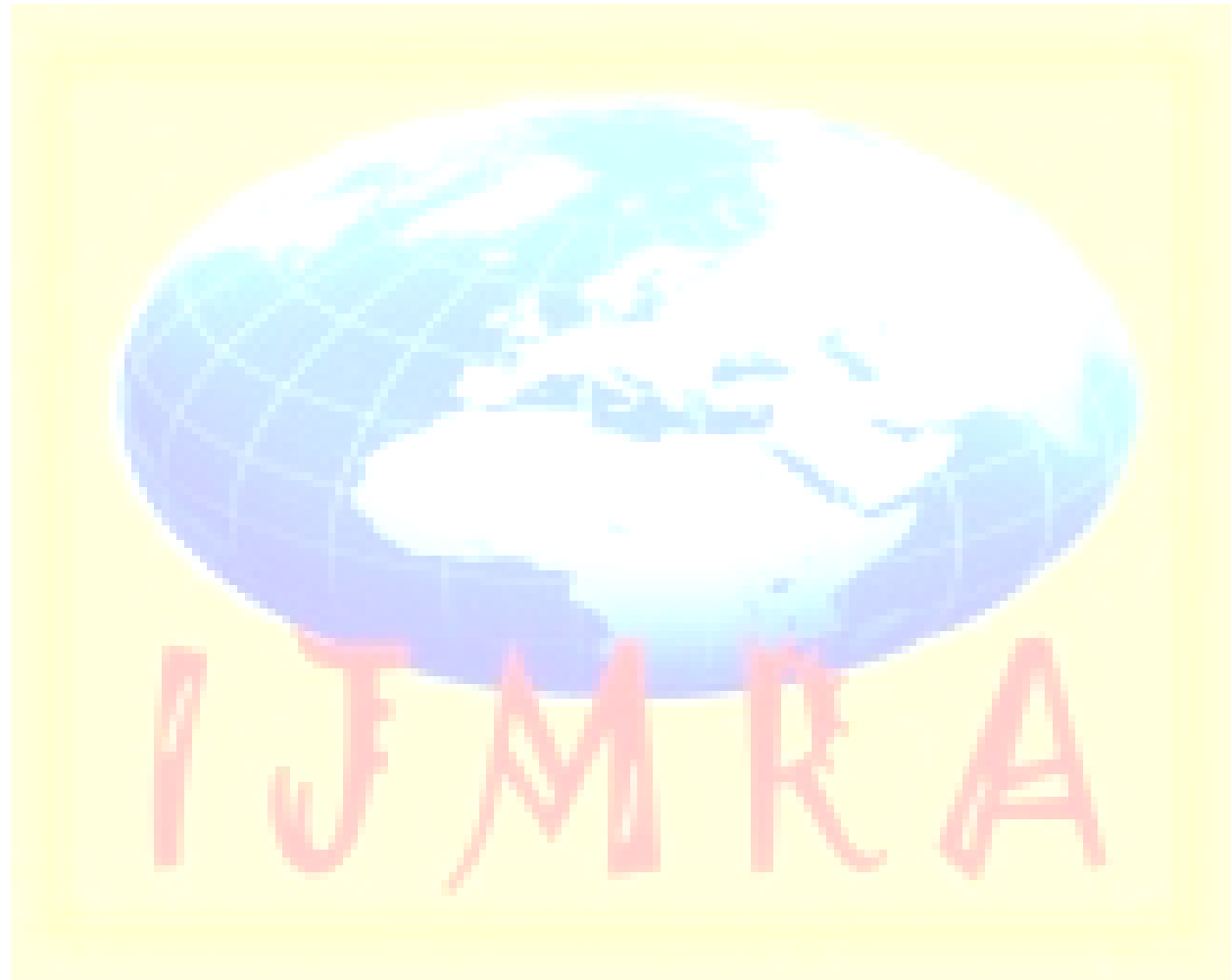
4. Tourism industry Branding

The incredible India campaign created very positive image of India as tourist destination in the minds of travelers. Similarly, the industry people and government should take the initiative to promote travel, tourism and hospitality industry amongst the young, talented generation and attract them to join the industry making it long term career oriented. There should be a regulatory authority consisting members from government and industry which should lay down the framework, minimum standard of industrial practices, educational and training requirement, regulate and continuously monitor the industry.

7. Corporate Linkages

The tourism policy of India 2002, acknowledged the critical role of the private sector with government acting as a proactive facilitator and catalyst. The big corporate, who have not entered the field fully, should be encouraged to enter into this field to manage and develop it professionally. However, these corporate need to be given facilities and support by the government to harness the tremendous potential of tourism. Many countries in the world despite of not having naturally gifted tourism potential have successfully established themselves as highly coveted destination of tourism through manmade tourism. Similarly, also with the help of these corporates the tourism can be promoted and developed in those areas which are not naturally gifted with tourism potential, there are many such places in India which do not have any strong economy base not even agriculture, these places can always be developed with the perspective of manmade tourism though private-public partnership which will not only help in employment generation at local level. but , also will strengthen the economy and quality of life of local people, the state government can also tie-up with these corporates to contribute in the development of tourism in their states by providing them subsidies and benefits. The HRD policies of Government of India are not enough, for the promotion of Tourism Industry .The Government is realized the importance of the skilled manpower in the field at different level to train and develop human resources. The government should set up a high power committee consisting of Human Resource Development professionals, professionals from the

Tourism Industry, prominent economists, and intellectuals to study and assess various aspects of HRD. Proper implementation of government policies is essential part because, the policies framed by government on paper are not practically implemented up at grass root level. The government should frame a proper channel to control the activities and smooth implementation of tourism policy from time to time.



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