

The HR Challenges in Tourism Industry in India

*Praveen Kumar Srivastava**

Introduction

The World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC) have recently notified India as one of the fastest- growing tourist economies in the world as per the statistics provided by **World Travel and Tourism Council** (WTTC)¹ in the past 7 years contribution of Indian Tourism industry (Direct and Indirect Impact) in GDP has increased from Rs 958.17Billion to Rs 2190.24 Billion and employment in the industry has increased from 21.9Billion to 25.6Billion, The growth in Indian tourism industry both in terms of Tourist Arrival and foreign exchange earning is remarkable.

Indian Tourism registered a growth² over 104% over a period of 10 years from 1997 to 2007 in terms of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA). The estimated number of FTA in 2007 touched 5 million as compared with 4.45 million in 2006; moreover, the foreign exchange earning registered a growth of more than 300% over a period of 10 Years from USD 2.88 Billion in 1997 to USD 11.96 Billion in 2007.

The phenomenal growth in economy has lead to increase in disposable income, change in spending habits and demographic structure; increasing affordability due to numerous holiday packages and cheaper air fares, has resulted in a rapid growth in outbound tourist traffic; which grew at a rate of 25% over the last three years and has seen a growth of more than 160% over the last 10 years from 3.73 million to approx 10 million in 2007.

In order to create a niche in the field of travel and tourism; seeing the immense potential in the industry; Government of India came up with a new Tourism policy in 2002. The key elements of new tourism policy³ 2002 are;

- Position tourism as a major engine of economic growth
- Harness the direct and multiplier effects of tourism for employment generation, economic development and providing impetus to rural tourism.
- Focus on both international and domestic tourism
- Position India as a global brand to take advantage of the burgeoning global travel and trade and the vast untapped potential of India as a destination.
- Acknowledges the critical role of the private sector with government acting as a proactive facilitator and catalyst.
- Create and develop integrated tourism circuits based on India's unique heritage in partnership with States, private sector and other agencies.
- Ensure that the tourist to India gets physically invigorated, mentally rejuvenated, culturally enriched and spiritually elevated.

The Eleventh Five-year Plan⁴ outlines six key strategic objectives for Indian tourism sector.

1. Positioning and maintaining tourism development as a national priority activity;
2. Enhancing and maintaining the competitiveness of India as a tourist destination;
3. Improving India's existing tourism products further and expanding these to meet new market requirements;
4. Creation of world-class infrastructure;
5. Developing strategies for sustained and effective marketing plans and Programs;
6. Developing Human Resources and capacity Building of Service Providers

The future

An Annual Growth rate of 8.8% over the next decade has been predicted for Indian Tourism industry by the World Travel and Tourism council in its projection where it covered 174 countries, the projection shown by the council for India is the highest in the world with a target to reach a figure of 10 million tourist arrival by the year 2010. The Contribution in the Gross Domestic Product has been estimated to be up to Rs 8, 50,000 Crore and the industry will be employing 8.78% of the total employment which clearly indicates that there will be a huge demand of demand of skilled and trained manpower in the industry.

1. Tourism satellite Account for India, World Travel and Tourism Council.
2. Tourism Statistics at a glance, 2006: Report published by Ministry of Tourism Government of India
3. National Tourism Policy, 2002; Ministry of Tourism & Culture Department of Tourism Government of India

*Faculty-HR, ICAFI National College, Kanpur. 13/6, Parmat, Civil Lines, Kanpur. samaycalling@gmail.com

Though in the recent past India has bagged several prizes and accolades at international level in terms of achievements in the Tourism industry like being declared as “Numero uno” Destination and “favorite country of the year” for the year 2007 by the world's leading travel and tourism journal, "Conde Nast Traveller" along with WTA's Asia's Best destination for the year 2007 yet there are certain serious issues before the industry like poor infrastructure in terms of roads, airports, availability of good three stars hotels, heavy tax structure and lack of qualified and competent staff both at operational and managerial levels and a huge gap between supply side inputs and demand side requirements which are raising some serious questions over the sustainability of the industry.

