



HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

(A study with special reference to Agra)

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ABSTRACT

The study focuses on the potential problems with tourism that might be seen in and around the city of Agra and the areas that need to change for improved tourism. The current study is conceptual and exploratory in character. In order to identify the problem areas and current difficulties facing the tourism business, data were gathered from secondary sources such as research journals, books, newspaper articles, expert interviews, and hoteliers' comments. Websites were also consulted. The study's focus is on the existing human resource practices in the tourism sector in and around the city of Agra. This study also discusses many problems and difficulties with financial and operational procedures. Findings show that the Agra tourism business faces numerous problems, including "Backpacker tourists," a weak management system, subpar infrastructure, and dissatisfied visitors. Pollution may have given the world's most renowned monument to love a yellowish hue on top of its white marble, doing what seems to be irreparable damage. The mausoleum and its integrated complex of buildings are estimated to have brought in Rs 21.84 crore, primarily from entrance fees. However, in the most recent fiscal year, the authorities only allocated Rs 2.85 crore, or a small portion of the revenue, for Taj upkeep and repairs. Heritage experts have cautioned that much more will be required to maintain the edifice because of the very filthy Yamuna making a massive loop to almost touching distance of the northern face.

Key words: Tourism business, Taj, Heritage, Backpacker tourists.

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INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector has a broad reach and offers a variety of services and procedures. In a nation like India, tourism is significant to the economy since it creates both income and jobs. Travel

and tourism are significant drivers of the global economy, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). In addition to creating jobs directly in its own industry, tourism also has indirect and induced effects on other



economic sectors that are of concern. By 2023, there are expected to be 30,631,000 direct jobs, up 2.1% annually, according to the WTTC estimate from 2013. This is expected to lead to a significant growth in employment prospects across many other industries. The direct contribution of travel and tourism to GDP reflects 'internal' travel and tourism spending. The total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP indicates "wider" travel and tourism spending. Both tangible and intangible elements are present in this industry. The tangible elements include transportation infrastructure such as roads, airplanes, ships, railroads, and buildings; lodging options such as hotels, resorts, apartments, and visitors' homes; and accompanying hospitality services such as food and drink, tours and operators, safety and security. Leisure, loyalty, experience, rest, culture, adventure, services provided, willingness to work, room amenities, and convenience are some examples of intangible aspects. According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), tourism includes the actions of people who travel to and remain in locations outside of their normal environment for up to one year in a row for pleasure, business, and other reasons.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To draw attention to any potential problems with hospitality that might be felt in Agra.
2. To determine the difficulties facing Agra City's tourism.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study is conceptual and exploratory in character. Secondary sources used to assemble the data included books, media articles, research journals, expert interviews, and hoteliers' recommendations. To gather information about problem areas and current HR practices in the tourism business, online sources such e-reports and surveys, websites, and other digital resources were used.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

- i. The primary source of data for this research study is secondary data, which may not be trustworthy.
- ii. Writing a research study requires a lot of time.
- iii. Data organization is a very difficult endeavor in and of itself.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The socio-economic circumstances in Agra with regard to tourism have been taken into consideration as a study variable while keeping in mind the study's goal.

The northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh includes the city of Agra. One of the major tourist spots that draws visitors from all over the world is Agra. Many famous kings have ruled Agra. There were numerous Mughal monarchs, including Humayun, Akbar, Jehangir, and Shah Jahan. Manufacturing for the leather, plastic, steel, and petha sectors is concentrated in Agra. These industries have made significant contributions to the city's ruthless infrastructure and bad environmental condition. It is also one of the most significant sources of economic growth through tourism, lodging, transportation, and trade.

The Taj Mahal, the Agra Fort, and Fatehpur-Sikri are three of the sites that Agra has the privilege of having included on the UNESCO World Heritage List. But nowadays, Agra is characterized by overcrowding, pollution, filthy and unkempt roads, an excessive number of vehicles that causes traffic jams, poverty, crowded living conditions, management disengagement, corruption, disregard for laws and regulations, a decline in socioeconomic sense, crimes, and noise.

Lack of infrastructure, unreliable, inexperienced tour guides and operators, local crimes like chain or bag stealing, rapes, and harassment by locals all negatively affect tourists' experiences in Agra.

In actuality, there are year-round acute water shortages, inadequate energy infrastructure, and crumbling roads. Only 50%

of tourists go to Fatehpur-Sikri, but few people visit the Akbar Tomb and Imtab-Ud-Dauld's. The number of days that travelers stay on their circuit is further reduced by unorganized tourism. Recognized factors contributing to the hotel industry's poor performance include reduced occupancy rates, lower management engagement, and demotivated and dissatisfied staff. According to polls, lack of public conveniences, information centers, and a huge number of Hawkers, peddlers, and photographers are the top reasons why tourists are disappointed with their travel experiences.

The lack of quality makes Agra unsuitable for extended stays. International tourists fainting from heat exhaustion and sunstroke inside the Taj happen frequently during the summer. As a result, tight monitoring and supervision are needed at this UNESCO heritage site. Another issue with the development of this resort is the lack of facilities for drinking water. Even though there are city-level projects to provide water supplies in this area, the problem persists.

