

A Study on Customer Preferences towards Travel and Tourism Sector and Their Services

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Abstract- Today's business situations are highly dynamic and demanding as continuous changes are taking place in the economic environment. Contemporary business paradigm of survival of the most innovative and competitive is the new business model for most business organizations. With the advent of era of consumerism, customers are getting more powerful in terms of product and service requirements and it is imperative for the companies to place their products not only in the mind but also in the heart of the customers. With the economic growth of country and customers, their investment portfolio grew larger and wider with tourism and travel taking the centre-stage. In sync with the growth story of tourism industry, associated sectors such as hotels, travel agencies etc. have also shown tremendous growth over the decade. Professional management of the customers with a wide array of tour packages not only made the supporting staff skillful and expert but much in hindsight of customer tour planning. This study focuses on the customer behaviour towards the travel and tourism sector, the benefits customer considers while deciding the itinerary and required attributes of selected travel agencies.

Keywords: Tour packages, Tourism Industry; Tour planning, Travel and Tourism, Travel Agencies

1. INTRODUCTION

As economic strata and income of world population are rising, so is their expenditures on leisure, fun, travelling and touring. People generally are benchmarking more funds for tours and travel in sync with their rising incomes and social status. The amount of curiosity and interest it generates, tourism and travel can be considered as the modern-day stress buster and the end result of improving happiness quotient of people. In foresight travel and tourism sector also scores big on economic development, employment and empowerment index of the respective touring states/regions and is considered as the new flag bearers of the rising and shinning India. The influence and improvement it is bringing to the lives of people living adjacent to the touring spots, it surely is improving their standard of living and their lifestyles. The tourism industry consists of a number of different sectors aliened in parallel, including the travel, hospitality sector etc. In each of these sectors, there are a number of individual businesses that provide a range of services to people for travelling, lodging, boarding, sight-seeing etc. These trips can be for a variety of reasons, including celebrating life defining moments and key events, visiting friends or relatives, attending conferences, participating in business meetings / activities and associated tasks of primary importance. Modern day customers require a single window management wherein they desire that their complete trip be managed by travel planner and

they don't have to speak to ten different people for travelling, for hotel staying, for sightseeing making it a cumbersome and haphazard experience. They want complete communication, time schedules and travelling plan be managed by a professionally competent travelling partner with compete assistance of key visiting places and heritage sites. As the technology users, customers now a day research beforehand about the value-centric holiday packages, prime locations, vogue tourist spots and sites to visit, places serving best cuisines, safest hotels to stay in and then customise their travelling dates accordingly. Incorporating into tourism the study as published by (Herzberg, 1966) suggesting travelling agencies must be clear in mind that tour and travelling experience also depends upon a host of motivational and hygienic sectors which bears significant importance on the holiday booking pattern of travelling agents by customers. Motivational factors are those which encourage people to do something. For example, the desire to make new friends can motivate people to take a tour guide rather than travelling alone. On the other hand, hygiene factors are those that do not encourage travel, but their absence would discourage such a trip. A good example is the availability of clean rooms, quality fooding and safe drinking water. It is unlikely that these factors will motivate someone to travel, while its absence could lead to someone not choosing a travel agent or destination. The absence of motivational factors does not lead to dissatisfaction it leads to a sense of emptiness rather than a sense of anger or disappointment. On the other hand, the absence of a hygienic factor will lead to

dissatisfaction. The presence of such a factor will not lead to satisfaction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Keeping in view the geographical diversity (Eck, 2012) and cultural diversity (Kong, 1990) of Indian landscape, it is one of the most popular tourism destinations. It is bordered by the Himalayan ranges to the north and surrounded, on three sides by oceanic views of Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean. Indian scenic landscapes and beautiful sea shores offers a variety of places for visitors and attract tourists from all over the world. Tourism sector is one of the main sources of economic growth, foreign exchange earnings (Mishra, Rout, & Mohapatra, 2011) and employment in India (Pais, 2006). It also positively impacts the value chain (Weiermair, 2012) and ancillary areas of travel agencies, transportation including airlines and railways. Diverse biological diversity (Nyström, Peterson, Bengtsson, Walker, & Norberg, 2003) with multitude of religions such as Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism and others exist in India making it a diverse land of tourism destinations in the form of religious shrines and fascinated people from all over the world. Monuments, museums, forts, places of religious interest, palaces etc. attract a lot of tourists having diverse interests (Britton, 1991) in crafts, fairs and music. In view of associated socio-cultural transformation through tourism some of the common places of tourist attractions are Agra, Jaipur, Delhi, Ujjain, Shirdi visited by people of specific orientations and place of origin interests (Sebastian & Rajagopalan, 2009).

