Part - III

Conclusion
PART - III

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Conclusions

3.2 Recommendations
CONCLUSION

In this section, an attempt is made to match the inferences of my study with the objectives that had been taken up. In effect, it is the integration of the findings section.

Objectives:

(1) The Time Series Trend Analysis shows that, over the eight year period, 1985 to 1992 the growth rate in tourist population to Pondicherry as a Centre has been to the tune of 3.17 per cent.

(2) The Time Series Trend Analysis reveals that over the eight year period 1985 to 1992, the growth rate in number of beds has been 0.4 per cent for Pondicherry as a tourist centre.

(3) Tourism has been defined piecemeal by the hoteliers. It has been stated by some to be an exchange of culture. Some others have opined it to be development of infrastructure for people to visit places of interest and relax. To Others it is mere business to the hotel industry.
(4) The accommodation units as such do not have a separate promotion wing. The promotion of tourism is to a limited extent through arrangement of sightseeing facilities, often in collaboration with Pondicherry Tourism Development Corporation or one or two private guided tours. However, not many facilities exist other than good rooms and the essential services. Foreign tourists do not seem to enjoy separate or different facilities vis-a-vis the domestic tourists. In the advertisement copy itself, the units bring out a picture of Pondicherry to attract the tourists. Further, some of the units in order to attract more tourists and to extend their stay, often reduce the room rents. The promotion budget does not reveal specific patterns; it is on the line of "Affordable Method." Government policies on tourism do not seem to have made any impact.

(5) Certain jobs in accommodation sector have been found to be essential. This is true in case of front-office assistance and housekeeping jobs. However, though security related jobs exist, it has been found that many hoteliers expect the front-office staff to handle security also. The
decision-making level of employees is around 25 per cent of the total employee strength, with about 75 per cent going to the operational employees. The owners (known mostly as the General Manager) control, guide and execute the decisions. The decisional jobs, they definitely require some minimum qualification as against the no specification case for operational jobs.

(6) The majority of tourists who visit Pondicherry are the business tourists or the vacation tourists. Religious tourists constitute a small number. These tourists are mostly males, while most females accompany them. Most visitors are in the age range of 30 to 60 years. These tourists stay in Pondicherry averaging less than three days. Around 75 per cent of the tourists who visit Pondicherry are domestic tourists, the remaining being foreign tourists. The domestic tourists are mostly from Tamil Nadu and Kerala, though quite a number of tourists come from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh also. Pondicherry receives some religion spiritual tourists also, and most of them are from West Bengal. While tourists mostly have South Indian food followed by North Indian food, some also like to go for continental dishes.
Barring a few, no formal orientation or training is arranged for the employees in most of the units. However when the employees join they do not become permanent unless they have learnt the handling of the tasks. This researcher has referred this as on-the-job training. It has been further observed that training on specific fields of hotel or tourism management does not carry a preferential consideration for promotional purposes, an important finding is that there exists a high percentage of unconfirmed employees in each unit of the accommodation sector. This high percentage may be the cause for the lack in employer interest in formal training or even orientation training. The training period varies, depending on the nature of the job. For certain jobs it is between one month to six months, while some other job it varies from one month to three years. The training scenario in accommodation sector is a quiet one. Many units seek out experienced personnel. The evaluation of the employees for and during the stated period is mainly through two sources, the first being through the performance on the job and the next
being the feedback from the immediate supervisor. However a single evaluation parameter is not considered sufficient in this regard; more than one parameter is taken into account. The training is mostly in the institution where they are employed and at the venue of their job. The courses in which orientation training are sometimes given include customer services and a few topics of hotel management. The training are arranged with hotel craft institutes or professional bodies.

