CHAPTER 3:
Existing Trend, Policies and Practices, and A Conceptual Framework of TC In TA in India
Chapter – 3

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The preceding chapter presented a detailed review of pertinent and published literature on training culture, job performance, organizational commitment and turnover intention. This review concluded that although substantial literature work has been done in this area, yet this aspect of training culture in travel agencies remained outside the focus of scholars so far. The entire reviews served as the driving forces and jumping-off point for research investigation.

This chapter has been planned to elucidate present status of training culture in travel agencies in India. The chapter has been divided into two parts. The first part deals with an introduction of concepts of training culture and the second part presents the scenario of travel agencies with regards to its training culture.

(Section A)

3.1. Conceptual Introduction of Training Culture

3.1.1 Introduction

Present Scenario of business world is characterized by a growing competitiveness, market globalization and technological advances in organizations. The survival of an organization implies the achievement of sustainable competitive advantages. The knowledge and skills of employees working in an organization have become increasingly important to its performance, competitiveness, and its commitment towards organizational goal. In search of a monumental place to work, job aspirants and employees are regularly looking beyond salary, allowances, and pensions to other factors that includes development prospects, what the organization stands for, how the organization serves its customers and the society, and how the employees are trained and by what means. Therefore every organization needs to look at those things that not only attract employees to apply for the job but also bestow benefits to the organization. The human resources today are changing significantly.
Policy makers should endeavor to make innovative strategies in such a way that keeps the organization with continuous learning leading to the instillation of training culture.

The concept of training culture as an issue for organizational analysis and development is of recent origin. The reasons for the development of the concept appear to be twofolded. First, is the recognition that classical quantitative and ‘scientific’ approaches were no longer as appropriate as they had been thought to be earlier in the century. Second, is the realization that human resources are the world’s most powerful weapon to conquer. Hence, training culture has emerged as a tool that enables continuous learning of human resource and helps in moving ahead without any hurdle and hiccups.

Trends in ‘culture management’ during the late twentieth century attempted to identify how organizations sought to develop cultures in the interests of organizational improvement (Grieves, 2003). The organizations not only offer educational chances to their employees, but they generate and help the environment necessary for proper learning. Without understanding culture, one can never train for performance because somewhere the system will break down. Either the training will not be imparted as schemed, evaluation will not be managed, time and resources will not be available, or a standard of performance will not be desired. So before organizations can adequately comprehend the richness of the training, they must focus on establishing a true TC inside the organization (Muzaffar, 2014).

It has been acknowledged that TC has a promising future as a vehicle to promote personal and organizational learning; TC will develop its true potential when it identifies its core knowledge and skills. Additionally, training is needed to be seen as a continuous process. Therefore, TC became a more widespread and broader concept with more defined and central objectives as compared to earlier. The focus on continuous learning and on identifying key competencies accelerated the development of TC and elevated the importance of training within many organizations. It appears that TC is now firmly identified as the mean that will enable an organization to fight against changing and turbulent environment. A training culture is a culture where people are continually becoming the part of training programs, workshops and skill development classes/ courses, discovering how they can perform their job better and how they can change it.
3.1.2 Defining Training Culture

Before beginning an analysis of training culture in travel agencies, it becomes incumbent to first overview the concept of training culture. There have been numerous attempts to define training culture and its various aspects. Here are some definitions of training culture as stated by different scholar. The point which is important to note here is that the researchers have used different terminology to define this term, like, training culture, learning culture, learning supportive culture, and corporate culture as well, all these terms are closely related to each other and may be used sometimes interchangeably.

According to Lynton and Pareek (2005) the degree to which training climate becomes “institutionalized” and is supported by enduring procedural and physical arrangements it is the “training culture, at least in that particular system or part of it. Gill (2010) has stated that a culture of learning is an environment that supports and encourages collective discovery, sharing, and applications of knowledge. Learning is manifested in every aspect of organizational life. Staff and volunteers are continuously learning as individuals, in, as a whole organization, and in relation to their communities. A learning culture can be developed through communication and leadership. Learning culture is an environment in which individual learning, team learning, whole organization learning, and community learning are nurtured. Furthermore, Marquardt (2002) said that learning culture is one in which learning is recognized as absolutely critical for business success; in such an organization, learning has become a habitual and integrated part of all organizational functions. This rich, adaptable culture creates relationships and enhances learning by encouraging values such as teamwork, self-management, empowerment, and sharing. It is the opposite of a closed, rigid, bureaucratic architecture. A number of values that push the organization up the learning ladder characterize a corporate learning culture.

As per Rosenberg (2008), learning culture can be defined as an organization that knows how to learn with people who freely share what they know and are willing to change based on the acquisition of new knowledge. Certainly, one of the most important elements of a learning culture is high quality. Training culture is a key component in the business strategy of an organization committed to continuous learning. A true training culture continuously challenges its own strategies and
methods of doing things. This guarantees consistent improvement and the ability to change (Developing a True…, n.d.). Skerlavaj, Stemberger, Mojca, Skrinjar and Dimovsk (2007) claimed that the concept of organizational learning culture (OLC) is proposed and defined as a set of norms and values about the functioning of an organization. They should support systematic, in-depth approaches aimed at achieving higher-level organizational learning. The elements of an organizational learning process that is being used are; information acquisition, information interpretation, and behavioral and cognitive changes. Learning culture may be defined as a culture that accept a set of attitudes, values and practices that bolster the procedure of continuous learning inside the organization.

A learning culture is an environment in which people are committed to their own growth and development as professionals and apply their learning in reflective practice. It involves accepting a set of attributes, values and practices, which support a continuous process of learning for an organization and its members. The people involved in it should have a sense of what it feels like to be part of it, what it sounds like when discussing it and how it looks when seeing it in action. It is a key feature of a learning organization (A Learning Culture for…, 2011). Bishop, Felstead, Fuller, Jewson, Lee, and Unwin (2006) provide a possible foundation for the construction of a model of a learning supportive culture which includes tacit assumptions/values, beliefs/norms, and practices/artefacts and given an exhaustive list or comprehensive model of a learning supportive culture. Hawke’s in 2002 (as cited in Bishop, Felstead, Fuller, Jewson, Lee, & Unwin, 2006) argued that learning cultures may take a variety of forms from one organization to the next. There may be no one ‘true’ model of a learning culture, only variations on a theme.

August Jacacci in 1989 (as cited in Marquardt, 2002) perceived learning culture as one in which there is “collaborative creativity in all contexts, relationships and experiences,” and the measure of success is the combined wisdom and the synergy of the organization. The whole culture learns in a self-aware, self-reflective, and creative way. A ‘learning culture’ was defined as the existence of a set of attitudes, values and practices within an organization which support and encourage a continuing process of learning for the organization and/or its members. In some organizations this may be manifested by specific policies, corporate goals or documentation (Johnston & Hawke, 2002).
Defining Training

The definition by different researchers emphasize more on the learning culture rather than training culture of an organization. Hence for the purpose of this study, the need to define training culture emerges. TC is made up of two words; training and culture. For a better understanding of the term TC, there is a readily apparent need to establish meaning of training and the culture separately and then attempt to arrive at a synthesis of two definitions.

According to Rao (2005), “Training is a program designed to improve performance and to bring about measurable changes in knowledge, skills, attitude and social behavior of employees. Training makes employees versatile, mobile, flexible and useful to the organization”. Kishore, (n.d.) perceived training as a ‘change agent’, which means that primary purpose of training is to effect change in employee knowledge, skills, performance or behaviour. Training and development is increasingly becoming a major strategic issue for organization. Training has several possible roles in the implementation of strategies particularly human resource strategies. Davis & Davis, (n.d.) argues that training is the process through which skills are developed, information is provided, and attributes are nurtured, in order to help individuals who work in organizations to become more effective and efficient in their work.

