

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES OF HERITAGE HOTELS AND ITS CONTRIBUTION IN TOURISM INDUSTRY: WITH REFERENCE TO JODHPUR CITY, RAJASTHAN – AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Rajasthan has a flourishing tourism industry because of its natural beauty, art, culture and a great royal history. Every third foreign tourist visiting India also travels to Rajasthan as it is part of the Golden Triangle for tourists visiting India. The deserts and forts of Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Bikaner, lakes of Udaipur and palaces of Jaipur are most chosen destination of foreign and Indian visitors. Many old, obsolete and neglected palaces and forts have been converted into heritage hotels. Tourism has increased employment in hospitality sector. The princely state of Jodhpur (earlier known as Marwar) is one of the most well-known cities and a major tourist destination in the north Indian state of Rajasthan. The second largest city of the state, it was established by and named after Rao Jodha of the Rathore Clan of Rajputs in 1459 AD. An important business center as well, it is flocked by leisure and business travellers every year in crazy number. The whole city is dotted with palaces, mansions, forts and other popular tourist attractions. Post-independence when privy purses were abolished by the government, it became quite hard for the royal families to maintain these huge properties. Thus, they sold a part or the whole property to the present-day caretakers who with minor changes have maintained the same old grandeur. Thus, came up with the concept of heritage hotels.

Tourists and visitors may enjoy a comfortable stay in a Rajputana setting that is adorned with modern-day facilities like restaurants with well-stocked bar, spacious lawns for parties, well-equipped conference halls, Wi-fi services, laundry, medical assistance, swimming pool, indoor and outdoor etc. The royalty and grandeur of the exteriors and the interiors have been kept as it is to give the ancient atmosphere to the visitors. In this paper we would like to analyze and highlight the basic key points with the help of secondary data about the contribution of heritage hotels in the tourism industry of Jodhpur city. The paper also emphasizes upon how Human Resource Development practices of heritage hotels (Jodhpur City) contributes to build customer satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: *Human Resource Development, Heritage Hotels, Tourism Industry, Customer Satisfaction.*

Introduction

Human Resource Development in heritage hotels is a systematic process in which individuals and groups are trained to acquire new competencies to make them more self-reliant and improve their effectiveness in the realization of common goals.

Human capital is considered as an asset and precious commodity that vigorously contributes within organizations to their success or failure. The most successful heritage hotels are those that motivate, train and monitor their workforce to function as a backbone.

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The princely state of Jodhpur (earlier known as Marwar) is one of the most well-known cities and a major tourist destination in the north Indian state of Rajasthan. The second largest city of the state, it was established by and named after Rao Jodha of the Rathore Clan of Rajputs in 1459 AD. Jodhpur is an important business center as well; it is flocked by leisure and business travelers every year in huge numbers. The whole city is dotted with palaces, mansions, forts and other popular tourist attractions.

A modern-day heritage hotel boasts of providing its tourists and visitors a glimpse of the Rajputana without compromising on the comfort of their guests, thanks to the plethora of modern-day facilities like restaurants with well-stocked bar, spacious lawns for parties, well-equipped conference halls, Wi-fi services, laundry, medical assistance, swimming pool, indoor and outdoor, amongst many others, that it provides. It however, must be noted that the façade of the hotel is kept as it is to ensure that a sense of royalty and grandeur is maintained and the guests could get to experience a slice of the era that is now long gone.

The following is a brief list of heritage hotels in Jodhpur Rajasthan:

- Ajit Bhawan Palace
- Balsamand Lake Palace
- Bijolai Palace
- Devi Bhawan
- Hotel Jhalamand Garh
- Hotel Ratan Vilas
- Juna Mahal
- Karni Bhawan Palace
- Kothi Heritage
- Krishna Prakash Heritage Haveli
- Madho Vilas
- Pal Haveli
- Polo Heritage
- Raas Haveli
- Ranbanka Palace
- Taj Umaid Bhawan Palace

Objective of Study

This is an attempt to analyze the existing Human Resource Development Practices in Heritage Hotels of Jodhpur (Rajasthan) and to know the contribution of the same in Tourism Industry, to review the Human Resource Development practices and its benefits to the heritage hotels and employees. Previous researches have shown that Human Resource Development is related to organizational success, service quality improvements, sharing of knowledge and improvements in operational efficiency. The key outcomes of Human Resource Development that will be identified are: improvements in staff attitude, better teamwork, enhanced productivity and better service delivery. Human Resource Development's end result is a better, improved and motivated employees who strives to perform better than best to make tourists and visitors happier and satisfied by their services at heritage hotels.

Literature Review

Success of hotel operations is dependent on staff quality (Baum, 2006). Lack of qualified personnel impacts on the service experience and affects future hotel patronage demand. Human resources (HR) remain an important determinant of tourism production and affects destination competitiveness (Murphy & Price, 2005). Investing in Human Resource Development (Human Resource Development) allows organizations to enhance staff knowledge and capabilities (Leopold & Harris, 2009), contributes to the provision of superior service quality and customer satisfaction (Aksu, 2005).