(8) The industry is seen to be affected by changes namely technological, knowledge explosion, product and service obsolescence, social, political and economical. These changes are seen to lead to both favourable and unfavourable environments. The technological environment is a blessing to the industry as new gadgets, both electrical and electronic, have helped the services ultimately leading to satisfaction. However there has also been a tendency among customers, to misuse such facilities. The spread of knowledge, due to the literacy drive, presence of library facilities, and local dailies, has brought in concepts such as
hygiene, interior decoration, improved service - quality, and the leisure and recreation. In turn it has also led to more of workers movements, more emphasis on rules and more insisting customers. Not quite strangely, product and service obsolescence have brought in more of personalised service recreation facilities, variety of foods, quality service and sleek with better performance and more of space availability furniture and materials. The resulting attitude changes in personal as well as in social life have added more confidence and outgoing-approaches to hotels. The new value system does sometimes create confusion and inabilities. The political change has brought favourable tourism atmosphere, backed by stable government and union territory status. However political interference and pressures are also seen. Economic change has brought to the hotel units the benefits of industry, of rupee convertibility (as a facility), of a growing middleclass with discretionary income, and of incentives. However the operational problems have largely remained the same, with inflation and taxation on the rise.
3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions as enumerated earlier, several suggestions offer themselves for consideration. While it is true, however, that water-tight compartmentation is not possible these have been grouped under five categories for convenience:

(a) Policy
(b) Marketing
(c) Training
(d) Personnel
(e) General

POLICY

* The growth rate of 3.17 per cent against the expected compounded all India growth rate of five per cent per annum indicates that there is a gap in the tourist inflow to Pondicherry. Efforts should be made to reduce the gap to begin with by conferring on Pondicherry the status of special tourism area thereby enabling the Union Territory to enhance the facilities to Pondicherry as a tourist centre.
The growth rate of number of beds being as low as 0.4 per cent indicates that availability of beds could be increased, occupancy rate being high in many hotels irrespective of season, hotels could be encouraged to avail the facilities of Tourism Finance Corporation for increasing the number of beds and their quality. The facility of interest subsidy (one per cent on loans advanced upto 75 lakhs for 4 - 5 star hotels and three per cent for all approved categories) can also be availed.

Pondicherry as a destination must attempt to offer more memorable events, historical or cultural. The tourist seems to go only to few places; mainly Ashram, Auroville, Museum and beach. Yoga conferences and yoga coaching classes are now being arranged by the Department of Tourism. More needs to be done.

As most of the tourists visiting Pondicherry are business or vacation types, government has to take initiative to boost religious or special interest tourists, honeymooners etc. The entertainment, infrastructure in general has to be improved.
The Government policies that affect the hotel industry need to be communicated timely so that hoteliers could take the benefits and help the accommodation sector. For instance, many hoteliers wanted to expand but were not aware of the government policy thereto.

Efforts have to be taken to reduce the political incidence of interferences and pressures on the hotel industry. This alone will give the right direction.

Finally the present concept of developing tourist circuits (some 15 circuits) could also be extended to Pondicherry by including Pondicherry among one of the circuits. Further circuits within Pondicherry should also be taken up.

To cope with localised inflation, government could have some ceiling or notified prices at which the daily inputs could be supplied to registered hotels.

As taxation tends to demotivate it is necessary as suggested by Federation of Hotel Restaurant Association of India, taxes should be rationalised for this sector. This would reduce the plethora
of taxes, reduce the incidence and provide incentives to enterprise.

* Study from time to time on periodical basis the effectiveness of government policies and therefore the impact.

* As most tourists are business tourists, efforts should also be taken to promote business centre in Pondicherry.

* Given the modern positive outlook of Aurobindo institutions, schemes to promote female tourists could also be worked out.

* Effort should be made to make the stay for longer than three days, economic benefits will definitely accrue.

* Only 25 per cent of foreign tourists visit Pondicherry, this indicates that tie-ups with higher foreign rating cities and especially on lines of accommodation is required to bring more of foreigners.

* Government must help the hoteliers with loans and facilities to modernise the gadgets, equipments and communication devices.
As tourism is a multiproduct, marketing for this industry has to be shifted from demographic segmentation to consumer-benefit. This is because tourism products cater to different demographic groups simultaneously.

Promotion for foreign tourist has to be encouraged by the government by giving special facilities. This could be controlled by department of tourism. For example, it could seek some deposit from hoteliers. This deposit could be used to compensate the dissatisfied tourists.

