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THE LAST MILE

Future of Indian Tourism and Hospitality Industry



OUT OF THE BOX

Growth and Challenges faced ...



IN FOCUS

Ratings and Accreditation of Hotels



HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM

Greeting hearts beyond borders

PLUS

ROUND UP

•

MY MARKET

•

THE PRESCRIPTION

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VIEWPOINT



BEJON KUMAR MISRA | bejonmisra@consumerconexion.org

Incredible INDIA

The direct contribution of travel and tourism to GDP is expected to grow 7.2 per cent per annum from 2015-25 to USD85.6 billion. Vast variety of flora and fauna in various states is a major factor behind their growing popularity as tourist destinations.

IN THE LIGHT of said facts about Indian tourism and hospitality, we can conclude beyond the shadow of any doubt that India is one of the best tourist destinations in the world, and there is absolutely no second thought about the beauty and diversity of India. Although we have seen some of the key points that contributes to some of the negative elements in Indian tourism and hospitality industry, but, we are also aware of the fact that by taking few strict steps against these undesirable elements, we can overcome the major problems faced by the vast majority of people.

As per the recent research and analysis, the tourism and hospitality industry of India, we can be sure that the people and the organizations are highly professional and welcoming. But, the system lacks some of the features that may be a drawback for this industry and it surely needs an amendment in it. The government of India, tourism and hospitality sector, and the higher officials of respective states and districts can come together and make strict implementations of useful systems in

the respective regions. The major point of carelessness occurs at minor level, and the local administrative officers should take care of it. The major concern is security and safety of the tourists, thus, judicial system is the stakeholder of these matters and they should execute full proof plans to eliminate these elements for the welfare of the society. Therefore, it is the need of the hour to join our hands for the welfare of this industry, and uplift it for the betterment of the tourism and hospitality industry of India. This will not only help in uplifting the economy of the country, but will also raise the name of the country to another level. We are aware that economy of India is developing and the growth rate will be higher in the upcoming years. In this context, we have explored only about 5 to 10% of the tourism sector in India, thus it is necessary to develop such practices of implementing advanced strategies for the enhancement of this industry in India.

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Victims
to Fraud
Be Aware”

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Philosophically and culturally, India is not a country but a world in itself as every part of our life is coated with a culture within culture.

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Today, tourism industry is facing the inclusion of several new concepts, which needs to be refined for proper implementation of laws and regulations. The authorities need to be very active in imposing strict laws for the citizens or tourists to follow.

We give welcome kits to tourists when they land at the airport.

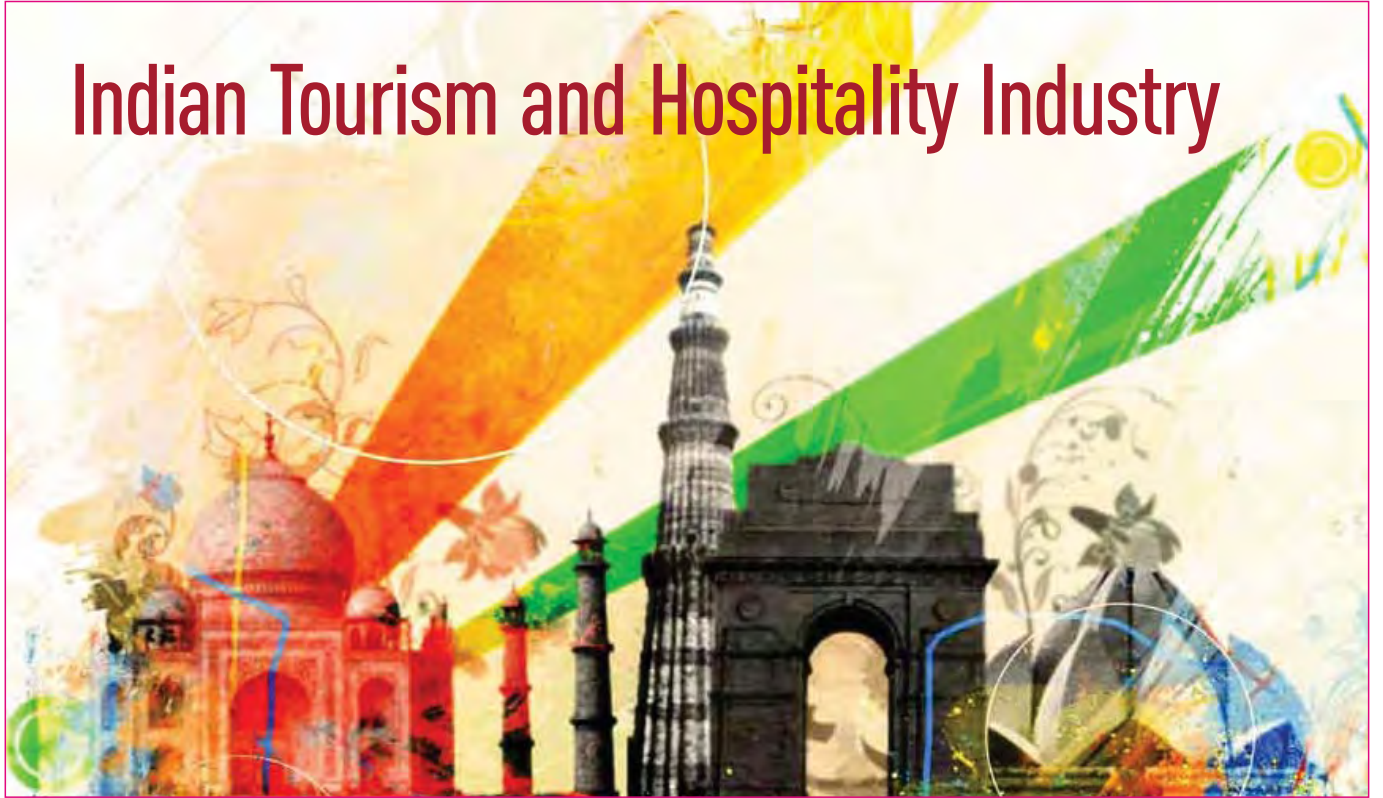
The kit includes a card with do's and don'ts such as, do not venture out alone at night in small towns, take a picture of the registration number of the vehicle you use and send it to a friend...

THEY SAID IT



ROUNDUP

Indian Tourism and Hospitality Industry



Introduction

Nowadays, when the competition for job has increased in almost every domain, each and every organization is looking for the best employee in this run. All the companies in corporate sector are refining their employees by eliminating the ones who are not effective in their work. In this scenario, there is one industry which has a large number of job opportunities at various levels, and this industry has got a never ending work atmosphere. Here, we are talking about the tourism and hospitality industry, which is mushrooming at a fast pace especially in India. It has affected the economy and GDP of many countries which are blessed with a large number of tourist places, hotels, restaurants, malls, and multiplexes. Presence of tourist places not only enhances the beauty of a particular country, but also gives wings to several other sectors related to tourism and hospitality industry. This industry is among

those which are developing and showing the positive signs of growth at high rate, and the world has witnessed a huge rise in this industry over these many years. The data analysis predicts that this industry will see much rise in upcoming years also, and this indicates that it will require the participation of a lot of workers and employees in future. This industry of tourism and hospitality is all about the guest and the host and a variety of services which includes accommodation, restaurants, event planning, casinos, catering, resorts, theme parks, transportation, cruise line, and other additional fields within the tourism industry such as travel agency, hotel booking sites, cab services, and what not. This industry is divided into a number of sections which has its own management system and work protocol. Although, tourism and hospitality are two different sectors but these two are interrelated and also interdependent on each other for their survival. ▶

DATA BRIEFING

By 2025, foreign tourist arrivals in India is expected to reach 15.3 million, according to the World Tourism Organisation

OVERVIEW

DUE TO DIVERSE culture in India, we have got a large variety of places to visit. Be it any hill station or religious place, coastal region or trekking points with dense forest cover, India has got a huge amount of options to ponder for any person who loves discovering the real pleasure of travel. The industry of tourism and hospitality contributes a major portion in the GDP of India, and has seen an accelerated growth in the past decade. The advancement in this industry has led to a considerable increase in the number of tourists to India, and it is one of the fastest developing sectors in India due to its amazing environmental, social, and cultural factors. Earlier tourism and hospitality was never considered as potential business, but it has reached great heights today, by attracting a large number of domestic and foreign tourists in different ways. This business has not only contributed in GDP of our country, but also solved the unemployment issue of our country to a greater extent by providing work to a large population. The ministry of tourism has developed a number of policies in order to streamline the business in this domain.

