



LTC (LEAVE TRAVEL CONCESSION) AS A MEANS TO PROMOTE TOURISM IN JHARKHAND

Gupta Sonia

Dept. of Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Mesra, Ranchi

Chatterjee Rajeshwari

Dept. of Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Mesra, Ranchi

Gupta Atul

Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition, Bhopal

ABSTRACT

Various perks are offered to the employees as incentives. LTC (Leave travel concession) is one of these perks provided to the Government employees of India, once in the block of four years. The employees along with their family members can visit a single destination in India. The two way travel fare is borne by the Government and the rest expenses are borne by the Employee. LTC as a means to promote tourism in Jharkhand would not only boost up domestic tourism, but also the state would be financially strong through tourism. Jharkhand with its vast natural resources has not able to utilize properly and is not able to attract tourists. In turn Jharkhand Government can look forward to generate revenue from tourism.

In this paper a survey was conducted of sample size of 128 Government employees in Ranchi. SPSS Version 11 was used for statistical analysis in this paper.

KEY WORDS: LTC, Jharkhand, tourists, Perks, Government Employees.

Introduction

Jharkhand as a state is known as a vast reservoir of natural resources in terms of forest areas as well as minerals. However, in spite of this immense potential, it has not been able to utilize them properly and is thus counted among the backward states in the country. The widespread unrest among the naxal community in recent times has further added to the problem. It thus puts a challenge before the state to provide good governance and to enable equitable growth and socio-economic progress. The region

is also unexplored by foreign as well Indian tourist. The level of tourism is very deficient here.

The leave travel concession is the perk, which is helpful especially for the middle class family to travel within and outside their hometown. It is a perk provided by the Indian Government to its employees once in a block of four years. The employee along with their family can travel to any single destination in India. The two way travel fare is borne by the Government and all other expenses are taken care by the Employee himself. Generally, it has a tendency to cover far distance destinations under the LTC scheme. In turn, LTC also boost up domestic tourism.

Research Objective

- * To find how LTC promotes tourism amongst Government employees in India.
- * To assess the role of Jharkhand government in promoting tourism using LTC.

Methodology

The sample for this study comprised of 125 Government employees selected on random basis from Ranchi city, the capital of Jharkhand. The questionnaire was prepared and distributed amongst these samples. The questionnaire probed into the areas which revealed availability of present LTC facilities to the Central as well as State government employees. The tourism details and availing of LTC facilities in the state was explored. The incomplete and improperly answered questionnaires were eliminated from the study. Finally the study was based on 98 usable samples. The required statistical tests were used to analyze data. SPSS version 11 was used for the purpose.

Review of Literature

Hunziker and Krapf, (1941), defined tourism as people who travel however and “the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents, insofar as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity.” In 1976, the Tourism Society of England’s definition was: “Tourism is the temporary, short-term movement of people to destination outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities during the stay at each destination (Conference on Tourism in Global Village, 2009). It includes

movements for all purposes.” In 1981, the International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism defined tourism in terms of particular activities selected by choice and undertaken outside the home.

According to Wahab (1971) tourism is a “system” that relates to the sociosphere and is a complex combination of interrelated industries and trades. A key element of a successful tourism industry is the ability to recognize and deal with change across a wide range of key factors and the way they interact. Key drivers of global change within the external environment can be classified as Economic, Political, Environmental, Technological, Demographic and Social (Dwyer, Edwards, Mistilis, Roman, Scott 2009). Tourism may be described variously because of its “close” relationships with other social sciences, including economics, politics, sociology, cultural anthropology, psychology and even law and statistics (Papadopoulos 1986).

The World Tourism Organization defines tourists as people who “travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than twenty-four (24) hours and not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited”.