The HR Perspective

The 1995 International Tourism labor market conference clearly stated that Tourism industry is facing an acute shortage of skilled manpower and there are many obstacles as far as development of Human Resources in tourism industry is concerned, the conference observed that the people working in tourism industry are highly uneducated, unmotivated, unskilled and unproductive; and these are due to the unattractive salaries and working hours. In India also the salaries paid by the tourism industry are comparatively far less than the salaries paid by the other industries like IT, call centers, retail, banking, insurance, finance, telecom, real estate etc also as tourism sector comprises mostly of small and medium sized enterprises the HR practices are not standardized, lack professional approach, vision, clear career path, secured & long term employment, growth opportunities, learning, development and quality of work life is resulting in high employee dissatisfaction and attrition moreover a poor perceived image of Hospitality & tourism sector and inadequate and inefficient training and education programs are also discouraging the competent people and talented lot to opt the industry as a career option which is resulting in less and poor supply of manpower.

The industry structure and manpower requirement: A statistical overview

According to A Market Pulse report published by Ministry of Tourism; Department of Tourism; Government of India on “Manpower requirement in Hotel Industry, Tour Operator and Travel Sector, Manpower Trained by different institutes and placement scenario”.

There are around 1.2 billion hotel rooms in India in both organized and unorganized sectors, out of which star category hotels accounts for merely 7%; 5 and 4 star and heritage hotel have a total of almost 36000 rooms; three, two and one star category hotels have a room capacity of 43000 and its been forecasted that by the year 2010 and 2020 there will be 2.9 million and 6.6 million hotel rooms respectively in the country; around 750,000 people are working in various hotels of organized and unorganized sectors and the hospitality industry will be requiring 3.5 million people by the year 2020.

On the other hand in travel trade business there are around 6000 travel trade companies in the country and the number is growing by 7.5-10% every year, employing almost 83,500 people with most of them performing the function of ticketing, tour operation, accounts and administration and it is forecasted that this sector will be employing around 242,000 by the year 2020, it is also forecasted that annual demand for trained manpower in hotels and restaurants is likely to touch 29,000 by the year 2010 and will be approximately 39000 by the year 2020, similarly the annual demand of trained manpower in travel and tour sector is likely to be 12735 and 20760 in 2010 and 2020 respectively .

The report says that around 16850 students are being trained in hotel management and around 17500 people pursue IATA/UFTA certified diploma courses, graduate and post graduate courses annually there are around 300 Government sponsored, university affiliated and privately owned institutes providing training and education to around 32000 people in hospitality and tourism industry.

One more interesting fact has been revealed by the report that nearly 40% of people who have undergone these courses are pursuing careers in other emerging service sectors like call centers or opting for alternative career option due to attractive salary packages and poor perceived image of hospitality sector; The report indicates that there will be a severe shortage of trained manpower in this industry by the year 2010 and a huge difference between the demand and supply of trained professionals.

The major challenge ahead before the Tourism industry in India to bridge this gap of demand and supply of skilled workforce through attracting and retaining the talented skill to serve the industry.

4. Draft: Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012), Planning Commission, Government of India

This paper is based on a study conducted in order to know the view points of industry stakeholders regarding quality, competence and availability of manpower in Indian Tourism industry with special reference to the problems of supply.

Research Methodology

Objective of study

1. To identify the reasons as to why the tourism industry lacks competent professionals and talented lot is not attracted towards the industry to opt it as a career.
2. To analysis the existing infrastructure and facilities available for tourism education and training in India and quality of skills provided by these institutions.
3. To offer some suggestions and solutions to improve the quality of skill supplied to the industry and also some implication to make this industry more attractive and lucrative for the talented lot based on the findings of the study.

Scope of the study

The study confines its analysis to the problems and prospects of human resources in the Indian tourism industry especially with the focus on supply of human resources, problems regarding attraction and retention of talented people in India. The study restricts itself to the Travel trade and ‘Tourism sector’ and does not include hospitality and other areas. Moreover the study analyses the Tourism management Courses being run by various universities and Institutes in India and does not include other diploma or certificate courses being offered by various institutes in tourism and hospitality.