According to the research and analysis done by the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness in 2015, India stands at 52nd rank amongst a total of 141 countries selected for the research in tourism and travel industry. However, in the competitiveness of price, the Indian tourism grabs 8th position out of 141, because it provides high quality cultural and natural resources to its visitors, and the transportation facility in our country is also up to the mark as compared to other places. As we know, good things come along with many challenges, and one of the major drawbacks of Indian tourism and hospitality is the issues related to safety and security of foreign tourists, especially the female. This has been a matter of major concern because despite of having rich culture and diverse natural resources, India is lagging behind in the most crucial part. ▶



THE INDUSTRY OF tourism and hospitality in India has emerged as a major booster of its GDP over several years, and is also one of the crucial sources of foreign exchange for our country. The contribution of this industry to the national GDP is approximately 6.23 percent, and 8.78 percent in the employment sector of the country. The Indian tourism and hospitality sector has been growing at a cumulative annual growth rate of 14 percent every year contributing a major part in the Indian economy through foreign exchange. Even the tourism sector has a large domain which is divided into different categories such as ecotourism, wildlife tourism, pilgrimage tourism, medical and healthcare tourism, rural tourism, and heritage tourism. Similarly hospitality sector also has equally large domain and is categorized into various fields such as resorts, airport hotels, business hotels, conference and convention centers, suite hotels, and casino hotels. Some of the important growth factors enhanced by tourism and hospitality industry in India are as follows:

- It has brought a major rise in the income of households
- India has seen a greater increase in niche tourism such as eco-tourism,

Role of Tourism

India stands at 11th position in Asia Pacific region at World Travel and Tourism Competitiveness.



luxury tourism and medical tourism which has accelerated the popularity of this industry

- 100 percent FDI allowed through automatic route in hotel and tourism sector
- Diversity of the country has grabbed the attention of an increasing number of tourists every year
- The initiatives of Government in order to improve the infrastructure like airports, highways, ports and railways has worked well in the development of this sector
- India stands at the fourth place amongst the most preferred travel destination by Lonely Planet which has selected our country among the top five destinations from 167 countries.

The World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC) have highlighted the potential of employment generation in India through tourism and hospitality industry. It has stated that India's tourism and hospitality sector is expected to be the second largest

employer in the world, by providing employment to approximately 50 lac people, either directly or indirectly in the coming time. As per World Economic Forum, India stands at 11th position in Asia Pacific region at World Travel and Tourism Competitiveness.

Along with the economical quotient of the country, we have also seen some of the major developments in accommodation facilities, shopping hubs, and improvement in the quality of product manufactured for sale, quality of food and beverages, transportation facility, advancements in communication system, and many other domestic facilities. Several mega projects have been launched in order to increase the standards of the facility provided to our tourists. Restoration of art and culture of the country by taking initiatives for maintenance of tourist places such as old monuments, natural lakes and rivers, forest covers, and other attractions of our country. ▀

and Hospitality Industry in Nation's development



Emerging trends in TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY industry

AS WE HAVE witnessed the advancement of tourism and hospitality industry, it is natural that this industry will demand many other enhancements also, which will be necessary for striking a balance in the economy of the country altogether. Earlier due to lack of awareness, tourism and hospitality was very simple and did not include advanced features in it. But now with emergence of era of technology, it is mandatory to match up to the standard of the services at an international level in order to maintain and fulfill the demands and expectations of the customers. So as per the latest research and analysis of our tourism and hospitality industry, here are some of the emerging trends in tourism and hospitality industry of India:

- Cruise Ship Management because tourists prefer to experience a good stay at cruise instead of some luxurious suite in five star hotels.
- Club Management and Recreation and Healthcare Management, as everyone is keen to carry their day to day habits along with them to their travel destination.
- Digital compatibility of hotel rooms because every traveler is looking for a perfectly furnished room from technology point of view. Wi-Fi remains an essential need of everyone as per the present scenario.
- Airline Catering and Cabin service is equally important because everybody is demanding a picture perfect vacation without a single drawback.
- Fast Food Joint management and restaurant management is necessary to provide high quality food and beverages to all the visitors without giving them a



single reason to point out a finger at the management.

- Beverage, food and confectionery production should be ready to meet the emerging demands of the tourists.
- Catering departments owned by Government like armed forces mess, ministerial conventions and railways services, which are an integral part of hospitality industry of India, and plays an equally important role in the economy of the nation.
- Emergence of new untouched tourist places that will give a new and exotic

experience to all the visitors, and hence, there is a need to recreate all the major places to meet the demands of their customers.

- Cheap and best transportation and staying facility is required to remove the barriers for all those travel freaks who keep pondering between the offers to look for a budget friendly flights and accommodation.
- Betterment in the adventurous activities and also careful initiatives to ensure the safety of the tourists. ▶

Duties and Responsibilities of Travel agents

IN THIS CONTEXT, it is very important to choose the right travel agent for arranging a trip to your desired destination. Nowadays, we come across a large number of agencies which have fraud intentions and they try their level best to trap you. Therefore, it is our duty to take care while choosing and relying upon any travel agency, and it is mandatory to check their past records in tourism and hospitality industry. It is also the duty of travel agents to take good care of their clients and satisfy them by providing good quality service to their clients. They have the responsibility of creating desirable and satisfying trip to their clients, and they should be honest in their profession in order to improve the business and for the welfare of their nation's economy. Taking up the job of a travel agent, loads you with a number of responsibilities and it is not as smooth as a piece of cake. It is the priority of a travel agent to make their clients happy by giving them a luxurious itinerary and also by arranging a memorable trip for them. Therefore, here are some of the

responsibilities of a travel agent given below, which should be fulfilled by them without any fail.

- First of all they should have the minimum qualification which is required to become a good travel agent in our country. And they should have good command over English and other languages for the convenience of their foreign clients.
- They should be responsible enough to make comfortable arrangements of accommodation and transportation for the clients. They should have proper knowledge about the rules and regulations of every place they refer their clients to, and also they should be in touch with their clients until the trip is successfully completed.
- They should be kind and attentive to the needs of their clients in order to match their services up to the expectations of their clients. They should be honest and clear in describing their services, and they

should always believe in maintaining the transparency with their clients.

- Even if they do not have much options, but their services should match the standards of the clients, and they should take the criticism in a positive way, in order to use it to improve their services.
- They should be very well aware about the destination that client wishes to go to, and they must provide necessary information related to weather, price, accommodation facility, documents required for visa, exchange rates, and rules and regulations of the place.
- They should be well versed with the knowledge required to become a travel agent, and they should also do some extra courses related to tourism and hospitality in order to have good knowledge in this domain.
- They should choose their domain as per their area of interest, and they should do proper course related to it, in order to gain good exposure and better experience in their profession. ▶



Analysis of Indian Tourism and Hospitality Industry

The complexity and diversity in tourism and hospitality industry poses a newer and a daunting challenge for any kinds of research and analysis. And, it gets further compounded in the context of India which is thickly coated with layers of social, cultural, historical, economic and classical challenges. Like any other challenge, it is the burning need of hour for Indian tourism and hospitality sectors to adapt to the changing and challenging eco-system in the modern context and learn to get its full advantage in this information age. In this background, one such research was done at the TechSci Research Institute for its detailed interpretation and analysis. For this purpose, the various parameters were studied and multiple data were collected to identify the feature and characteristic of tourism and hospitality domains from multiple perspectives.

Beyond the shadow of any doubt, it is crystal clear that tourism and hospitality sectors are interwoven, and there are many sub-sectors that have overlapping impacts on the growth parametric analysis on tourism and hospitality. Despite these challenges and obstacles in the description, interpretation, and analysis of these sectors, it has been decided to identify the core ingredients of tourism and hospitality for salient research and analysis. Some of these sterling and defining ingredients are:

- a) Foreign Tourist Arriving in India
- b) Foreign exchange earnings from tourism in India
- c) Tourism & Hospitality Industry in India

In the light of aforesaid facts and analyses, it is paramount to share and present some of the salient data for each of the three key factors. Let us discuss these factors in detail. ▶

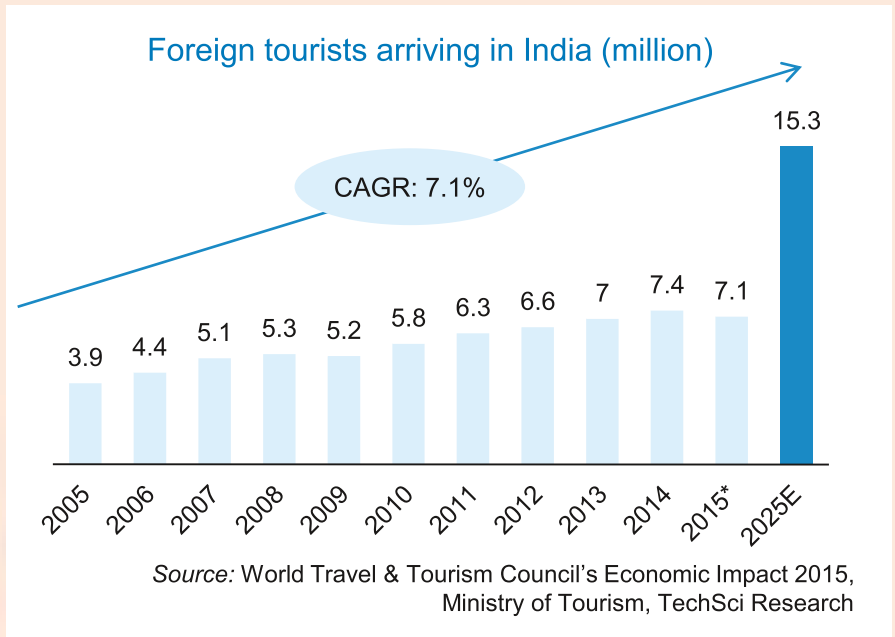


It is the burning need of hour for Indian tourism and hospitality sectors to adapt to the changing and challenging eco-system in the modern context and learn to get its full advantage in this information age.