Aswathappa (2007) perceived that in simple terms, “training refers to the imparting of specific skills, abilities and knowledge to an employee. According to Wills (1998) “training is the transfer of defined and measurable knowledge or skills. Gupta (2009) has supported Rao and defined training as a process of increasing knowledge and skills of an employee to cope with the ever changing demands of the work situation or is the process of matching the present competency of employees with job requirement”. According to Kratcoski (2007), training is intended to provide the trainer with the necessary information that results in his development in the various fields related to his work and to make him acquire the technical, administrative, and behavioural experience and skill necessary for his performance. Hence, training is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, competencies, attitude that relate to some useful competencies. Training has specific goals of improving one's capability, capacity, and performance. It is a learning process that involves the
acquisition of knowledge, sharpening of skills, concepts, rules, or changing of attitudes and behaviours to enhance the performance of employees.

**Defining Organization Culture**

In this section, an attempt has been made to define organizational culture from different perspective. Marquardt (2002) defines culture as an organization’s values, beliefs, practices, rituals, and customs. Culture helps to shape behavior and fashion perceptions. Rosabeth Moss Kanter (as cited in Davis & Davis, n.d.) conclusively describes culture of an organization “out of the design and structure of the organization arises a set of pattern of behavior and cultural expectations that guide what people in the system consider appropriate modes of operation. While Gregory, Harris, Armenakis, & Shook (2009) adopted the competing values framework of organizational culture as it is perhaps the most popular approach to assessing culture where the interest is on relating culture to organizational performance. Collins (1998) sums up the matter by stating that cultures are historically developed, socially maintained and individually interpreted. Every culture, however, has an in-built tendency to unify behaviour.

Schein (2010) perceived culture as a dynamic phenomenon and argued that it surrounds us at all times, being constantly enacted and created by our interactions with others and shaped by leadership behavior, and a set of structures, routines, rules, and norms that guide and constrain behavior. Edward Tylor in 1891 (as cited in Grieves, 2003) posited “culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” Moreover Grieves (2003) observed organizational culture and defined it as the sum total of the learned behavior traits, beliefs and characteristics of the members of a particular organization. Organizational culture includes arts, beliefs, customs, inventions, language, technology and traditions followed by an organization. Norms, beliefs, principle, trends that exist in organization are the inevitable part of the organizational culture. It is full range of learned human behavior.

After having a glance on concepts and various definitions of training and organizational culture one by one, what becomes clear is that TC is living in the shadow of organizational culture. TC may be defined as a culture where training is
fortified at all level, training has become an integral part of the organization, frequently need-base training programs are organized, and where human resources freely share what they know and are disposed to change based on the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. For the purpose of this study researcher took the perspective that training and the factors that support the transfer of training are part of a training culture that values the creation, sharing, and application of knowledge.

3.1.3 Antecedents of Training Culture

Technological advancements, dynamic customer demands, increasing globalization, the blurring of organizational boundaries, and increasing competition all combine to produce organizational environments that are more turbulent and volatile than ever before. It has become increasingly necessary to recognize training culture as an appropriate response to globalization, turbulent environment, technological upgradation, increasingly competitive nature of business and boosting consumers’ demand. These antecedents of training culture have been identified as the result of extensive literature survey. It is important to note here that these antecedents do not on their own join to facilitate training culture rather create an opportunity for an organization to establish training culture. Given the dynamic and competitive nature of business, increasing technological upgradation and boosting consumers’ demand, organizations develop training culture and provide resources so as to enable all employees to engage in training in order to acquire new competencies both for individual growth and development and to achieve the objective of the organization effectively as well as efficiently.

3.1.3.1 Globalization

Globalization can be described in terms of growing economic interdependence and cross-border linkage that increasingly connect countries worldwide (Wesly, 2012). Globalization of business sector is one of the most captivating growths of this century. It is a main idea which has turned into the fundamental element in business life during the recent couple of decades. Its effect on economic transactions, processes, institutions and players, is considerable and wide ranging. It challenges set up standards and conduct, and demands diverse outlooks. To challenge these changes, it generates options for the well prepared participants who can be proactive and creative. Hence, a greater emphasis on training has resulted because of globalization
in human resources management. Training tends to be focused on the needs and professional competencies of groups of employees within the organization (Bradley, n.d.).

3.1.3.2 Technological Upgradation
Technology upgradation from 2G to 3G has made the market accessible to many investors. Every day new challenges are entering into business sector as rivals. It’s a given fact that the advanced transformation and the information explosion of the past two decades has changed the substance of business, and that the pace with which innovation develops and changes has only accelerated in recent years. This implies that organizations must be kept on their toes in order to maintain adaptability and flexibility in a continually evolving world (Silberman, 2013).

3.1.3.3 Knowledge and Awareness
Facilitation in information and communication technologies (ICT) have significantly changed the position of users and ended in unparalleled rates of information generation and dispersion. From one viewpoint, a wide range of sensors are being coordinated with mobile communication gadgets. Then again from another viewpoint, online social applications are mushrooming. Together, these improvements add to the heterogeneity of users in terms of interests, likings and portability, and empower the collection and distribution of massive number of information. This information collectively enriches people’s awareness about environment, products etc.

3.1.3.4 Increasingly Dynamic Nature of Business
Globalization creates a market dynamic that encourages competition, requiring expertise in supply chain optimization and higher quality and efficiency levels. As highlighted in practices, training culture is seen as a response to an increasingly changing and dynamic business environment. It is seen as flexible to the external environment and continually increasing the potential to change and to adapt through proper training.

3.1.3.5 Competition and Deregulation
Competition is currently expanding day by day. This competition can be identified with product and service cost and price, target market, technological adaptation, quick
response, proliferate production by corporate and so on. Competitors are always looking to take a bigger share of the market, may be by reducing their prices or by presenting another or better form of an item. The basic reason for recent significance on training culture is a direct result of the expanded pace of rivalry. Classically, work has been considered as being moderate and hard to change. Learning was something surrendered from work and innovation was seen as the important yet problematic approach to change. The organization which can rapidly learn and then develop their work will have the capacity to change their work practices to perform better in the constantly changing environment. Change is presently measured in terms of months not years as it was in the past (Jankiraman, 2008).

3.1.3.6 Turbulent environment

Liberalization and the accompanying policy of economic reforms have created a new environment that expose the organizations to various vulnerabilities while at the same time providing new and greater challenges for growth and adjustment. The post-liberalization business environment has become harsh for the organizations because of increased internal and external competition. Because of these impending threats, the organization needs to be prepared for the new challenges and should work for the instillation of training culture.

3.1.3.7 Boosting Consumers’ Demand

When a product becomes uncomfortable, demand can quickly fall away. Changing tastes and inclinations can significantly affect demand for different products. Persuasive advertising is intended to bring change in tastes and preferences and thereby make an increment in demand. To cater to the increasing consumer demands, a skilled workforce is needed that can handle their demands.

3.1.4 Why Training Culture?

Training is essential. Doubts arise only over its contribution in practice not in its importance. The training apparatus and its cost have multiplied but not the benefits. Training like a tax has been levied on the willing and unwilling alike. In sober fact, training is neither a panacea for all ills, nor it is a waste of time. What is required most of all is to use the divine sense of impatience for acquiring insight into what training can or can not do and skills in designing and carrying out training
effectively and economically (Lynton & Pareek, 2005). In short, here arises a need to take a look at a novel concept of training culture, by which the yield from training can be optimized and cost can be reduced. Essentially, training culture has been seen to be a relatively recent attempt to influence HRD by suggesting that corporate success as well as training success required a strong favorable training culture.