With the increase in income of the people, tourism in India is growing and well promoted by respective state governments. Many states have taken the necessary steps to promote tourism like Goa promotes water sports like scuba diving and rafting. In addition to the initiatives of states the central agencies like The Indian Tourism Development Corporation has also launched a campaign called "Incredible India" (Kerrigan, Shivanandan & Hede, 2012) to encourage tourism in India. The slogan of this campaign is **Athithi Devo Bhaboh** (Bhakuni, Kapoor, & Kamil).

India also has been widely promoted as online destination image (Dwivedi, 2013) bearer of the world being a host to a number of heritage sites. Medical tourism in India is flourishing under the partnerships of private public initiatives and innovations due to the increasing number of foreign patients coming to India for state-of-the-art treatment (Connell, 2006). The recent innovation of e-tourism (Buhalis & Law, 2008) and eco-tourism (Zeppel, 2006) is also bringing a paradigm shift and challenging the tourism industry structure.

On the socially negative side of increased tourism activities and visitors, tourism can also damage the environment as resorts are being built to accommodate the increasing number of tourists and thereby negatively impacting the natural ecosystem and local architectural sites of national importance (King, Pizam, & Milman, 1993).

3. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

To study the customer behaviour towards the travel and tourism sector.

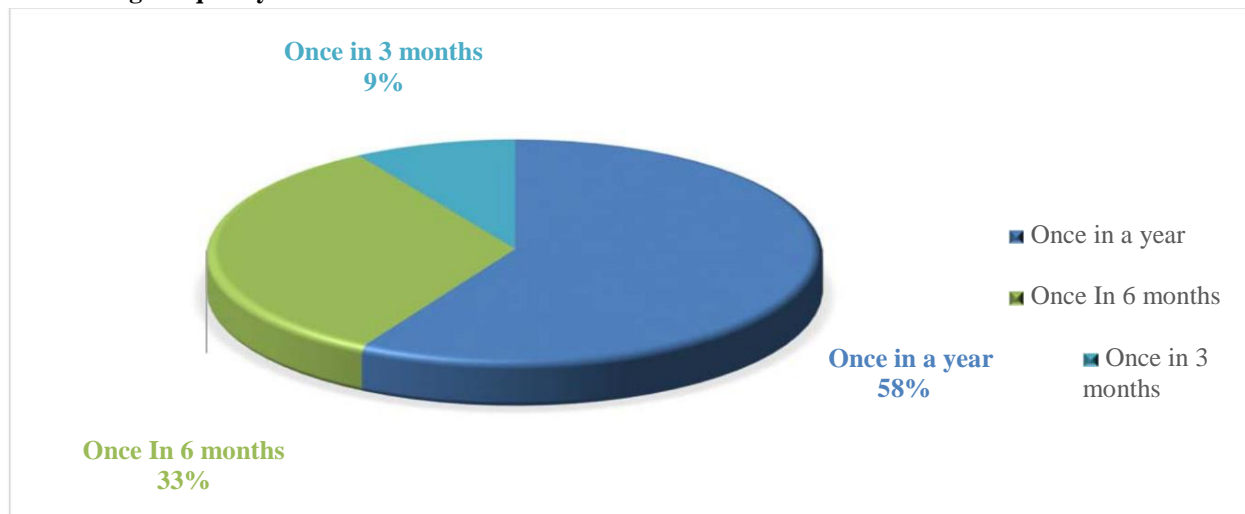
4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In lieu with the objectives of the research study, the data collection method used for getting respondent responses about the travel & tourism industry is primary data. The Primary data collection tool used in the research work is close ended questionnaire of 16 questions seeking sector specific developments and customer insights about their travel and tourism sector related preferences. It was spread among various respondents based on demographic and socioeconomic parameters like gender, age, geographical area, occupation etc. to get required insights. The questionnaires were made with the help of Google forms and data is analyzed with the help of MS Excel and SPSS version 23. Data is collected from 103 prospective customers from NCR to solicit their preferences towards travel and tourism sector in India. The research design used by the researcher is exploratory research design and the sampling tool used is convenience sampling. Secondary research is also utilized for aggregating information by accessing research papers to ease the buildup of fundamental structure of exploration. The papers are accessed from various sources like web journals, Google scholar and articles for reference. Here is the summary of the information collected:

Demographic Profile

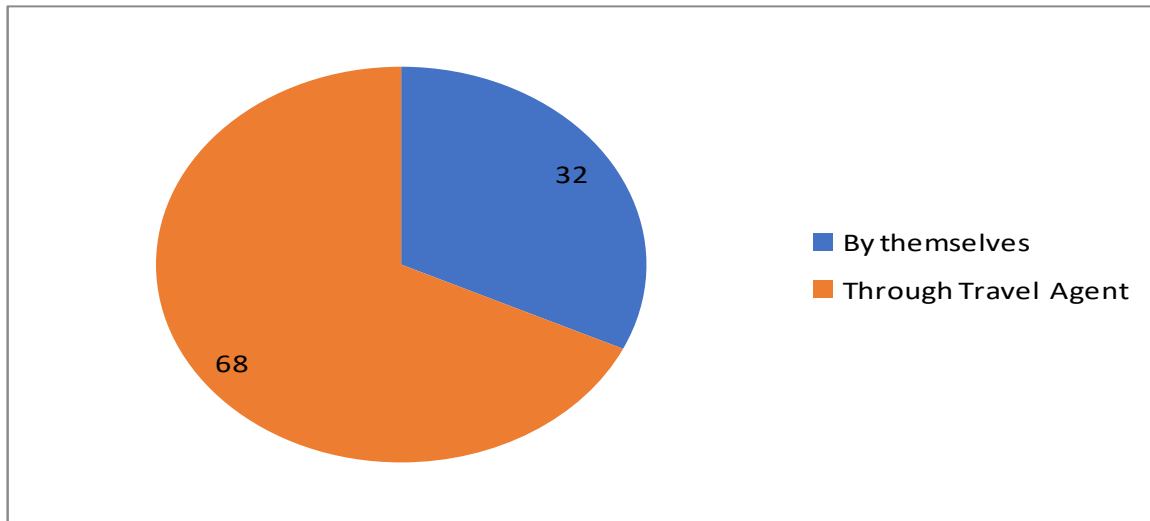
Characteristics	Frequency (N=103)	Percentage (%)
Age (Years)		
19-25	18	17
26-35	36	35
36-45	31	30
45 Above	18	18
Gender		
Male	66	64
Female	37	36
Marital Status		
Single	32	30
Married	71	70
Occupation		
Businessmen	37	36
Salaried	41	40
Professional	4	4
Student	16	15
Homemaker	5	5
Annual Income (In Lakh)		
Less than 1	0	0
1-5	10	10
5-10	36	35
More than 10	57	55
Total	103	100

Travelling Frequency



Inference: The figure shows that 60 respondents out of 103 respondents in other words 58 percent of respondent travel once in a year. Out of 103 respondents 34 respondent in other words 33 percent of respondent in once in three months travel once in six months. 9 respondent travel once in three months. Maximum respondent travel once in a year while least travel

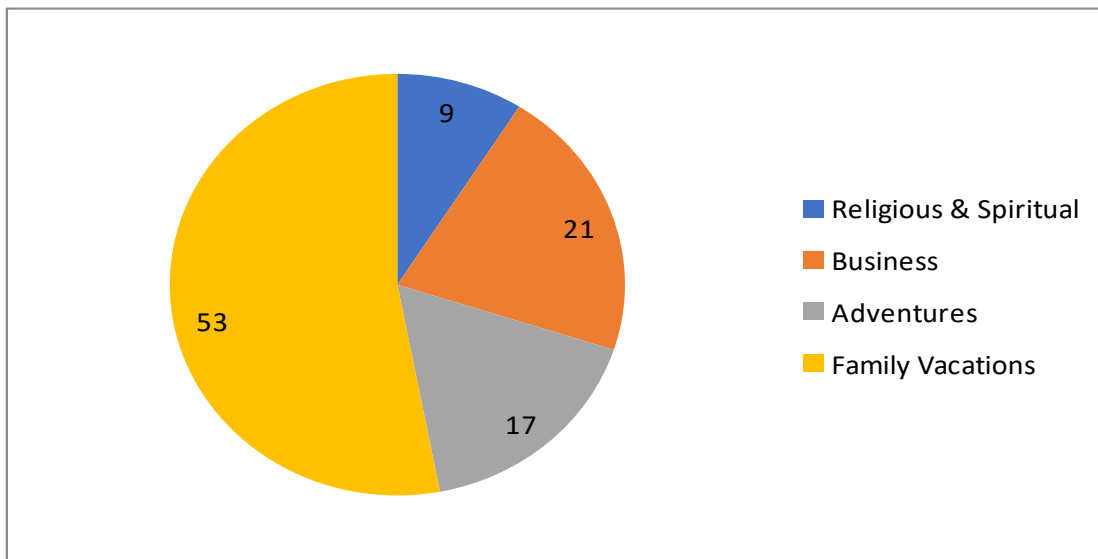
Travelling Mode



Inference: The figure shows that 33 respondents out of 103 respondents plan and manage their trip on their own. On the other hand, 70 respondents prefer to plan and manage their trip through a travel agency.

