

## **FICCI- YES Bank report suggests roadmap for capacity building in tourism industry**

**New Delhi, June 23, 2012:** A **FICCI and Yes Bank report on capacity building in tourism industry** reveals that while infrastructural development is essential for a robust and sustained growth of the travel and tourism industry, past experiences have shown that without simultaneous attention to human resource development, proper utilisation becomes an issue, which either leads to a premature depreciation of infrastructure or its under-utilisation.

The FICCI-YES Bank report suggests the following steps to ensure that the vision for the growth of manpower in tourism stays on the path of progressive development.

**Dynamic Policy Framework:** The policies and guidelines devised for HRD programmes have to be designed to be in sync with the market forces of demand and supply, as well as focus upon developing the base level skills (communication, etiquettes etc.) across all segments. The setting up of National Skills Development Corporation under which Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) have been established to supplement the vocational education system of the country and the SSCs of every industry sector have the active support of all major players of that sector, in order to be successful in its role.

**Action points for tour guides:** Government should make the tour guide associations a consultative partner. Not only will the measure provide the government with an insight into the guides' problems, but the authorities can also look at this a training dissemination platform.

Though capacity building programmes have picked up momentum in the country and are increasingly becoming streamlined and professional, but assessment is still proving to be a problem. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has instituted guidelines for training of regional level guides through the Indian Institute of Tourism and Management or their chapters or any other recognised institute in coordination with the concerned regional director.

**Action points for taxi drivers:** The safety of the tourists is in the hands of the taxi or coach drivers and the behavioural pattern of the drivers defines the comfort level of the tourist. Good training and capacity building will not only increase his business possibility, but also build up the brand India.

The owner of the taxi stands and the operators on ground needs to be roped in by the Department of Tourism in each state to train the ground drivers. There needs to be a clear demarcation between drivers accompanying the tourists for multistation trips and city or region specific drivers to prepare the training blueprints appropriately. The drivers who often face precarious situations like accidents and road blocks need to be trained in crisis management skills and first aid.

Workshops in communication skills need to be conducted by the state governments through the industrial chamber bodies, where even the owners need to be trained in best behaviour practices with guests.

**Action points for travel and tour operators:** Certification is a crucial aspect as it provides a degree of credibility of the travel and tour operators and confidence in their ability to offer the services as promised. Ministry of Tourism has a scheme of approving Travel Agents, Inbound Tour Operators, Adventure Tour Operators, Domestic Tour Operators and other sectors. However, the operators covered under this scheme should be reviewed periodically and initiatives should be undertaken to increase its reach. Another innovation that can be introduced is the concept of star category rating of Travel and Tour Operators where the rating parameter is developed keeping in mind the different components that make up a tourism product.

Apart from certification, training is a crucial component for capacity building of travel and tour operators and emphasis needs to be laid on: ability to handle the complaints of a diverse profile of customers; time management, people management and client handling and developing a flavour of the local demography and attractions.

**Action points for hotels and restaurants:** There is an urgent need to institutionalise capacity building in all segments of the hotel industry particularly in emerging options such as budget hotels and service apartments and even the restaurants and hotels present in the unorganised segment.

Recent studies have shown that the preference for accommodation is gradually shifting away from budget to the semi-luxury and luxury segment. In 2015, the share of classified category is estimated to increase to 62.7 per cent with budget category's share decreasing to approximately 47 per cent as compared to 58.7 per cent and 53 per cent in 2010 respectively. Despite the decline, there is an urgent need to augment the training infrastructure available to service the budget category hotels.

The IHMs and FCIs are primarily involved in catering to the organised sector workforce. At the same time, there are a large number of persons who are engaged in the unorganised sector such as small hotels, road side eating places, ticketing, travel agencies, drivers and *dhabas*. The tourists come in contact with various service providers therefore it is necessary that these are given certain inputs and certifications which can improve their behaviour and service levels.

**Public Private Partnership:** The private sector (especially industry) can bring in relevant experience for skill development which can help in developing industry relevant skill sets crucial for growth of the workforce of a particular sector. These private sector initiatives can be appropriately certified or monitored by the government and hence PPP is an important institutional innovation for capacity building in the tourism sector.

One such initiative has been setting up of the National Skill Development Corporation which aims at setting up of SSC. The SSCs will play a significant role in setting up and determining skills, competency standards and qualifications for various jobs, which can be used by companies to assess employee performance and skill development needs.

As a part of the private initiative, the NGO's and local travel associations, need to hold training sessions for the tour guides, drivers and tour operators, especially before the onset of the tourist sessions. A status report from the local authorities could be send to the Department of tourism in the state and likewise the Ministry of Tourism can be updated about the initiatives taken.

The concept of People Public Private Partnership (PPPP) or Public Social Private Partnership (PSPP) as a more inclusive form of development is gaining force, owing to the fact that a large portion of the workforce requiring capacity building falls in the unorganised sector. The PSPP model is an attempt to restore the social equity as the dispersive nature of the effects of incremental tourism tends to affect a wide part of the society.

Media Division