As our attention shifted from training to the wider and complex context of design and culture and the powerful influence of both on the possibilities of improvement in behavior, training culture has become crucial for organizational development and success. It is fruitful to both employers and employees of an organization. An employee will become more efficient and productive if he is imparted with training program that is designed well and successfully implemented with supervisor’s and trainee’s support. Training culture introduces a prime chance to grow the knowledge base of all employees, yet numerous employers find these opportunities costly. Some of the time employees pass up a major opportunity for work time while going to training sessions, which may delay the completion of projects.

Common imbalances during training are shown below in Figure 3.1 that are causing problems to trainees as well as their organization. On the completion of training programs, they can be easily eliminated if a favorable training culture does exist in the organization.
Figure 3.1: Four Common Imbalances in Training: Effects during the Post-training Phase

3.1.4.1 Importance of Training Culture for the Organization

Training culture gives the organization all in all and the individual workers with advantages that make the expense and time an advantageous investment.

a) Higher Employee Satisfaction, Morale and Retention

With a favorable training culture in place, the first apparent benefits that an organization avails are higher employee satisfaction, morale and probably retention of employees. Employees are more motivated and more inclined to do a good job when they feel they are being given importance and when they feel that organization is investing in them and thinking about their development. When they can share and discuss their issues and ideas freely and be recognized for what they know, when they learn from mistakes rather
than being punished, they become more committed to organization, hence the rate of turnover decreases.

b) Surface Ideas
A company with a favorable learning culture tends to surface ideas more efficiently. Employees are not hesitant to come up with ideas for fear that they will be shot down. When management ignores participation in training programs, they are discouraging employee participation. But when management welcomes ideas and is interested in becoming part of training programs, the culture changes and even more ideas are generated.

c) Reduction of Redundancies
Another benefit of a favorable training culture is reduction of redundancies. If two people or teams are working on the same type of project in different parts of the business, a good training culture might expose those people with each other through training programs which are frequently held by the organization for the development of its employees. Therefore, combining resources and ideas enables elimination of the redundancies and concentrates more creativity and brainpower on the critical needs at hand.

d) Improved Reputation
Within the list of advantages of training culture, improved reputation is of vital importance. A favorable training culture has the potential to yield an improved reputation in the business community for the organization itself and a better value proposition for that organization’s training department. This better reputation helps an organization to attract good human resource, to get loan from lenders easily and to make consumers satisfied with their products and with a better demands of products and services rendered.

e) Good Return on Investment
A favorable training culture enables continuous and need-based training of an employee. Since employees are trained about their job that what they are expected to do and are explained how to perform functions of the job, possibilities of mistakes and errors are reduced. Employees are able to give their best in terms of performance. Disturbance and interruptions are
discouraged as employees and employers are in positive and healthy relationship. All these things definitely have a positive influence on the returns of an organization. Hence return on investments is increased.

f) Motivational Development
It must also be understood that well designed training and development interventions may raise the motivation and expectations of the participants.

g) Integrate Talent Management Strategy
Finally, a favorable training culture will integrate a company’s talent management strategy. Learning will not be separated from incentives, rewards, pay, working conditions, tools, recruiting, selection, retention, selection, and long-term employee support. All of those factors seem to be merging in the business community and without a training culture; there is a big gap in talent management strategy of an organization (Rosenberg, 2008).

3.1.4.2 Importance of Training Culture for the Employees

a) Develop a sense of growth in learning/ improve performance:
An employee who receives necessary training is able to perform his/her job better. He turns out to be more mindful of safety practices and proper procedures for basic tasks. Continuous training also keeps employees on the cutting edge of industry developments. Employees who are competent and on top of the changing industry standards support company to hold a position as a leader and solid competitor within the industry (Frost, n.d.).

b) Address Employee’s Weaknesses
Most employees have some shortcomings in their workplace skills. A favorable training culture allows strengthening those skills that each employee needs to make strides. A development program brings all employees to a higher level so they all have similar abilities and knowledge. This helps reduce any frail connections within the company which relies heavily on others to complete basic work tasks. Providing the necessary training makes a general proficient staff with employees who can take over for one another as required,
work on teams or work independently without constant support and supervision from others (Frost, n.d.).

c) Elevate Employee Satisfaction
Training culture makes a strong working environment which leads to elevate employee satisfaction. Employees may get access to training that they would not have generally thought about or searched out themselves. Employees who feel acknowledged and tested through training opportunities feel more satisfaction towards their jobs. Employees with access to training and development programs have the advantage over employees in other companies who are left to seek out training opportunities all alone. The interest and investment in training that an organization makes demonstrates that the employees are valued.

d) Improve morale of employees
Training culture helps the employee to get job security and job satisfaction. The more satisfied the employee is, the greater is his morale, the more he will contribute to organizational success and the lesser will be employee absenteeism and turnover.

e) Make employees a better decision maker and problem solver
The more an employee participates in organizational matter, the more he will feel a kind of belongingness towards organization and he will be involved in organizational matters more deeply. Hence he will be able to take better decisions for organizational welfare and would be able to solve problems effectively.

f) Encourage self-development and self-confidence
Training culture also builds confidence among workers through continuous training. An employee is able to have a stronger understanding of the industry and the responsibilities of her job through these trainings. This confidence pushes him to perform way superior and think of new ideas that offer him some assistance with excelling.
g) Develops good relations

Training culture creates an urge for a healthy relationship between employer and employee. Since employees feel that their employers think of their well-being and bother about their career and personality development, they work for their organization with better motive and devotion. Close collaboration and open communication between management and staff on training issues, which is inspired through training culture results in improved relationships.

3.1.5 How to Instill Training Culture in the Organization?

In this era of technological convergence, dominated mainly by the information technology, taking training culture to the next level in an organization may be daunting, but establishing a strong training culture is possible. Moving towards instilling a training culture requires a strategy. It does not just happen overnight, it takes commitment from everyone in the organization and it needs to be part of the organization’s long-term strategic objectives. Here are certain strategies of establishing training culture to make an organization better so that it can develop and retain its employees and can attain sustainable competitive advantage:

3.1.5.1 Involvement from Top

When managers and executives are committed towards training and deeply involved in either attending or imparting training, a precedent is set for the employees to follow them as they are the topmost authority of an organization. Hence a training culture can be developed in an organization when topmost authorities support and attend training first. Karsh (2001) indites that by taking a top-down training approach, management and senior leader can share their information with subordinates to get others excited and interested about attending training program. If employees meet with personal rejection or resistance from the topmost authorities to adopt and accept new ideas and approaches, they will be discouraged and demotivated to attend training program and a true training culture will be failed to be established. Hence involvement of topmost authorities becomes very important for establishing training culture.
3.1.5.2 Aligning Training Culture to Business Needs

Training and development initiatives are to be engaged in an organization and then they need to be clearly connected to the organizational need. Participants demand a supportive climate otherwise the intervention may be senseless. Management must ensure that learning is aligned to business strategies and that too must be communicated to the employees. HR professionals should regularly verbalize with the line managers or section heads about the issues and problems they are facing and should enable the employees to find solutions through the training process. Thus ensuring that current training courses offered, are addressing current business needs and are extremely relevant for the concrete time (Developing a True…, n.d.). This would surely help to instill training culture inside an organization.

