

A Study of Human Resource Management Practices with Reference to Employees' Recruitment and Selection in Travel Trade Enterprises in Garhwal Region of Uttarakhand

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Abstract

Tourism industry constitutes small and medium level enterprises at large which provides employment opportunities both directly and indirectly through its linkages with various other sectors of the economy. It employs people with skilled, semi-skilled and even professionally unskilled too. The combination of skills and characteristics hold an individual in much better instead than a formal academic qualification within lower paid roles, but as individuals look to progress up the management ladder a lack of education and understanding of academic and business principles are likely to considerably slow progression and promotional opportunities (Baum, 2006). Through this study the authors examine the employees and employers attitudes towards recruitment and selection of human resources at various positions in their enterprises. Structured questionnaires were collected from 70 employers or managers and 140 employees in order to study the employee recruitment and selection method in travel trade enterprises situated in Haridwar-Rishikesh-Dehradun in Uttarakhand. The findings suggest that these tourism and travel trade enterprises should consider about and follow the ethical globally accepted human resource management practices including recruitment and selection methods for employees in order to remain competitive in long run of business, which is missing in most of these enterprises.

In order to achieve the framed objectives, researcher has performed a wide review of the prevailing literature emphasizing on the human resource management in the tourism sector in general and focused to the travel businesses in the study area in particular. An attempt was made to prepare a profile of the tourism and travel

trade enterprises with the help of the primary data obtained from the empirical study carried out with the help of primary data sources including structured questionnaires, informal interviews and object observation methods. Further, the current research also incorporates the current practices of the human resource management adopted by these enterprises.

Keywords: Travel Trade Enterprise, Recruitment, Selection, Human Resource Management, Employees etc.

Introduction

Tourism industry provides employment to millions of people in India both directly and indirectly through its linkages with various other sectors of the economy. It employs people with skilled, semiskilled and even professionally unskilled too. Many roles in the travel sector require people with general sales and customer service skills and a positive disposition. This combination of skills and characteristics hold an individual in much better stead than a formal academic qualification within lower paid roles, but as individuals look to progress up the management ladder a lack of education and understanding of academic and business principles are likely to considerably slow progression and promotional opportunities (Baum, 2006).

Human resource plays a significant role in the development of any economy. No sector, including

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tourism and travel trade can flourish without adequate development of human resource. The management of Human Resource (HR) is crucial in the travel enterprises. Most of the larger enterprises within the sector have their own HR departments or are in contact with specialized HR consultancy responsible for recruitment and selection of employees through disciplinary procedures for the prospective enterprises. Human Resource Management is about taking a long-term view of the HR requirements of the business. HR recognizes the importance of individuals to business performance and usually rewards staff very well when employees as well as business are performing effectively. A competitive advantage can be gained through recruitment and selection of employees through considering proper procedure, usually offers staff greater flexibility, which encourages greater commitment from employees.

Schuler and Jackson (1987) reveal that the broad aspects of attracting, maintaining and developing the effective workforce are continuous process. Most of the small and medium tourism and travel trade enterprises are suffering with Human Resource (HR) issues. Recruitment and selection is one of the initial and most important practices of human resource management in an enterprise. Its improper practice can cause short term as well long term loss for the enterprise. It has also been observed that the recruitment and selection process also impact psychologically to the employees which directly affect the working efficiency in the enterprise. Employees selected through proper procedure or through multi level screening performs more seriously. The Human Resource Management (HRM) cycle outlines the various stages and task for HR departments and provides the basis for the different sections. The initial stage of the Human Resource Management (HRM) cycle is to attract the effective workforce through Human Resource (HR) planning, recruitment and selection steps.

Travel Trade in Study Area

Tourism activity in the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand, India is benefiting the community economically and socially since long times, especially in the major tourist destination regions and attractions more or less to the state completely. But its importance and potential have always been less valued, especially in the state Uttarakhand. After separation from the state, Uttar Pradesh, the new government has stepped sincerely to identify the potential

and significance towards contribution in economic, employment and social development of the state. The tourism has been given the status of industry by the Government of Uttarakhand, Department of Tourism vide its notification No 483/VI/2004-333 (Tourism) /2003 dated 17 July 2004.