Tourism seldom occurs in isolation. It competes for the use of scarce resources, such as land, water, labour, energy, and waste assimilation capacity, with other potential uses of those resources and even with uses that require that the resources not be consumed, such as nature preservation, or lightly used such as protected areas, both predominantly natural or built. While it is not possible to examine everything at the same time, even though one may be sympathetic to systems thinking (Farrell & Twining-Ward, 2004), pragmatism requires that attention is focused on a subset of reality. However, the manifestations of tourism likely vary with the form that it takes and the situations in which it occurs, making findings, of necessity, contingent (Wall & Mathieson, 2006).

Acknowledgement of the importance of the links between tourism and other activities leads to the conclusion that tourism should be seen as a tool for development and not as an end in itself (McCool & Moisey, 2001). The tourism helps in all round development of the region. It may be pertinent to ask whether and in what forms tourism might contribute to sustainable development. Tourism affects the economy of both hosts as well as destination country. Tourism is an ideal instrument of exporting

certain social and cultural models encompassing culture consciousness, reawakening, social renovation and preservation. Tourists not only bring money to a region, but they also carry along with them a strong visible life style, which have demonstrated effect on the host community. Tourism is an increasingly widespread and complex activity, which requires sophisticated management to realize its full potential as a positive and sustainable economic, environmental, social and cultural force. Such a perspective acknowledges that tourism is unlikely to be the sole user of resources and that a balance should be sought between tourism and other existing and potential activities. Elements of travel behaviour synthesized for individuals being modelled by (Hildebrand, 2004) included total daily activity (with and without travel), total daily trip tours and more splits. The research has shown that a categorical approach using lifestyle groups with unique activity and travel characteristic can be successfully combined within an activity-based framework.

Tourism emerged as the largest global industry of the 20th century and is projected to grow even faster in the 21st century (National Tourism Policy, 2002). Indian tourism is one of the most diverse products on the global scene. India has 26 world heritage sites. It is divided into 25 bio-geographic zones and has wide ranging eco tourism products. Apart from this India has a 6,000 km coastline and dozens of beaches. India's great ethnic diversity translates into a wide variety of cuisine and culture. India also has a large number of villages, plantations and adventure locations. India is home to a great variety of wildlife and its reserves are well known through out the world.

It also has one of the world's biggest railway systems opening possibilities for those interested in rail tourism. India also has excellent hospitals offering affordable medicare and traditional healthcare systems like Ayurveda. In addition to this India have numerous fairs and festivals, which are quite attractive to foreigners.

India has immense possibilities of growth in the tourism sector with vast cultural and religious heritage, varied natural attractions, but a comparatively small role in the world tourism scene. In India, Travel and tourism, as an industry, has been somewhat slower to take off than in many other places. However, with increasing worldwide interest in travel, and with the Government's encouragement of its activities, it is undergoing massive expansion and improvement. When seen in this light Jharkhand

also has immense possibilities for tourism as it is extremely rich in natural beauty, culture, traditional adventure spots and live mines.

A New Tourism Policy, which builds on the strength of the national Tourism Policy of 1982, but which envisages new initiatives towards making tourism the catalyst in employment generation, environmental regeneration, development of remote areas and development of women and other disadvantaged groups in the country, besides promoting social integration is, therefore, vital to our economy. It would lead to larger foreign exchange earnings and create conditions for more Foreign Direct Investment.

WTTC has named India along with China as one of the fastest growing tourism industries for the next 10 to 15 years. India at present ranks amongst the top 5 destinations from 167 countries and has projected India as one of the, 'emerging tourism markets' having potential of \$ 24 billion annual foreign exchange earnings through tourism by 2015(Conference on Tourism in India Challenge Ahead, 2008).

India is a huge market for tourism, both outbound and inbound. Apart from this India has a sizable domestic tourism industry which caters to around 37 crore internal travelers. The number of domestic tourists is expected to jump from 369 million to 430 million. As per an estimate of the WTTC the demand for Indian tourism is expected to grow at 8.8 per cent every year in the next decade.

India's tourism industry is set for massive growth. By 2010 the number of international air seats is expected to increase to 32 million from the present 12 million and domestic air seats from 24 million to 56 million.