This shows that more people plan their visit through a travel operator. As a result of which a greater number of travel agencies are entering into the market.

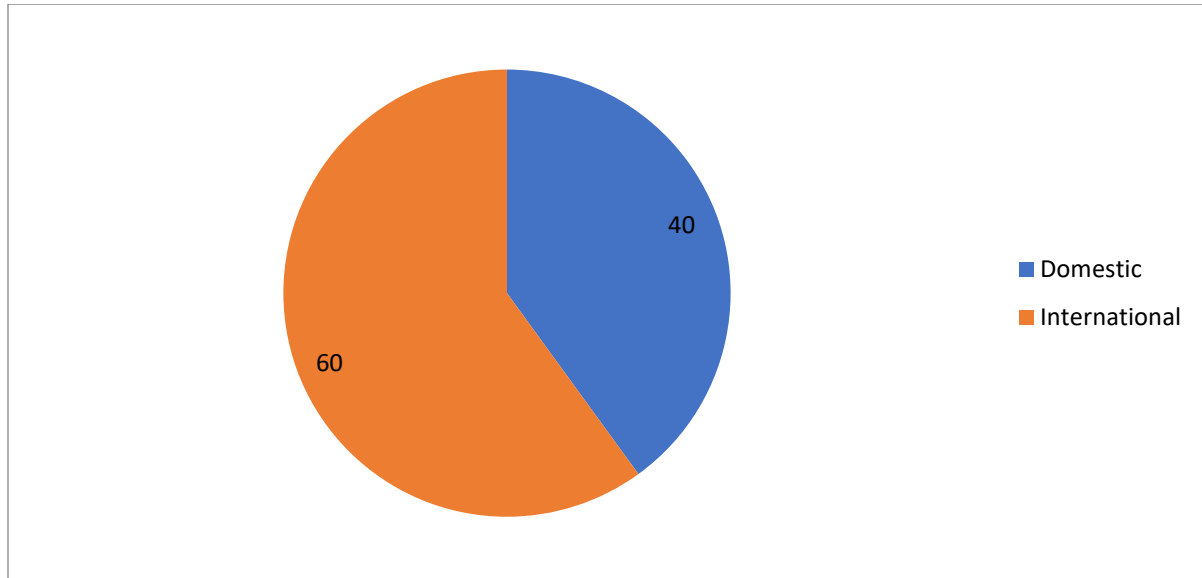
Travelling Purpose



Inference: The figure shows that 53 respondents out of 103 respondents travel for the purpose of spending time with family, so they prefer family vacations. On the other hand, 21 respondents travel because of business or work purpose. 17 respondents travel for the