3.1.5.3 Well Defined Set of Objectives

Most well-run organizations have a well-defined set of business objectives. Where these exist, they will normally cascade down the organization so that departments, sections and individual managers will have sub-objectives that dovetail into the corporate plan. These are the prime source of information in developing the training need assessment (TNA) at this level, for here are the specific, measurable targets that the organization is committed to pursue (Palmer, 2001). There should be a clear and firm idea of the goals and objectives to be achieved. As stated above, “Training Culture” should be a Corporate Goal and should be stated at the highest level of objectives in order that it is cascaded down to the organizations’ employees and becomes a part of every employee’s personal annual goal. The strategic nature of the job must be reflected through plans. Best plans are developed not in isolation but through joint involvement of colleagues, clients and other stakeholders in business (Developing a True…, n.d.). The business objectives should be set after a thorough inquiry with clients, senior managers, HR team, and the target employees on how they want to perform their work in the organization, how and by what means they want to be trained and how they want to enhance their learning capabilities. Hence training need after analyzing the objectives tend to be more successful and helps in the establishment of training culture.
3.1.5.4 Proper Environment for Learning

A learning organization without dynamic learners is similar to a college without students. With a specific end goal to build a learning/training culture, an organization must cultivate dynamic learners by making a learner driven environment. Workers must be given essential tools and the important substance to become self-learners. Way to deal with learning must be refined to consistently create learning culture. It is possible to refine learning methodology after getting input from workers (Developing a True…, n.d.). Once feedback has been taken from employees, an evaluation can be made as to on which points the training program conducted in past was lacking and in future these uncovered part of training program may be given due weightage. Understanding the tremendous significance of training for the modern organization and confident that it represents a good and remunerative investment, present day organizations should set aside more and more resources for this activity as this would surely help in establishing training culture.

3.1.5.5 Encouraging Learning Environment

One may come across many barriers particularly the reluctance of employees to change their behaviour. This barrier can be removed by developing coaches and mentors to help employee development. Coaches are to be rewarded for their service and assessed about their attitudes. The coaches and mentors love to perform the tasks because the rewards are personalized. In building training culture in an organization the work culture must have democratic principles. The organization culture shall not be of command and control. The training culture cannot be built in such an atmosphere. Organizations in order to have encouraging learning environment, shall have to invest time and provide resources for learning.

3.1.5.6 Encouraging Experimental Mindset

Training can be offered as a reward to pump employees’ morale and high performers within the organization (Karsh, 2011). For establishing a training culture, employees must be encouraged to experiment with new ideas, new styles and new ways to work and to take calculated risks. Organizations should stimulate employees...
to take advantage of changes taking place in business. Indeed employees must be able to predict changes and be prepared to stand against changes. Employees must be urged to attempt new things at their workplace and within the context of the organization and workers who are innovative, creative and experimental must then be remunerated also to encourage them for innovations and creativity, so that a true training culture may come in existence. After having a training program, employees will work accordingly; this may lead to some activities of experiment and innovation.

3.1.5.7 Making Training Fun and Keeping it Relevant

A survey of employees should be done to discover their interests and development opportunities, and then find compelling programs that match their needs. A manager can empower the employees by making them feel like they have had a hand in creating and deciding the focus for the training workshops. When training is fun and relevant, attendees will want to be there (Karsh, 2011). Trainees cannot learn if they do not enjoy their training. What is pleasurable to one trainee may not be for another. Using a variety of training tactics that involve active trainee participation is preferable to less interactive approaches (Hayes, 2009). Hence by making training relevant to work and conducting it like a fun, encourages employee to learn. Hence it supports in the establishment of training culture.

3.1.5.8 Pondering to the Feedback

Managers should listen to trainees and consider their input about the effectiveness of the learning process practiced in the organization. It is ideal to have an online evaluation tool and conduct surveys to figure out the employees views on the learning process, training programs and create an improvement plan (Developing a True…, n.d.). These improvement plans would assist in better planning for training programs and would be of paramount importance in establishing training culture.

People need direction and guidance, but they also need the right amount of autonomy and independence. They need to learn how to cooperate with their colleagues, but they also need to keep up with professional developments. They have their own ideas of what they should learn and how they should learn it, but other
people will probably think differently about these issues. These are the tensions that the people face on a regular basis. A well developed training culture inside the organization allows them to resolve these issues and problems satisfactorily. All employees in an organization have a right to be taken seriously in what they need to learn, what they learn and how they go about learning it finally. An awareness of the current situation in the corporate learning system is a starting point from which a true learning organization can arise.

(Section-B)

3.2 Training Culture in Travel Agencies in India

3.2.1 Introduction

The pace of globalization is increasing continuously in terms of markets for goods and services, investment and business opportunities within one or more organizations. This transformation caused by globalization affects all the industries and travel agencies are not left out in this transformation movement as it has obligation to move along with the changing demands of the globalization process. Therefore, so as to keep pace with the changing and turbulent environment, travel agencies should also move alongwith.

Today most of the organizations operate in a business environment where uncertainty, risk and complexity in the external environment have become a fact of life. Nevertheless, pressure of international competition and market globalization are forcing Indian travel agencies to match global standards. Whatever their structure or business strategy, travel agencies are realizing that it is the performance of their human assets that can make a reasonable difference between success and failure. The travel agencies in India have become highly competitive with regard to the quality of service provided by travel agency, as the quality of services has significant effects on the profitability and success of travel agencies. This quality of services can be maintained by continuous development of both the employees as well as other factors involved in the quality of services. Travel agencies being a service business need to look at those things that attract and make the employees efficient and update to work for their travel agency.
With increasing emphasis on technology, quality and service, all are moving away from mechanized workforce to an intellectualized one and thus need competent and self directed employees to assume responsibility as per the changing demands of the work situations. As such no organization can ignore the learning and development needs of its employees. Employee training and development are not only an activity that is desirable but also an activity that an organization must commit resource to, if it is to maintain a viable and knowledgeable work force. Hence, to be successful in today’s challenging scenario of cut throat competition, all private and public TAs need to take a fresh competitive look at their objectives and the relevance of training program of their organization to ameliorate their image.

Attitudes and attention to training has changed greatly in the last 50 years in travel agencies. Historically training was applied more to manual and trade skills often affected through apprenticeships. In more recent years much more accentuation has come about in behavioural training. With the avail of modern technology the training expertise itself has been greatly developed and improved to cover all aspects of modern business and industry. Training of employees in travel agencies has a special role in this industry as this has direct impact on quality of services and satisfaction of customers.

Indian travel agencies are waking up to the challenges thrown in the market economy. Travel agencies in India are currently facing a rapidly changing environment. Even their traditional intermediate function is being questioned. Deep transformations are therefore bound to take place, so that travel agencies may adapt to this new competitive environment. To survive in this highly competitive scenario, managers are being pressured to improve quality, increase productivity, cut down waste and eliminate inefficiency. The collective effort of employer and employee surmises relevance in this context. And this is where training culture can play a crucial role indeed.

**3.2.2 Human Resources in Travel Agencies**

People are an important resource to most of the organizations, but particularly in service based organizations, it is often the human resources that represent the key factor in delivering successful performance (Evans, Campbell & Stonehouse, 2003). There are some industries where people are not just important but they are the key
factor for successful performance (Lynch, 2000), viz. travel agencies, where a agency has a direct, intangible interface that relies on individual employees to give interest and enjoyment to customers.

It is frequently said that people are a critical dimension within the successful delivery of tourism services (Baum, 2007). The criticality of human resources in national and organizational development is not far-fetched. It is the human resource that utilizes other resource inputs like capital and technology in the complex and dynamic process of production. Among a firm’s intangible resources, human capital may be the most important and critical for competitive advantage because it is the most difficult to imitate. Any organization that seeks a competitive advantage through human resources thus must acquire the right resources and take the steps required to leverage them. Further, it is only the human resource that reacts to issues and responds to the way it is being treated. Indian tourism scenario is not an exception to this; rather human resources have more dominance role to play in this industry. With its dominant role in creating a tourist product, the human factor has a decisive role in the operation of a tourist enterprise.