Sample and Methodology

The relevant data for the study has been collected from both the primary and secondary sources; the primary data is collected through online, telephonic and field survey conducted on various stakeholders of the industry viz; educational institutions, students’ communities, travel agents/tour operators, employees of various approved travel agencies/ tour operators in India by the way of structured questionnaire, personal interviews, discussions and mails. Two sets of questionnaires were designed one for industry stakeholders and another for the students’ community pursuing tourism education in 10 various university and institutes in different parts of the country. There were a total of 446 Reponses for the questionnaire 1 and 200 responses were collected for questionnaire 2. The survey lasted for a period of two months in the months of November and December 2007. The questionnaire designed had both open ended and close ended questions. The observation was done using likert’s scale and the hypotheses were tested through tools z test, standard deviation, average and mean, table, charts and graphs.

The opinions were sought on three main statements given below

1. Indian tourism industry still lacks competent professionals to serve the industry.
2. Education and training institutions have not been able to churn out the professionals who can meet out the industry’s expectations.
3. Tourism industry has not been able to attract the talented lot to pursue it as a career.

Table 1.1.

Question	Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	Total
Indian tourism industry lack competent professionals to serve the industry.	90	71	27	6	0	194
Education and training institutions have not been able to churn out the professionals who can meet out the industry’s expectations.	48	24	27	30	6	135
The Tourism industry has not been able to attract the talented lot to pursue it as a career.	39	45	12	15	6	117
Total	177	140	66	51	12	446

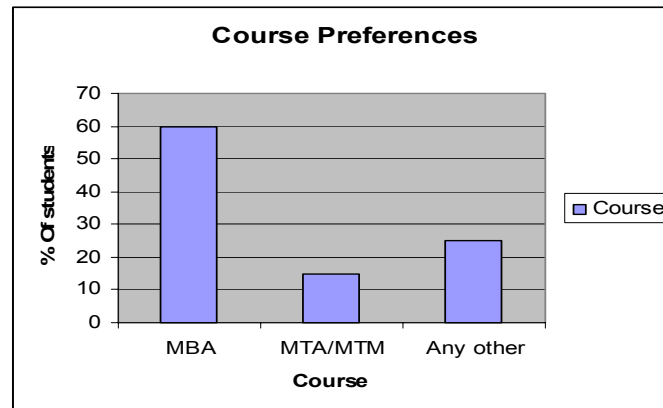


Fig1.1. The first course preference of the Students Pursuing Tourism Management In various colleges and universities.

Results and discussions

Major findings of the study are as follows:

- The respondents were strongly agree with the fact the tourism industry lacks competent people one of the major reason for the same was that the people who are joining the industry majority of them are simple graduates and under graduates not having any specific degree or diploma of tourism courses.
- The industry also does not have any specific recruitment policy regarding recruitment of specialized people in the industry.
- Most of the respondents were agree with the fact that the salary packages offered by the industry are quite less than the salaries offered by other industries in service sector also they were of the opinion that HRD practices in most of the organizations leaving some big organization are missing and there is no clear cut defined career path which is a big impediment as far as talented lot is concerned to take it as a career option.
- Respondents expressed their concern over the fact that still the industry is perceived as the industry of ticketing agents, guides and brokers.
- The young generation still opt MBA as their first course option when they go for management education which indicates that tourism courses have not been promoted well and lack saleability.
- Professors and faculties at universities and institutes also admitted that the student intake in the courses is of average and poor quality; quality students go for MBA and other courses also during the counseling sessions seats of MBA and Finance courses get filled first and the remaining lot then opt for tourism or other courses which clearly shows that the tourism industry which has tremendous employment potential is still not attracting good candidates.
- The courses taught at university seriously lack employability and are very much theoretical in nature; the course curricula have not been revised for long; Director of a reputed Travel Institute in New Delhi disclosed that the syllabus he designed for tourism studies in a very reputed University has not been revised for last 25 Years.
- Students pursuing tourism education were of the opinion that the course delivery lacks practical orientation; Guest faculties from the industry are available in big cities but when it comes down to other cities a rare industry interface is available also the course curriculum does not lay much emphasis on soft skills and personality development which is very essential to perform efficiently in the jobs.
- Students also opined that the courses offered are providing the basic level knowledge of tourism and other related discipline, the courses curriculum designed is hybrid in nature covering travel and tour operation, hospitality, airline and cargo management but it seriously lacks specialization in any specific field.
- A strange revealing came out of the survey in a university where some girls revealed that they are pursuing this course because of the family pressure as it is easy to get admission in this course and a management degree helps them in matrimonial purpose.
- In most of the universities and institutes there are only 2-3 faculties who are specialized in tourism education rest of the faculties come from other discipline also there are very few or no faculty

- development and training programs for competence building of the teachers teaching in tourism departments also there are very few facilities available for research and development. In a university in north India the tourism management course was launched 7 years back but still the university does not have any provision for faculties and scholars having degrees in Tourism management to pursue Ph.D. program.
- In some of the universities which are providing varieties of management courses there is no separate placement cell for tourism courses.
 - Indian Institute of Travel and Tourism management; the apex institution in Tourism Education in India has stopped offering Bachelor of Tourism Management course which again raises a serious concern over the future of tourism education in India finally affecting the supply.