Swanson (1996) defines Human Resource Development as "a process of developing and unleashing human expertise through organization development, personal training and development for the purpose of improving performance". The general consensus is that Human Resource Development encompasses three components: Learning, Performance and Change (Tseng & McLean, 2008).

In recent years, the concept of Strategic Human Resource Development has superseded Human Resource Development. Garavan (1991) defines SHRD as "the strategic management of training, development, and of management or professional education interventions, so as to achieve the

objectives of the organization while at the same time ensuring the full utilization of the knowledge in detail and skills of individual employees". The concepts of Human Resource Development and Strategic Human Resource Development are well entrenched in the Human Resources Management and general management literatures. However, relatively fewer studies exist on Human Resource Development and/or Strategic Human Resource Development in the hospitality setting (Chand & Katou, 2007).

In addition, the majority of studies on Human Resource Development practices in the hotel industry mainly focus on developed economies such as USA (Kalargyrou & Woods, 2011), Spain (Agut, Grau & Peiro, 2003), Australia (Timo & Wang, 2010), Ireland (Farrell & Monks, 2010), New Zealand (Poulston, 2008), Germany (Langer, 2003) and UK (Watson, Maxwell & Farquharson, 2007). However, with some exceptions scant research exists on Human Resource Development practices in the heritage hotels, with special reference to Jodhpur and thus research in this field remains poorly understood. Human Resource Development has a positive long-term effect on organizational performance and bottom-line profits (Tseng & McLean, 2008). It actively contributes to the provision of superior service quality and customer satisfaction in the hotel industry (Aksu, 2005).

Yet, Human Resource Development activities in developing countries tend to focus on individual learning as opposed to organisational learning (Garavan, Heraty & Barnicle, 1999). Instead of the workplace, the classroom is the learning arena and Human Resource Development is perceived as a reactive activity isolated from core organizational strategies (Garavan, Costine & Heraty, 1995). Such Human Resource orientations suggest a more 'traditional' approach to Human Resource Development in developing countries rather than a competency oriented or Strategic Human Resource Development perspective (Garavan, Heraty & Barnicle, 1999). For many heritage hotels, the challenge remains to develop a comprehensive and effective human resources base and to provide opportunities for training. Human Resource Development is an essential component in building institutional capacity of heritage hotels to deliver sustainable development (UN Department of Economic & Social Affairs, 1998).

Hypotheses

- There is a positive correlation between Human Resource Development functions of heritage hotel industry and Tourism Industry
- There is No Correlation between Human Resource Development functions of heritage hotel industry and Tourism Industry

Methodology

The present study is based on the secondary data published by various agencies and organizations. The present study makes use of data and information provided by, ministry of Tourism, The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India, World Travel and Tourism Council, Newspapers, Magazines, Books, Economic journals and Internet etc.

Human Resource Development Practices

The existing Human Resource Development Practices in the heritage hotels of Jodhpur (Rajasthan) is as follows:

Feedback and Performance Appraisal

Feedback is quite essential in the hotel industry to achieve their objectives. The system without a feedback is never successful. The people in the hotel industry ensure that the feedback given is proper and unbiased. The feedback given to the employees possess the following characteristics:

- Feedback should be descriptive and not evaluative.
- The focus should be on the behaviour and not on the person to whom the feedback is given.
- The feedback should be data based and specific and not impressionistic.
- The feedback should reinforce a new positive behaviour.
- It should be suggestive and not prescriptive.
- The process should be continuous.
- It should be mostly personal.
- The intention of giving feedback must be to help the employee.
- The modifiable behaviour should be more focused on.
- It should often be checked and verified.
- Well-timed feedback is always preferable.
- The need based and solicited feedback would be welcomed.

Performance Appraisal is a process of measuring the productivity, measured in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, and also includes measures of accidents, turnover, absences and tardiness. A satisfactory performance relates to “doing a job effectively and efficiently, with a minimum degree of employee-created disarrays”. Performance appraisals, performance reviews, appraisal forms, are usually considered as an annual assault, and are universally disliked and avoided in Heritage Hotels. The most important outputs, from each person’s job, may not be defined or measurable in the current work system. To overcome the difficulties, performance management system is used by heritage hotel industry. The focus is placed on what the top management really wants to create in the Heritage Hotel. As part of system, a checklist is provided to guide participation in the Performance Development Process and this can be used as a checklist to help in a more traditional performance appraisal process.

Preparation and Planning

The heritages in the hotel industry develops goals and prepare and plan accordingly, once the foundation of developmental goals is in place, however, time to administer the system decreases. Each of these steps is taken with the participation and cooperation of the employee, for best results. The processes in the feedback and Performance Appraisal system in the heritage hotels are as follows:

- Purpose of the job, job duties, and responsibilities should be defined clearly.
- Performance goals with measurable outcomes should be clearly elucidated.
- Priority of each job responsibility and goal should be mentioned.
- Performance standards for key components of the job should be delineated.
- Interim discussions should be held and feedback about employee performance, preferably daily, summarized and discussed, at least, quarterly should be provided. The feedback provided should be positive and constructive.
- Record of performance should be maintained through critical incident reports Notes about contributions or problems throughout the quarter, in an employee file should be jotted.
- Opportunity for broader feedback should be provided. (Using a 360-degree performance feedback system that incorporates feedback from the employee’s peers, customers, and stakeholders).