Human resource make benefit of their own abilities, the available capacities and natural values of a tourist location, tourist workers plan, create and design a tourist offer, create and control the quality of tourist services, manage the work processes, and make decisions. Both the quality and productivity of their work, and the economic benefits they gain, depend on the skill, capability and ability of the employees (Simonceska, 2002). For smooth functioning of the travel agencies in this competitive scenario skilled, calibred and trained employees are required. Therefore training is an activity for the development of skills, efficiency, knowledge and behaviour of human resource so that they may keep pace with the changing scenario of tourism industry. Training is now firmly identified as a key to enhance capability and efficiency of employee to show good performance in the travel agencies. Training involves skill development, communication and managerial qualities etc. Travel agencies also get benefit out of it as they derive competitive advantage.
3.2.3 Human Resource Requirements of Travel Agencies

Human resources in travel agencies are the primary factor in servicing of travel niches in travel and tourism industry. Thus, they create the relationships with medium and high yield clientele in tourism and significantly influence profitability of agencies (Vucetic, 2012). Travel agencies need tourism professionals specializing in different operational and managerial functions – tour planning and itinerary designing, travel information, reservation and ticketing services, destination counseling, sales and marketing, finance and accounts, conferences and conventions, visa and travel insurance, foreign exchange services etc (Lather, Garg, & Vikas, 2008). For medium-sized and large tourism enterprise, human resource issues and the factors affecting their performance are usually highly linked to the staff and workforce and therefore recognizing the role of on-going development of the staff resource to achieve strategic goals become essential (Page, Brunt, Busby, & Connell, 2001). The industry requires a healthy combination of articulate, highly skilled and trained professionals. Training institutions should try to bridge the deficiency of employees by proactively facilitating the talent management in the travel industry (Chakraborty, 2013). The growth, and therefore the success, of a travel agency would depend almost entirely upon the competence and ability of its manager and on the knowledge and experience of its staff (Sharma, 2006).

The amateur stage of the travel agency business is long over. Over the last two decades, the travel companies have transformed their pattern and structure to meet tough challenges in the international tourism market. So, in this volatile business environment, only that travel agency will succeed that will change to meet the competitive threats and opportunities to match the needs of a new travel market, and will bring flexibility, creativity, innovation, determination and professionalism into its operations (Lather, Garg, & Vikas, 2008). Servicing of market niches and differentiation of agency services and products at the same time reduces the possibility of substitution and imitating of services and products and contributes to generation of the above-average profit (Vucetic, 2012). Human resources in travel agencies are the primary concern and represent an especially valuable resource. Figure 3.2 details out the profile of human resources employed in the Travel and Tour Operators.
Figure 3.2: Profile of HR Employed in Travel and Tour Operators Segment


Apart from this, certain companies might have a separate Passport/Visa and Foreign Exchange divisions too. The profile of the people in the department will be same as that of Travel Counsellors. There are also companies who outsource the Passport/Visa related works (NSDC Report).
Figure 3.3: Function-Wise Distribution of HR in Travel and Tour Operators Segment


Figure 3.3 succinctly showing the distribution of human resources according to their function in travel and tour operators segment. This figure shows that the function of ticketing have the highest need of human resources i.e. 25% followed by Accounts and Tours. Foreign exchange is having the least requirement of human resources i.e. 4% followed by Sales & Marketing and Operations. Table 3.1 details the education-wise distribution of human resources in Travel and Tour Operators.

Table 3.1 vividly shows the distribution of human resources according to their education in travel and tour operators segment. There is 3% to 5% need of those human resources that are MBA, CA, CS or ICWA while Travel and Tour Operators segment needs human resources with Diploma/ Certificate Courses the most i.e. 42%-45% followed by Post Graduates/ Graduates people. The table further elaborates that there is need of 15%-30% of people who are High School and below.
Table 3.1: Education-Wise Distribution of HR in Travel and Tour Operators Segment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>% of People</th>
<th>Functional area assigned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MBA, CA, CS, ICWA</td>
<td>3% - 5%</td>
<td>Management level as Branch Manager or Divisional Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduates/ Graduates</td>
<td>25% - 35%</td>
<td>Ticketing (Travel Counsellors), Marketing and Sales, Accounts Finance Department, Foreign Exchange etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma/ Certificate course</td>
<td>42% - 45%</td>
<td>Ticketing, Executives/ Assistants in various departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School and Below</td>
<td>15% - 30%</td>
<td>Ticketing, messenger/ Delivery boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Human Resource and Skill Requirements in the Tourism, Travel, Hospitality, and Trade sector (2022)-A report. (n.d.).

### 3.2.4 Training Requirement in Travel Agencies

As a service industry, tourism by its very nature is a labor-intensive business that not only requires professional competencies but also significant social skills. To maximize their effectiveness, travel and tourism professionals need both hard technical skills as well as the soft people skills (Negi, 2006). This is even more so in the travel agencies which are all about people and how to handle and oversee them. Travel agents offer clients some assistance navigating through the regular process of making the best possible travel plans in terms of convenience and expenses. In doing as such, they have to deal with boundless measures of information with an educated viewpoint that the normal traveler may not possess. All these challenges can be overcome by proper training and development practices. A re-investment in the human resource through on-going training and development of the employee skills and ability to create and add value to the organization are inherent qualities for which successful tourism enterprises are recognized throughout the world (Page, Brunt, Busby & Connell, 2001).
Training for tourism is, no doubt, still a young activity when compared to other sectors. However, the very fast development of the tourist market and the extension of the territorial reference framework mark the need to rapidly adapt training processes to the new market requirements. Therefore, training for tourism needs to claim the same dynamics that are featured by the market evolution. It becomes increasingly essential to relate the originating and destination markets of the tourist flows with the contents of the training, which, instead, are nowadays thought of as a function of the internal dynamics of a territory or a country (Macchiavelli, 2002).

The tremendous expansion in the world of tourism is creating an urgent need for trained staff. Employees working in tourist-hotel, travel agencies, transport offices and reception offices are to be properly qualified. They must have, in addition to technical knowledge certain professional attributes. These attributes are amiability, quick initiation, tact, balance, self-control, distinguished hearing and manners, ready conversation, in-sight and knowledge of the customs, habits tastes, and rules of conduct of tourists, especially foreign tourists. In addition, the need for practical knowledge of foreign language is obvious (Negi, 2006). The importance of continuous training in travel agencies is further emphasized in Sharma’s (2006) book “Tourism and Travel Agency” that there should always be ongoing training and instructing of experienced employees in new skills. A mistake that many managers of travel agencies make is to assume that because an employee has years of experience, that person is operating effectively and efficiently. Older does not always necessarily mean better. Some people do tend to get into a rut, and unless training and updating sessions are held regularly, people who are inefficient and nonproductive will probably remain so. Therefore a culture inside the travel agencies should be encouraged in order to enable continuous, well planned and need based training for the upliftment of the employees.

Those travel agents who keep themselves informed of pertinent knowledge and competence in the workplace learning and performance field will excel. And, those employers who focus their efforts on developing human potential will survive in the long run. The need of the hour is employability skill-set. In fact, it is only exceptional learning and performance that will create a travel agency that works better (Pattanayak, 1998). On-the-job informal training should be always going on in a
travel agency. It is especially important whenever a new employee joins an agency, if
the manager is to get that person started on the job correctly. Even if a new counselor
has sound travel industry experience, as a new employee, he or she still need to learn
how the things are being done in a particular agency. For example, invoicing and
other book keeping functions of a travel agency may be vastly different from others.
So may be the manner in which client files are organized and maintained are different.
A newcomer to the industry would do well to get some formal training before trying
to get a job too. Private trade schools, correspondence courses, and evening courses in
basic travel agency techniques and procedures are available for the totally
inexperienced (Sharma, 2006).

Owners and managers are not to be forgotten either. One of the major causes
of business failure is the inadequate and improper training of owners and managers.
Furthermore, untrained owners and employees are a danger to their clients. Even if a
manager is not active in the travel agency, he should be willing to learn something
about the industry in which you are investing (Sharma, 2006). Nevertheless, role of
management in training should not be overlooked but need a rigorous look to get them
take part in training. Smeeta Gulvady, VP and head, Centre of Learning -Thomas
Cook India says, “there is an increment in attention of the travel and tourism industry.
Students are more demanding, and some of them are centered on their career path.
Henceforth professional training has expected a more prominent significance as it can
offer youth some assistance in accomplishment of their aspirations” (Chakraborty,
2013).