Foreign Tourist Arriving in India

The paradigm of foreign tourist arriving is a key indicator for the holistic development of economic, social and human index. Further, it demonstrates the quality of law & order, happiness, prosperity, and peacefulness. Similarly, it has been found in the World Travel & Tourism Council's Economic Impact 2016, Ministry of Tourism, TechSci Research that there has been a steady and robust increase in the inflow of foreign tourists in India.

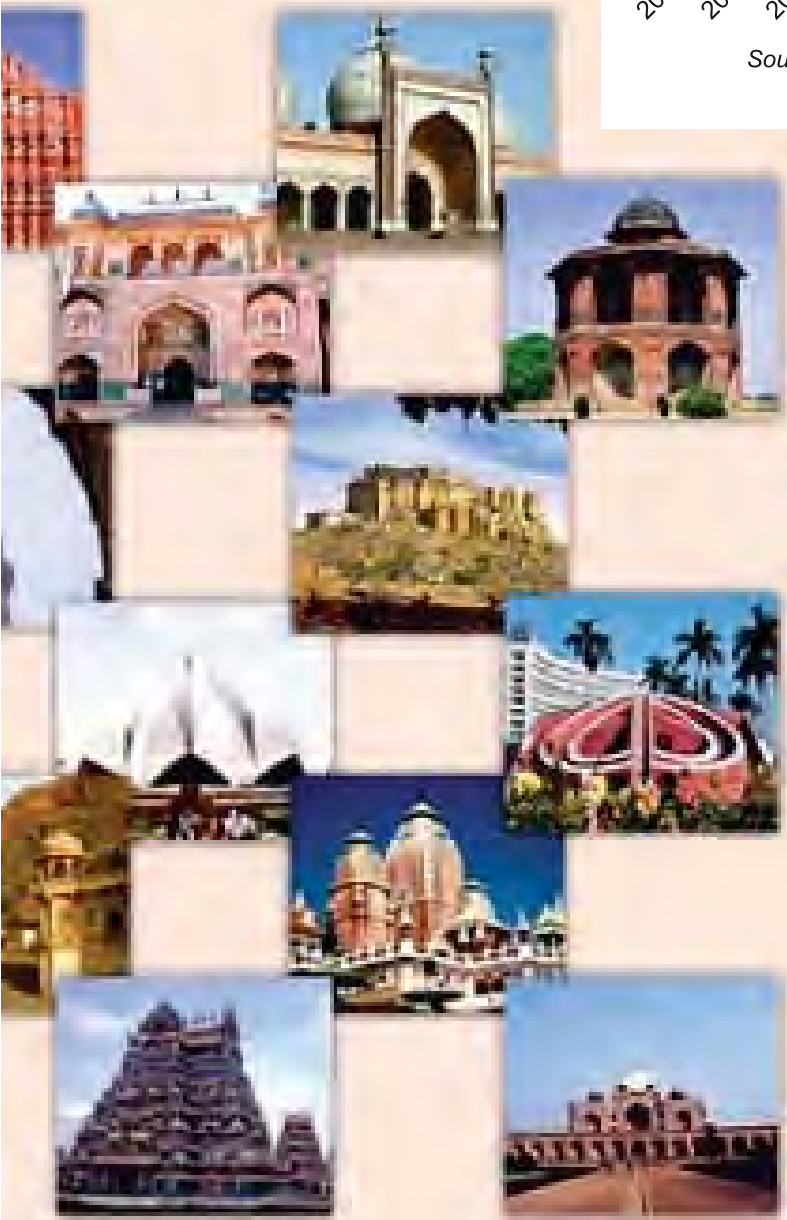


This data shows the records for a period ranging from 2005 to 2015. In addition, it is also estimated that there will also be a continuous and consistent growth in the development of the tourism and hospitality sector till 2025. This analysis goes on to present that there is a constant increase of at least 10% foreign tourist arrival in India. It is quite encouraging to note that in 2005, there were only 3.9 million foreign tourists who arrived in India. But, with the pragmatic development plans of Indian tourism and hospitality industry, the number of the foreign tourist arrivals in India zoomed to 7.8 million by 2015. And, further it is estimated that this pattern of the futuristic growth index will continue to remain strong at least for the next 10 years till 2025. So, it is statistically assumed that India will undoubtedly see the arrivals of at least 15.3 million foreign tourists.

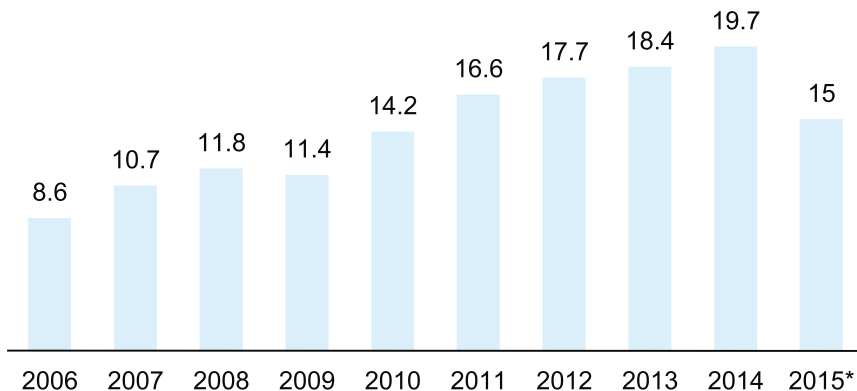
This paradigm of foreign tourist arrivals will be a great boost to the prospective growth plan of our Indian economy. So, it indicates that there is compound and consistent annual growth rate of 7.1% in the foreign tourist arrivals in the last 11 years. Undoubtedly, it is a good sign of our growth plan and strategy of not only the tourism and hospitality industry, but also the holistic booming of Indian economy in the global developmental arena. Keeping the boost in foreign tourist arrivals, it makes good sense to analyze the elements of foreign exchange proceeds that India makes from this sector.

Foreign exchange earnings from tourism in India

Due to consistent and continuous growth in foreign tourist arrivals, there has been an upsurge in the foreign exchange earnings. And, this is the result of the accumulated growth of



Foreign exchange earnings from tourism in India (USD billion)



Source: Ministry of Tourism, TechSci Research
Note: 2015* - Jan to September 2015

is important to note that during the global economic depression period from 2008 to 2009, there has been slight decline in the earnings. But, this decline is also an important indicator of India's robust economy and economic management which led to the marginal depreciation, not the total collapse of the economy which was seen globally, including the developed countries of the world. It is highly appreciable to note that India had only a depreciation of 0.5% from \$ 11.8 US billion in 2008 to \$11.4 US billion in 2009. Believe it or not, in the same period, there was a global depreciation of 20% to 35%. But, India and its tourism sector maintained the orbit of growth rate and sailed through the rough weather successfully.

Similarly, it has been found in the source data of "Ministry of Tourism, TechSci Research" that there has been a strong and

our Indian economy through the impact liberalization policy. Although it was initiated in 1991, its trace of impact has been perceptible in the last 15 years. So, the seeds of liberalization that India sowed have started bearing the fruits, and all these are indicated in the foreign exchange earnings.

The presented data suggests believing that our earning through the foreign tourist arrivals has been consistently robust. It shows the strong roots seeded in our economy through effective and efficient economic management system.

The paradigm of foreign earnings from tourism in India has increased from \$ 8.6 US billion in 2006 to \$19.7 US billion in 2014. These data are indicators that India has achieved a compound annual growth rate of 15-20% in the last 10 years. It

healthy increase in the foreign exchange earnings from foreign tourist inflow in India. Further, it is assumed that this growth paradigm will ceaselessly continue to prevail for the next 10 years. Further, there is a huge scope of tourism growth due to the evolution of the concepts of rural tourism, religious tourism, cultural tourism, medical tourism, health tourism, and academic tourism. All these ingredients are key factors to give a fillip to the Indian tourism and hospitality sectors and their associated stakeholders.