Suggestions

On the basis of the analysis of the surveyed data and findings of the study, there are some suggestions which require immediate attention from the Policy makers, Industry people and educational institutions to raise the level of the industry to international standards and make it attractive as a career option for the young talented generation and professionals.

Standardized HR Practices

Sustainability tourism development requires a number of human resources development (HRD) strategies aimed at the tourism industry personnel, host community and the tourists, and underpinned by concepts and practices of sustainability. Sustainability based work culture, professional ethics, and operational practices are basic to sustainability in tourism;

The HR practices still lack professionalism in most of the organizations in the industry; less salaries, long working hours, improper career path, lack of professional growth, lack of training & development, quality of work life and improper work-life balance are the key issues in tourism industry; which need be addressed by the industry in order to reduce attrition; moreover a good manpower planning, job description & specification and proper career planning is required at all the level of the organizations.

The industry stakeholders need to ensure that there should be a strategic selection of the workforce taking in to the account the long term vision and growth, and the workforce employed must possess the required certification, degree or diploma in tourism or related discipline as may be the requirement in order to qualify to work in the industry; also people working at different level should be given regular and timely training inputs and refresher courses which will improve their skills and abilities according to the changing needs and requirements of industry.

Face lifting of the industry

The incredible India campaign run by the ministry of tourism Government of India which has been rated as the highest recall campaign world wide by Travel and Leisure has created a very positive image of India as a tourist destination in the minds of travelers; similarly the industry people and Government should take the initiative to promote travel, tourism and hospitality industry amongst the young talented generation and attract them to join the industry making it long term career oriented; there should be formed a regulatory authority comprising of members from Government and industry; which lays down the framework and minimum standards of industrial practices, educational and training requirement, to regulate and continuously monitor the industry and deals with all the issues pertaining to tourism; Associations of industrialists like FICCI and ASSOCHAM need to play a very important role in promotion of the industry.

Corporate Tie-ups

As it is one of the key element of the Tourism Policy of India 2002; “to acknowledges the critical role of the private sector with government acting as a proactive facilitator and catalyst”; the big corporate; have not yet entered into the tourism field fully; should be encouraged to enter into this field to manage and develop it professionally; moreover; these corporate need to be given facilities and support by the government to harness the tremendous potential of Tourism and Hospitality; many countries in the world despite of not having naturally gifted tourism potential have successfully established themselves as highly coveted destination of tourism through man made tourism similarly in India also with the help of these

corporate the tourism can be promoted and developed in those areas also which are not naturally gifted with the tourism potential, there are many such places in India which do not have any strong economy base not even agriculture; these places can always be developed with the perspective of man made tourism through private-public partnership which will not only help in employment generation at local level but also will strengthen the economy and quality of life of local people; the state government can also tie-up with these corporate to contribute in the development of tourism in their states by providing them subsidies and benefits when they are establishing any plant or industry therein , similarly multinational companies can also be encouraged to contribute in tourism development .

Improving the quality of Tourism education

The quality of the Courses in Tourism Management being offered by the universities and institutes need to be improved, the courses offered are very theoretical in nature and do not fulfill the industrial requirement, the curriculum needs to be revised and should be designed in consultation with the industry, the courseware should be revised frequently to meet the continuous changing requirement of the industry.

The Tourism Management Courses offered in the Universities, Government affiliated and private institutes are Hybrid in nature; 2 Years Full time Tourism management Program generally covers four areas Travel and Tourism, Hospitality, Airline and Cargo, undoubtedly the nature of tourism and related business requires understanding of these areas but still these courses lack specialization of any specific field and function, the course curriculum needs be deigned in a manner where the second year is fully devoted towards specialization in a specific field (Airline, Travel and Tour, Hospitality and Cargo) and function (Marketing, Human Resources, Finance and IT); also some subjects like Entrepreneurship, Business Research Methodology, Personality development & soft skills should be introduced in tourism management studies taking into account the changing business nature and process of the industry.

