

## HRD Practices of Public Sector Tourism Agencies in Kerala

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### ABSTRACT

*Tourism as a service industry, its potential can be exploited only through human resources. Public sector tourism agencies are more structural and organised one. The public sector tourism agencies provide a platform for its tourism development through its HRD practices. The aim of the study is to identify the HRD practices of these public sector tourism agencies and also to give supportive measures for the promotion of tourism in Kerala.*

**Keywords:** HRD, Training and Development, Performance Appraisal, Career Planning and Development, Employee Welfare and Quality of Work life, Rewards.

### INTRODUCTION:

Manpower is the blood of the success of tourism industry. Quality of tourism services depends on sufficient quantity and quality of human resources. HRD practices helps to increase the knowledge and skills of human resources and deliver quality performance. In Kerala, public sector tourism agencies play a major role in tourism development and promotions. Public sector tourism agencies are those tourism agencies which is owned and managed by Government of Kerala. As they are more organised and structured, they provide a supportive platform for the development of private sector tourism agencies such as hotels, resorts, travel agents, tour operators etc. The major public sector tourism agencies are Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC), Department of Tourism (DoT), Kerala Institute of Travel and Tourism Studies (KITTS), Bakel Resort Development Corporation (BRDC) etc. For the development of these public sector tourism agencies efficient and effective HRD practices needed.

### Concept of HRD:

The concept of HRD (Human Resource Development) was firstly introduced in by Leonard Nadler in a conference organised by the American Society for Training and Development. He defined HRD as, "Those learning experiences which are organized, for a specific time, and designed to bring about the possibility of behavioural change." (Narayna & Rao, 2002)

HRD practices help to attain the competencies of an employee and improve the overall organisational climate. Training and development, performance appraisal, potential appraisal, Counselling and monitoring, building morale and team work, career planning and development, employee welfare and quality of work life etc are the general HRD practices

### OBJECTIVES:

1. To get an understanding about the Public sector tourism agencies in Kerala.
2. To study the HRD practices followed by public sector tourism agencies in Kerala.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

The study by Jithendran & Baum (2000) titled, "Human Resource Development and Sustainability- The case of Indian Tourism" states that human resource development for tourism in India is recent origin and suffers from lack of strategic approach. The sustainability oriented development of Indian tourism requires HRD strategies focusing on sustainability based industry practices, tourism development, value systems and behavioural patterns among all the stakeholders. The important target group in such an industry would be the tourism industry personnel, the holistic community and the tourists. The competence, efficiency and the value system of tourism industry personnel is very vital for the total quality of a country's tourism. Pre employment training and in-service training of tourism industry personnel leads to sustainable tourism development. Host community education can also help to sustainable tourism development in India, for this all sectors of tourism –public, private and voluntary- need to come together. Educating the tourists about the destination, its environment, society, local custom, acceptable and responsible behaviour at the destination all leads to minimise a large number of negative, social cultural and environmental impacts and contributes to sustainability.

Risbood (2001) aims to study the manpower aspects of travel and tourism organizations and also the training facilities available for the recruited and the need for professionalised training. For this he conducted a study on 50 travel organizations located in and around Pune city. For this he used purposive sampling for the selection of travel organisations. The study finds that recruitment is done on the basis of personnel recommendations of friends and relatives, employees are not organised and also decision regarding pay of employees is taken based on the judgement of the owner. He concludes that growth in an Organization is a part of business dynamics and accordingly the organization itself also needs to initiate dynamic approaches; Professionalism in all HRM practices includes recruitment and selection or and development of the people.

Kokkranikal et al., (2002), made an attempt to study the role of human resource development of tourism among the rural communities in Kerala. The study many ways pointed that HRD for tourism in Kerala mirror the HRD tourism initiatives at the national level. Formation FCI, KITTS, tourism clubs, tourism awareness campaign, and inclusion of tourism general education curriculum played a basic role for rural tourism promotion in Kerala. From the available literature the researcher found that limited financial resources, lack of entrepreneurship & quality control, under utilisation of infrastructure, lack of awareness among rural community are the major constraint for tourism development. The researcher conclude the study by stating the similarities between Kerala and rural communities, Kerala's example in rural community should be a model for human resource development for tourism in India.