Tourism & Hospitality Industry in India

The purpose of this study is to carry out a hypothetical research team on the impact of tourism and hospitality industry on our

Tourism & Hospitality Industry in India

Direct contribution of tourism and hospitality to GDP

The tourism and hospitality sector's direct contribution to GDP totalled US\$ 37.3 billion in 2013.

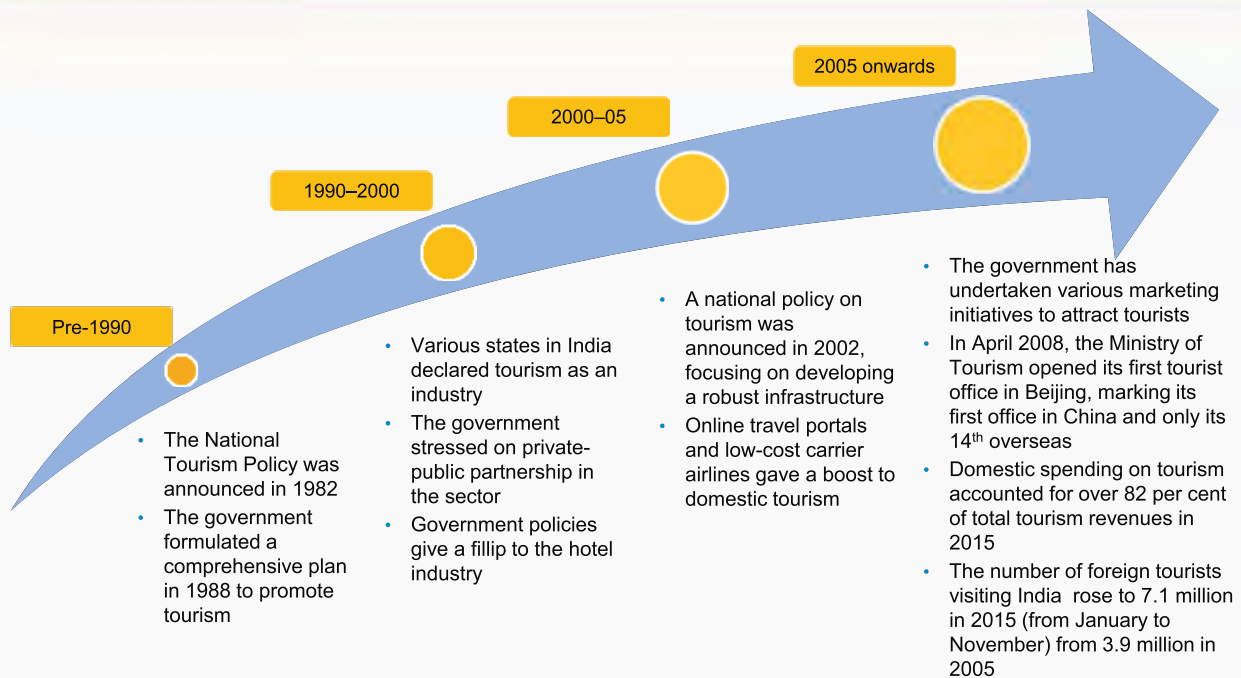


Foreign tourists arriving in India

Over 6.8 million foreign tourist arrivals were reported in India during 2013.



EVOLUTION OF THE INDIAN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SECTOR



Source: WTTC, Ministry of Tourism, TechSci Research

Indian economy in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This analysis on “Tourism & Hospitality Industry in India” can be safely classified into two categories. These are:

- Direct contribution of tourism and hospitality to GDP
- Foreign tourist arriving in India

In the light of the aforementioned classifications, let us discuss in detail.

Direct contribution of tourism and hospitality to GDP

Based on the data mentioned, it is indicated that the Tourism & Hospitality Industry in India had a healthy and sturdy growth pattern in the last 10 years. Similarly, the future is also bright as India economy is growing leaps and bounds. In addition, it is worth-mentioning to note that the contribution of Tourism and Hospitality industry to our GDP was 10% during the years 2006-2013. In this period by 2013, the tourism and hospitality sector's direct contribution to GDP has totaled US\$37.3 billion. And, it is a very encouraging sign of our success and growth. Further, it is estimated that the earnings of US\$37.3 billion will get doubled by 2024 as the estimated earnings through tourism sector is fixed at \$71 US billion.

Here, it is important to note that there has been no decline in the contribution to our GDP from the tourism and hospitality sectors even during the global depression period of 2008 and 2009. All these elements are indicatives of our strong base of our Indian

economy, and its reputation in the global market. All these have played a key role in influencing the growth curve of tourism and hospitality industry. Further, it is significant to identify the growth pattern of the foreign tourist arrival during the same corresponding period of the GDP analysis.

Foreign tourist arriving in India

It is paramount to signify and analyze that over 6.8 million foreign tourist arrivals were reported in India during 2013. And, this was a continuous average growth rate of 7.2% as far as the foreign tourist arrivals are concerned. During this period, there was a systematic and strategic planning made by the Indian economic system. And, this contributed to the healthy health of Indian tourism and hospitality sectors, and building a strong foundation for the strong and viable growth pattern in future. All these factors will give boost to the unexplored regions, heritage, culture, and traditions of India, and weave them into the map of global tourism. Finally, this approach will lead to attracting more foreign tourist arrivals to India, thus further contributing to the huge growth in foreign exchange earnings. Ultimately, this phenomenon will create a culture and cycle of pumping more investment in the Indian tourism and hospitality sector, and bringing laurels to our economy and its strategic planning. So, all these data displayed through these three diagrams are tentative, and there is further opportunity for taking the tourism and hospitality sector to a great level in future with our effective and efficient system of Indian economy. ▶

5 million preventable
deaths occur every
year



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you are one of them



Analysis on Consumer psychology on Tourism and Hospitality

UNDERSTANDING THE PERSPECTIVE

of consumers is an important factor which can enhance the business in tourism and hospitality. It is necessary to keep yourself in the shoes of your customers and then understand their demands and expectations. Usually, customers in any domain are looking forward to choose something that suits their comfort, and fulfills their expectations. It is important to keep your customers convinced with the service provided by you and your firm, and attract a large number of visitors. Some of the major areas to lay emphasis upon while studying the behavior of consumers in tourism and hospitality are attitudes, perception, decision making, values, motivation, trust and loyalty, self-concept and personality, and satisfaction.

- Decision making

It is important to understand this factor to get well versed with consumer psychology, because it is the key point

which enables you to find the type of role model you need to be in order to grab the attention of customers. One common characteristic of any customer is that, they are rational decision makers, the more you convince them the more they choose to opt for your services. Due to a lot of variation in the services provided by various agencies, customers tend to choose the best as per their needs.

- Value

It is the prime factor which influences the decision making ability of any



customer, so it is always important to create a demand in the market without harming the value of your name. Based on different categories of products and their brands, customers change their preferences and choices. In this context it is necessary to give proper output to the customers to maintain your value and demand in the market.

- Motivation

A right approach towards consumers by the service providers can drive the attention of large number of people; hence, it becomes mandatory to have a motivational approach towards consumers to gather maximum profit in this business. Customers should always get aroused by having a brief review about your services, and they will tend to prefer your facilities over other available options. You need to be competitive enough so that your customer gets forced to compare the quality of your services with others every time.

- Expectations

Knowing about what the customers expect their service providers to offer them, plays a crucial role in building trust and loyalty in the minds of the consumers. If you are able to match with the needs of your customers, then you can leave a positive mark in their mind. There is no doubt that consumers only choose the best from the options available, and it is the duty of service provider to give them what they expect. Trying to match up to the expectations of your clients will not only increase your market but will also raise the standard of your facilities.

- Attitude

It is important to judge the attitude of your clients towards your service, brand, and product, because that will help you to determine, how favorable or unfavorable your product is based on their expectations and demands. If you see any negativity in their attitude, you should immediately find ways to tackle with the faults and improve your concepts. One should allow their consumers to assess and evaluate the services provided by them, in order to clearly understand the needs of their customers.

- Perceptions

It is the natural tendency of humans to perceive the possibilities based on the prior experience, popularity, and also as per the motivation from the brands. Hence, it is necessary for everyone to mold the perspective of their customers in a fruitful way, so that it will enhance their business in tourism and hospitality industry.

- Trust and loyalty

It is really necessary to create a bond of trust with your customers because that is the only way you can keep them connected with you and your organization. This is possible when you are prepared to be loyal with your customers and provide them high



It becomes mandatory to have a motivational approach towards consumers to gather maximum profit in this business.

standard services consistently. This will enhance your market and attract more and more customers towards you. Building trust and loyalty will support the organization and will support them to achieve their future goals in a smooth way.