3.2.5 Annual Demand for Trained HR

Travel-Tourism is the world’s fastest growing job profession in creating new
jobs. Since the industry is experiencing a boom time, it’s also a boom time for travel
agencies. Travel agencies are in desperate need of qualified, trained and skilled
employees to meet the need of booming industry. As customers are more and more
well informed, educated and aware, they are looking for travel agents who know more
about the travel products or packages they are looking for. Travel agents need specific
training to enhance their service level quality but mainly to sell products with high
margins.
According to Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (2004) recruitment at the entry level touched almost 14,000 in year 2010. A large proportion of them were hired by tour operators, partly to offset high employee turnover rates. Adventure tour operators did not report any hiring at the entry level. Table 3.2 shows the demand for trained manpower in travel trade sector in the year 2002, 2010 and 2020. The growth in the annual demand for trained manpower can be assumed to follow a linear trend. As the demand for trained manpower is highest in the year 2020 i.e. 20,760 which is being speculated on the basis of present increments in demand and demand is lowest in 2002 which clearly evident a linear trend.

**Table 3.2: Demand for Trained Manpower**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Annual Demand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>7,155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>12,735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>20,760</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Ministry Of Tourism, Government of India, 2004*

Table 3.3 cogently shows the annual demand for training manpower at entry level from April 2009 to March 2010. Annual demand for trained manpower is highest for ticketing department followed by Sales and Marketing Department in all Travel Trade Business, be it travel agencies, tour operator or tourist transport operators.
Table 3.3: Annual Demand for Trained Manpower at Entry Level
(April 2009- March 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Departments</th>
<th>Travel Agency</th>
<th>Tour Operator</th>
<th>Adventure Tour Operator</th>
<th>Tourist Transport Operator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration/Operation</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticketing</td>
<td>2947</td>
<td>2513</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tours</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales &amp; Marketing</td>
<td>1113</td>
<td>2881</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>4962</strong></td>
<td><strong>7526</strong></td>
<td>--</td>
<td><strong>1725</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2012

3.2.6 Different Departments of the Travel Agencies and Skills Needed

Information Department

Information department is one of the important departments of travel agencies. Information department is first and fundamental step for the customer. This department provides the useful information to their customers. It gives different kinds of information about the destination, currency, accommodation and tour.

Skills Needed

a) Excellent communication skills so as to inform clients about their products.
b) Establishing tie up with various downstream service providers.
c) Being presentable as the role is client facing and involves hospitality.
d) Ability to resolve the issues faced by their clients, which have been identified through the service calls given to the clients on a regular basis.
e) Adequate knowledge of hotels available at various locations in order to execute hotel bookings.
Chapter – 3

Ticketing Department

The next is ticketing department. This department is very useful for host and foreigner customers. At present days in this service reservation for accommodation also included.

Skills Needed

a) Ability to oversee specific functions such as ticketing and passport
b) Knowledge of ticketing, that he/she has gained over experience and/or through the courses for example from IATA, UFTA, etc.
c) Knowledge on refunding norms in case of partly utilized tickets.
d) Ability to calculate the ticket fare, should know their components, such as surcharge, service tax, etc.

Insurance Department

To cover any risk some insurance are arranged by or provided by some travel agency. This covers the risk like any loss of luggage, accident, or any kind of theft.

Skills Needed

a) Ability to ensure that the expectations of customers are met.
b) Need to be proactive and smart
c) Ability to oversee the smooth running of the department.
d) Knowledge of major insurance schemes

Sales Department

It is the section of a travel agency which deals with selling the products and services to the clients. This department provides the facilities of tour packages. Packages tour is provided on the basis of commission. A certain percentage of commission is charged. This department is also affixed with hotels. Travel agencies provide rooms in very luxurious hotels.

Skills Needed

a) Knowledge of a major CRS such as Abacus, Galileo, Saber, Amadeus
b) Study of the market to identify potential clients.
c) Ability to build customized products for clients depending upon their requirements, making effective presentations, and winning the business.
d) Ability to motivate the team leaders and the sales team.
e) Need to be proactive and smart  
f) Ability to maximize the sales revenue.  
g) Ability to conduct market studies.  
h) Ability to meet potential clients and interact with them, explaining the products offered.  

**Transport Department**  

This department is mainly for the facility of transport. This department provides the services of bus, car and train department to their customers.

**Skills Needed**  
a) Knowledge on various travel routes both domestic and international.  
b) Ability to understand the needs of the customer and act as their travel advisor.  
c) Ability to network with clients  

**Currency Exchange Department**  

This is new department of travel agency at present days. This department provides the facilities of exchanging money of their customers. It is very useful for all the kind of travelers. Travel agency exchanges their currency according to the country in which they want to visit. This saves a lot of time of the customers.

**Skills Needed**  
a) Knowledge of Exchange Rates  
b) Good Communication Skills  
c) Ability to network with clients  
d) Need to be proactive and smart  

**3.2.7 Types of Training Conducted in TAs**  

There are two broad categories of trainings namely, technical trainings and behavioral trainings that are important for all the employees working in travel agencies.

3.2.7.1 Technical Trainings  
3.2.7.2 Behavioral Trainings
### 3.2.7.1 Technical Trainings

Specifically related to the travel and tourism industry, the technical trainings cover the product-related aspects of the job and are related to reservation systems, fares, ticketing, itinerary planning, health and travel insurance, visa, foreign language and foreign exchange procedures etc. Knowledge of these products is essential for improved performance of travel agency employees (Lather, Garg & Vikas, 2011).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product or technical trainings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• CRS training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ticketing (domestic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ticketing (international)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Itinerary planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Foreign language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Computer basics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Adopted from Lather, Garg & Vikas. (2011)

1. **CRS Training**

Computer Reservation Systems (CRS) otherwise called the Global Distribution Systems (GDS). There are four computer reservation frameworks in the travel industry. They are;

a) Sabre

b) Apollo

c) Worldspan

d) Amadeus

These computer airline reservation systems work similarly and get to primarily the same databases for their data. The CRS is applied generally to book:

a) Airline Reservations

b) Hotel Reservations

c) Car Reservations
With the headway of the web, numerous suppliers, for example, cruises, tour and package companies offer their own particular electronic booking engines. The principle contrast between the CRS and the online booking engines are the techniques in utilizing the systems. The computer reservation systems are totally keyboard driven and travel agents must learn the formats in order to work with it proficiently. The online booking engines work in the point and click environment.

Things needed to be trained to an employee before handling CRS are given below;

a) How to create a complete Passenger Name Record (PNR)
b) How to utilize the CRS program
c) Airline reservations (availability, flight service information, classes of service)
d) Fare quotes, pricing and ticketing
e) Car reservations
f) Hotel reservations

For smooth running of travel agency business, an employee needs to have necessary training of CRS programs (Computer Reservation System Training, n.d.).

2. **Ticketing Training**

Ticketing is an important function of a travel agent. A ticketing consultant is an expert in calculating and quoting airfares and understanding different type of airfares. Hence proper training should be provided to the travel agents so that they may be handy in calculating all type of fares.

3. **Itinerary Planning Training**

Itinerary planning incorporates booking client’s meals, accommodation and attractions and helping to plan excursion to make sure that client’s group gets to experience the absolute best of the area visiting. Training in itinerary planning helps a travel agent to manage efficiently and go safely and on time.
4. **Foreign Language Training**

Foreign language training is given to develop effective communication skills of different languages. This type of trainings ranges from individual training and corporate group training to specific skill seminars. This training is also very fruitful for the employees working in travel agencies so as to communicate with foreign clients regarding their travel needs and plan.