Training and Development

Hotels are generally dynamic and complex in nature. The rate of change is faster than before due to the rapid change in the technological and social scene. The kind of change is more rapid, continuous and stressful. As the response time is getting shorter and information explosion is leading to rapid obsolescence the heritage hotels are on their toes. The managers have entirely a new shift in role from task co-coordinators to team leader/coach /counselor.

Components for Training

Skill Training – to achieve a short-term objective, and to accomplish the given job effectively.

Attitude Training – Needed throughout to have the right attitude in the working place.

Knowledge Training – This is a development process and carried on to achieve a long-term objective.

To achieve the desired level of performance from the current level of performance and to close the GAP training programme is conducted.

Training Process

- Ñ Need Assessment
- Ñ Designing & objective Setting
- Ñ Implementation Stage
- Ñ Evaluation Stage

Training Failures

- No needs assessment
- Training is always the answer- No assessment of the problem
- Training is reactive
- Training is a one-shot deal
- Failure to measure results
- Management does not participate

Challenge of Servicing the Sector

For actualization of tourism specific expectation and for attainment of goals effectively and efficiently, the pre-requisite for servicing the hospitality and tourism sector is "skilled manpower". These are both an imperative and a challenge. The Sector is facing huge difficulty in creating skillful service as it is already an inherent challenge and there is large skill gap that obtains in the Sector. Also, the Sector is not hostile to taking raw hands and expose them to acquire function-related skills on the job.

Government Reforms

With the growing realization that it would be necessary to reinforce efforts to bridge the skill gap obtaining in the hospitality sector, the Ministry has put in place the following five-pronged strategy: - Efforts to increase the annual pass out of trained persons by expanding and strengthening the institutional infrastructure for training:

- Asking the existing IHMs to start craft courses.
- Broad-basing of hospitality education / training.
- A Scheme dedicated to the training and up-skilling of the existing service providers.
- Hunar se Rozgar programme for creation of employable skills.
- Skill testing and certification of the existing service providers. Ministry has also come up with Skill Development Strategy.

Besides the regular institutional academic effort leading to award of diplomas and degrees, Ministry of Tourism has put in place the following strategy to meet the Sectoral skill requirements by institutionalizing skill testing and certification, and - commissioning pre-service skill development training programme of short duration.

(Source: Ministry of Tourism-Annual report 2016-2017)

Interpretation

Line managers overwhelmingly associate Human Resource Development with the provision of staff training, with emphasis on individual learning as opposed to organizational learning. Hotels have a strong preference for on-the-job training as

First, it is efficient, less costly and employees assimilate more quickly in real work conditions. Second, on-the-job training offers opportunities for interactions and is an effective way for team building, especially among new recruits. Moreover, management exerts greater control over the quality of training. On-the-job training is flexible (offered during off-peak hours) and thus puts little pressure on busy work schedules. Finally, on-the-job training enables trainers to identify potential future leaders within the organization.

In terms of the relative importance of Human Resource Development in the organization, analysis identifies four major benefits:

- Human Resource Development is a challenge but key to organizational success.
- Human Resource Development is associated with service quality improvements.
- Human Resource Development is the sharing of knowledge and skills among employees
- Human Resource Development contributes to operational efficiency.

Conclusion

India is the largest democracy in the world. It is gifted with rich cultural heritage, splendid geographical location and wide variety of flora and fauna which makes it one of the finest destinations in the world to explore. In recent years travel and tourism has become one of the largest service industries in India. The industry is set to grow at 7.5% in 2016 exceeding the previous year's growth rate of 6.9%. According to World Travel and Tourism Council's "Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2015" report the direct contribution of this industry to the country's GDP in 2014 was 2.2%. It is forecasted that the contribution will rise significantly to 2.5% of total GDP in 2025. The improved connectivity, better lodging facility and favorable government policy on visa reforms like Visa-on-arrival have helped the Indian Tourism to thrive and flourish. Hospitality sector has huge contribution in upliftment of tourism sector. Heritage hotels plays key role in it. Heritage hotels attract tourists and visitors primarily as it not only provides a room to stay but also gives the aroma and feeling of vintage. Jodhpur City (Rajasthan) is one of the known places for heritages.

Jodhpur, the second largest city in Rajasthan, has secured the number 10 spot in the Trip Advisor's global 'Travellers' Choice awards for Destinations on the Rise and has been ranked 10 globally and third most attractive tourist spot in Asia by the Trip Advisor's global 'Travellers' Choice awards for 2017 as Rajasthan continues to attract travellers.

(Source: Times of India - Dec 7, 2016)

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