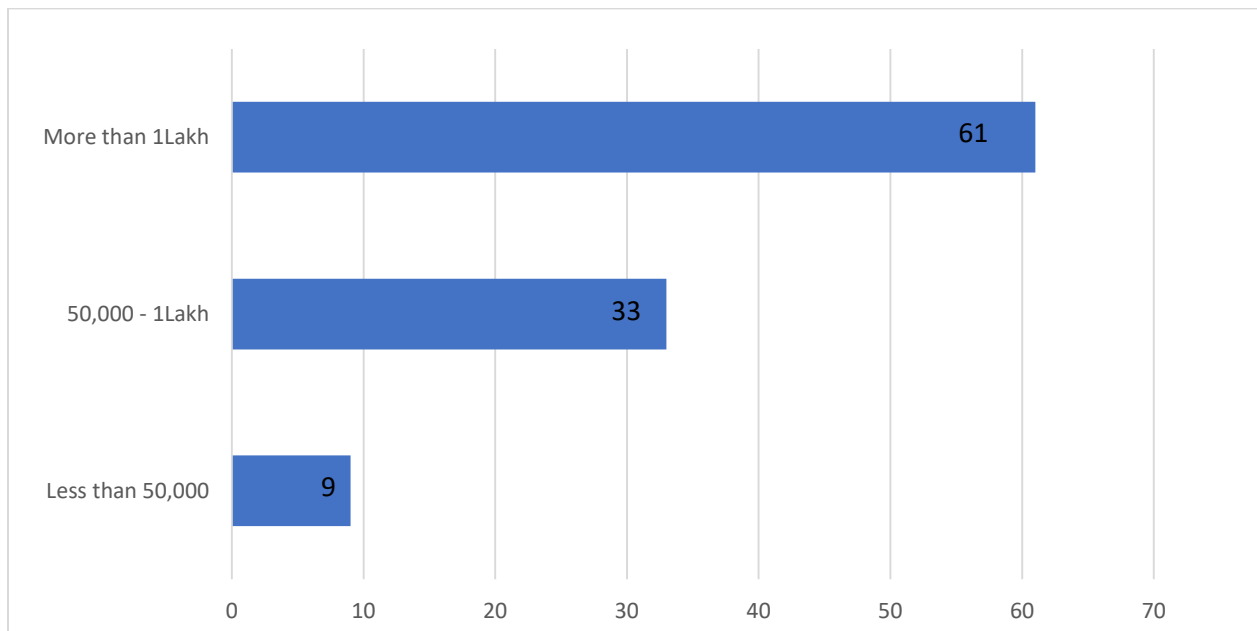
purpose of adventure. 9 respondents travel because of religious and spiritual purpose.

Travelling Destination



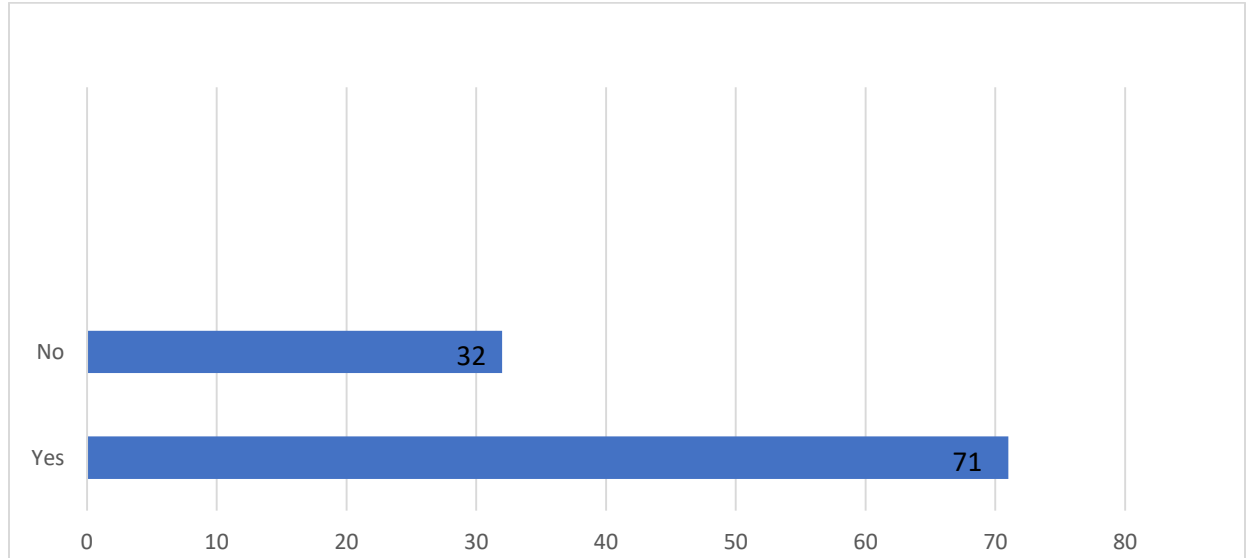
Inference: The figure shows that 60 respondents out of 103 respondents prefer to travel internationally and 40 respondents preferring domestic travel

Travelling Expenditure



Inference: The figure shows that 61 respondents out of 103 respondents usually spend more than one lakh on a trip. On the other hand, 33 respondents usually spend between 50000 to 50000 on a trip and last 9 respondents spend less than 51 spends less than 50000 on a trip.