5. **Computer Basics**

Computer basics incorporate basic knowledge about MS Office, internet surfing and handy on the key functions of computer. Hence an employee who is assigned the job of ticketing or other computer related functions must be trained in computer basics.

3.2.7.2 **Behavioral Trainings**

Behavioral trainings are related to soft-skills trainings in managing business, managing people, managing customers, managing self and some of these are related to sales negotiation skills, leadership, customer service, problem solving and decision making, team building, presentation skills, business communication, stress management, time management.

With innovative work systems and practices are introduced such as team working, performance related pay, job rotation or total quality management (TQM); there are immediate implications for employee skills. Rapid changes in the structure of employment and in the organization of work generally, have led to a growing recognition that the possession of ‘soft’ skills which are variously referred to as ‘generic’, ‘personal’, or ‘behavioral’) are integral to working effectively in new work patterns. There is a general recognition of the importance of “soft skills” in improving the productivity of the workforce, but there is still quite a degree of ambiguity in defining their boundaries. The increasing emphasis on customer care has further emphasized this. Further, all employees of travel agencies are required the skills to interact in a positive manner to be able to create and maintain a safe and dignified working environment (Lather, Garg & Vikas, 2011).
### Table 3.5: Behavioral or Soft-skill Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioral or Soft-skill Training</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Telephone etiquettes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consultative selling skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Negotiation skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Customer service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Business communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Team building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Key accounts management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Customer relationship management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Presentation skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leadership skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Decision making and problem solving skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interviewing skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Finance and non-finance personnel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Train-the-trainer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Adopted from Lather, A. S., Garg, S., & Vikas, S. (2011)

### 3.2.8 Current Status of Training Culture in TA

Along with changes in sales outlets, travel industry training has also moved forward. An increase of in-house training, many companies use the National Vocational Qualification route (Syratt, 2003). Nevertheless, for those already employed in the industry, the airlines conduct regular tariff and ticketing seminars and other training sessions. The Institute of Certified Travel Agents, the ASTA School at Sea, and dozens of seminars all offer advanced training in excellent and highly professional programs. There is formal structured training available for virtually everyone from the rank beginner to the ten years veteran travel agent (Sharma, 2006).
3.2.8.1 Training Institutions

Numerous institutions have sprung up purporting to offer courses at various levels in travel, tourism, catering, hotel and institutional management across the country. A brief overview of two major centers viz, Centre of Learning - Thomas Cook and Centre of Excellence- Kuoni that mainly focus upon the training of travel and tourism sector is discussed as under.

a) Centre of Learning - Thomas Cook

To take into account the demand, Centre of Learning - Thomas Cook India comprehends this need of the tour and travel sector which is going through with an attrition rate of 15-30 per cent. Henceforth this institution endeavors to viably furnish this sector with a unique inflow of all around trained and very competent experts, prepared to be absorbed into the workforce. Thereby incorporating worth to the organization through their well rounded knowledge and training (Chakraborty, 2013).

Centre of Learning is the corporate training arm of Thomas Cook (India) Ltd. (TCIL) to develop talented and efficient employees for the organization as well for the industry itself. In the connection of high development and expanding client prospects, talent management will be one of the vital challenges to the travel industry. This identifies with both the lack of actual numbers and the desired capability levels from both a technical and managerial viewpoint. Thomas Cook - Centre of Learning has been set up with the goal of proactively encouraging the talent management in the travel industry and would endeavor to develop, outfit and sustain the skill sets in the industry (col.thomascook.in). This organization gives intensive industry-centric training with internships as an integral part of their program. The learning is not limited to classroom training. Study visits to comprehend, watch, and observe travel is also attempted (Chakraborty, 2013). Thomas Cook Centre of Learning not only prepares young aspirants but follows the adage of ‘Train the Travel Agent’. Training programs are developed and conducted for the travel fraternity on behalf of different tourism boards. Candidates learn everything about destinations including festivals, history, geography, local road, transport facilities, monuments, accommodations, dining, entertainment, etc. (col.thomascook.in).
a) Center of Excellence- Kuoni

Centre of Excellence set up in 2010, is an initiative from Kuony Academy to create talent for the organization as well as for the Industry. It is India's first corporate training house that provides offline classroom destination training on different tourist destination & attractions over the world. It serves as a meeting point for all corporate and business necessities. At centre of excellence extensive projects for corporate establishments and trade partners are conceptualized and conferred. Their point is to connect with every single front liners and key partners of Travel and Tourism fraternity and keep them upgraded about the most recent developments in different tourist destinations and attractions of the World.

Aside from offline classroom destination training, centre of excellence additionally gives customized training programs on selling skills support business era and client administrations which helps in consumer loyalty and satisfaction based on customer requirements. More than experts/partners have been trained as such, across India including police officials, travel agents, tour managers and airport staff over India. The training is not centered around transfer of knowledge alone; it indeed enlarges general development and overall growth of skills of a member. The same is ensured by mixing product presentations with energizers, role plays, exercises, case studies, group activities and visual guides. The attention is on enhancing the proficiency of employees which in turn boosts profitability for their organization.

Centre of Excellence has expertise in

a) Travel & Tourism Education & Training  
b) Service Industry  
c) Destination Knowledge  
d) Selling and Customer Relationship Management  
e) Leadership & Behavioral Skills  
f) In-house Content Development and Research

Source: http://www.kuoniacademy.co.in/center-of-excellence.htm

Centre of Excellence’ Network
Network in India – 13 Centers in 11 cities

a) Mumbai (3centers – Apsara, Andheri, Vashi)
b) Delhi (2 centers – Defense colony, Connaught Place)
c) Chennai
d) Coimbatore
e) Hyderabad
f) Bhopal
g) Ahmadabad
h) Mangalore
i) Jabalpur
j) Raipur
k) Kolkata

Source: http://www.kuoniacademy.co.in/center-of-excellence.htm

3.2.9 The Common Challenges and Pitfalls along the Way

a) **Poor Liaison between Education and the Industry:** India is facing the problem of matching the suitability of education and training to the needs of the industry, and qualified tourism instructors are in short supply. To aggravate the poor liaison between education and the industry, the tourism industry also suffers from a poor image as an employer (Esichaikul & Baum 1998).

b) **High Employee Turnover:** Unfortunately, the employee turnover is very high in the tourism industry, especially in travel agencies and tour operation business (Lather, Garg, & Vikas, 2008). The travel agencies are also scared of high turnover and not paying any due consideration to training and development programs. Employee turnover necessarily impedes the efficacy of training, because trained workers leave, and untrained workers arrive. Thus, training in this instance again is necessary just to maintain current labour productivity (Percival, Cozzarin & Formaneck, 2013).
Rate of employee turnover is high particularly among tour operators at 50% followed by 32% in travel agencies and 17 % in tourist transport operator. Sales and marketing function in travel agencies and tour and facilitation in tour operators witness the highest attrition rates. On the other hand tour in tourist transport operator and facilitation in travel agencies reported the least employee turnover, 3% and 8% respectively (Table 3.6).