Ashraf (2003) explained the importance of HR in managing, operating, planning and promoting tourism industry in the global scenario. He studied the development of HR in public and private sectors both in his paper entitled "HRD in Tourism Industry." In public sectors, government has merged 3 corporations into one composite undertaking for synchronizing its working. While in the private sector, training institutes with foreign collaboration were established to meet the demands of HR. The author also has thrown the light over the growing issues like lack of proper training and attitude of management towards HRD programmes, lack of well defined status of tourism industry, lack of national tourism organizations etc. Further the author also suggest some remedial measures to overcome these problems like the government should set-up an expert committee for the training and development of the employees for ensuring more resource allocation in tourism industry. And also seminars and workshop conducted at international level will help to enhance the ability of human resources.

Baum (2007) in his paper, "Human resources in tourism: Still waiting for change" considers the status of work in tourism and reflects upon the impact that key environmental developments have had upon employment-the practice of human resource management in contemporary tourism; the impact of global and social forces on perceptions of work and careers; the impact of ICT on work and employment in tourism; changing interpretations of skills within tourism; and the increasing diverse nature of the tourism workforce in developed countries.

Baum & Szivas (2008) in their study named, "HRD in tourism: A role for government?" aims to explore substantially neglected role of the state and its agencies in creating an enabling environment for effective HRD within tourism, through policy and planning as well as the delivery of actual HRD initiatives. It briefly addresses the contested role of government in economic development and, in particular in HRD. The study concluded by giving strong arguments for an integrated approach for national level HRD in tourism. Integration can be done in a number of ways. First, it should include a holistic view of tourism and the integration of interest of all subsectors of tourism. Secondly it should involve a partnership approach between the public and private sectors and thirdly, it should incorporate a dynamic partnership between education and training and the industry. The study also suggested there is a need to develop an applied research agenda that monitors and evaluates the role of state in HRD within tourism in a variety of national and local contexts, both in developed and less developed countries.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

Public sector tourism agencies such as KTDC, SIHM, BRDC, KITTS, KTIL etc are more structural and developmental in nature. They take leadership role by supporting the needs of tourists, residents and tourism businesses with appropriate legislations and administration. Tourism as a service industry, its successful implementation is in the hands of employees working in the industry. For this strong HRD practices is needed. "Right people in the right position" is the motto of effective HRD practices in tourism industry. But the HRD practices in these industry is relatively unrevealed one. Personnel department is responsible to implement the HRD practices. But sometimes their activities are constrained to attendance, and salary preparation. To upgrade the employees in public sector tourism agencies we need to educate them about training, performance appraisal needs, career planning and developmental activities, welfare measures, rewards etc. All these lead them to become loyal and satisfied. Hence the researcher selected the topic, "HRD practices of public sector tourism agencies in Kerala".

## **METHODOLOGY:**

The following are the methodology used for the study:

### **1. Type of study:**

The study is basically descriptive study. It describes the human resource development practices in the public sector tourism agencies in Kerala.

### **2. Type of data:**

Both primary and secondary data are used for the study. Primary data is collected from public sector tourism agencies and secondary data is collected from all available sources.

### **3. Method of data collection:**

Direct personnel investigation is the method used for collecting the primary data. Here researcher personally approaches the Managing Directors, personnel managers and employee of the organisation for collecting the details about public sector tourism agencies.

## **Kerala Tourism:**

Kerala is the most popular tourist destination in India situated in the tropical Malabar Coast of south western India. Before 1980s Kerala is relatively unknown destination, with most tourism circuit concentrated around the north of the country. By 1986, tourism had gained an industry status and adopted the tagline God's Own Country in its tagline. Among the Association of British travel Agents (ABTA) 12 destinations to visit for the year, 2017 Kerala got 8<sup>th</sup> position lagging behind destinations like U.S, South Africa & Vietnam.

