MANPOWER MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM INDUSTRY IN KERALA – AN EVALUATIVE STUDY

Synopsis of
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The economic value of tourism to a country is often measured by way of estimating its contribution to the national income, employment and tax revenue. More than the direct employment provided by the predominantly service oriented industry, tourism creates additional indirect employment in activities such as shops and also induced employment in construction. Those directly employed in tourism creates demand for goods and services and to sustain this additional demand, more people are employed in the production of such goods and services. The extra earnings of those who are employed to satisfy this demand creates further demand and in turn employment and so on.

**Purpose of the Study**

In general countries promote tourism to earn foreign exchange and to encourage developmental activities for improving local economies by generating employment. It may be noted that every employment generation through tourism should aim to improve the quality of the service since it determine the image of tourism.

Quality of service is highly dependent on the extent of training gained and how effectively people are managed at work. So manpower management is an integral part of people at work in tourism and their relationships within the enterprise. Effective human resource management requires training and up gradation of knowledge and skills of employees on a continuous basis.

Training must be given to persons like front office managers of hotels, waiters, room boys, tour operators, travel agents, street guides, etc., who directly or indirectly come into contact with the tourists. Lack of skilled and trained manpower is one of the most important obstacles to tourism development in the State.

In the light of the facts cited a study about the problems in manpower management in tourism industry appears significance. Facets of manpower has to be navigated, manipulated and stimulated for a better tourism industry. Hence the main purpose of this study is to analyse the potentiality of engaging maximum
manpower with utmost utility in the tourism industry which take Kerala to the world map of tourism.

**Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives set for the study are –

1. To study and report about the manpower requirements of the tourism industry in the state of Kerala.

2. To examine and assess the existing institutional / infrastructural facilities available for training manpower requirements of tourism sector in Kerala.

3. To make an analysis of facilities available to tourists at the major destinations in the State, their opinions with respect to the facilities and the attitudes of various personnel, the services available and people in such destinations .

4. To identify the problems if any confronted by the domestic / foreign tourists visiting the State.

5. To make an analysis of the educational and socio economic status of employees working in tourism industry in the State and

6. To make an indepth analysis of the extent of influence of:-
   a) the number of tourist arrivals,
   b) remuneration offered to employees,
   c) marketing expenditure of hotels
   d) hotel occupancy rates and
   e) the length of residence of tourists

on the income from tourists in hotels in the study area at the aggregate and at the disaggregate levels.

**Hypotheses**

Following hypotheses have been formulated for the purpose of the study:

**Ho:** There exists an unbridged gap between supply and demand for trained manpower suitable for tourism industry in the State.
Synopsis

**Ho:** The intake of universities / govt. agencies which offer certificates / diploma / degree imparting practical skill and special knowledge training required for tourism based industries in Kerala is far less than the actual requirements.

**Ho:** Infrastructural facilities and skilled manpower at destinations are far below tourists’ expectations.

**Ho:** The number of tourists arrival, the remuneration offered to employees in hotels, the marketing expenditure of hotels, the hotel occupancy rates and the length of residence of tourists has no positive influence on the income from tourists of hotels in the State.

**Population and Sample**

The population for the study is the people associated with tourism industry in Kerala. Personnel involved in hotel industry, tour operations, travel service personnel, tourist guide, tourism police and a cross section of the public and the tourists constitutes the population. Managers at different levels in these industries and the actual work force constitute the universe.

The hospitality industry in Kerala consists of Private hotels, hotels owned by Government and heritage hotels constitute the first set of population. These include star hotels (20%) and unclassified hotels (80%). In this study samples are taken from all categories on the proportion to total population. All together there are five hundred and ten hotels in Kerala. Samples are selected by giving more weightage to Thiruvananthapuram and Ernakulam districts where large numbers of tourists are visiting. The second set of population for the study is the tour operators and travel agents. There are around fifty travel agencies working in Kerala state during the survey period. For the purpose of the study six from Ernakulam and seven from Trivandrum and one each from other districts are taken as stratified random samples. The third set of population is the employees working in hotels and other tourism related industry. For the purpose of this study two hundred employees working in tourism industries in the state are taken as stratified random samples. The fourth set of population is the tourists itself. Tourists include foreign tourists and domestic tourists. Four hundred samples are taken for this study, two hundred
foreign tourists and two hundred domestic tourists both on random basis. The fifth set of population for the study is tourist guides. Most of them are un-authorised guides. Interactions with some such guides are also done for the study. The sixth set of population is the tourist police. Some tourist polices were also contacted for the purpose of the study.