The impact of Information and communication Technology has been so powerful that it has changed the entire functioning of the industry; with the introduction of real time data base system entire business process has become hi-tech; its is now required to provide a sound understanding of Real time data base system along with the concepts of e-commerce, m-commerce, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and SAP to the students, these inputs will increase the practical understanding of the business process and enable students to perform multiple tasks which are the expectation of the industry; it will open the floodgates of opportunities available at national and international level not only in the Travel, Tourism, Transport & Hospitality sector but also in those companies who require consultants for IT based project consultancy and designing of tourism related software and business solutions.

According to a survey report published by FICCI in July 2007 on “Emerging Skill shortage in Indian Industry” in the central universities there is an acute shortage of faculties in engineering, management, computer science and IT, the situation of faculty shortage in Tourism Discipline is further grim; universities and institutes need to employ more faculties for teaching tourism courses also they need to work for the competency development of faculties; there should be faculty developments & training programs and refresher courses in order to abreast the faculties involved in tourism education with latest trends and development in tourism industry and techniques of pedagogy, universities and institutes should encourage faculties and provide necessary infrastructure to the faculties and researchers to develop intellectual capital through tourism based research and case study development; Institutions and universities can also tie-up with some famous foreign universities in U.K, Switzerland, and Australia etc.; involved in tourism education and research; for faculty development and students’ exchange programs to provide cross-cultural learning; these tie-ups can also be established with the companies involved in tourism business to develop students according to the demands of the industry.

Conclusion

Supply of Competent and skilled Human Resources is the biggest challenge before Indian industry especially at managerial level (Source- Confederation of Indian Industries, seminar on HR , Oct 2007) and situation is not indifferent in Tourism and Hospitality industry also; rather it is more worrying. Lack of standardized HR practices, unclear growth part and non competitive salaries have resulted in high attrition rates and dissatisfaction in employees also the industry has not able to attract the talented young generation to serve the industry due to the above stated reasons. The supply also has not been of quality due to lack of initiatives and actions taken by the educational institution by not revising the courseware to make it meet to the international standards and requirement of the industry. It is high time now to take the issues of the

quality of supply of talented manpower on priority to keep the industry up on the growth path as it has tremendous potential to contribute in the social and economic development of the country.

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ANNEXURE 1
Table 1.2. Indian Travel Industry still lacks competent professionals to serve the industry

Indian tourism industry lacks competent professionals to serve the industry.	Options	Points given on likert's scale(P)	Respondents (R)	P*R	Survey mean $\frac{\sum P*R}{\sum R}$	Standard deviation	Standard error or mean SX
							$\frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}$
	Strongly agree	5	90	450			
	Agree	4	71	284			
	Neither agree nor Disagree	3	27	81			
	Disagree	2	6	12			
	Strongly Disagree	1	0	0			
			194	827	4.2628	0.813	0.064735

Hypothesis: Respondents think that the Indian Travel Industry neither has competent professionals nor incompetent professionals mean they have neutral opinion.

Points have been allocated to the responses using Likert's scale as

1---Strongly Disagree

2---Disagree

3---Neither Agree nor disagree

4---Agree

5---Strongly Agree

So mid point will be $1+5/2=3$

Hence the null hypothesis $\mu=3$

Alternate hypothesis $\mu \neq 3$ which means that μ may be greater or lesser than 3.

Which means at 3, respondents will neither be agree nor will be disagree.

So we assume that people are neither agreeing nor disagreeing

The Level of Significance (LOS), for which the formula is

$$\mu \pm Z S \bar{X}$$

WHERE μ = hypothetical value which is 3.