- Personality

It is the responsibility of the organization to create a catchy marketing strategy for their firm, so that they can receive maximum crowd. The organization needs to be an initiator as well as an influencer to grab the attention of new customers and maintaining the relationship with the old ones. It depends on the personality buildup of each and every element of your organization and this will act as your reputation builder in the market. The firm needs to take care of their rivals and upgrade their services as per the latest trends that are going on in the market, and make perfect plans to promote their every newly launched service, facility, or products in the market.

- Satisfaction

It is the only factor which decides the future of your organization. The more satisfactorily you provide the services to your customers, the more happily they will return to seek your services. This will not only increase your market demand, but will also help you in gaining the confidence of your viewers and it will help in uplifting your image in the market. The organizations are just service providers, but the purchaser is the one who ultimately decides whether they are convinced by your facilities or not. Therefore, it becomes necessary to understand that you meet all the expectations and demands of your respective customers in a consistent manner.

Keeping in mind the above mentioned facts about the psychology of consumer in the tourism and hospitality industry, it will certainly help your organization in achieving their future goals in this market in an easy way. Therefore, one should strictly abide by the work strategies of business and try to create a set of rules and regulations that are acceptable to each and every employee of the organization. ▸

RATINGS AND ACCREDITATION OF HOTELS

THE TREND OF rating and dividing the hotels into various categories is not the latest one. Since time immemorial we have been following the tradition of rating the hotels based on their food quality, facilities provided, behavior of the staffs and ambience of the particular hotel. There are certain basic services which are expected by all the visitors from their choice of hotel and restaurant, and these services are must for any hotel to be eligible for rating. Nowadays, we have a wide variety of factors which can determine the quality of hotels and categorize them into different grades. Most of them include star rating system, and number of stars indicates the luxury of the hotel in terms of their quality of service, comfort quotient, and atmosphere of the hotel. The AAA and the bodies affiliated by them indicate the ratings of the hotels based on the number of diamonds instead of stars for express hotels. The quality of food, variations in the size of the room, other amenities, gym and fitness centers, location, and entertainment factor are some of the major criteria for determining the standard of the particular hotel. The standard of the hotel is established mainly based on the amount and quality of facilities provided by the hotel. But there is still a lack of globalized scheme based on which all the hotels could get their standards assigned in a unified way. Several terms used for classification of hotels are deluxe, luxury, budget class, economy, tourist class, standard, first class, superior, etc. Based on letter grading system, the hotels can be rated from “A” to “F”. ▀



Role of employee in Tourism

THE EMPLOYEES OF tourism and hospitality industry play a crucial role in development of this industry and enhancement of business in this domain. There are certain specialized characteristics that employees and workers of this industry needs to possess in order to take forward the legacy of providing high standard services to their clients. The employees are supposed to follow certain protocols and maintain the dignity of their profession, by adhering to the necessary rules and regulations and maintaining the proper ambience in their working atmosphere. Given below are some of the basic behaviors that must be possessed by employees in order to uplift the business in tourism and hospitality industry:

- **Honesty**

It is the best way to gain the trust and loyalty of your clients. It is always good to be honest and maintain the transparency with their clients, and build a healthy relationship with them.

- **Integrity**

It is the prime factor which creates a positive work atmosphere for all the employees. They need to work together as a team to give desirable output to their clients and maintain the strong bond between the clients and the service providers.

- **Trustworthiness**

This is a crucial factor to make sure that your clients never break the bond with

your organization or brand, and it is important to flourish it with passing time. The more reliable and trustworthy you appear, the more attention you gather from clients across the world.

- **Loyalty**

As already discussed earlier while explaining about honesty, it is mandatory to be loyal to the needs of your clients without compromising with the quality of your service. Even a single mistake can create a huge loss in business, especially when it is related to the satisfaction of your clients. So it is important to be loyal while presenting your skills and the type of facility you will be providing to them.



EXPECTATIONS AND DEMANDS OF CUSTOMERS

THE TRUE ESSENCE of tourism and hospitality lies in the satisfaction and happiness of customers. You need to know your customers and try to analyze all the possible information regarding their expectations and demands in order to keep them fixed to your brand or organization. In this era where tourism and hospitality industry is developing with a fast pace, you need to know about every possible aspect of this industry in order to match up with the advancing features.

Nowadays, customers ask for well-equipped accommodation

with advanced amenities, and even the hospitality of basic standard has got some of the advanced features like Wi-Fi, gym and fitness center, and well furnished rooms. Therefore, it is the duty of managers to update and upgrade their services as per the need of their customers. Customers expect the organization associated with them to take care of even the minute information related to their needs. It is the responsibility of the authority of organization to keep records of birthdays, anniversaries, dietary requirements, and also take care of their special requirements and requests. Once you

and Hospitality Industry

• Commitment

One can achieve excellence only by dedicating themselves in the service of their customers and giving them what they expect from you. Your commitment will not only fetch you huge appreciation but will also act as a reflection of your hard work which will attract more clients and also enhance your business and reputation.

• Respect and concern

It is very important to have a soft corner for your clients in your heart, and understand their needs and serve them respectfully. The clients always look for a good behavior and treatment, so one should always show a harmonic attitude that will not disappoint them under any circumstances. ▶

Make in India initiatives taken by Government

APART FROM THE initiatives taken by various non - governmental organization and private sector in order to uplift the tourism and hospitality industry in India, there are some major steps taken by Government of India in favor of this industry for its significant development and growth in India.

Government of India has provided and implemented

various policy measures, incentives in the form of taxes, and infrastructural support for tourism and hospitality industry. Given below are some of the initiatives taken by government for the welfare of this industry:

- They have promoted rural tourism by Ministry of Tourism in association with the United Nations Development Programme, for incorporating various cultural and religious values of India into the tourists who visit the place.
- They have made it easy to avail Medical Visa for tourists who visit our country for medical treatment.



get the proper knowledge about your clients' requirements, it will be simple and easy to fulfill their expectations and provide better services to them. Each and every consumer expects their clients to be attentive, sincere, and punctual to their needs, hence, it is a prime factor that determines the quality of service you provide to your customers. This determines how favorable your business strategies and service providing goals are, based on which the consumers will sort their choices in tourism and hospitality industry.

You will have to place yourself in the shoes of your clients to know about their needs and intentions. It takes years to build a healthy relationship with your client, but only a second create a loss and destroy your business, so every step and every single decision should be taken carefully. ▶

- 100 percent FDI allowed through automatic route in hotel and tourism sector
- Insurance of visa on arrival of tourists from selected countries like Finland, Japan and New Zealand
- Introducing and launching the capital subsidy programmes for budget hotels.
- Elimination of customs duty for import of raw materials, equipment, liquor etc.
- Five-year income tax holidays for 2 to 4 star hotels established in specified districts which have been declared as 'World Heritage Sites' by UNESCO. ▶

Shivya Nath

Shivya quit her corporate job at age 23 to travel the world. She was awarded India's best travel blogger at The India Blogger Awards 2013, for her blog: The Shooting Star. Her stories take readers on the roads less travelled, with a focus on solo and responsible travel.

She was awarded Best Indian Travel Blogger by Vogue India (2015). She Featured on BBC Travel and NDTV (2014) and also on Femina's "35 Under 35" Power List of Indian Women and by a Forbes journalist as one of 50 Indian women to follow on Twitter.

The Aware Consumer spoke to Shivya to know more on her travel and the Award.

THE AWARE CONSUMER : At the age of 23, you wanted to 'discover the world', and you did it! So what prompted you to take this role?

SHIVA NATH : Back in 2011, at age 23, I quit my corporate job to travel the world. I live a nomadic life, seek adventures off the beaten path, and work on the go to fund my travels – the idea was to break away from the monotony of a 9-5 work life and taste a bit of freedom and a lot of adventure. The Shooting Star is the home of all my travels, and I hope to inspire my readers to step out of their comfort zone and discover the world.

TAC: Tell us about your 'journey' from Dehradun to Singapore and then to conquer the world through travel.

SN: I grew up in a protective Indian family in Dehradun, a small town at base of the Himalayas, and spent my childhood wondering what lay

beyond the mountains I could see from my roof. Upon finishing high school, I went to Singapore to study, with big dreams and a big student loan. As luck would have it, I graduated in the middle of the financial recession of 2009, when most companies I wanted to work with had ceased their hiring. I landed a job with the Singapore Tourism Board, where I learnt everything I know about social media, and started following the journey of travel bloggers across the world. It was impossible to tame my restless cubicle-bound soul, so in 2011, I took a 2 month sabbatical from work. I went flash-packing across Western Europe with a friend, and volunteer-travelled by myself in the high Himalayas of India. In those two months, I saw, experienced and lived more than I ever had before, and decided to quit my first and only corporate job with the dream of travelling the world on my own terms.

TAC: What according to you is the essence of traveling? Were your journeys solo or in groups?