**Table 3.6: % of Employee Turnover**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional Domain</th>
<th>Travel Agency</th>
<th>Tour Operator</th>
<th>Adventure Tour Operator</th>
<th>Tourist Transport Operator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration/Operation</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticketing</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Exchange</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tours</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales &amp; Marketing</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td>--</td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. (2012), pp116

c) **Tourism Policy:** India’s tourism policy, according to tour operators, is not very definite. The state of tourism in India, despite there being huge potential, is not growing at the rate as in other countries like Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. The primary reason being that tourism sector in the referred countries is very organized. The policies are clear drafted; hence all the stakeholders in the sector operate complimenting each other. The scenario in India is totally opposite. All the stakeholders in the sectors work according to
their own policies and even the promotional campaigns and marketing modalities are separate for private players and Government administration.

d) **Tourism Infrastructure**: India’s tourism infrastructure is not at all evolved or growing due to non-aligned growth of different segments. Quality accommodation units are available in India at a premium price, when compared to other countries. The internal connectivity for tourist destinations in India is only by air or rail. Road connectivity is very poor. Apart from airports at the metro cities, other airports in the country do not have the facilities to handle many visitors, unlike small airports in the chosen countries.

e) **Information Dissemination**: Information dissemination is not as great in India as it is in other countries. A comprehensive website which provides all kinds of information to a traveler of any origin is not present in India. Modern methods need to be adopted to provide information and increase awareness amongst tourists about India.

f) **Visa**: Getting a visa for India is problematic for nationals of other countries as the application form for visa is a very lengthy one and online option for getting visa is non-existent. Moreover, there are no specification mentioned in the form for the size of photograph, type of photograph, etc, this makes procurement of visa for India a big hassle. In case of India, no group visa is provided to foreigners, who usually travel in groups.

g) **Security**: The repeated terrorist attacks in India is a big drawback for India, as foreign tourists planning to visit India are very skeptical about the security measures in India and often cancel the planned trips to India. Apart from terrorist attacks, safety for women is another area of concern. In other tourism centric countries, women and tourists feel secure and roam freely, whereas in case of India, recent negative incidents have created the perception of “unsafe” in case of India (Ministry of Tourism Government of India, 2006).
3.2.10 Training Level among HR in TAs

a) HR Training Pattern

Table 3.7 cogently shows the level of training of total employees in March, 2010. Majority of the employees i.e. 31852 are formally trained, while 29515 employees are trained at job and total untrained employees are 1622. Highest formally trained employees are in Tours 12755, followed by 10680 employees in ticketing. Furthermore, for Ticketing, 12121 employee are trained at job, followed by 11437 employees trained at job for tours. Administration function has the 240 untrained employees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function Domain</th>
<th>Formally Trained</th>
<th>Trained at Job</th>
<th>Untrained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>8417</td>
<td>5957</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticketing</td>
<td>10680</td>
<td>12121</td>
<td>612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour</td>
<td>12755</td>
<td>11437</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>31852</strong></td>
<td><strong>29515</strong></td>
<td><strong>1622</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. (2012)

HR Training Forecast

- HR Training Forecast 2012

Table 3.8 cogently shows the employment forecast across level of training of total employees of tour and travel units in India. Majority of the employees i.e. 32543 are formally trained, while 30167 employees are trained at job and total untrained employees are 1653 in March 2012. Mostly employees, trained formally in Tours 12755, followed by 11067 employees formally trained in ticketing. Furthermore, for Ticketing, 12558 employees are trained at job,
followed by 11437 employees trained at job for tours. Administration function has the 248 untrained employees.

Table 3.8: Total Employees in March 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function Domain</th>
<th>Formally Trained</th>
<th>Trained at Job</th>
<th>Untrained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>8721</td>
<td>6172</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticketing</td>
<td>11067</td>
<td>12558</td>
<td>634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour</td>
<td>12755</td>
<td>11437</td>
<td>771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>32543</strong></td>
<td><strong>30167</strong></td>
<td><strong>1653</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. (2012)

**HR Training Forecast 2017**

Table 3.9 cogently shows the employment forecast across level of training of total employees of tour and travel units in India. Majority of the employees i.e. 36062 are formally trained, while 33414 employees are trained at job and total untrained employees are 1837 in March, 2017. Mostly employees are trained formally in Tours 14440, followed by 12092 employees formally trained in ticketing. Furthermore, for Ticketing, 13722 employees are trained at job, followed by 12948 employees trained at job for tours.

Table 3.9: Total Employees in March 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function Domain</th>
<th>Formally Trained</th>
<th>Trained at Job</th>
<th>Untrained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>9530</td>
<td>6744</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticketing</td>
<td>12092</td>
<td>13722</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour</td>
<td>14440</td>
<td>12948</td>
<td>873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>36062</strong></td>
<td><strong>33414</strong></td>
<td><strong>1837</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. (2012)
HR Training Forecast 2022

Table 3.10 cogently shows the employment forecast across level of training of total employees in March, 2022. Majority of the employees i.e. 39404 are formally trained, while 36511 employees are trained at job and total untrained employees are 2007. Mostly employees are trained formally in Tours 15778, followed by 13213 employees formally trained in ticketing. Furthermore, for Ticketing, 14994 employees are trained at job, followed by 14148 employees trained at job for tours.

Table 3.10: Total Employees in March 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function Domain</th>
<th>Formally Trained</th>
<th>Trained at Job</th>
<th>Untrained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>10413</td>
<td>7369</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticketing</td>
<td>13213</td>
<td>14994</td>
<td>757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour</td>
<td>15778</td>
<td>14148</td>
<td>954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39404</td>
<td>36511</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. (2012)

b) Incidence of Training in TAs

Under this section incidence of formal training of in travel agencies are being shown alongwith the incidence of training in tour operators and tourist transport operator. Mainly two functions of travel agencies have been undertaken to represent the incidence of formal training in travel agency, first is ticketing and another one is tour. The basic idea behind choosing only two functions of travel agency is that as per the report of Human Resource and Skill Requirements in the Tourism, Travel, Hospitality, and Trade sector ticketing is the function needs highest human resources among all function of travel agencies, followed by tour i.e. 25 % and 15 % respectively.
• **Ticketing: Incidence of Formal Training**

Table 3.11 cogently shows the incidents of formal training in ticketing of travel agencies, tour operators, adventure tour operators and tourist transport operator in percentage. Travel agency has the highest percentage of formally trained managers 78%, followed by 65% in tour operator and 62 % in tourist transport operator. Executives of tour operators are highly trained i.e. by 56%, followed by 48 % in travel agency and 14 % in tourist transport operator. Furthermore Tourist transport operator has the highest percentage of formally trained assistants 55%, followed by 35 % in tour operators and 34% in travel agency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Travel Agency</th>
<th>Tour Operator</th>
<th>Adventure Tour Operator</th>
<th>Tourist Transport Operator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executives</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistants</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. (2012)

• **Tours: Incidence of Formal Training**

Table 3.12 succinctly shows the incidents of formal training in tours of travel agencies, tour operators, adventure tour operators and tourist transport operator in percentage. Tourist transport operator at present has all trained managers (100%), followed by 79% in travel agency, and 71 % in tour operator. Executives of adventure tour operators are fully trained, followed by 55 % in travel agency and 47 % in tourist transport operator while tourist tour operator is having least trained executives i.e.185. Furthermore tour operators have the 31 % formally trained assistants followed by 25 % in travel agency. 55 % guide are formally trained in tour operators while 39 5 are trained in travel agencies. 1005 drivers are trained in tourist transport operator, followed
by 58% in travel agency and 43% in tour operator, while others are trained by 67% only in travel agency.

Table 3.12: Incidence of Formal Training (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Travel Agency</th>
<th>Tour Operator</th>
<th>Adventure Tour Operator</th>
<th>Tourist Transport Operator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executives</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistants</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guides</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. (2012)

Summary

This chapter has defined what is meant by “training culture” and explained how this culture contributes to build an effective organization through sustainable competitive advantage. Training culture is an environment that supports and encourages the collective discovery, sharing, and application of knowledge. A training culture can be developed through communication and leadership. Furthermore this chapter made an attempt to highlight the current training culture scenario in travel agencies, training requirements in travel agencies, and its educational background of key functional area followed by the need of trained employees for different departments of this business. The chapter ends with common challenges and pitfalls along the way and training level among HR in travel agencies.