Tourism promotion is the careful planning of activities used to communicate products and services viz. newspaper advertisements, billboards, brochures etc. For tourism promotion in Kerala needs high levels of skill to respond to increasingly sophisticated market needs. Safety and security, conservation and development, international cooperation, professional excellences are the major factors affecting tourism promotion. Tourism promotion agencies in Kerala include public sector tourism agencies, private sector tourism agencies, Public private partnership and voluntary agencies.

## **Public Sector Tourism Agencies in Kerala:**

Public sector tourism agencies are those tourism agencies owned and managed by the government. Kerala Tourism Development Corporation Limited, Department Of Tourism Bakel Resort Development Corporation, Kerala Institute of Travel and Tourism Studies, Kerala Tourism Infrastructure Limited, Food Craft Institute, Thenmala Eco-tourism Promotion Society , Green Tourism circuit Society , Muziris Heritage Projects Ltd, Kerala Adventure Tourism Promotion Society, State Institute of Hospitality Management, Kerala Forest Development Corporation Ltd, District Tourism Promotion Council ,Responsible Tourism Mission are the major public sector tourism agencies in Kerala.

Based on formal HRD practices, the following public sector tourism agencies are selected for the study.

## **Kerala Tourism Development Corporation Limited:**

Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC) is the 'Official Host to God' Own Country. It is the largest tourism service provider in Kerala. It is the largest chain of hotels in Kerala, is a firm incorporated under Indian Firm's Act in 1956, which is wholly owned by Govt. of Kerala. It was incorporated as Kerala Tourism and Handicraft Development Corporation Ltd in 26<sup>th</sup> December 1965. KTDC had started its business operation on 1<sup>st</sup>

April 1966 with hotel properties viz, Aranya Nivas, Periyar house and Lake Palace at Thekkady, Mascot hotel at Trivandrum and Kovalam complex. Later corporation was renamed as 'Kerala Tourism Development Corporation Ltd' in July 15<sup>th</sup> 1970. It is the state's premier destination developer with over properties ranging from luxury resorts to budget hotels and motels.

**Bakel Resort Development Corporation:**

Bekal Resort Development Corporation is a prestigious project in Kerala. BRDC is established in the year 1995 to develop Bekal as an international standard, 'Beach Tourism Destination'. The chairman this corporation is the chief secretary to Govt. of Kerala. Many senior Govt. officials work as the Director and Managing Director to BRDC. The Corporation mainly plans to focus on eco-friendly and ecologically viable method of development, to set comprehensive tourism infrastructure and to ensure the development beneficial to the local community is the main goal of this corporation. BRDC gives support and assistance for almost all the new ventures happening in and around Bekal.

**Kerala Institute of Travel and Tourism Studies:**

KITTS is an autonomous institute working under the Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala catering to the needs of the global tourism industry. A Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel studies is a pioneer organisation offering education and training in the state. These institutions are actively involved in the tourism site throughout Kerala. The training programme conducted by KITTS include quality improvement programme for Deputy Directors, Tourist Information Officers, Emigration officers, Tourism Police, Life Guards, Vocational higher secondary school students, hotel operations etc.

**Kerala Tourism Infrastructure Limited(KTIL):**

Tourist Resort (Kerala) Ltd. (TRKL), established under the Govt.of Kerala, is the nodal agency for tourism investment promotion and infrastructure development in Kerala. It was incorporated on August 1989. The Hon Ex- Chief Minister of Kerala, Mr. V. S Achuthanathan announced the restructuring of TRKL as Kerala Tourism Infrastructure and Investment Company Ltd, on February 17, 2010. The Company is reconstituted to provide thrust to tourism infrastructure development and investment promotion in the state. KTIL is working towards creating various investment, development and partnership models to address this problem and to catalyse growth. The range of activities conducted by KTL is mainly public private partnership, Re-nrk partnership, Govt.owned projects.