SN: I like to go slow, get under the skin of a place, talk to locals and experiment with the local cuisine – to me, that's the very essence of travel. I'm not a backpacker; while I carry a backpack for convenience, I like to stay in experiential accommodations (think home-stays), travel impulsively and to places that have seldom been written about, and don't believe in counting every penny I spend. I mostly travel solo or with a friend; group travel with a fixed itinerary is just not for me.

TAC: You travelled in parts of Africa, Europe, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, the Caucasus region, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, and PanamaDo you plan such travel in advance?

SN: My travels are pretty impulsive and chaotic. If I find a cheap flight, I can fly



When travelling to a country that offers visa on arrival to Indian citizens, it's a good idea to have proof of accommodation (at least for your first night or two) and a return/onward flight out of the country handy on your phone – or at least a convincing answer. You usually need the former for immigration forms and the latter to convince hesitant immigration officers.

If you plan to quit your job to experiment with long term travel, I urge you to apply for a US tourist visa while you can still get a letter from your employer.

And one important thing: Please, don't work illegally or overstay your visa. It hurts all of those who genuinely want to travel without silly visa restrictions.

I have shared these tips in my blog: 'the shooting star. Sharing helps others. So share your visa experience on blogs, forums, face book, wherever – so anyone looking to confirm visa processes can find it. Traveling with an Indian passport is not as impossible as it sounds.

TAC: You mentioned about Visa on arrival; there is e-Visas as well, is this an easy process?

SN: If one is so serious and intending to travel a lot, he should understand all details of rules and procedures related to Visa and also update himself.

We have over 40 epic countries, both in our own backyard (Nepal, Thailand) and halfway across the world (Ecuador, Tanzania), where our Indian Passports get visa on arrival or visa-free entry. For many countries, we could go in for e-Visas, here the process is quick and pretty hassle-free. Most e-visas require that you upload your information and documents online, and carry a print-out (or e-copy on your phone) of the approved visa.

One can apply for e-visas on the relevant government website of the country, as well, may be for a small fee.

TAC: We have often heard that if going to US, always ask for multiple-entry US

halfway across the world without any planning (if my Indian passport allows it), and I seldom know where I'll wake up a week or month from now. I'm always looking for epic adventures and unique travel goals; I welcome ideas and accept them as challenges for myself.

TAC: What about seeing India, what was your experience?

SN: I had never really experienced India (on family holidays and vacations do visit relatives) until my first solo trip to the high Himalayas. India, with its diversity, kindness and chaos, never stops surprising me!

TAC: The beaches, back-waters, mountains, valleys, heterogeneous culture, heritage monuments, temples and many more: India has much to showcase. Do you think India is not taking the advantage fully on the potential? Would you suggest India travel?

SN: I think before we can start marketing India, we need to ensure the tourism infrastructure is in place. I've travelled in several developing countries, and hardly have I found traveling anywhere else more challenging than in India. Still, it's rewarding, and I urge everyone to step out of their comfort zones and discover this incredible country – just go with an open mind and a heart for adventure!

TAC: Normally Travelers have problems in getting Visa for many countries, one is botheration, the other is time. You seem to have managed these issues at ease. Can you give few practical tips for our readers?

SN: Visa rules change all the time (usually for the better)! Make sure you check the visa consulate section on the embassy website of the country you are travelling to before you go. Call the country's Embassy in India and speak to the consulate section if things are not clear.

1/B 2 Visa for longer years. Any observation on this?

SN: The best visa I have on my Indian passport right now is a multiple-entry US B1/B2 visa valid for 10 years! Not only does that allow me to travel to the US often, it also gives me visa-free or VOA access to some pretty cool countries around the world. Using it, I've travelled through most of Central America, parts of the Caribbean, and even Turkey.

Long-term UK and Schengen visas have a similar advantage, but I've learnt from experience that these are harder and much more expensive to score.

TAC: One is generally scarred to visit Visa office, the fear is 'will it be rejected'. What does your experience say?

SN: Simple: be cool, be smart in applying and be aware of the rules. Be smart when applying for Visa in India.

Let me explain: for US Visa you are not required to show confirmed accommodation or flight bookings. I

went the extra mile by getting an invitation letter from my brother who works and lives in the US, as well as carrying a cover letter addressed to the visa officer and carrying copies of my bank statements; it helps to remain calm (and honest) in the visa interview too.

But for Canada Visa, you have to show confirmed flight and hotel bookings for your travel together with a whole stack of documents like bank statements, proof of employment, income tax returns etc – as listed on the VFS Canada website. Then apply in person. If documentation is perfect, nothing to worry: I scored a multiple entry 7-year visa for Canada, and my passport was returned within 2 days!

When I say 'be smart', I mean you should know the intricacies. Getting Schengen Visa is bit 'tough' from experience, I would suggest: apply at VFS Germany – Once you have a Schengen visa, you can enter Europe from and travel to any country within the Schengen zone.

TAC: So you seem to have had a smooth



drive everywhere, you really acted 'smart'.

SN: Not exactly always, knowledge helped a lot. Most consulate websites state that you need to be a resident/citizen in the country where you're applying for a visa, but I've managed to plead my case a couple of times – and scored a South African visa



I volunteer-travelled by myself in the high Himalayas of India. In those two months, I saw, experienced and lived more than I ever had before, and decided to quit my first and only corporate job with the dream of travelling the world on my own terms.

Shivya Nath



in Germany and a Schengen visa in Georgia.

So one should know what to ask for and how to ask for.

TAC: Like any business, in Tourism also, Consumers should be understood. But there is little guidance suiting to their ambitions and taste. What best could be done to know the Consumer in this business?

SN: I think Steve Jobs said something like, it's not the responsibility of the consumers to know what they want / need, and that's true for travel too. Especially in India, we are stuck in a chicken-and-egg game where the same, overdone itineraries are being offered by travel companies. You need to start thinking out of the box, encourage travellers to slow down, and really discover places beyond sightseeing.

TAC: In one of your blogs, you had mentioned: Travel More Responsibly. Can you elaborate?

SN: In my travel, I essentially followed five simple things, and I termed it as essentials for a responsible traveler: Let me elaborate:

1. Using public transport while traveling. There is no better way to see the countryside than through the lens and stories of your co-passengers.
2. Carrying my own water bottle

wherever I go. Each time we buy and dump a mineral water bottle, we add around a 1000 years of decomposing plastic to the earth. Hundred rupees, on the other hand, buys me a sturdy water bottle that can conveniently slip into the side pocket of my backpack. I've carried one on several trips now, and finding clean drinking water to refill it has never been much of a challenge.

3. Staying in homestays. I couldn't have imagined what it would be like to stay with a host family until my first homestay in a fruit farm in Punjab. The warmth with which I was welcomed and hosted, and the home-cooked food fed with such love, had me hooked. Staying with local hosts in places I've never been to before has given me the chance to experience life in a region, learn first hand about its culture and traditions, sample local cuisine prepared with locally sourced ingredients, unearth local treasures that no tourist maps or guidebooks talk about, and find a 'second home' in the most unexpected of places.

4. Carrying my litter back. Truth is, in a world where 90% of everything you consume comes wrapped in plastic, and I thought of ensuring that my travels add no more plastic to a small town or village. As much as possible, I have made it a habit to gather my trash – soft drink cans, chocolate wrappers, chips packets

and the remains of whatever else I like to munch on – and carry it back to a city with a recycling bin or waste management know-how.

5. Asking for permission before clicking photos. When I first read about this photography etiquette, I didn't understand why someone would mind having his or her photograph taken. Most people don't, but it feels disrespectful to have someone shove a camera in your face without so much as exchanging a word with you. I experienced that first hand in a small village in Himachal Pradesh, when engaging in conversation with an old mountain lady. A man walked right up to us, and without even a smile on his face, blinded us with a flash and walked away. The lady lamented how that is nothing new, that most people visit to photograph them but leave without knowing anything about their lives. Some of these nameless pictures will be exhibited and sold. That is the day I decided that as much as the native people of a place make for good subjects for travel photography, before I click any faces with my camera, I will have both their permission and their story.

TAC: You got you an Award in 2013 and again in 2015. So what is the next Award you are looking for?

SN: (just smiles and avoids answer!) ▶

The trend of **ONLINE BOOKING** in tourism and hospitality

THE TOURISM AND hospitality industry has witnessed a major transformation in India with technological advancements such as digital marketing and online booking systems in hotels, restaurants, and some of the tourist places also. Nowadays, people don't spend hours standing in queues and waiting for their turn to book travel tickets, instead they comfortably sit at home and book the tickets by making an online payment. There are majority of people who make use of this online booking facility, and make things easy and smooth for them. Waiting at the hotel and restaurant is now a hectic process, and every single person prefers to book their rooms before the start of journey, and they just need to check in after reaching the place.

