
CHANGING SCENARIO OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

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Tourism is characterized by constant change and development, and trends indicate what will happen in the future. The UNWTO had identified, in the year 1998, trends that will influence global tourism until 2020. It has forecast that international tourism will continue to grow at the average annual rate of 4.3 percent a year until 2020, while receipts from international tourism will increase by 6.7 percent a year. The growth of the tourism industry will be rapid in the twenty first century, with one billion international arrivals by 2010 and 1.6 billion international arrivals annually by 2020. Some important points of the forecast are as follows:

- *There will be an increase in multiple, relatively short duration trips by travelers from industrialized countries.*
- *Foreign holidays will become popular amongst people from developing countries.*
- *Long - haul travel will grow slightly faster than intra-regional travel and will increase from 18 percent in 1995 to 24 percent.*
- *Tourists will be more discerning in their search for quality and value for money, which will influence their choice of destination.*
- *Environmental consciousness will increase and destination selection will be based on environmental quality.*

The UNWTO Tourism 2020 Vision predicts that by 2020, one out of every three trips will be a long haul journey and long haul travel which was 24 per cent of all international tourism in 1995, will increase to 32 percent by 2020. Europe has been forecast to remain the lead tourism region, followed by East Asia Pacific in second position by 2010. China will be the world's top destination by 2020 and will become the fourth most important tourist generating market.

Key Words : *Value for money, Culinary Tourism, Cruising, Cultural Tourism, Cyber Space.*

Introduction

Customers are always looking at services that give them a unique experience along with comfort and value for money. With the increasing competition, hotels are redefining the concept of hospitality and are going all out to make the customers stay an exciting, extra special and memorable event. They are pampering travelers with the latest and the best in services and products. Some important trends in tourism are as follows :

- The experienced traveler looks for rare, authentic vacations in remote and less well known places, as against luxurious five star vacations. The trend is towards ethnic and rural tourism.
- The emphasis is on rest, relaxation, health and wellness, especially for tourists with high income and less leisure time.

- Frequency of trips is increasing while travel distance and duration of stay is decreasing and neighboring country tourism is gaining popularity.
- Tourists have realized the need for something different and nature specific featuring premium holidays and select destinations.
- The high-end luxury traveler looks for spa facilities, luxury cruises, wild life safaris, premium holiday packages, wellness holidays, spiritual getaways etc.
- Travel agents and tour operators are focusing on FIT and students as the GIT market is quite saturated and on MICE and SMERFs.
- Incentive travel schemes to employees, distributors, and associates to recognize and award performance are on the rise. Incentive travel now includes exotic and unusual locales such as bush - dinners in Africa, a private jet tour over the cliffs of Grand Canyon, a helicopter ride over the Twelve Apostles in Melbourne, a music extravaganza at the Paradise Latin in Paris, etc.
- Tourist products include special interest products and niche products such as tours to the North Pole and Antarctica and musical cruises, exclusive spas and luxury yachts in Greek Waters, cultural tourism in Leh and Ladakh.

Emerging Types of Tourism

Many new forms and types of tourism are being developed to meet the needs of the growing tourist market. All forms of innovation in tourism are being promoted keeping specific needs of different tourism in mind such as culinary tourism, tea tourism, film tourism, highway tourism, etc. some of the emerging forms are discussed in this paper at length while the reader is just introduced to the other forms.

Cruise Tourism

Cruising to exotic locales in different parts of the world is no longer a niche activity limited to the upper echelons of society. The cruising culture has spread from Europe and the Americas to India. Cruise holidays on luxury floating resorts are gaining popularity as cruise operators are offering affordable packages for all budgets ranging from one day to a number of days for all age groups. The cruise tourism industry in the country is set to witness an over three-fold rise by 2010 as number of domestic and international passengers at Indian Ports is expected to increase to 600,000 a year by 2010 from the current, 1,80,000. Besides, number of domestic and international cruise liners entering Indian ports is also growing as the country is emerging as a major destination for cruise tourism, according to the study, 'Developing Ports as Cruise Tourism Hubs in India', by FICCI - Evalueserve.