The government has increased budgetary allocation for tourism and has also improved the approach to international marketing. The government has cut taxes on tourism and travel and has introduced a flexible policy on charters. The government is also disinvesting from some of its hotels.

The government has declared an open skies policy and has decided to privatize the New Delhi and Mumbai airports. It has also declared more airports as international airports. The Government has more focused approach for infrastructure development.

The government has Okayed private investment in airports to strengthen landings, parking, navigation etc. Tourism Department of India has worked out a scheme to encourage rail tourism by involving the private sector. The

Government has planned to exploit its 6,000 km coastline to develop cruise tourism. To encourage the construction of hotels Government has provided land and also providing land and also inking PPP (public-private) pacts.

The profile of NE region comprises of 8 States: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim & Tripura. It constitutes about 8% of India's land mass. It has about 4% of the country's population. To increase tourism in these states, Ministries of Tourism has formulated and launched a professionally prepared publicity programme on security for tourists. The possibilities of setting up of subsidiary of ITDC were incorporated in the North-east state. A dedicated airline for establishing connectivity within NE was considered. LTC norms were relaxed for Govt employees to visit NE states. In a major decision to boost tourism in the scenic north eastern region, the Centre has relaxed Leave Travel Concession (LTC) Rules for its employees permitting them to travel by air. The new rules will apply to employees irrespective of their grade or post and the order will be in operation for two years, sources in the Ministry of Personnel today said. Under the revised rules, Group A and B Central Government employees will be entitled to travel by air from their place of posting or nearest airport to a city in the north eastern region. Employees belonging to other categories will be entitled to travel by air to a city in the north eastern region from Guwahati or Kolkata. All Central Government servants would be allowed conversion of one block of Home Town LTC into LTC for destinations in the north eastern region, the order said. The Ministry said that data regarding the number of employees availing LTC to the north eastern region would be maintained. The decision will enable government servants in the junior grades to visit the northeastern region, which used to remain a distant dream for them because of high air travel costs and absence of official entitlement. (Access North East July1-15 2009) The recent success story of such idea was the relaxation of LTC rules for government employees to travel to North-East by air. About 4.5 lakh employees including their family members have traveled to NE region during the last one year giving impetus to tourism sector.

A "Forum" consisting of representatives of Ministries of Tourism (North East) and Civil Aviation, Public and Private stakeholders, tour operators etc. was established in the year 2006 for the formulation of State tourism circuits, Inter-State tourism circuits, Eco and Village tourism, Promotional events, Advocacy.

The Marketing Development Assistance Scheme (MDA), administered by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, provided financial support to approved tourism service providers, i.e. hoteliers, travel agents, tour operators, tourist transport operators, approved by the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India or by the State Tourism Department in the case of the North Eastern States (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura) for undertaking the following tourism promotional activities abroad like Sales-cum-study- tour, Participation in fairs/exhibitions Publicity through printed material.

The Chief Minister of Goa, Shri Manohar Parrikar, in 50th National Development Council Meeting held at New Delhi, 2002 stated that tourism forms the backbone of Goa's economy and there is the need to provide new vistas for tourism like Eco-tourism, Hinterland tourism and Heritage tourism to attract more tourists and at the same time to preserve the environment and also the unique character of Goa. It is also proposed to establish a Special Economic Zone with emphasis on IT and Tourism.

Haryana Government had liberalized the policy of leave travel. The Government has decided to give one month's salary to the State Government employees in a block of four years in lieu of LTC. The Chief Secretary states issued a letter in this regard, stating that the first block of four years for this will be applicable from 2008-11.

A chain of about 550 islands in the Bay of Bengal, the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago is clothed in thick rainforests and home to excellent beaches and coral reefs. Agriculture, forestry and government jobs have traditionally been the mainstay for the people of this centrally-administered territory that is closer to Thailand, Burma and Indonesia than the Indian mainland. In a related move the central government also extended its Leave Travel Concession (LTC) programme to a section of its employees, allowing them free air travel if they chose to holiday on the islands. For nearly two years now employees from the government-owned Steel Authority of India's units in Bhilai, Bokaro, Durgapur and Rourkela (small towns in central and eastern India) have constituted the bulk of the tourists visiting the islands.