Uttarakhand, especially Garhwal region enjoys 'tourism magnetism' par-excellence and has an inherited strength to attract almost all major interest groups of tourists ranging from pilgrimage, leisure, mountaineers, trekkers, wild life lovers, history, art and culture lovers. The domestic tourists visit Garhwal region not only for pilgrimage but also for other forms of tourism. Adventure tourism, eco-tourism, wildlife tourism, heritage tourism, rural tourism, and conference and convention tourism alongside pilgrimage tourism may perceivably pay long term dividends. For this travel agents play a major role. Planning a vacation or a business trip is a difficult and a time consuming task. Travelers therefore, seek the assistance of the travel agents. Travel agents make the best possible travel arrangements, in accordance with the traveler's preference, budget and other requirements, which can be done by the employee having wide knowledge and experience of resource and package management. Hence travel trade business is flourishing and has vast potential in Uttarakhand especially in Haridwar, Rishikesh and Dehradun.

There are more than two hundred travel agents and tour operators, engaged in travel trade business in Haridwar, Rishikesh and Dehradun in Garhwal region of the state. They provide tourism and travel packages to the tourists in these regions. There are around 140 registered Rafting companies in Uttarakhand, which contribute to promote Rafting business in Uttarakhand especially in river Ganga famous for white river rafting. Haridwar, Rishikesh and Dehradun are the gateway city for the tourists visiting Garhwal region of the state Uttarakhand. Continuously growing number of tourist's flow and variety of emerging tourism types have strengthened the opportunity for investors in the tourism business. Once the destination known only for seasonal religious tourism business has received new dimensions and established the icon position in the Indian tourism business.

Stakeholders in tourism business in the region are:

1. Travel Agency
2. Tour Operators

3. Inbound Tour Operator
4. Domestic Tour Operator
5. Adventure Tour Operator
6. Rafting Company
7. Transporter
8. Accommodation unit
9. Restaurants and Eateries (*Dhabas*)
10. Souvenir Shop

Literature Review

Tourism business intermediaries such as tour-operator, travel agent, transporter, tour-guide or similar other agents are overriding in shaping both access to, and the image of, local peoples and their cultures. They carry significant responsibility as gatekeepers of information and knowledge that shape tourist's expectations, attitudes and experiences (Sigala, 2008 and Budeanu, 2009). Tourism and travel trade enterprises have proven to be key stakeholders and employment provider as well (Carey et al., 1997; Forsyth, 1997 and Budeanu, 2009). The tourism sector consists of a multitude of small and medium sized, private-public owned and operated businesses, which have been felt difficult to co-ordinate and legislate (Cohen 1993; Saïd 1978; Mukul Guha, 1981; Clifford, 1987 and Bagri, 2003). It promises a new source of revenue for many countries (Kandampully, 1995). Its importance and scope has been recognized globally (Butler, 1993; Lea, 1993; Lanfant, et al., 1995; Bagri, 1999 and Bruner, 2004).

Services are essentially intangible experiences which are difficult for customers to evaluate the product prior to experience. As a result, most tourism services are heavily dependent on word-of-mouth recommendation (Murphy, 1985) especially for the business of the small and medium sized enterprises. The design of the tour package not only influences customers' tourism experience, but also affects the image of the destination and, ultimately, the tourism industry as a whole. So, the role of employees becomes more significant. According to the study by (Lattin, G.W, 1979 and Lanfant, 1980) the tour operators or travel agency are those intermediaries who can package even the most remote, unexplored or dangerous destination and describes that very few places are on the planet which have escaped from the curiosity of the tourist.