**Food Craft Institute:**

The Food Craft Institute (Kerala) Society was founded jointly by the Government of India and the Government of Kerala in 1967 at Kalamassery. This was the first institute which was started in India. Since the Government of India identified Tourism and hospitality as the single entry which can generate maximum jobs and career prospects, Food craft Institute were started in all major towns and cities all over India. The institute offer value based quality education in all branches of the hospitality industry and its various courses(Food and Beverage Service, Front office operation, food production, Hotel Accommodation operation, Bakery and Confectionary etc)have been a stepping stone to many young aspiring candidates who occupy top executive positions in major hotels all around the world. With the ever increasing popularity of Kerala as a tourist destination globally and with the demand for more five star hotels, the Food Craft Institute are fully geared up to equip young men and women with theoretical knowledge and practical training in the hotel trade so that the increasing demand for trained professionals in the industry can be met.

**State Institute of Hospitality Management (SIHM):**

SIHM is an autonomous institute jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism, Govt.of India and the Department of Tourism, Govt. of Kerala. It is registered under the society of registration act with District Registrar of Societies, Kozhikode. It is formed in the year 2008 at West hill, Kozhikode. It is the right place to acquire skills and Knowledge and to improve the attitude and professional skill of young and motivated spirit in the field of hospitality management. The facilities and amenities in the institute are as per the accredited norms of National Council for Hotel Management in respect to building, planning, staffing, equipment requirements and infrastructure facilities.

## **HRD practices of public sector tourism agencies in Kerala:**

The following are the main HRD practices followed by the public sector tourism agencies in Kerala.

### **Training and Development:**

Large number of employees is working in Public sector tourism promoting agencies. So the efficient utilisation of these human resources, training and development is needed. For this separate training and development department is needed. KTDC have a separate training and development department for meeting its training requirements of its employees. In organisation such as BRDC, their personnel manager itself gives training to its employees for boosting their confidence level. In addition to these they send their employees into CMD and KITTS for external training. KITTS, SIHM, FCI, KTIL staff participate the refresher training courses given by their respective organisations.

### **Performance Appraisal:**

Performance appraisal shall be prepared by the immediate superior officer under whom the employee is working and shall be submitted to the Head of the Department, who shall counter sign it adding his/her own remarks, if any. It shall be made at the calendar year and the report shall be sent for safe custody before 15<sup>th</sup> January of the succeeding year. It will be the responsibility of the Head of the Department to ensure that the reports are made in time and given to the Head of the Department to ensure that the reports are made in time and given to the Head of the Personnel department for Confidential and safe custody. In this regard a simple performance appraisal shall be printed and circulated to all Heads of Department. The forms shall be filled up carefully and correctly after making the assessment. If the rating officer and reviewing officer shall record their separate opinion in the space provided for them. If the reviewing officer disagree with the opinion of the rating officer, such specific remarks shall be made wherever possible. Feedback system on performance appraisal shall be made compulsory. Unsatisfactory and exceptional rating shall be intimated to the appraisee. The respective officer gets the training in the preparation of performance appraisal reports from institutions like IMG etc. The performance appraisal format varies depending upon the organisations. . In KTIL two types of forms are used for performance appraisal of employees. One for the staff category and the other for managerial category of employees. Punctuality, Communication skills, Time management, Discipline etc are the main components in performance appraisal of staff of KITTS and SIHM. A self appraisal form is given to them and after entering the details, return the format to immediate superior. In the teaching post, the filled appraisal form submitted to the Principal of the institution and the office staff appraisal form submitted to the superintendent of the organisation

### **Employee welfare and Quality of work life:**

Public sector tourism promoting agencies provide welfare measures to its employees by recognising, they are the core asset of the organisation. The welfare measures provided by these organisation includes EPF, ESI, medical reimbursement, labour welfare fund, subsidised canteen facilities, overtime wages and free uniforms based on the nature of job, speedy grievance redress procedure, interest subsidy scheme on housing loan etc. The welfare measures provided by the organisation make the employees to become happier and help to improve the quality of their life.