Z= Z Value (as the sample size exceeds 30), the Z-value is 1.96 at 95% Confidence level or 5% level of significance (the z value 1.96 is derived from the Z table)

$$S \bar{X} = \text{Standard Error of Mean which can be rewritten as } \frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}$$

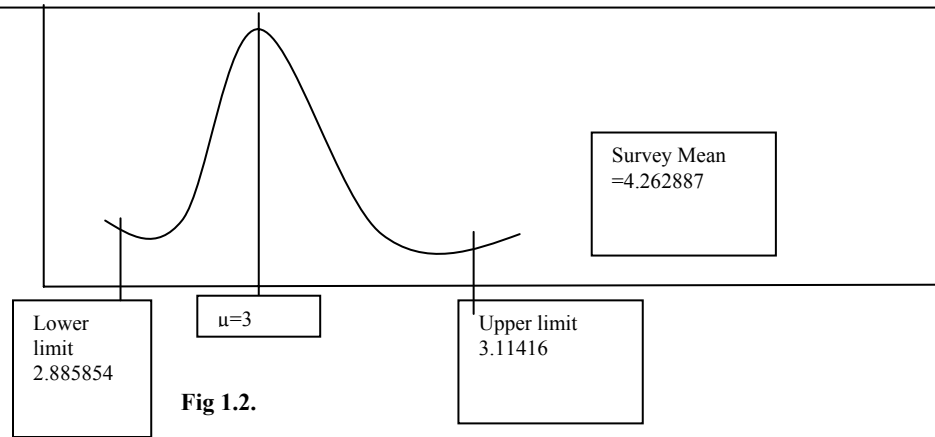
Where s= standard deviation which is 0.813

n=Sample Size (194) square root of which is found to be 13.96.

First equation will be $3+1.96 \times 0.813/13.96= 3.11416$ (Upper limit) &

Second equation will be $3-1.96 \times 0.813/13.96 = 2.885854$

When we draw normal distribution curve the survey mean Survey Mean which is found to be 4.262887 falls out side the curve.



As survey mean is outside the lower and upper limit as calculated above the assumption that Indian Travel Industry neither has competent professionals nor has incompetent professionals. (i.e. $\mu=3$) is rejected. Since the mean survey value was found to be 4.262887, falls outside the range, we can say that $\mu>3$. Which indicates that most respondent agree that Indian Tourism Industry lacks competent professionals

Table 1.3. Education and training institutions have not been able to churn out the professionals who can meet out the industry’s expectations.

Education and training institutions have not been able to churn out the professionals who can meet out the industry’s expectations.	Options	Points given on likert’s scale (P)	Respondents (R)	P*R	Survey mean $\frac{\sum P*R}{\sum R}$	Standard deviation	Standard error or mean SX $\frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}$
	Strongly agree	5	48	240			
	Agree	4	24	96			
	Neither agree nor Disagree	3	27	81			
	Disagree	2	30	60			
	Strongly Disagree	1	6	6			
			135	483	3.577778	1.29561	0.97964

Hypothesis: Respondents are neither agree nor disagree with the statement that educational and training institutions are not able to produce quality professionals.

Null Hypothesis $\mu=3$

Alternate hypothesis $\mu \neq 3$ which means that μ may be greater or lesser than 3.

Applying the equations the upper limit and lower limit have found to be 3.5606 and 2.494

When we draw normal distribution curve the survey mean which is found to be 3.57778 falls outside the curve. As survey mean $\mu>3$ which means that μ may be greater or lesser than 3; falls outside the curve the hypothesis is rejected indicating that respondents agree with the statement that educational institutions are not able to produce quality professionals

