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**TOURIST GUIDE, AN AMBASSADOR OF
DESTINATION – A CASE STUDY OF
KURUKSHETRA**

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Tourist Guide, an Ambassador of Destination – A Case Study of Kurukshetra

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Abstract – A Tourist guide is person who works as a mediator in between the host and guest culture. He is the one who provides information and knowledge about the country and destination to the visitors, whether it is cultural, historical and social information. He is fully aware of local infrastructure. He is the ombudsman (official) to a foreigner and is expected to be an ambassador of the country.



INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an ancient phenomenon. Limited to providing mere necessities of travel, food and shelter, for travelers, traveling for trade or pilgrimage, today it is one of the largest service industries of the world catering to a huge segment of business, pilgrimage or leisure travelers. Tourism has been enjoying a global boom and has emerged as an organized industry with spending of over \$ 3 Trillion on travel and tourism representing 10% of the world's GDP. Investment in the tourism and travel industry all over the world accounts for 7% of the total capital investment throughout the world. Travel and Tourism provide one job out of every nine in the organized sector and meet an annual payroll of \$515 billion.

In India, tourism has emerged as one of the highest net foreign exchange earner by way of invisible exports and has contributed foreign exchange earnings of Rs.4500 crores during 1994-95. The employment generated by tourism industry amounts to 15 million, comprising 6 million direct jobs and 9 million indirect jobs. The contribution of tourism to the net national income was of the order of 5%. There has been an encouraging growth in Indian Tourism, with the rate of growth of international tourist arrival being appreciably higher at 7% as against the worldwide average growth of 3.3%. (Kalpana, Kulkarni, Neelima Joshi, 2003) The number of tourist arrivals in the first half of the year 2008 is 2660337.

It has been that the individual and personal dimension of real tourism should extend to people making up their own minds about how they experience and understand the toured world. Of course, this could mean that tour guides in their current incarnation might be largely not required in authentic tourism. But it might be a worthwhile philosophical exercise to examine what tour guides do, see what that tells us

about the concepts of meaning-making and interpretation, and perhaps recast their role to find a place for them in authentic tourism. Finding a role for tour guides in authentic tourism calls for a rethink of what tour guides most commonly do. It also calls for a reconceptualisation of interpretation as a tour guide responsibility.

This paper will first outline the roles and responsibilities of tour guides as reflected in tourism literature. Next, it will explore conventional ideas about meaning making and interpretation as they relate to the work of tour guides. Finally, it will make some preliminary suggestions on how a reconceptualisation of interpretation might affect the role of tour guides, with special attention paid to unusual tour guides working in kurukshetra.

ROLE OF TOUR GUIDES

Conventionally, a Tourist guide is person who works as a mediator in between the host and guest culture. He is the one who provides information and knowledge about the country and destination to the visitors, whether it is cultural, historical and social information. He is fully aware of local infrastructure. He is the ombudsman (official) to a foreigner and is expected to be an ambassador of the country. Tourist guide in general sense is a part-time pursuit requiring no serious knowledge except a smattering of history.

A tourist is who is traveling to an unknown sight, does not know about the culture or environment. So its guide responsibility to make sure that his client should enjoy the visit in a carefree manner and should carry happy memories while returning home. It can only happen if guide is aware about the characteristics of tourist he is going to deal with, it includes knowledge of Demographic, Psychographic and Geographic characteristics of tourists and if it is

possible he should try to know about the psychological aspect of the tourist as well.

Not only this guide should be fully equipped with local information; the major sources of information are books, maps, pictorial records. He should know how to plan and prepare the tour; how they can undertake the tour in manner that tourist will feel satisfied. Guides should also be crystal clear with the facts and history associated with the destination. They should also be aware of the codes and conducts while traveling on places like monuments, historical buildings, wildlife and should also convey this to their tourist group to whom they are conducting.

Guides can be classified on the nature of services they are providing, on the basis of rates they are charging or on the sights and destinations they are covering with their respective customers i.e. tourists classification can be down as given basis;

City tour guide, who provides services, while guiding tourist through a town or city.

Monument & Museum guide, one who provides his services only to shows monuments and museums.

Mountain guide: Sherpas and pathfinders

Wildlife and sanctuary guides; fully equipped with the knowledge of flora and fauna of area that they are covering.

A tourist guide is the one who spends the maximum time with a tourist on a sight or on destinations. Now Indian government has also recognized the present scenario to be equipped with better human resources in the field of guiding and escort to the tourist and had taken some serious steps.

