TS-002: Tourism Development: Products, Operations and Case Studies
Guess Paper-I

Q. Take any place of your choice and explain various factors you will consider while planning a tour of that particular place for a group of tourists.

Ans. Group trips can be the best or worst type of trip ever. They can become one of the most amazing times of our lives, where we bond with our travel companions and reminisce about the group trip for years to come.

Factors we will consider while planning a tour of that particular place for a group of tourists are,

- **HAVE A LEADER (OR TWO):** In an ideal world, you could organize a group trip as, well, a group. But realistically, it's best to appoint a group leader or two, even just to be the go-to person who knows how the planning is progressing and what needs to be done next. If having one person as a leader seems a bit much, you could also have different people in charge of different aspects of the group trip. For example, one person for accommodation, one for researching activities and things to do, etc. You can still discuss and agree on the final choices as a group, but it will mean that the work isn't all done by one person and that everything does actually get organized! Play to the strengths of your group members. If there's someone who loves planning then let them lead the way (but support them if they ask for help of course!) and if you're all indecisive, appoint a decision maker or have a method for making decisions. It's easier to sort all of this right at the beginning and not waste your time on vacation trying to figure out how to do things!
- **AGREE ON A BUDGET:** One of the stickiest points of group trip planning is often the budget because people can have very different ideas about how much money they like to spend when they're 1ravelling. A maximum budget for trip necessities like accommodation will mean there are no surprises for anyone when it comes to paying for the group trip! Of course, some experiences can be optional so group members can decide whether or not they want to participate, but make sure that's clear too.
- **BOOK FLIGHTS OR TRAVEL FIRST:** The price of flights or ground transport can drastically increase the closer the trip date gets, plus spaces can fill up leaving no room for a big group. When you're planning a group, trip make sure you book your travel early to get the best deals and make sure you have enough space for the whole

group. Check if there is a group rate that you can take advantage of if you're traveling by train or road transport.

- **CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION:** choosing where to stay when you're planning a group trip is a big decision and can make a huge difference to your travel experience. There's more to accommodation than hotels, and in fact, they're not necessarily the best option for a group, unless you're after an all-inclusive resort experience. Staying in an apartment or house as a group gives you the chance to cook group meals and hang out together without cramming into one small hotel room! You can also stay in some amazing houses, and at more affordable prices than hotels.
- **HAVE A PLACE TO ORGANIZE PLANS AND TAKE PAYMENTS:** Having a central place where all group trip members can access the group trip plan is key to keeping everyone informed. A group travel planner will help to keep everyone on the same page with what's happening when and what they need to do.
- **PRE-PLAN SOME ACTIVITIES:** Take a look at the top things to do in your chosen destination and consider pre-planning some activities, especially if you're a large group. If there are any tours you want to do you may be able to get a group discount. Sometimes you absolutely have to book in advance if you have more than a certain number of people, and it would be a shame to miss out on something the group really wants to do because it wasn't booked soon enough!
- **SPLIT UP:** Just because you're traveling as a group doesn't mean you need to be glued together all the time. Everyone will have different ideas of must-see things or must-do activities.

Q. Assuming yourself as a Tourist Guide, how would you describe the Taj Mahal to a group of tourists?

Ans. We will describe Taj mahal as the ivory-white marble mausoleum on the south bank of the Yamuna river in the Indian city of Agra. It was commissioned in 1632 by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (reigned from 1628 to 1658) to house the tomb of his favourite wife, Mumtaz Mahal; it also houses the tomb of Shah Jahan himself. The tomb is the centrepiece of a 17-hectare (42-acre) complex, which includes a mosque and a guest house, and is set in formal gardens bounded on three sides by a crenelated wall. Construction of the mausoleum was essentially completed in 1643, but work continued on other phases of the project for another 10 years. The Taj Mahal complex is believed to have been completed in its entirety in 1653 at a cost estimated at the time to be around 32 million rupees, which in 2015 would be approximately 52. 8 billion rupees (U. S. $827 million). The construction project employed some 20,000 artisans under the guidance of a board of architects led by the court architect to the emperor, Ustad Ahmad Lahauri.

The Taj Mahal was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983 for being "the jewel of Muslim art in India and one of the universally admired masterpieces of the world's heritage". It is regarded by many as the best example of Mughal architecture and a symbol of India's rich history. The Taj Mahal attracts 7–8 million visitors a year and in 2007, it was declared a winner of the New7Wonders of the World (2000–2007) initiative. The Taj Mahal was commissioned by Shah Jahan in 1631, to be built in the memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal, who died on 17 June that year, giving birth to their 14th child, Gauhara Begum. Construction started in 1632, and the mausoleum was completed in 1643, while the surrounding buildings and garden were finished five years later. The imperial court documenting Shah Jahan's grief after the death of Mumtaz Mahal illustrates the love story held as the inspiration for the Taj Mahal.