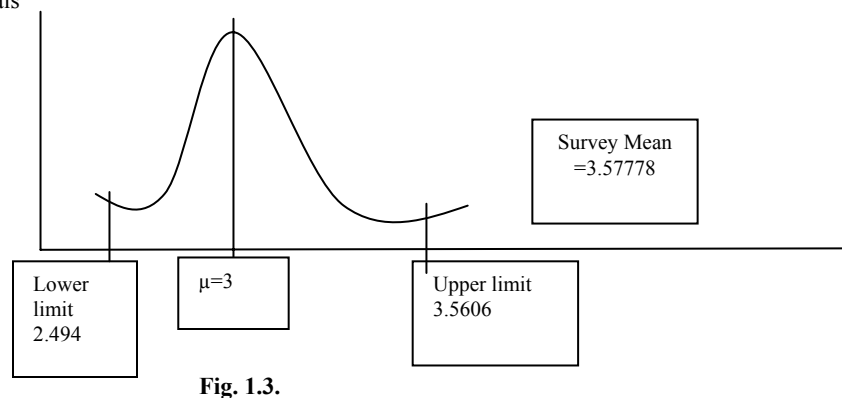
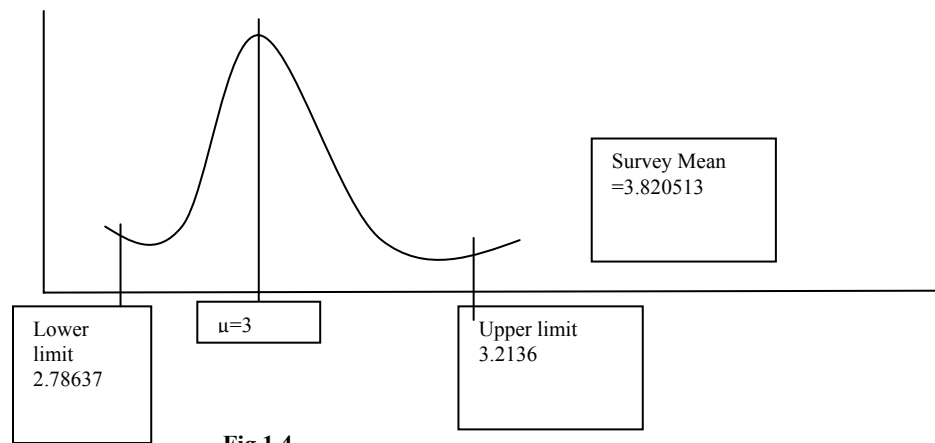


Table 1.4. The Tourism industry has not been able to attract talented lot to opt it as a career

Tourism industry has not been able to attract talented lot to opt it as a career.	Options	Points given on likert's scale(P)	Respon dents (R)	P*R	Survey mean $\frac{\sum P*R}{\sum R}$	Standard deviation	Standard error or mean SX $\sqrt{s/n}$
		Strongly agree	5	39	195		
	Agree	4	45	180			
	Neither agree nor Disagree	3	12	36			
	Disagree	2	15	30			
	Strongly Disagree	1	6	6			
			117	447	3.577778	3.820513	1.178949

Hypothesis $\mu=3$: Respondents were neither agree nor disagree with the statement that Indian Tourism industry has not been able to attract talented lot to opt it as a career.

Applying the equations the upper limit and lower limit have found to be 3.2136 and 2.78637 when we draw normal distribution curve the survey mean which is found to be 3.820513 falls outside the curve rejecting the hypothesis indicating that respondents agree with the statement that Tourism industry has not been able to attract talented lot to opt it as a career.


Fig 1.4.

The Course preference of the students Pursuing Tourism management in various universities and Institutes.

Table1.5.

Course	% of Students
MBA	60
MTA/MTM	15
Any other	25

Questionnaire -1

Name:
Company
Designation

1. Indian Tourism Industry Lacks competent professionals to serve the industry

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

2. The education and training institutions have not been able to churn out quality professionals who can meet the industry's expectations.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

3. Indian tourism industry has not been able to attract talented lot to opt it as a career.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. What according to your opinion has been the reason behind shortage of competent professionals in the industry?

5. What are your expectations from educational institutions that are running tourism management/ certificate courses?

6. What suggestion would you like to give in order to make the industry more attractive in terms of joining it as a career?

7. What future do you see of tourism industry in India?

8. What Suggestions would you like to give to bring Indian tourism industry to world standards in terms of manpower development?

ANNEXURE-3

Questionnaire 2

Name:

Gender:

Name of the Institute:

Course undergoing:

1. Why did you join Tourism Management course?
 - I see a lot of potential in tourism industry and decided to opt it as a career.
 - I did not have any other option hence taken admission.
 - Any other reason(Please specify)

2. What was your first preference at the time you decided to pursue management education?
 - MBA
 - MTM/MTA/MBA(Tourism)
 - Any other (Please Specify)

3. Were you aware about the career prospects in tourism industry at the time of taking admission?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not much

4. Are you satisfied with the course curriculum?
 - Yes
 - No

If no what are the problems?

5. The education and training institutions have not been able to churn out quality professionals who can meet the industry's expectations.

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

6. What future prospects do you see for yourself as a student of tourism management?

7. What are your suggestions regarding making this course more attractive?