Lack of proper training for human resource is the biggest handicapped in the field of tourism; if we don't have a proper and systematic system for the training of tourist guides then it will result in ruin as far as tourism is concern. So the government has also initiated different institute around the country to provide proper knowledge and information to people who are interested in making their carriers in tourism sector as tourist guide.

Government has also classified guides, according to their skills and knowledge.

A Class tourist guide

B class tourist guides

C class tourist guides

The 'A' class is selected by the Department of tourism and those come under this category are the one most suites to requirements. On the other hand the 'C' and

'B' are subject to the approval of department of Archaeology India.

While selecting the 'A' class guide government select those candidates who have done their graduation and have a good command over the history and should be equipped with as many foreign languages one can. Candidates after get selected has been send to three month training during this course they are made familiar with all the travel related aspects and also be provided thorough knowledge of traits of good guide. These candidates are also taken for sightseeing, monuments within the possible reach, and where it is not possible to approach because of lack of time or distance some paper works and slides have provided to sort out that particular tourist destination for tourist in future. After this a exam is held and by passing it they will be in the panel of guide and issued an identity card with license and certificate and they are ready to serve the tourist. After this a refresher course is also organized for these qualified tourists.

Whereas type 'B' and 'C' guides are appointed on a particular monument and allowed to work on particular limited area.

OBJECTIVES

To know the satisfaction of tourists, with the service provided by guide at kurukshetra.

To know what are the expectations of tourists about their guide.

To suggest some remedies for improvement.

REVIEW OF LITREATURE

In an exploratory study of guides entitled "The guided tour: a sociological approach". Holloway, J.C (1981) suggests that the guiding role is not yet institutionalized, and remains open to interpretation by guides and passengers alike. The role of guiding involves a number of subsidiary and sometimes conflicting sub-roles, of which the information-giving function is emphasized by guides themselves, in their drive for professional status. Guides are found to develop manipulative and dramatic skills to satisfy their passengers' quest for a unique touristic experience. The mediation of the guide as "culture-broker" eases and may make more meaningful the contrived and artificial relationship between tourists and their hosts. This study was based on data derived from research combining observation and extended interviews, the relationship between guides, drivers, and their passengers had examined.

Abraham Pizam and Gang-Hong Jeong(1996) also carried out similar type of study entitled" Cross-cultural tourist behavior-Perception of Korean Tourist Guides, in this study they tried to know the fact that tourist perceived to behave alike regardless of their nationality. Or dose nationality makes an effect on

their behavior. The very outcome of this study was that nationality cultures have a strong moderating effect on tourist behavior than 'touristic cultures' This study was helped by Korean tourist guides who had present their perceptions based on their observations done American Japanese and Korean tourists.

Erik H. COHEN (2001) stated in his study entitled "A New Paradigm in Guiding; The *Madrach* as a Role Model" that role model guides encountered in the counselors of Israel Experience youth study tours, contrast traditional concepts of pathfinder and mentor. This model type is proposed as more appropriate for tours providing informal education and quest for identity. Not drawing authority from official recognition but from a personal guide-tourist relationship, *madrachs* rated characteristics essential to guides leading these trips. A multi-dimensional analysis uncovered the structure of these characteristics to create a structure of an "excellent" Israel Experience *madrach*. This structural analysis confirms an earlier typology and helps to uncover another kind of approach towards youth guiding.

Ian McDonnell (2001), "The role of tourist guide in transforming cultural understanding", in this paper an attempt has been made to show an important aspect of tour guide's role is to facilitate cultural understanding of the host culture by visitor.

Jonathon Howard, Rik Thwaites and Brenda Smith (2001) INVESTIGATING THE ROLES OF THE INDIGENOUS, this paper extends the current research on the role for Particular niches markets by investigating the roles of indigenous interpretive guides at Mutawinji National Park. Like other studies of particular niche markets, such as those on nature tour guides, we found it necessary to include an additional role that focuses on nature of Aboriginal culture. In particular, communicating the Contemporary nature of that society and ensuring that this culture is sustained through careful controlling the dissemination of Knowledge and site access.

John AP, Kevin K. F. Wong (2001) in their study named. " Case Study on Tour Guiding: Professionalism, Issues and Problems" they identified that Tour guides are one of the key front-line players in the tourism industry. Through their knowledge and interpretation of a destination's attractions and culture, and their communication and service skills, they have the ability to transform the tourists' visit from a tour into an experience. The role and duties may not be that glamorous as the profession, in many countries, lacks a well-defined career path and their incomes are reliant on a variety of income sources. This study examines the nature of tour guiding in Hong Kong, assessing the existing level of professional service standards, and identifying issues and challenges facing the profession in the 21st century.

