

HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES (A study with special reference to Agra)

Dr Suryakant D. Koshti and Ms. Sonal Gaurav Sharma

Sheth NKTT College of commerce and J T T College of Arts, Sheth
NKTT College, Thane,(W.)

Abstract : The study focus on the potential issues of tourism perceptible in and around Agra city and the area of turnaround needed for better tourism. Present study is explorative and conceptual in nature. Data have been collected from secondary sources such as research journals, books, newspaper articles expert's interviews and hoteliers' suggestions, surveys and websites were visited to reconnoiter problem area and existing issues of tourism industry. The scope of study presents the current issues of tourism industry in and around Agra city in terms of Human Resource practices. Different issues and challenges in terms of financial and operational practices are also discussed in this study. Findings expose that Agra tourism industry is suffering from voluminous challenges like 'Backpacker tourists', low management system, poor infrastructure and unsatisfied tourist. Pollution may have turned its white marble yellow as it takes what appears to be an irreparable tool on the world's most celebrated monument to love.

According to estimates from the Centre, the mausoleum and its integrated complex of structures raked in Rs 21.84 crore, mostly in entrance fees. However, the authorities spent only a fraction of the collection, Rs 2.85 crore, on maintenance and repairs of the Taj in the last fiscal. With the extremely polluted Yamuna making a giant loop to almost touching distance of the northern face, heritage experts have warned that much more will be needed to preserve the structure.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry has a wide scope which includes a varying number of services and processes. In the country like India, tourism plays an important role in economy because it generates earnings and employment both. According to World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) travel and tourism is an important economic activity in most countries around the world. Tourism directly generates employment in its own sector as well as via indirect and induced effects in the concern sectors of the economy. According to WTTC report, (2013) it is forecasted to account 30,631,000 direct jobs by 2023, an increase of 2.1% per annum which in turn generate huge employment opportunities in various other sectors also. The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP reflects the 'internal' spending on travel & Tourism. Total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP reflects the 'wider' spending on Travel & Tourism. This industry involves tangible and intangible components. The tangible elements include transport bodies like roadways, airways, waterways, railways and Premises; accommodation services like hotels, lodge, apartments, guests' house and related hospitality services like food and beverages, tours and operators, safety and security. The intangible elements include leisure, satisfaction, loyalty, experience, rest, culture, adventure, services delivered, willingness towards work, room amenities, and convenience. As per World Tourism Organization (WTO) tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To focus on the potential issues of hospitality perceptible in Agra city.
2. To identify the challenges for tourism in Agra city.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Present study is explorative and conceptual in nature. Data have been collected from secondary sources such as research journals, books, newspaper articles, expert's interviews and hoteliers' suggestions. Digital sources like e - reports and surveys, websites were visited to collect data to explore problem area and existing HR practices in the tourism industry.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

- i. This research study is basically based on secondary data which may not be reliable.
- ii. Preparation of a research study is a time consuming process.
- iii. Organization of data is itself a very tough task.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Keeping in view the objective of the study, Agra's socio- economic conditions in terms of tourism has been considered as study variable.

Agra is a part of the state of Uttar Pradesh in Northern India. Agra is one of the crucial tourist destinations attracting tourists from all over the world. Agra has been ruled by many great kings. Many Mughal emperors like Humayun, Akbar, Jehangir, and Shah Jahan. Agra is a hub of leather, plastic, steel and petha manufacturing industries. These industries have contributed much to the poor environmental state and ruthless infrastructural facilities of city. It is also one of the most important sources of economic development through tourist, accommodation, transport and commerce.

Agra has the honor of recording three monuments in The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage List; the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatehpur- Sikri. But, nowadays Agra is recognized by overpopulation, pollution, mucky and filthy roads, an excessive number of vehicles resulting in traffic jams, poverty, overcrowding, dis-engagement among management, corruption, lack of regard for rules and regulation, decline in socioeconomic sense, crimes and noisiness.

The tourists' experience in Agra is constrained by the lack of infrastructural facilities, unreliable, untrained guides and tour operators, local crimes such as chainor bag snatching, rapes and harassment by local people.