Q. What are the functions of Tourism Division in Air India?

Ans. Tourism Division has a four-pronged work programme namely Tourism Promotion, Congresses and Conventions, Adventure Tourism and Corporate Communications. Over the / years the Division has played a pivotal role in promoting inbound tourist traffic to India. To I facilitate working the Division has four main sections:

- Tourism
- Public Relations
- Mountaineering and Trekking, and
- Congresses and Conventions.

All these sections aim at promoting tourism to India and thereby additional passengers on Air India. Each section concentrates on specific areas for functional purposes in-order to achieve its objectives. This division works in close liaison with the Government of India's Department / of Tourism and its Tourist Offices overseas to plan the marketing strategies for promoting i tourism to India.

Q. List out some of the factors which SITA faced on its way to success.

Ans. The road to success for SITA has not been a smooth one. There have been challenges and new ones are always coming. The success of the company depends on how best it is capable of tackling them.

General Competition: A large number of agencies are operating in this area which offer a competition to the services of the company.

Threat of Discounting: The threats of this nature can be expected from the smaller agencies working. Low over heads. Sometimes bigger agencies also resort to this tactic. only way out is to provide superior services.

Threats of GSAs: Of late, most of the airlines have been appointing their own General Sales Agents (GSAs). These GSAs get promotional fares which are very difficult to match by other travel agents. The company should evolve effective strategy to counter it.

International Competition: With the growing liberalisation a number of foreign companies are entering India. These companies have a better infrastructure and accessibility to inbound tourists. They may pose a serious challenge to the main profit-making departments of the company.

Unknown and Unforeseeable challenges

In such a competitive industry new challenges keep coming. There can be a number of challenges$ and problems. A few may be listed here.

- political uncertainties or upheavals
- changes in government policies
- general economy of the country
- international events affecting tourist movements etc.

Q. Mention the various steps involved in evolving marketing strategies.

Ans. Since some of the events or factors are beyond our control, what we need to do is change our & strategies and priorities in response to the environment.

The strategies that we have adopted are:

Tap or Develop New Markets: The visit of a tourism delegation led by the Minister of Tourism & Civil Aviation to the CIS countries in September and East African countries recently has generated new interest in India in these countries. The visit of tourism delegation led by Minister of State to Israel in June last year had created new enthusiasm in the market for selling tours to India. The recent delegation to Greece led by, the Director General of Tourism has created new operators in the market. More than us, the local tour operators are now taking initiative to promote India in the market. We do not mean to neglect the traditional markets of Europe. We have no plan to reduce our market activities in these traditional markets. The traditional markets of Europe like Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands, Switzerland, etc. are sophisticated and sensitive markets. A slight adverse report, a report even about minor cough and cold, scares away the tourists from these countries. 8 Besides, because of the strong ~consumer 'protection Act in these traditional markets, tour operators would not like to take risks if there is some disturbance in the destination. Hence, our strategy would be to keep looking after the traditional markets, because some of them still have potential to generate 50 - 100% growth in traffic in the next

3 years, but in the meantime, to develop new untapped markets also, so that in case of any crisis, either in the destination or in the market, the supply of tourists does not dry up completely from any particular market. The age-old advice, "Don't keep all your eggs in one basket", is a good advice for us.

Promote Super Summer Saver: Our strategy is to promote tourist traffic during the lean period of summer, so that we may have tourist season throughout the 12 months of the year. We have been promoting Super Summer Saver for the last 3 years, and the result has been quite encouraging. ' Of course, last year the scheme suffered set back, because of the non-operation of Air India flights to Europe from March t; the middle of May; but this year, the response from the tour berates hasbeen very encouraging. Some of them have already brought out their brochure for the coming summer. Our advertising campaign for the summer season is also almost ready.

Build Up the Tour Operators' Confidence in India: India was called a problematic destination by tour operators last year because they had to face court cases, and incur financial losses during the last Indian Airlines' pilots strike, and the series of events that we had in the beginning of last year (1993).

Strengthen Distribution Network: Our strategy is to have Indian tourism products in as many retail outlets as possible. We would also like to see the counter sales people sell India with confidence and pride. The European tour operators are also supporting us in this strategy, because there is quite a competition for the space in the sales racks of travel agencies for keeping brochures of various companies.

Encourage Charter Flights: The charter flights, especially from the markets which do not have direct flights to India or which have charter markets, have been helpful to us in bringing additional traffic from these markets.

Boost Up Image of India: This is a continuous process. Boosting up image of the country should be the first priority of the tourist office, because, if the image of the destination is positive, the destination gets sold easily in the market.

Consistency in our Efforts: We had excellent results in 1992. , We achieved a growth of 17. 5% in 1992; but in 1993 we had just a marginal or nil growth. What things of excellence that we? did in 1992 that our performance, rather our results, were so good in 1992? In my opinion, whatever we did in the market in 1992 were normal marketing activities but they produced good results because of the synergy received from all round atmosphere. If we could do in the past, we can certainly do in the future also. We need to be consistent in our approach and efforts.

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