**Methodology & Tools used for Analysis**

This is an empirical research making use of both primary and secondary data. The study involves an exhaustive enquiry into the factors determinant to the growth of tourism industry. The population of the study is the personnel associated with tourism, i.e, the middle level managers and employees of hotels, restaurants, tour operators, travel agencies, guides, transporters, tourist police, photographers and a cross section of the public and the tourists. Stratified random sampling technique is adopted for the purpose of the study. Primary data are collected by means of pre-tested interview schedules. Secondary data have been collected by referring books on anthropology, history, psychology and the records and reports of the Tourism Department, Government agencies and other tourism associated bodies. Data collected are processed by common mathematical and statistical tools such as ratios, percentage, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, correlation, multiple regression, ANOVA, chi-square test, etc.,

Analysis involves five sections. Section I tries to analyse the gap between demand and supply of manpower, both skilled and unskilled required for hotel industry in the State. Section II makes an analysis of the various courses offered by the universities / govt. institutes in the State which are related to travel and tourism management. Section III deals with the analysis and interpretations of data collected from the tourists, employees working in hotel industry and travel agencies.

Section IV and V examines the extent of influence of the independent variables like number of tourist arrivals, remuneration offered to employees, marketing expenditure of hotels, hotel occupancy rate and length of residence of tourists etc on the income from tourists at the aggregate and disaggregate levels respectively.
Findings and Conclusion

Issues related to human resource development in the tourism sector involve the quality of human resources, their conditions of work, their training and educational programmes, the role of the private sector and the role of the public sector in giving attention and finding solutions to the problems and constraints. Being a service industry, tourism is labour-intensive and generally requires well-developed social and language skills in a cross-cultural working environment. The availability of skilled and trained manpower is a crucial element for the successful development and sustainability of a tourist destination. In the ultimate analysis, skilled and trained human resources will ensure the delivery of the efficient, high quality service to visitors, which is a direct and visible element of a successful tourism product.

Major findings

- There is a wide gap between the demand and supply of skilled manpower in case of both classified and unclassified hotels in Kerala state.

- The total intake for various tourism related courses offered by universities / govt. institutes in Kerala state is less than the requirements of tourism-based industries in the state.

- The tourists who visit the state face difficulty in getting easy and efficient transportation connectivity within their manageable time frame.

- As per the opinions of tourists the facilities at the air ports, train and bus stations in the state are not up to their expectation of cleanliness.

- Most of the tourists have the opinion that the rail – road connectivity in the state is very poor and the conditions of the roads connecting tourist destinations are not at all impressive.

- Foreign tourists face difficulty in communicating with different levels of people which they come across during their tour.
As per the opinions of tourists the services of personnel like receptionists, room boys, waiters, etc working in hotels need to be further improved. 

The services of security personnel and house keeping people in the hotels and shop keepers including destination managers are helpful to the tourists who visit the state.

Majority of the employees working in hotels and travel agencies in the State are not professionally qualified and they do not have any degree or diploma in travel or tourism management.

The absenteeism of employees in hotels and travel agencies is medium while their turnover rate is high.

The main reasons reported for employee turnover in tourism industry are the low wages compared with the work load remuneration from other sectors.

Among the professionally qualified employees who are working in the hotel industry, diploma in tourism is the qualification held by majority of them.

 Majority of the employees working in the hotel and travel industry demands more training in their field of operations and better wage system.

Trade Union activity among employees working in the hotel industry is not very active.

The numbers of tourist arrivals, the remuneration offered to employees, the marketing expenditure, the hotel occupancy rate and ‘the length of residence of tourists’ have a positive influence on income from tourists in both classified and unclassified hotels in the state.