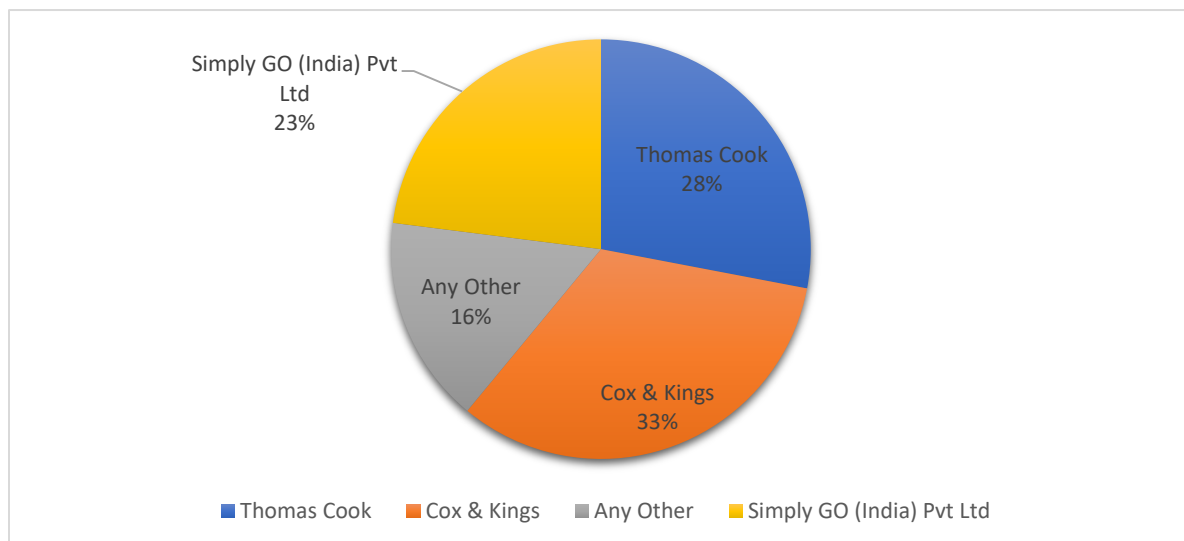
Preference for Travelling Insurance



Inference: The figure shows that 71 respondents prefer that travel insurance should be included in their package as it has some benefits. On the other hand, 32 respondent

feels that travel insurance should not be included in the package.

Agency Preference



Inference: The figure shows that 34 respondents out of 103 respondents have planned their visit through Cox and Kings. 29 respondents have planned their visit through Thomas cook. On the other hand, 24 respondents have planned their visit through simply go (India) Pvt. Ltd. and 16 respondents have planned their visit through any other agency.

Findings

1-The inability to find good deals often negatively affects the business of the travel industry. If the company's staff cannot customise the right deals to their clients, the company is likely to lose the advantage. The staff must know the offers offered by the different travel companies and associated supply chain partners.

2-Companies must contact different hotels to reconfirm the rates, the car rental agency and the

equipment costs before giving the confirmation to the clients. Management must be productive in their work, only then can they meet the needs of the clients and in turn supplement their business needs.

3-Today, there are many portals and travel websites with advanced technologies that offer better prices, hotels, destinations, routes, activities, packages. Online companies help customers plan and customize their trips with better tour packages.

Recommendations

If the tourism industry wants to be productive, business schools should offer courses related to tourism and ancillary sectors. With the increase of competition in this segment, if one has to survive in the market, companies should offer all kinds of packages, from budgeted to premium. This will help companies responding to more

CONCLUSION

In today's world, people are more interested in having a better lifestyle, it is due to the increase in the income level of people. The tourism sector serves a small segment of society in India because it is preferred to travel when basic life needs are met properly and in India many people live in unfavourable conditions. The tourism industry cannot grow on its own until there are associated sectors adding value to it, such as hospitality, travel insurance, transportation and accommodation. The companies must try to improve them in terms of the services they offer,

people and attract more customers. In today's world, the customer is the king pin of the market and to attract the customer, companies must be good advertisers so that more people know about the services they are offering. In this era of cut-throat competition, customers can choose among available options and decide which one is most suitable for them. In this case, companies should keep their prices to a minimum to attract customers by offering them the best in class services. It is very important for companies to make each customer their lifetime customer and deriving sales and future business from customer loyalties.

It is also very important that the staff help the client by offering best in class deals and there must be coordination between all the departments of the organization allowing for free flow of information and communication for smooth functioning.

because in the end what helps to maintain or gain position in the mind of the customer is the level of satisfaction that they get after investing their hard-earned money. The company should focus on important attributes of fair costing of services, skillset of the staff, courtesy and friendliness of the staff etc. Human resources are the most important resources of an organization; therefore, if they are effective and efficient, the company will have the advantage over its competitors. It is very important that the right person provide details and information to client.

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