The reality is that there are severe water scarcities, underdeveloped electricity system, and dilapidated roads throughout the year. Only 50% of the tourists visit Fatehpur- Sikri, other monuments like Akbar Tomb, Imtáb-Ud-Dauld's receive few visitors. Unorganized tourists' circuit further decreases the number of days of stay of the tourists. It is recognized that the hotel industry is not doing as well as it should be due to lower occupancy rates, lower engagement among management, unmotivated and unsatisfied employees. The surveys say that the tourists are mainly dissatisfied with lack of public convenience, information center, and large number of hawkers, peddlers, photographers provide a major nuisance and are a primary reason for dissatisfaction with the tourist experiences.

Hence, Agra has no quality reasons for long stay. During the summer months it is a very common phenomenon to have international visitors' faints, heat exhaustion and sunstroke inside the Taj. Hence, being a UNESCO heritage site, strict regulation and management is required. Unavailability of drinking water facility is another drawback in the development of this destination. Though there are projects at city level for providing water supply in this region but still it is a major issue. Local people and guides start cashing and bothering tourists (especially foreign) which leaves a very wrong impression among tourists. Because of these touts and offensive behavior tourists generally don't spend much time at starting and ending points. Tourists fear ranges from terrorists attacks, religious minefields to isolated local behavior like rape and thieves.

Agra has very poor civic conditions with dirty roads, lanes and drains. This "puts off tourists" and discourages travel to monuments other than the Taj. The main road that leads to the Taj passes through very busy and dirty stretches in Agra. Further, roadways are filled with muck and piles of garbage. Bad traffic jams also spoil the mood.

FINDINGS

1. There is a marginal increase of domestic tourists to Agra from various states.
2. There is a marginal increase of international tourists to Agra from various countries.
3. Major portion of the people to visit Agra under domestic inflow category are from Delhi.
4. Major portion of the people to visit Agra under international inflow category are from USA.
5. Both domestic and international tourists spend most on the accommodation services.
6. Purpose of both the domestic and international tourists to travel Agra is for leisure and also to visit Taj Mahal- one of the Seven Wonders of the World.
7. The major employment provided under hotel industry is by F&B department.
8. Tourism inflow to Agra plays a vital role in the growth of Indian Economy.

CHALLENGES BEFORE AGRA CITY IN ORDER TO PROMOTE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Tourism industry is growing day by day in the world and India is sharing a major part of world tourism receipts and world tourism traffic and has proved successful in maintaining its place on world tourism map. Agra in Uttar Pradesh is contributing a lot towards Indian economy. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism industry will create about 40 million jobs for the people by 2019. Though India shares only 1.24 % of international tourist receipts and 0.59% of international tourist traffic but this contribution cannot be neglected. The major Challenges before Indian Tourism Industry are as follows:-

1. Non-availability of adequate infrastructure including adequate air seat capacity, accessibility to tourist destinations, accommodation and trained manpower in sufficient number.
2. Poor hygienic conditions and incidents of touting and harassment of tourists in some places are factors that contribute to poor visitor experience.
3. Lack of capital, Lack of Community participation and awareness, Lack of involvement from rural sector, Lack of concern for sustainability, Complex visa procedures, and Lack of good language translators are the other reasons which are serving as the constraints in the way of tourism.
4. Hotels of India are lacking behind in providing the hygienic hospitality facilities and room services including hygienic food to the tourist, as a result Indian hotels and other eating outlets are losing trust of foreign tourists.
5. Other major constraint in the development of tourism in Uttar Pradesh is the partial attitude of the government towards corporate and public hoteliers and other travel organizers.
6. Further these states are facing the problem of shortage of skilled and educated professionals, guides and drivers. They lack behind in understanding the language of foreign tourist.
7. Lack of appropriate accommodation facilities and lack of security measures is another challenge before tourism Industry.

In spite of having all potential for tourism, Agra city in India are lacking behind in gaining all benefits from this emerging segment. There is a need to promote these states as the new emerging value travel destinations abroad. India should call for the collective efforts of private sector, public sector, organized and unorganized organizations, local community and media to synergize their actions to promote these States as the prime tourist destination worldwide. Further there is a need to improve the infrastructure facilities including building up of new standardized hotels, Restaurants, Bus, coaches, low cost air carrier, rest rooms, and spa resort in order to provide high class facilities and amenities to the tourist who came from far off land to get some enjoyment. To encounter shortcomings, newly challenging and attractive points/places etc. should be developed which oblige the tourists to come to Agra.