Mr. Arun Kumar Singh, Secretary, Department of Tourism, Government of Jharkhand confirmed that in order to have a long-term impact on the travel and tourism industry in Jharkhand, the state government has accorded the tourism sector the 'industry' status.

Mr Singh mentioned that the tourism sector would now enjoy all the fiscal incentives as enjoyed by other industries. Apart from promoting tourism and showcasing the cultural heritage of the state, the main thrust would also be on creating new employment opportunities.

The Tourism Department of Jharkhand has promoted various tourism related activities within the State. To create awareness among potential tourists, attract investment in tourism sector and showcasing the tourism strength of the state, the department has organized and participated in various State/National/International level exhibitions, seminars, workshops, etc. from time to time. In light of above, the Tourism Department of Jharkhand also proposed to produce/procure the Corporate Gift Items like Golf Caps, ladies Golf Straw hats, Wallets Table Clock etc for official guests of the Department of Tourism, visiting Travel Writers, Journalists, VIPs, dignitaries, etc.

The Government of Jharkhand is also considering for its employees to avail the facility of LTC once in their career (Jharkhand Fitment Committee Report, 2008).

The department has set up 'Jharkhand Adventure Tourism Institute', a nodal state-level body to promote adventure sports by providing training to promote different kinds of water and aero sports. So far, 20 water bodies have been identified for adventure tourism. "For the first time in the country we are unveiling a concept called 'Mining Tourism' for which we have set up a Special Purpose Vehicle in association with Hindustan Copper. Tourists will be taken to the mining sites of Hindustan Copper and will be educated on mining activities and copper processing. We are also in talks with Central Coalfields. We believe that this new concept will become very popular among the tourists,' Mr.Singh added.

The state tourism department is also for the first time launching a dedicated force for tourists christened 'Paryatak Suraksha Mitra' which will involve ex-servicemen posted at 78 important tourist spots including railway stations, airports and bus stands. Local habitants will also be engaged to maintain the tourist spots in the state with the help of NGOs. Moreover, two villages in each district of the state will be taken up for tribal tourism. Mr Singh also mentioned about the engagement of the service of call centers for distress management. Any tourist can avail the facility of dialing a toll-free number in case of any emergencies.

Mr. Singh further added that the department is also inviting private investors by working on a comprehensive tourism development plan involving public and private sectors and will soon unveil an attractive incentive policy for private investors.

The tourism department also has grand plans for tourism promotion. It has roped in ad guru Prahlad Kakkar to direct a film showcasing the state's tourism products in five foreign and five regional languages.

Achieving competitive advantage in times of rapid change requires tourism stakeholders to have a clear understanding of the direction of change and its implications for business or destination management. Since tourism is essentially integrated with other sectors in the economy, tourism trends cannot be considered in isolation from key drivers that will shape the world of the future.

The necessity for special interest tours to conform to consumer interests and the existence of special interests, require that those in the travel industry conduct market segmentation, prior to designing travel itineraries, so as to have an understanding of the target market (Sheng,et.al, 2008).

Today's long haul travel requires destination information before they travel to a destination, and also while they are at the destination. The increasing complexity of the tourism industry and the increasing sophistication and diversity of travelers makes access to this information both more important and more difficult, especially for long haul destinations. Indeed there are substantial search costs for travelers to identify products in long haul destinations. More accessible information sources on a destination's facilities can reduce the substantial search costs that are incurred in the planning and organization of a long haul trip, and thereby facilitate market transactions in the destinations (Sheldon 1993).

The rules of LTC during the 6th pay Commission were revised where an employee for post in the grade of Rs.9000 and above are entitled to travel by J Class by air/AC First class by train, employees for the post in the grade from Rs. 6600 to Rs. 8400 are entitled to travel by Y Class air/AC First Class by train, an individual in the grade of Rs.4200 to Rs. 4800 is entitled to travel by AC II tier Class by train .A person in a post carrying grade pay of less than Rs. 4200 is entitled first class/AC III Chair Car by train.