Various travel agencies have also established their online web portal for the convenience of their customers. With this, the consumers can compare the services of different travel agencies, and hotels, and they can select the best out of those for them. Along with online booking system, the trend of online marketing, content marketing, and easy payment method is also growing at a fast pace to strike a balance with advancement in technology. These online portals offer various discounts on seasonal basis, and also during special occasions. We have the privilege to book the tickets months before the journey at low fare, and tickets can also be booked during emergency cases. These agencies are keeping a close eye at the needs of their consumers and trends of tourism industry to give them the most compelling and satisfying experience.

Some of the major trends in the online booking system which attracts majority of customers are as follows:



With the online web portal, the consumers can compare the services of different travel agencies, and hotels, and they can select the best out of those for them.

• **Mobile technology**

Due to introduction of various mobile applications, and advanced technology, customers can receive location based immediate deals and offers, and they get customized facilities from their clients. The increased safety of transaction of payments has led to ease of access to these advanced services.

• **Personalization**

The trend of adding more features based on your personal comfort is the latest trend, which allows you to select the services of your choice. Now, one fit for all types of thinking and trend has become very old.

• **Reviews and referrals**

It is important to get the feedback from your customers related to the services you have provided, so that you can get to know about their level of satisfaction. The consumers these days have the right to express their views about the experience to their agents directly, and they also have the authority to suggest some changes in the services for the betterment of the organization. Amidst all this, reference has become an important part of online booking system, which allows you to give reference to your friends and relatives based on your experience with particular brand or organization. ▶

TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

are backbone of our Indian economy which has the potential of exponential growth to impact the other associated verticals of our fast-developing economy. Its contribution for the holistic development of our Indian society and the common people is monumentally life-changing and growth-impacting. In addition, it offers key shares of proceeds as an invaluable and insurmountable fountainhead of foreign exchange generator for our country.

Believe it or not, our present economy is expectedly on the rise. And, this rise is due to the creation of conducive eco-system of holistic growth of travel, tour and hospitality sector by our government and the associated public and private stakeholders. Even the introduction of tourism and hospitality philosophy through the traditionally-enriched and thought-provoking message of “Vasudeva Kutumbakam” has suited to Indian culture and ethos in attracting the global audiences and markets of the tourism and hospitality sector. Therefore, in this booming atmosphere of the rising economy, the marketing analysis of key ingredients that play a significant role, is undoubtedly worth-appreciable. In this competitive and globalised environment, it is pertinent to describe, interpret, and examine the influential parameters and paradigms of the key ingredients. These key ingredients control, guide and impact the root of tourism and hospitality industry. And, these salient ingredients could be classified under three verticals. These are:

a) 5 and 7 Star Hotels

b) Guest Houses, Restaurants, Food Courts, and Dhaabas

c) Shopping Centers and Multiplex (Movie Theater)

In this perspective, it makes good sense to briefly analyze the nuances of the relevance and influences of each of three verticals on the tourism and hospitality industry. So, let us discuss in details.

a) 5 and 7 Star Hotels

Our image in the global markets of travel, tour and hospitality mirrors through the prism of the quality of 5- and 7-star hotels. And, it is the burning need of hours to identify and explore the growth angle of the star hotels in the leading cities and metropolitans of our country. Although there is a boom in Indian economy for the general masses, it is still mild and mediocre. And, it is still unbelievable beyond the reach of even creamy layers of our society and people. Our economic development paradigm is still in embryo stage.

In this perspective, it is greatly needed to enhance the purchasing power of upper middle class through robust investment in infrastructural development. But, in this prevailing economic atmosphere, the creamy layers in our Indian society are still unreachable to enjoy the privileges and standards of the highest quality of service in the hospitality sector. So, even the creamy layers could only afford to occupy



only 5-star hotels, not 7-stars hotels. It is true that there is considerable number of 5-star hotels in the leading cities of our country. Further, our economy is also causing enabling fillip to the mushrooming of 5-star hotels. Despite these prevailing scenario and circumstances, the presence of 7-star hotels is rarely visible.

In this perspective, it is important to note that there is an urgent need to create a class of people who could afford to use the hospitality of 7-star status. In addition, the revamping of business strategy in the tourism and hospitality sectors is also the need of hours. Therefore, in order to improve the cascading impact of the 7-star hotel occupancy, it is pertinent that the hospitality sector has a very strong base for the convincing occupancy strength of 5-star hotels. For this, huge investment with strategic marketing of hospitality products and services in 5 and 7-star hotels is the urgent need of hour to meet the futuristic status demands of the growing burgeoning middle class of India.

b) Guest Houses, Restaurants, Food Courts, and Dhaabas

India is traditionally and culturally a country of guest houses, restaurants, and dhaabas. These are our traditional roots that we have inherited in the hospitality sector. And, with the sprawling growth of information and technology sector, the addition of food court to our traditional culture has been the order of the day. Thus, no matter where we go and what we do, there is always a prevalence of guest house, restaurants, and dhaabas in all the leading cities and metros of our country.

Philosophically and culturally, India is not a country but a world in itself as every part of our life is coated with a culture within culture, a tradition within tradition, and a variety within varieties. So, this diversity offers a booming platform for the potential increase the mushrooming of guest houses, restaurants, and dhaabas.

In this direction, our state and central governments have been initiating suitable initiatives through building the basic infrastructures of rail, road, air, and waterways so that our country could become a globally-recognized tourism and hospitality hub. In order to reshape and restructure the face of hospitality industry, it is paramount to improve quality of guest houses, restaurants, and dhaabas in the areas surrounding or along national highways, state highways, airports, railways, and ports. In this perspective, the monumental growth in economy through



computer and information technology has added features to the culture and traditions of food courts in all the leading cities of our country. And, all these are key constituents for augmenting the quality of hospitality sectors through the strategic marketing of hospitality products.

c) Shopping Centers and Multiplex (Movie Theater)

The explosive growth in Indian economy has augmented the economic and purchasing power of the burgeoning middle class of Indian society. This culture has given a room for the establishment of shopping centers not only in the metro political cities, but also in the tier 2 and 3 cities. In addition, there is also a sudden prevalence of multiplex which strengthens scope and intensity of hotel, tour, and hospitality industries. Such a growth has also drawn the attention of international giants to set-up the hospitality-oriented shopping centers and multiplex. These centers have different types of categories to meets the demands and tastes of the general masses. Believe it or not, India has an estimated growth of 19% of shopping centers as there is a strong indication of industrial, economic, technological, and human-index growth. All these are positive indicators for making our tourism and hospitality sector strong, viable and competitive to the world market. ▶





Future of Indian Tourism and Hospitality Industry

THE TOURISM AND Hospitality Industry is growing at a tremendous rate over the past few decades and also, it has emerged as one of the major drivers of growth in the services and employment sector of India. The enhancement and development of the hospitality and tourism industry in India is interlinked with each other because both foreign as well as national tourists play a crucial role in its growth. With the majority of middle class families in our country, as well as India emerging as a globally recognized country in business, more and more people are coming to India, thus accelerating the growth of the Tourism and Hospitality Industry. The industry witnesses a cumulative annual growth rate of 14% every year, which is expected to grow further leading to fulfillment of several expectations from the tourism and hospitality industry in the coming years.

• Innovations led by Technology

Businesses are becoming paperless and the tourism and hospitality industry is also following the trend of a completely digital system, with online presence and social media grabbing considerable amount of importance. Mobile technology is also becoming strong with more and more work being done on hands free devices.

Mobile apps will be occupying the center of the stage over the next few years. The industry is flowing along with the trend of customization and personalization system and consumers expect to have a completely memorable experience within a hotel which is totally suitable for their mood and needs. This in turn has led to the creation of a wide range of important customer preference data that needs to be incorporated into the hotel management system in order to deliver a satisfying and high quality service for every return visit of the customer.

• Emergence of Aggregators

India has more than one lakh hotels. While the number of branded firms such as Oyo Rooms, Zo Rooms and Vista Rooms are emerging day by day, these numbers show that there still remains a large market for hotel aggregators and the future will come across many such advanced establishments in our country. The most interesting part to observe will be how they move away from the league and provide unique services to their respective clients.

• Involvement of Foreign Investors

While India is gathering importance at the international platform and the government

allowing 100% FDI for hospitality and tourism sector under the automatic route, the industry will see many foreign tourism enthusiasts investing in India to expand their business in our country. This will not only give profit to the investors but will also contribute a major part in increasing the GDP of India.

• Evolution of Business Strategies

The consumers these days have become very conscious and concerned about the price and they want service of greater value in exchange of their money. The industry is evolving more and more budget friendly accommodation without altering the standards of the service and facilities provided by them. A large number of hotels are launching their pocket friendly versions under their own brand names which has spread the market in the market at a faster rate thus driving the attention of more and more customers towards them. Hotels have also started exploring various other pathways for expanding their business such as managing events, taxi services etcetera apart from their core business in tourism and hospitality. Medical tourism is also emerging as an important part of tourism industry and hotels are upgrading their services to conquer this market. Well-furnished studio apartments are likely to become a major money earner.