In his study "Application of importance-performance model in tour guides' performance: evidence from Mainland Chinese outbound visitors in Hong Kong" Hanqin Q. Zhang (2003) in this study he assessed the performance of Hong Kong's tour guides as perceived by mainland Chinese outbound visitors by using the importance-performance analysis (IPA) model,. Twenty relevant tour guide service quality attributes are identified. The results of IPA illustrate that Hong Kong's tour guides performed well in 11 out of the 20 service quality attributes, in areas mainly related to their professional skills, reliability and language ability (*keep up the good work* quadrant), while the problem-solving ability of Hong Kong's tour guides fell into the *concentrate here* quadrant. The study illustrates that the IPA model as a useful managerial tool can be applied in identifying areas to which marketing resources should be allocated in order to improve and enhance the quality of tour guide services provided.

In his work "Ethics, Motivation and Rainforest Tourist guide Business Interest" Glenn F. Ross (2004) has sought to examine relationship among ethical values and work motivation as they may predict entrepreneurial interest tourist guide rainforest tour guiding business among a sample of secondary college graduates from a major Australian tourism community. This study proved an understanding of the predictive power of factors such as ethical values and motivators in the investigation of predisposition to tourism industry entrepreneurial activity among potential business operators. Both ethics and motivation have been revealed to play a role in the explanation of tourism-directed entrepreneurialism; the diligence ethics, together with interpersonal motivational factors, have been found to be associated with those who would declare various level interests in such a venture. It is notable that other ethical precepts, such as honesty and sociability, were not similarly found to be associated with this form of entrepreneurialism.

David Bowie & Jui Chi Chang "Tourist satisfaction: A view from a mixed international guided package tour (2005) identify the variables that are related to customer satisfaction during a guided package tour service encounter, including the role of the tour leader and the service performance by suppliers – itinerary arrangements, auxiliary support and service delivery. Data were gathered through participant observation during a mixed-nationality tour of Scandinavian destinations. Expectations, customer on-tour attitude and behavior and equity were identified as affecting customer satisfaction during the service encounter. Additionally, the consumption experience of hedonism and enjoyment (excitement factors) on the tour had a significant effect on customer satisfaction. Two primary sources of complaints were identified: first, the tour operator's itinerary planning and hotel selection (basic factors),

and second, the tour leader's competence (performance factor). The findings indicate that the tour leader is a significant determinant psychologically, spiritually and practically in influencing the success of the tour product. The result contributes to a better knowledge for the tour operator of tourism satisfaction in the international market for guided package.

In study paper entitled "Reconceptualising interpretation: Role of tourist guide in authentic tourism" Yvette Reisinger & Carol Steiner (2006), reconceptualise interpretation as one of the major tourist guide. This paper was based on Heidegger's philosophy of that tourist guides might largely superfluous in authentic tourism and special attenuation was paid to the guides of Israel.

"Tourist guides and sustainable development: the case of Hainan, China", Wei Hu (2007), This study addresses the gap by promoting an understanding of how tour guides can assist in moving tourism in a sustainable direction.

Kathleen Lingle Pond, in his study "The Professional Guide: Dynamics of Tour Guiding " aims to focus on providing guides with a foundation to the tourism and travel industry. It begins with a definition of the various kinds of guides and an overview of guiding throughout history and the world. He explores and examines the following areas: theories and techniques of learning; research and preparation of travel commentary; assessing and addressing the needs of travelers; leadership skills and group psychology; public speaking and presentation skills; logistics and ethics of lecturing in public places; techniques of interpreting art, architecture and the natural environment; logistics involved in walking and motorized tours; leading extended excursions; multilingual guiding; guiding the disabled; marketing and the business of guiding; professional etiquette and ethics of guiding; trends and the future of guiding.

In their research paper Peter Lugosi & Jeffery Bray (2008) titled "Tour guiding, organizational culture and learning: lessons from an entrepreneurial company" examines the impacts of organisational culture on the learning and development of tour guides. Drawing on a case study of a small entrepreneurial tour company, the paper considers the nature of the organization's culture, the tours it provides, including their narrative contents and the processes of organisational learning and socialisation. The paper suggests that the development of a learning culture within such an organisation may benefit from the provision of appropriate learning opportunities among the guides and facilitators who coordinate guide development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is composed of primary data. The primary data is collected through self-administered questionnaires from selected tourists visited kurukshetra. There were questionnaires developed

tourist & they were humbly requested to fill it to let us know about the main service attributes of tourist guide and also asked to tell whether they were satisfied with their services. Questionnaires were circulated and the conclusion was drawn on the basis of their response towards the question they had to reply while filling the questionnaires.