Choy (1995), states that the development of the tourism industry creates new employment opportunities. The quality labor force with dynamic management, responsive government and responsible society are three pillars of the tourism industry. Szivas and Riley (1999), argues that 'only competent and motivated employees can deliver high-quality service and achieve competitive advantage for their enterprises and tourist destinations. Features of employment in these conditions in terms of recruitment, training and professional status and, unsurprisingly, notes that many areas of tourism work typify weak internal labor market characteristics. Human resources are likely to be sources of competitive advantage and that human resource (HR) practices should therefore be central to the strategy (Laursen & Foss, 2003). Recruitment and selection are important aspects of Human Resource Management (HRM). Its poor practices can result in a range of negative impacts on the enterprise. Productivity and quality can be negatively affected by recruiting the wrongly skilled people. HR professionals spend a lot of time on recruitment and selection because getting the right people, in an industry that works through people, is a baseline fundamental. Recruitment and selection are an important part of managerial work and workplace life. To proponents of the quality-enhancing employment approach 'employee selection is an important issue. Investing in techniques and skills which improve the selection decision is essential for success of enterprise' (Barclay, 2001). Good recruitment and selection is based on an assessment of work values, personality, interpersonal skills and problem-solving ability (Redman and Mathews, 1998). Testing potential employees can be used to control 'type' and help mould enterprisaal culture (Storey, 1992). Various methods of recruitment and selections have been found in different sources of literatures. In human resource concept, recruitment and selection for new employee is sometimes referred to as 'sourcing', means using different sources viz. internal sourcing, external sourcing, third party sourcing, etc. Here the researchers have adopted the terminology viz. campus placement, advertisement, job portals and reference/recommendation for recruitment and selection which are common in practices especially in small and medium size enterprises in the study area.

Objectives of the Study

To evaluate the employment status in tourism and travel trade enterprises.

To evaluate and examine the ongoing Human resource management practices adopted by travel trade in terms of especially recruitment and selection of employees at various levels.

Hypothesis

H1: With the ever changing needs and expectations of tourists, present Human Resource Management practices especially recruitment and selection of the employees adopted by tourism and travel trade enterprise is not systematic.

Research Methodology

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. Secondary data were collected from Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB) and other reports. Primary data were collected through scheduled and structured questionnaires from 210 respondents which include 70 employers/ managers and 140 employees from travel trade enterprises of the study area i.e. Haridwar-Rishikesh-Dehradun in the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand. Out of available total number of tourism and travel trade enterprises of the study area forty employees from twenty enterprises of Haridwar, sixty employees from thirty enterprises of Rishikesh and forty employees from twenty enterprises of Dehradun were selected as sample for this study. Stratified random sampling technique was used for this. Recognizing the importance of human resource management in general and the recruitment and selection methods in particular the recorded data were analyzed using SPSS 17. Statistical techniques like Frequency, Percentage and Chi-Square Test has been used for the analysis. The questionnaires were assessed using a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 5= strongly agree to 1= strongly disagree.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

There are more than 200 travel trade enterprises present in the study area, including travel agencies, tour operators, transporters, rafting and trekking agencies etc. which are collectively referred as travel trade enterprises in the present study. The study reveals that the majority of the travel trade enterprises located in the study area is partnership companies followed by the sole proprietorship whereas mere 7.1% are Private Ltd. Companies. It is interesting to

note that most of the travel trade enterprises in Haridwar are sole proprietorships while most of those in Rishikesh are partnership. Only 20% of the enterprises have other branches. The travel trade enterprises have been classified as Travel Agent, Tour Operators, Transporters and Rafting Operators on the basis of their functioning, products and services provided by them. Further, the majority of these enterprises are small in size having number of employees ranging between 1 to 6 and an average annual turnover between Rs. 20-30 Lakh. As far as the source of finance used to establish the enterprises, self-finance followed by loan from banks were the major priority sources of finance. However, a small number of these enterprises have used these two sources together and a few have also taken assistance from the government financial schemes. The study has statistically proved that the sources of finance used by these travel trade enterprises vary along their type of business entity. Most of the travel agent opted self-finance as their source of finance while loan from the banks was the popular source of finance among the rafting operators.

Table 1: Place-wise Distribution of the Employees

Place of Interview	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Haridwar	40	28.6	28.6
Rishikesh	60	42.9	71.4
Dehradun	40	28.6	100.0
Total	140	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

A brief profile of the employees surveyed is displayed in the Table: 2. Out of the total 140 employees surveyed, 114 (81.4%) were male, while the remaining 26 (18.6%) were female. The majority of the employees 88 (62.9%) belonged to the age group of 21 to 30 years, followed by 40 (28.6%) from 31 to 40 years, 10 (7.1%) from age group more than 40 years and 2 (1.4%) from the age group below 20. In case of the educational level, 67 (47.9%) employees were intermediate (10+2), 60 (42.9%) were graduate whereas a mere 11 (7.99%) were post-graduate and 2 (1.4%) were matriculated. Further, half (70, 50%) of the employees associated with these travel trade enterprises was having diploma/ professional education in tourism. In case of the designation of the employees surveyed 10 (7.1%) were managers, 54 (38.6%) were tour executives, 24 (17.1%) were marketing executives, 35 (25%) were supervisors and 17 (12.1%) were helpers.