• Growth led by Consolidation

The future will also witness groups and organizations consolidating their position and the market will host many tie ups and joint ventures as well as partnerships amongst different groups of investors. ▶



POOJA
KHAITAN

Philosophically and culturally, India is not a country but a world in itself as every part of our life is coated with a culture within culture.

Precautions During Booking Tickets and Hotels

WHENEVER YOU ARE planning to go on a vacation during your holidays you must be always pondering between the sites to get some amazing travel and accommodation offers at your desirable destinations. Gone are the days when you had to depend on your travel agencies or agents to make your bookings and give you information about the packages. With internet conquering the world of business, this change has also affected the majority of tourism and hospitality industry. Today you can make all your flight and hotel bookings from the comfort of your home or office using your handheld devices. To match the pace with this gradually expanding market of online shoppers most of the travel agencies, airlines and hotel services have developed their online portals from where customers can plan their holiday trips and make their online bookings easily. However there are some major drawbacks that you must take care of while making your bookings online. Some of these drawbacks are mentioned here.

- **Choose wisely**

This is the first and foremost thing that you need to be aware of while making your flight and hotel bookings via online method. The trouble that you could face in this field is that with so many people crowding the internet, more and more websites and mobile applications are being launched on a daily basis. While the majorities among them are reliable, there will be a group of websites that appear to be relevant but they are fraudulent whose sole intention is to cheat their customers who choose them for planning their trip. The matter of major concern here is that when you make your bookings through these websites using your credit cards, they could steal your confidential data and use them in wrong way.

- **Compare and decide**

One should take care to not rely upon the rates provided by a

single service provider. The best alternative that you have related to this is to take the help of web portals that provide you the feature to compare the rates offered by different brands and agencies. This will assist you to get an idea of the different prices of various agencies and will prove to be an effective aid for you in bargaining with travel agents.

- **Always carry the proof**

One of the major issues that you could face while booking your flight tickets and hotel rooms online is that you will have to keep proper printouts of hardcopies of each and every payment receipt that you have done online. This is because you could have issues with your selected travel agency in future and you may have to produce proof of your transactions to them. Always ensure that you keep these records properly stored with you and at a place that is easy to remember and easily accessible to you every time. ▶





Growth and Challenges faced by INDIAN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

There are several factors that determine the growth of tourism and hospitality industry in India, and some of the factors are given below:

- As already mentioned, it has helped a number of households in increasing the income.
- India has witnessed a huge increase in niche based tourism such as eco-tourism, luxury tourism, medical tourism, adventure tourism, research based tourism, etc. which are amongst emerging trends in the industry of tourism and hospitality of India.
- Tourism and hospitality sector grabbed second highest FDI

i.e. US \$3.2 billion in the year 2013

- 100 percent FDI allowed through automatic route in hotel and tourism sector
- Widely spread diverse flora and fauna of the country attracts an ever increasing number of tourists every year, thereby accelerating the growth of Indian Tourism and Hospitality Industry.
- The initiatives taken by Government of India for the improvement of infrastructure like airports, highways, ports, railway stations, tourist places, transportation facility, cleanliness drive, etc.

- India's growth and development is mainly depending upon the availability of labor and human resource, which is immense in India. In our country, there is presence of majority of population who are seeking employment opportunities, and they can get employed in tourism and hospitality sector.
- India stands at the fourth position amongst the most preferred travel destination by Lonely Planet who has selected the country from the top five destinations from 167 countries.

Although the global recognition of India in tourism and hospitality industry is commendable, there are some drawbacks in this sector which create blockage in the pathway of growth of this industry. We are aware that every coin has two faces, and so is the case with the domain of tourism. We have seen the positive side of Indian tourism industry, and we have admired the pleasure that it has offered its tourists. But, it is important to look at the other side of the same, and try to eliminate those negative elements from the tourism and hospitality sector of India. Thus, here are some points which need amendment by the higher authority for the betterment of this industry in our country:

• **Proper making and implementation of policies**

Today, tourism industry is facing the inclusion of several new concepts, which needs to be refined for proper implementation of laws and regulations. The authorities need to be very active in imposing strict laws for the citizens or tourists to follow. There is a need to make positive efforts for spreading the newly developed models of business in various domains of tourism and hospitality industry. Be it the matter of cleanliness or of service standards, there is a necessity of strict rules and regulations that should be taken care of by each and every organization and brand, in order to deliver high quality service to their customers.

• **Safety and security**

There is no doubt about India being one of the most preferred places for tourist activity, and hence it is important to maintain our standard of services that we provide to our tourists in various forms. Some of the most famous places in India which attracts majority of the tourists from various corners of the world are also the places which witness maximum amount of insecurity from various man made problems like terror attacks, eve teasing, pick pocketing, robbery, and what not. Thus, it is a very tough challenge for the Government of India to overcome these unexpected and undesirable events happening in our country. In this context, they should reform the safety and security laws at public places and tourist spots for better security of the visitors.

• **Protection and recreation of natural resources**

In order to keep the tourists connected with the beauty of our country, it is our duty to give them genuine reason to plan their return journey to our country. Therefore, we need some strict laws which prevent the destruction of our natural resources and natural beauty from any harm by activities of humans. There should be stiff implementation of rules for the protection of environment, wildlife, and diverse flora of the country. Due to exploitation and destruction of our natural resources, we have seen unavoidable hindrances in protection of our environment. It is the responsibility of higher authority to form a suitable protocol that should be strictly followed by each and every citizen of our country.

Today, tourism industry is facing the inclusion of several new concepts, which needs to be refined for proper implementation of laws and regulations. The authorities need to be very active in imposing strict laws for the citizens or tourists to follow.

• **Refining the operating system**

The system in our country is very hectic and it strictly needs to curb few of the lengthy procedures. Usually, the customers complain about long queues, time consuming and tedious procedures to complete certain simple tasks. Thus, there should be single window clearance system that reduces the hectic process, and finishes all the services in an easy way. It fastens the process of development of the tourism and hospitality industry, and increases the number of customers. There is a consistent pressure from the side of customers to implement a single window clearance system for everyone visiting our country. However, a green signal has been given to this system by cabinet ministers and other official authorities. This single window system will be applicable for the entire infrastructure related growths and developments, and it can be utilized by the hotels and tourist place authorities also. It is mainly proposed by the government to provide speedy official license to the tourists visiting our country, but the checking and confirmation process cannot be eliminated from the system due to safety and security concerns of the country. Implementing this system will be great help for all the tourists who have come for some educational purpose, research purpose or the treatment of their medical issues.

Bringing these minor changes into the system can solve a large number of problems that tourists may happen to face in future. It is important for bringing a positive change in the system for the satisfaction of the visitors. ▀

Consumer is King

Supremacy of Consumer in Tourism and Hospitality Industry

It is the first and foremost point to be noted in tourism and hospitality industry that, this industry is totally dependent up on the happiness and satisfaction of the consumers. Therefore, it is very important to take care of the needs and demands of the customers to achieve success in this domain. It is totally a customers' call, and everybody has a different taste and choice, thus, it entirely depends as to what extent your customer is satisfied with your service and facility. Undoubtedly, consumer is king of the business, and it depends on their reviews and feedback for your service. Great care should be taken while dealing with customers, because not everyone has the same mind set and similar mentality, therefore they should be dealt with different strategies. The choice of one customer may not be acceptable to the other, and the organization should be well established to deal with such variability in their business.

Responsibilities of a Consumer towards the Hospitality Industry

Being the most crucial part of tourism and hospitality industry, customers have certain responsibilities towards their service providers. Usually we get to see a dominating behavior from customers' side, and they fail to understand that along with the employees, staffs, stakeholders, and agents, they also have certain ethics and protocols to adhere. This will not only build a healthy

relationship with their clients, but will also fetch them some complimentary services from them which are quite interesting. It is necessary for the customers to understand their duties towards their service providers and be very kind and treat them respectfully.

Tourists and customers are advised to not migrate to the places which are unsuitable for their health. It is human tendency to look for the perfect living conditions, and we fail to understand that some places may not be suitable for each one of us. Initially, while planning a trip they should not move too far from their home land, because it will be little uncomfortable for them to adjust in a new environment which is different from their usual habitat. In this situation, it becomes difficult for the service provider also to give satisfactory facilities to their clients.

Also, the customers should try their best to cooperate with their agents and treat them like a friend so that they get to understand your needs in a better way. It takes some commitment to understand a person who is from a totally different culture and background, so instead of exploiting the service of your agents one should try to give them positive feedback which will not only encourage them but will also give them the satisfaction of understanding their clients. The tourists and customers should try their level best to mingle with the culture of their destination, and doing this will not make your trip enjoyable and memorable but will also give an immense pleasure to your hosts. ▶



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