To help the Employees meet the additional expenses during LTC govt. has framed a rule under 38-Aof CCS(leave) Rules, 1972 regarding

encashment of earned leave along with LTC while in service which says that Government servants are permitted to an cash earned leave up to 10 days at the time of availing Leave Travel. This will in turn be beneficial to the Employees.

Under Central Government Rules, a Government servant can draw advance in respect of the journey proposed to be performed under the Leave Travel Concession scheme by himself and/or by members of his family 60 days before the proposed date of the outward journey. He should however produce railway cash receipts within ten days of the drawls of the advance to the competent authority to show that he has actually utilized the amount to purchase the tickets. These orders are applicable to All India Service officers also, who are governed by the Central Rules.

Sponsored tours are special departures organized by groups, organizations or individuals who want to travel together. These tours are open to visitors to the Friendly Planet website, which is in business for over 25 years. Similarly, Travel ChaCha's Government Program is meant for the Government Employees of all levels from centre to grass root - centre, state, municipal, district etc. All those Government Employees who wish to travel under the scheme of Leave Travel Concession (LTC) / Leave Travel Allowance (LTA) by himself/herself or by members of his/her family covering comprehensive lists of tourist destinations in India and abroad depending on the selection of places under the scheme.

There is increasing competition in the tourism and hospitality industries - between destinations worldwide (between established markets and from new markets), between destinations domestically, and between firms within a destination. If the knowledge of our trends underpinning tourism development is great then greater is the capacity of destination managers and tourism operators to formulate strategies to achieve competitive advantage for their organizations.

The coming decade and a half will see major shifts in the leisure and tourism environment reflecting changing consumer values, political forces, environmental changes and the explosive growth of information and communication technology. Those destinations and individual operators that make decisions on the supply side that do not match changing customer needs will suffer the phenomenon of 'strategic drift' (Johnson & Scholes, 1997). Strategic drift occurs when an organization's strategy gradually moves away from addressing the forces in the external environment with

no clear direction. The challenge for tourism stakeholders in both private and public sectors is to account for these changes proactively to achieve and maintain competitive advantage for their organizations.

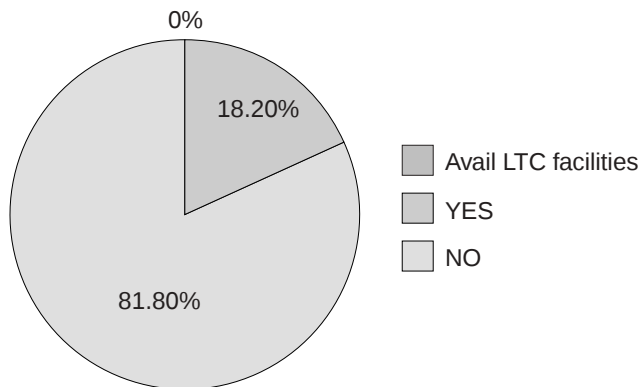
In these circumstances, research can play a major role in assisting strategy formulation by suppliers of the tourism product - the tourism destination and enterprise. Tourism stakeholders can strategically act as 'future makers' rather than 'future takers' (Ellyard, 2006). This requires tourism stakeholders to ask, not 'what will the future be', but rather 'what should the future be' and 'how can we meet that future'?

Observations & Discussions

To analyze the reliability of the survey data Cronbach Alpha test was used from spss version 11 package. The results of the score above indicate that the data is reliable. When the test was applied for this study, it resulted in a reliability score of 0.7621 which indicates the data is suitable for analysis.

A sample group of 98 Government employees working for Jharkhand Government, residing at Ranchi city were selected for this study. 56.1 % of them were aged between 26 to 45 years of age and 18.4% belonged to the age group of 46 to 55 years. 83.49% of the sample were male and remaining 16.51 % were female. Majority of the samples were educated upto graduation or post graduation level. 82% of them were Jharkhand Government employees whereas 18% served for Central Government.