Table 2: Profile of the Employees

Factor	Frequency	Percentage	Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Gender			Diploma in Tourism		
Male	114	81.4	Yes	70	50.0
Female	26	18.6	No	70	50.0
Age in Years			Designation of Employee		
Less than 20	2	1.4	Manager	10	7.1
21-30	88	62.9	Tour Executive	54	38.6
31-40	40	28.6	M. Executive	24	17.1
More than 40	10	7.1	Supervisor	35	25.0
Education			Helpers	17	12.1
10 th	2	1.4	Diploma in Tourism		
10+2	67	47.9	Yes	70	50.0
Graduate	60	42.9	No	70	50.0
Post Graduate	11	7.9	Designation of Employee		
			Manager	10	7.1

Source: Primary Data

Table 3: Distribution of Employees in terms of Working Experience

Working Experience	Less than 2 years	2-5 years	5-10 years	More than 10 years
Total Job Experience	32 (22.9)	30 (21.4)	50 (35.7)	28 (20.0)
Experience at present company	59 (42.1)	34 (24.3)	39 (27.9)	8 (5.7)

Source: Primary Data. Figures in the brackets are the percentage of total sample (N=140)

Table 3, reveals that out of total 140 employees surveyed, 32(22.9%) were having a total working experience of Less than 2 years, 30(21.4%) of 2-5 years, 50(35.7%) of 5-10 years and 28 (20%) having total job experience of more than ten years. In case of the working experience of the employees at present company majority of the employees (59, 42.1%) were working at their present enterprise for less than 2 years followed by 39(27.9%) who were working at their present enterprise for five to ten years, 34 (24.3%) were for two to five years while merely 8(5.7%) were working at their present enterprise for more than ten years.

Sources of Recruitment and Selection Method

The data regarding the sources of recruitment and selection methods adapted by the travel trade enterprises were collected from both the employees and employers. The mentioned sources of recruitment/selection methods adopted were recorded in the questionnaires. It included

‘Campus Placement’, ‘Advertisement’, ‘Job Portals’ and ‘Reference/Recommendation’. The results of data collected from the employees are displayed in the following Table 4. Majority of the employees 90 (64.3%) were selected through ‘Reference/Recommendation’ of their acquaintances followed by 35 (25%) employees who were recruited through ‘Advertisement’ in the local newspaper, 11(7.9%) were recruited through ‘Job Portals’ whereas merely 4 (2.9%) were recruited through ‘Campus Placement’.

Table 4: Sources of Recruitment Adopted by Travel Trade Enterprises (Employees’ Perspective)

Recruitment Process	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Campus Placement	4	2.9	2.9
Advertisement	35	25.0	27.9
Job Portals	11	7.9	35.7
Reference/Recommendation	90	64.3	100.0
Total	140	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

Further, in order to know the relationship between the sources of recruitment adopted by the travel trade enterprises in the study area for the selection of employees at different level of management, cross tabulation of both the variables is performed and the relationship was tested using chi-square statistics (Table: 5). The data from the table suggests that out of total 10 managers 4 each were recruited through 'Advertisement' and 'Reference/Recommendation' while remaining 20% were recruited through 'Campus Placement' (10%) and 'Job Portals' (10%). In case of the tour executives, majority (31, 57.4%) out of total 54 tour executives surveyed were selected through 'Reference/Recommendation' of their acquaintances followed by

17 (31.5%) through 'Advertisement', 3 (5.6%) each through 'Campus Placement' and 'Job Portals'. In case of the marketing executives, again 18(75.0%) revealed 'Reference/Recommendation' as a source of their recruitment followed by 4 (16.7%) who were recruited through 'Advertisement' and 2 (8.3%) through 'Job Portals' while none of the marketing executive were selected using campus placement. Similarly, in case of the supervisors and helpers, the data reports that 'Reference/Recommendation' was the major source of recruitment followed by 'Advertisement' and 'Job Portals'. The insignificant value of chi square (11.43) proves that there is no significant difference in the recruitment process and the designation of the employee.