Tourists (especially foreign tourists) start to feel very uncomfortable when locals and tour guides start pestering them and advertising their services. Tourists typically don't spend much time at starting and ending sites due to these touts and rude behavior. Tourists dread everything from terrorist threats to minefields created by religion to criminal activity like rape and theft in remote areas.

Agra's streets, alleyways, and drains are filthy and in very bad shape. This "puts off tourists" and deters visitors from visiting monuments besides the Taj. The major road to the Taj passes through many crowded and unclean areas of Agra. In addition, there is a mountain of trash and muck on the roads. Bad traffic bottlenecks are another mood killer.

FINDINGS

1. The number of domestic visitors to Agra from different states has somewhat increased.

2. Travelers from different nations are coming to Agra in slightly greater numbers.
3. The majority of visitors to Agra who fall under the domestic inflow group are from Delhi.
4. Americans make up the majority of travelers to Agra who fall under the foreign influx category.
5. The majority of tourist spending is on lodging services, both domestically and internationally.
6. Both local and foreign visitors come to Agra for leisure and to see the Taj Mahal, one of the Seven Wonders of the World.
7. The F&B sector is where the majority of jobs in the hotel industry are found. 8. Agra's tourism industry is crucial to the expansion of the Indian economy.

CHALLENGES BEFORE AGRA CITY IN ORDER TO PROMOTE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

The global tourist business is expanding daily, and India contributes a sizable portion of global tourism earnings and traffic while also successfully retaining its position on the global tourism map. The Uttar Pradesh city of Agra makes significant economic contributions to India. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTTC) projects that by 2019, the tourism sector will be responsible for nearly 40 million new jobs worldwide. Even though India only contributes 1.24% of global tourism spending and 0.59% of global travel, this contribution cannot be disregarded. The following are the main obstacles facing the Indian tourism industry:-

1. The lack of suitable infrastructure, such as enough air seat capacity, traveler accessibility, lodging, and a sufficient supply of skilled labor.
2. Unsatisfactory visitor experiences can be attributed to unclean surroundings, incidences of hawking, and harassment of tourists in particular regions.

3. Other factors that are impeding tourism include a lack of funding, a lack of community involvement and awareness, a lack of rural sector involvement, a lack of concern for sustainability, complicated visa requirements, and a lack of qualified language interpreters.
4. Indian hotels and other eating establishments are losing the faith of international visitors as a result of their poor performance in providing clean hospitality facilities and room services, including hygienic food, to tourists.
5. The partial attitude of the government toward corporate and public hotels and other travel organizers is another significant barrier to the growth of tourism in Uttar Pradesh.
6. In addition, these states are having trouble finding qualified and trained experts, drivers, and guides. They are behind in terms of foreign visitor language comprehension.
7. The tourism industry faces additional difficulties due to inadequate lodging options and inadequate security measures.

Despite having enormous tourism potential, the Indian city of Agra is lagging behind in reaping the rewards of this growing market. These states must be marketed as the newest, most affordable international tourist destinations. In order to promote these States as the top tourism destinations in the globe, India should urge the corporate sector, governmental sector, organized and unorganized groups, local community, and media to coordinate their efforts. Additionally, there is a need to upgrade the infrastructure, which includes constructing new, standardized hotels, restaurants, buses, coaches, low-cost airlines, restrooms, and spa resorts to offer top-notch services and amenities to the tourists who traveled from far-off places to have fun. To

address these issues, new, intriguing, and compelling attractions that compel visitors to visit Agra should be created.

The dignity of all the other ancient sites in Agra should be promoted more widely. It will directly result in increased employment, improved infrastructure, and direct social and financial uplift for farmers. More affordable accommodations with better amenities, as well as guides who are well-educated and well-trained, should be made available to visitors in a decent and acceptable manner around-the-clock. Making arrangements is necessary to transform Agra into a hub for conferences and meetings for politicians and businesspeople, allowing visitors from all over the nation and even from abroad to come for meetings, seminars, and conferences and stay for two to three days.

Today's tourists need experiences that are more exhilarating, adventurous, educational, and unforgettable, which Agra as a tourist destination cannot fully provide. Vitality of the Study For individuals looking for work and wanting to further their education in a setting where they may do so peacefully, Agra city in Uttar Pradesh offers a variety of opportunities. A variety of courses, including those in hotel management, travel and tourism management, general management, disaster management, and more are available in these states. These locations give a person the chance to learn about and engage in tribal life while also understanding the regional and cultural issues that they face. These include a wealth of cultural, natural, and historical heritage and have great potential for the development of the tourism industry.

CONCLUSION

The fusion of legacy and culture occurs in Agra. Visitors to The Taj Mahal travel from all over the world to view it. But sadly, for the past few years, our city has seen an economic slowdown. Agra is known for its overpopulation, pollution, unclean and unkempt roads, excessive car traffic, poverty,



crowded living conditions, management disengagement, corruption, disregard for laws and regulations, decline in socioeconomic sense, crimes, and noise.

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