Floating Luxury Hotel

Queen Elizabeth 2 the famous 70,000 tonne luxury ocean cruise liner which was launched in 1967 by the Queen of England, will soon become a luxury floating hotel.

Heritage Walks

This is a new trend which is eco-friendly and is gathering momentum in India. A two hour guided heritage walk to study the history which is reflected in the architecture, local way of living, craft, and culture of old parts of city untouched by urbanization is being popularized by the State of Gujarat at Ahmedabad and by other states too. Dwelling owners are being given financial assistance to preserve their properties.

Spiritual Tourism

Spiritual tourism is one of the most popular forms of tourism today. It is also called pilgrimage or religious tourism and involves travel to religious places for spiritual benefit. Many people today follow the path of their gurus, and find solace in their preaching and discourses. Tour operators are developing special packages for the spiritual tourists.

Space Tourism

One of the most advanced technological developments to be witnessed by humankind and one of the costliest types of tourism, is a trip to space which at present costs approximately USD 20 million. Space tourism as defined by the Space Tourism Society covers.

- Travel to the earth's orbit and sub-orbit;
- Travel to planets beyond the earth's orbit, for example to Mars;
- Earth-based simulated experiences at NASA centre and entertainment based experience
- Cyber space tourism experiences.

Under Water Tourism

The deep seas have always been an attraction for tourists whether it is fun and frolic on the beach, viewing the coral reefs on the seabed or marine creatures in ocean parks. The latest addition to deep sea attractions are restaurants and hotel submerged in the sea. The Hydropolis in Quingdao, China is a hotel under the Yellow Sea, which is scheduled to open sometime in 2009, and will offer rates comparable to five star hotels.

Perpetual Tourism

This is a term used to describe people who are perpetually on the move and stay in one country for a set period of time only so that they can avoid the legal obligations which arise out of permanent residency, for example, paying of income tax which is mandatory if a person stays for 122 days in one country. They adopt this lifestyle to be free from the laws that govern citizens of a country.

Virtual Tourism

This allows a tourist to visit a destination sitting comfortably in an arm chair, confined to the home. Virtual reality helps them to explore different regions of the world,

visit sites without having to book tickets, apply for visas or spend money, i.e., without having to physically travel.

Dark Tourism

Dark Tourism or black tourism is a pilgrimage to places where people gave up their life for the nation or where famous personalities breathed their last. The Cellular jail at Port Blair, the death site of St. Peter in Rome, the crash site where Princess Diana lost her life, the Nazi holocaust, World War II Sites, etc. are places people visit to pay homage to the departed souls or are curious to see.

Disaster Tourism

Tourism professionals are cashing in on destruction caused by various disasters to satisfy the curiosity of people to witness the extent of damage caused by various natural and human - made disasters by organizing guided bus tours to such sites. Prominent among such sites are Ground Zero at New York, where the twin towers of World Trade Centre were razed to the ground following the 9/11 terrorist attack, the sites of destruction which bore the brunt of the 2004 tsunami and Hurricane Katrina, etc.

Extreme Tourism

This involves travelling to risky places or participating in dangerous events. This is a niche tourism product for the physically fit, daredevil tourists who is aware of the risk, yet is inclined to experience what majority tourists would not dare to imagine and includes ice diving in the White Sea, trekking through dense jungles, etc.

Summary

The tourism scenario is changing at an unimaginable pace with more number of people taking to holiday breaks or moving away from their usual place of work to take up new assignments. The UNWTO has forecast a Tourism 2020 Vision which shows a growth in International Tourism and Environment Consciousness in the Tourist.

While the number of tourists is on the increase there is also stiff competition amongst the principal service providers, with each one trying to out do the other in terms of innovative offerings. In India, the growth of tourism has been rapid during 2001-2006 and a target of 10 million arrivals by 2011 is expected to be achieved. State Governments are drawing up tourism policies for increasing tourist activity in their state. The government is offering tax incentives to promote private investors to develop tourism and invest in hotels, amusement parks, convention centres, etc., which boost Tourism in the present era.

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