Table 5: Comparison of Sources of Recruitment adopted by Travel Trade Enterprises with the Designation of Employee (Employees' Perspective)

Recruitment Process	Designation of Employee					Total
	Manager	Tour Executive	M. Executive	Supervisor	Helpers	
Campus Placement	1 10.0%	3 5.6%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	4 2.9%
Advertisement	4 40.0%	17 31.5%	4 16.7%	7 20.0%	3 17.6%	35 25.0%
Job Portals	1 10.0%	3 5.6%	2 8.3%	3 8.6%	2 11.8%	11 7.9%
Reference/ Recommendation	4 40.0%	31 57.4%	18 75.0%	25 71.4%	12 70.6%	90 64.3%
Total	10 100.0%	54 100.0%	24 100.0%	35 100.0%	17 100.0%	140 100.0%
Chi-square=11.43 ^{NS} df=12						

Source: Primary Data

Analysis of the employers' responses regarding the sources of recruitment adopted by travel trade enterprises is depicted in the following Table 6. It shows that travel trade enterprises in the study area have used all the sources of recruitments shown in the table at a varied extent. But 'Reference' was the most preferred source used by 47.1%

of total 70 enterprises followed by 'Advertisement' which was used by 30.0% of the enterprises and 'Job portals' used by 20% enterprises while 'Campus Interview' was the least preferred source of recruitment which was used by merely 17.1% enterprises.

Table 6: Sources of Recruitment adopted by Travel Trade Enterprises (Employers' Perspective)

Recruitment process	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Campus Interview	12	17.1	58	82.9	70	100.0
Advertisement	21	30.0	49	70.0	70	100.0
Job portal	14	20.0	56	80.0	70	100.0
Reference	33	47.1	37	52.9	70	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Table 7 displays the comparison of sources of recruitment adopted by travel trade enterprises with the type of their business entity as per the responses provided by the employers'. It is apparent from the data that majority travel agent (50%), tour operators (45.5%) and transporters (53.3%) preferred 'Reference' as their main

source of recruitment while the majority of the rafting operators preferred 'Advertisement' as their main source of recruitment. The insignificant values of chi square statistics for the all the items related to recruitment process indicate that there is no significant difference between sources of recruitment adopted by travel trade enterprises and type of their business entity.

Table 7: Sources of Recruitment Adopted by Travel Trade Enterprises in terms of Different Types of Business Entity (Employers' Perspective)

Recruitment Process	Type of Business Entity				Total (N=70)	Chi-square
	Travel Agent (N=24)	Tour Operator (N=11)	Transporter (N=15)	Rafting Operator (N=20)		
Campus Interview	3 (12.5)	1 (9.1)	3 (20.0)	5 (25.0)	12 (17.1)	1.82 ^{NS}
Advertisement	9 (37.5)	2 (18.2)	1 (6.7)	9 (45.0)	21 (30.0)	7.40 ^{NS}
Job portal	3 (12.5)	2 (18.2)	5 (33.3)	4 (20.0)	14 (20.0)	2.53 ^{NS}
Reference	12 (50.0)	5 (45.5)	8 (53.3)	8 (40.0)	33 (47.1)	0.73 ^{NS}

Source: Primary Data. Figures in the brackets are percentage of respective N (Total number of samples)

Conclusion and Discussion

Human Resources Management is an important aspect of service industries. With the advancement in the field of information and communication technology and growing competition at the market place, to understand the need of potential tourists and deliver the services and products to suit their preferences has become a very professional task. In order to secure the satisfaction of tourists catered and to convert them as repeat clients trained manpower in the enterprise is a prerequisite for the success of the tourism industry. The present research was instigated with the objectives to investigate upon the issues related to the human resource management especially recruitment and selection methods of employees in small and medium tourism and travel trade enterprises in the study area. The research reveals that there is no significant difference in the recruitment and selection process and the designation of employees in the small and medium size tourism and travel trade enterprises. The small and medium enterprises hardly think about following the proper human resource management practices which is not only dangerous for sustaining the enterprises at long run but also for the employees at large to keep them sustained

in this sector as they will not achieve proper benefits by the organizations. It has also been observed that most of these enterprises are working as destination Management Company or ground handling agency for tourists coming in this region. Many of these enterprises are even not registered with any of the government agencies like Ministry of Tourism or others. So, there should be a compulsory guideline by government or leading tourism organizations which should be followed by each and every enterprises entering in the industry in order to brand the industry as well for creating a strong brand image of the state tourist destination image among the tourists.

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