### **Career planning and development:**

Public sector tourism promoting agencies takes special care for the career planning and development of its employees. KITTS, SIHMS etc send their employees into various faculty development programmes for the career development of its employees. Where as in BRDC and KTIL there exists a good employer- employee relationship. The personnel manager/Managing Director himself communicates the various career opportunities in front of their employees.

In KTDC, there exists a Special Career Development Scheme linked to the ladder of promotion. Employees below executive level, on completion of two years give adequate training to equip them with executive level in due course. Similarly employees do not have adequate qualification for suitable their career, such employees can attend the part time management courses/ P G Diploma courses, Courses of Food Craft Institute etc and also give necessary in house training without affecting their regular duty. On successful completion of the course they considered for the corresponding higher level posts.

### **Rewards:**

Rewards are the most inspiring HRD practice that an organisation can give to its employees. When employees are properly rewarded their loyalty towards the organisation increases. The reward given to the employee can be

in the form of good service entry, letter of appreciation, cash rewards, and reward for meritorious service, appreciation of employees in public meeting etc.

### **FINDINGS:**

1. Training and development, performance appraisal, career planning and development, employee welfare and quality of work life and reward are the major HRD practices followed by public sector tourism agencies in Kerala.
2. Training and development activities of KTDC among its staff are satisfactory.
3. Performance appraisal system is strictly followed in SIHM and KITTS. Even though other public sector tourism agencies have performance appraisal system, their activities are lies only in paper.
4. Welfare measures given to the employees of public sector tourism agencies are not fully satisfied .Organisation such as KTIL & BRDC demanding subsidised canteen facilities and a reading room to its employees.
5. Career planning and development activities conducted by KTDC to its employees are satisfactory. Whereas career planning and development activities conducted by all the public sector tourism agencies are not getting in the hands of employees at the right spirit.
6. The employees in the public sector tourism agencies are not satisfied with the rewards provided by their organisations.

### **SUGGESTIONS:**

1. Public sector tourism agencies have to implement more training and development activities, especially in house training programme and train the trainer programme.
2. There is a need to implement a performance appraisal authority in the organisations. This will facilitate give a clear outline of the performance of employees.
3. Public sector tourism agencies have to provide more welfare facilities especially with regard to safety measures and well being.
4. Majority of employees are not satisfied with the career planning and development activities in their organisation. Participative career plan and supportive training will improve the career development of employees.
5. Rewarding the team performance, public recognition in company meeting, flexible rewards etc will be a good measure to improve the performance of employees.

### **CONCLUSION:**

HRD practices in the tourism industry of public sector tourism agencies will becomes an inspiring role model for private sector tourism agencies growth. Public sector tourism agencies provide a supportive platform to private sector tourism agencies. The joint efforts taken by both public and private sector tourism give an insight to the promotion of tourism in Kerala.

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**Table 1: Training Programme given by KTDC Ltd to its employees for the Financial Year 2016-17**

| <b>Serial No:</b> | <b>Name of the Training Programme</b>  | <b>Number of Training</b> | <b>Number of Participant</b> |
|-------------------|--|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1                 | Standardisation of various dishes  | 1                         | 52                           |
| 2                 | Effective control in food cost and proper handling of raw materials                                    | 1                         | 19                           |
| 3                 | Train the trainer  | 1                         | 19                           |
| 4                 | “Refresh Training” Production, Kitchen hygiene and basic practices in Kitchen (Hotel Samudra, Kovalam) | 1                         | 19                           |
| 5                 | “Refresh Training” Food & Beverage Service(Hotel Samudra, Kovalam)                                     | 1                         | 11                           |
| 6                 | “Refresher Training” Housekeeping utility(Hotel Samudra, Kovalam)                                      | 1                         | 23                           |
| 7                 | “Refresher Training” Front office(Hotel Samudra, Kovalam)  | 1                         | 16                           |

**Source:** KTDC head office

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