More efforts should be endeavored to popularize densely the dignity of all other old monuments at Agra. It will generate more employment, infrastructure and social and financial up-liftment of agrites directly.

More number of budget hotels with better amenities along with well trained and well cultured guides should be made available to the tourists folks all along 24 hrs services in a descent and respectable ways.

Some arrangements should be made to develop Agra, as a meeting or a conference center for beaurocrates and for businessmen so that people from different parts of the country and even outside country visit for the purpose of meetings, seminars, conferences and stay for two to three days.

In present days, the tourists expects something more thrilling, adventurous, knowledgeable and memorable which Agra as a tourist spot does not cater completely. Importance of the Study Agra city in Uttar Pradesh have various opportunities for those who are searching for an employment, and want to get educate in such an environment where they can study in a very peaceful environment. These states are

offering various kinds of courses like hotel management, travel and tourism management, general management, disaster management and so on. These places provide an individual with an opportunity to explore and experience the tribal life and to understand their regional and cultural problems. These are full of every kind of heritage whether it is cultural, natural or historical and has lot of potential for tourism industry to grow.

CONCLUSION

Agra is the melting point of culture and heritage. Tourists come to see The Taj Mahal from different part of the world. But unfortunately, this city is suffering from economic slowdown during past couple of years. Agra is recognized by overpopulation, pollution, mucky and filthy roads, an excessive number of vehicles result in traffic jams, poverty, overcrowding, disengagement among management, corruption, lack of regard for rules and regulation, decline in socio-economic sense, crimes and noisiness.

REFERENCES

- 1)(n.d.). Retrieved 12, 2014, from [www.uptourism.com](http://www.uptourism.com/pdf/tourist_flow.pdf): http://www.uptourism.com/pdf/tourist_flow.pdf
- 2)Agra India (2008). Retrieved from Agra India.
- 3)Agra Development Authority (ADA). (n.d.). Retrieved 12, 2013, from www.ada.com.
- 4)Board, C. P. (2006). Air quality trends and action plan for control of air pollution from seventeen cities.
- 5)Castries, H. (2008). Promoting equal opportunities. Retrieved 12, 2013, from [www.axa.com](http://www.axa.com/en/responsibility/socialresponsibility/employees/promoting_equality_opportunities/): http://www.axa.com/en/responsibility/socialresponsibility/employees/promoting_equality_opportunities/
- 6)IANS. (2013, 9, 26). Tourist season begins but Agra hoteliers see no boom. Retrieved 12, 2014, from www.newsindianexpress.com: www.newindianexpress.com/lifestyle/travel/
- 7)Identification of Tourism Circuits across India, Interim Report, Uttar Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh (2012)
- 8)Indian Tourism Statistics. New Delhi: Government of India, Ministry of Tourism (2012)
- 9)Initiatives, H. I. (2012). Hotel Room Supply, Capital Investment and Manpower Requirement by 2021-India.
- 10)Khandwalla, P. N. (1992). Innovative corporate Turnarounds. Sage Publications.
- 11)Miriam Beard quotation retrieved from <http://www.where.ca/blog/travel-curiosities/20-awesome-travel-quotes-to-inspire-your-wanderlust/>
- 12)National Tourism Policy (2002). New Delhi: GOI, Ministry of Tourism.
- 13)Pandit, N. (2000). Some recommendations for improved research on corporate turnaround. *Management*, 25-37.
- 14)The Times of India (2012, 9, 15). Retrieved 10, 2013, from www.timesofindia.com: <http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-09-15/india/33862432-1-lakh-tourists-foreign-tourists-restaurants-association>
- 15)The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2013; Indian Economic Forum
- 16)Uttar Pradesh Tourism (2011). Luck now: Uttar Pradesh Government, Ministry of India.
- 17)"Why its' Ah! Taj for foreign tourists". (2010, 8,
- 18)World Travel and Tourism Council Economic Impact 2013 Report
- 19)www.agra.nic.in (2013). Retrieved from agra.nic.in.
- 20)www.isocarp.net/Data/case_studies/168.pdf. (n.d.). Retrieved 12, 2014, from www.isocarp.net.
- 21)World Tourism Organization (1990)