**Suggestions and Recommendations**

It is found that there is a dearth of trained manpower in the tourism sector in the State of Kerala to cater to the ever increasing needs of both
the domestic and foreign tourists. Considering these aspects various short term open courses should be started at the college and University levels to equip the students to involve in various tourism related activities like tourist guidance, development of websites highlighting the prominence of each locality, hospitality management, etc. to make earnings while they are learning.

- Many of the tourists who visit Kerala are found to be staying for a short duration in both unclassified and classified hotels due to the lack of awareness with regard to the potential tourist resorts and avenues in each locality. Hence efforts should be made at the Grama Panchayat levels to make more avenues of entertainments by organizing local level cultural festivals, art forms, etc., with a view to retain such tourists at the tourist destinations for a fairly long period of time.

- Village level heritage museums should be set up all over the State and should also be made known to the tourists through beautifully and well designed websites.

- ‘Foreign Language Proficiency Class’ should be set up at the potential tourist destinations to equip the local people who are desirous of learning such languages for easy communication with the foreign tourists for the effective marketing of the local products and services to them.

- Village level tourist maps and brochures should be developed with the participation of the students, teachers, researchers and local administrative authorities in association with the Department of Tourism to aid the tourists to visit a particular location to have a synoptic view of the potential avenues of enjoyment in Kerala.

- ‘Mini emporia’ exhibiting various value added products made out of indigenous materials like eco friendly caps, medicated drinking water, local fruits (both dried and fresh), etc. with the participation of various Kudumbasree units.
‘Hygienic Mobile Mini Restaurants’ be set up at selected tourist destinations on an experimental basis providing various local level food items and beverages.

The flight services in the state connecting the airports should be increased to meet the demands of the tourists.

The govt. should take necessary steps to connect the major destinations in the State by train services.

The rail – road connectivity in the State should be improved to connect the major destinations from the nearby railway stations.

The road system in the State should be maintained properly by repairing in time and widening the road connecting to the destinations to avoid traffic block.

More approved ayurvedic treatment centers should be established with the sophisticated facilities to attract more tourists. This will create more employment opportunities.

More hotels with star facilities should be started in the state to cater to the needs of foreign and domestic tourists.

The institutions in the tourism industry should develop certain training programmes with the help of the management institutes to improve the communication skills of their employees.

The prevailing customs rules in the State should be reformed to make it more simple and easy to the tourists, especially foreign tourist.

The workers related with transportation should also be given some training in human resource management, personality development, guest management, communication skill etc.

The hotels and restaurants in the State should make necessary arrangements to supply the variety of food items as per the requirements of the tourists.
The receptionists, room boys, waiters, etc working in the hotels of the State should be given proper training related to hospitality management.

The Govt. and the Universities should develop new training courses for the tourist guides and escorts working in the state.

The service of the tourist police should be extended to the entire tourist destinations in the State.

The shop keepers and destination management people near the tourist destinations should be given some special training in hospitality, guest host relations, customer relations, interpersonal relations, communication skill etc.

The Govt. can develop a positive attitude among the people in the State by conducting tourism awareness programmes with the help of tourism department, training institutes, local self govt. and other non – governmental agencies.

The Govt. should take necessary steps to develop a minimum wage system to the employees working in the tourism industry in the State to attract the qualified hands towards this field.

The Govt. and other agencies like DTPC can arrange orientation training programmes to the employees of the hotel industry in the subjects like customer satisfaction, human relations, communication skill, spoken English, interpersonal relations, consumer protection Act, hospitality management, etc. with the help training institutes working in the field.

The Govt. should take necessary steps to start new institutes for tourism management courses in the State.

The training institutes working in the State should try to provide training facilities to their students in star hotels and standard hotels.

The Govt. with the help of Tourism Department can give career guidance classes to the students in the state about the scopes of various courses of tourism management available in and outside the state.
The Govt. should frame a separate strategy and programme for the development of human resource management in tourism industry in the State by considering the increase of the tourist arrivals.

The Govt. and private organizations must take necessary steps to provide in-service course to the personnel associated with tourism industry in the State in order to compete with the changes in the global market.