Tour guides' missions is to enhance visitors' travel experiences, contributing not only to the success of local tour businesses but also to the realization of development. Therefore, tourists' satisfaction with the guiding service can be a measure of the altitude to which their tour guides were helpful in assisting them to obtain rewarding experiences. Besides, their input can also be meaningful in Pointing out where problems may exist in the guiding process. Out of 50 Questionnaire 47 (94%) were returned. Slightly more males (53.19%) than females (46.80%). Most respondents were of the age group of above 50 (34.04%) and in the age group under18-30 years, there were 21.27 % respondent, visitors with age group of 31-40 able to score 25.53% & people of aged between 41-50 were on third place with an average of 19.14%. As far as their education is related only 19.14% were postgraduate, 17.02% were those who had done primary education only

Senior sec.and below was able to score 25.53% and 38.29% were graduates. Out of these respondents 52% believe that their guides have good knowledge of destination, 47 % believe that they were friendly&honest, 56% admire their punctuality.54 %believe that they need professional training, 34 %were of the the view that they were unaware of safety measures. Rest of the participant were with an answer of can't say.

W had taken eight different service attributes of guides to judge the satisfaction and experience of tourist. On the basis of percentage analysis we came to know that guides in kurukshetra were friendly, punctual and honest and quite aware about the destination. But another aspect of this study shows that need to be more trained and will needed to be equipped with knowledge of safety regulations.

Name: Age Pct

Male	25.	53.19%
Female	22	46.80%

Age Nc pct.

18 to 30 years	10	21.27%
31 to 40 years	12	25.53%
41 to 50 years	9	19.14%
Older than 50	16	34.04%

Nationality

Indian	n	pct	Foreigner: country
	47	100%	NIL

Educational level n pct

Primary	8	17.02 %
Senior sec.and below	12	25.53%
Graduate	18	38.29%
Post graduate	9	19.14%

Tourist’s evaluations of the guiding performance

Please provide following information about yourself by marking (/) appropriate option. N=47

	Strongly agree		Agree		uncertain		Disagree		strongly disagree	
	n	pct	n	pct	n	pct	n	pct	n	pct
Well trained	7	15%	7	15%	9	19%	15	28%	12	26%
Generate friendly atmosphere	12	26%	15	31%	10	21%	6	13%	4	9 %
Knowledge of destination	15	31%	10	21%	12	26%	7	14%	3	6%
Able to solve problems	7	14%	10	21%	13	28%	10	21%	7	14%
Inform visitors about safety regulations	6	13%	8	17%	12	26%	15	31%	6	13%
Punctual	12	26%	14	30%	10	21%	6	13%	5	11%
Honest and trustworthy	10	21%	12	26%	10	21%	8	17%	7	14%

FINDINGS

No doubt that guides are serving tourist perform their promised service very well, and with reach professional standards especially in terms of punctuality, knowledge of destination. Tour guides were able maintain and keep up their good quality service in these areas and were able to solve problems. But this study also finds out that, most of them are not fully trained; lack of education and unlicensed persons associated with this job also gives rise to flaws in this job. One other fact needed to be mentioned is that few guides are licensed by Harayana government and misery increases when we find that most of them are not ready to work as a guide for one reason or the other.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study reveal that Kurukshetra tour guides perform the promised service very well, and reach professional standards especially in terms of punctuality, knowledge of destination, and politeness.

They should maintain and keep up their good quality service. This study also walks out with a conclusion that managerial efforts should be concentrated on raising and improving tour guides’ ability to solve problems.

RECOMMODATIONS AND SUGGESSTIONS

Based on the findings, a set of recommendations was formulated. A key recommendation includes the establishment of a monitoring system to ensure high standards of service performance by the tour guides. While sharing kurukshetra experience, there will be some lessons to be learnt that we should put efforts to improve the status and service professionalism of tour guiding.

The government needs to take the initiative and plan strategies for the guides in kurukshetra region. Regular training should be given to the staff to keep them motivated and going. Regular assessment should be carried out in order to maintain the quality of service that is delivered. Proper recognition and some kind of incentive should be given to guides who are consistent with the high quality of customer care.

Thus, if this aspect is emphasized it can definitely give rich dividends, especially for a destination like kurukshetra where we have good infrastructure for tourism. If our age old principal of “ Atithi Devo Bhava” is revived and imbibed in all the people who are a part of the industry, Kurukshetra and Harayana can expect to be one of the leading destinations in the world in times to come.

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