Graph 1 : Employees availing LTC facilities



Insert graph 1 about here

Through the study it was found that 18.2% employees could avail LTC facilities however a majority of 81.8% got travel allowance against travel.

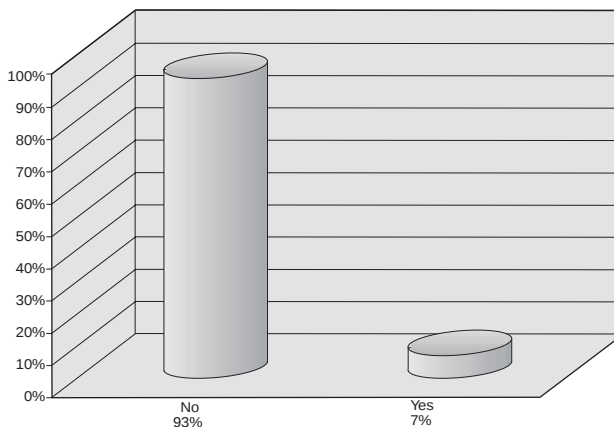
Govt. of India offers LTC as a perk to its employees. Once in a block of four years, the employees can visit a single destination in India along with his family. Two-way travel fare is borne by the government. Rest of the expenses is to be borne by the employee himself. Usually it is a tendency to cover far distance destinations under this scheme. 18.2 % samples of our study availed this facility.

The policy is not essentially available to all state government employees. However in the case of Jharkhand government, (previously coming under Bihar Government) the employees got only Rs 3000/- once in three years block against LTC claims. This policy was incorporated since 1996. Before that there was no such benefit offered to the employees. The scheme has also ceased to operate since the formation of the new state of Jharkhand.

It was seen through data collected that since the maximum limit for the LTC allowance was small thus as many as 36.0 % of employees visited nearby places within the state (Bihar). This factor resulted in increase of domestic tourism within the state. However after the formation of Jharkhand state even this factor no more existed.

Jharkhand Government can come up with policies like those of North East Government to promote tourism in the state. State Government can offer policies like providing additional LTC to the employees if they travel within the state. They can also offer the Indian govt. officials to travel

Graph 1 : Special Privileges to Travel within Jharkhand



Insert graph 2 about here.

through air if they visit Jharkhand. This will in turn encourage traffic flow towards Jharkhand. Presently 93% of the respondents said that they do not get any special privileges to travel within Jharkhand. The 7% of the samples who claimed for special privileges referred to the guest houses located at various destinations & staying there saved their cost for accommodation and in most cases also food.

76.3 % of the respondents also replied that their concern for not travelling within Jharkhand is the social security aspect. They do not feel protected due to naxalite problem and therefore they avoid travelling within the state. However 79 % of the employees felt that the facilities at the tourism destination are not sufficient and satisfactory for them to be encouraged to do so. Lack of development of infrastructure for accessing the tourist destination around Jharkhand also is cause for apprehension amongst tourists for travel here.

Central Government employees are allowed to travel to their hometown along with their families on three occasions in a block of four years and to any place in India on the fourth occasion. (Shankar.S. 2009) The railway staff, who number about 1.4 million, and their immediate families, enjoy free to- and- fro travel six times a year. In other words, they have six leave travel concession (LTC) benefits annually.

Jharkhand Government can think and plan on these issues to develop and promote tourism in the state. They can use the example of North East Government for the same.

The Government acknowledges the LTC-80 scheme of Air India in which the officers along with their families may choose to travel by any airline provided that the fare does not exceed the fares offered by Air India under LTC scheme. Ministry of Finance clarified that; officer along with their families may choose to travel. All the Central Government employees irrespective of the cadre can travel by Air to NE States under LTC Scheme.

Thus, if Jharkhand government comes up with some such kinds of scheme and policies then surely there can be a substantial growth in the development of Jharkhand Tourism.

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