Promotion of each hotel units have to be done on the basis of some unique selling proposition instead of simply one more among hotels offering rooms and services.

Hoteliers should not only promote their units but Pondicherry too, so as to increase the overall occupancy rate, as is done by public sector bank.

The government has to gear the tourism related activities in such a manner that the hoteliers
could perceive how tourism is going to make a difference. This in turn will encourage investment in private sector towards the supply side of tourism viz. accommodation sector.

* Travel agents should have better interaction and communication with accommodation sector to help the industry to grow.

* Proper co-ordination and sharing of information between hotel industry and the department of tourism (including Pondicherry Tourism and Transport Development Corporation) is required so that hoteliers are aware (1) of the campaigns and (2) services that are offered by the governments.

* The accommodation sector in Pondicherry is in tune with the budget tourist approach of the government. This is a welcome sign, government must help the hoteliers to maintain hotel rates in keeping with the capabilities of budget tourists.

* The hoteliers should be given forms on consumer satisfaction (structured by the Department of Tourism, stamped and self addressed)
to be distributed to the tourists in their accommodation units. This would help the department of tourism to keep a record of performance level in the hotels in handling tourists.

* Facilities and attractions to cater to different age groups than the high percentage elderly category.

* Promotion in other parts of India should be increased, this will help more tourists to visit Pondicherry. The northern part and the western part need to be touched by promotion campaign.

* Hygiene, food facility and availability for tourists who are late night arrivals are to be ensured in the hotels.

* Linkages between different hotels in the city will help the tourists with proper information and required availability this in turn will help the accommodation units to grow and serve the tourists.

* At the entry points effective point of contact promotion has to be established rather than
depending on rickshawpullers to undertake the publicity drive.

* Developing marketing wing to promote the units is very essential in the present world of professionals. The units will definitely gain over the long term period.

* As discretionary income is seen to be rising, efforts to tempt people to invest in tourism as an alternative should be developed.

* As many hotels do not help tourists in sight seeing at all, better co-ordination between sight seeing tour operators and hoteliers is required. After all it calls for a little bit of co-ordination and communication.
TRAINING

* Time is right to infuse professionalism in the job for healthy management practices.

* The training aspects have to be improved and formal training at inception and further on-going programs need to be undertaken to bring the best out of services. Due weightage could be given during promotion in case the candidate possesses the training in tourism and hotel management. This will encourage others to gain formal training and professional education.

* It is necessary that on-the-job training should also be formalised instead of being allowed to be haphazardous. This is necessary because it will help upward mobility among the employees and that too with ensured quality and standard.

* If training time and duration for each job could be standardised, then time and money could be optimally spent on training for personnel.
It could be explored whether hotel management or tourism related qualification should be made compulsory for decisional level employees. This could give a boost to tourism as a whole.

It has been argued that low motivation and lack of commitment in the industry goes with the high incidence of non-confirmed employees. If the converse could be established then this has to be changed.

Some of the jobs in the hotels need to be carefully delineated so that proper personnel structure and better service could be provided. For example, security service which is important for a tourist, cannot be left to the front office personnel with display notices in rooms stating that luggage care and security is the responsibility of tourists.

Some specification in qualification of operational level employee is also required to get the adequate training to improve the quality of personnel service.
GENERAL

* The tourists in general have to be also alerted on usage of modern and technological facilities and damage they would cause in case they abuse such facilities, including the cost implications. This has to be done by the government and as well as the hotel itself.

* The government has to help the hoteliers with required resources in phasing out their obsolete products and retraining the staff and thereby ensuring that the required product and service are made available.

* The social attitude of openness, leisure, revolutions must be encouraged so that the sector could reap the benefits of such attitudinal changes.

* Through proper communication the attitude conflicts have to be guarded against. The government has to work on this in a planned and sophisticated manner.
* Certain aspects of knowledge explosion discussed earlier could be harnessed to bring in more tourists and help the accommodation sector.

* The local hotel association should try to build linkage with Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Association of India. This would help them with information on the industry and the future trends.

* Non-room facilities should be highlighted by the hotel units. This gives the hotels edge in their promotion and enables them to grow as unique.
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