Taai in the tourism industry tourism essay

It could be encouraged through the development and popularization of action sports including rock climbing, hiking, trekking, water sports (as boating, angling, kayaking, wind-surfing, yachting, rafting, etc.), hand gliding, paragliding, etc., for the fun and adventure loving youth.

Eco Tourism

The forested tracks of the vidharba region as in Navegoan, Pench, Kinwat and Tadoba offer excellent opportunities for the promotion of eco-tourism. Tree-top huts, log cabins, tents, etc., need to be developed for cheap accommodation facilities of such tourists.

Wildlife Tourism

The rich collection of varied wildlife in the enchanting sylvan beauty of woodlands offer good prospects for the development of wildlife tourism in the state.

Heritage Tourism

Maharashtra has a rich share of cultural attractions mostly in the forms of archeological ruins of historic forts, palaces and ancient caves.

Pilgrimage Tourism

Maharashtra holds tremendous potentials for the promotion of pilgrimage tourism in its diverse pilgrimage centers.

Cultural Tourism

The organization and popularization of cultural events and festivals could mark a positive endeavor towards the promotion of cultural tourism in Maharashtra.

Retirement Tourism

With increasing life expectancy and the growing number of senior citizens, senior tourism could be developed as a prospective alternative. An economy based on senior tourism tends to be more insulated from the business cycle.

Health Tourism

This tourism holds good prospects for development in Maharashtra. The water in different parts of the state has medicinal properties. These could be developed for the health benefits of the tourists in the lines of the popular spa's in Europe. Accommodation facilities could also be set up at such sites.

Measures To Promote Tourism

Create the right image abroad by stressing on India's ' Uniqueness' as a tourist destination. Covering every taste and preference. There should be a dynamic publicity programmed to create awareness of India's diverse tourist attractions by innovative advertisements and promotional brochures. There should be increased emphasis on heritage tourism, with India's many historical Monuments. The mind-set of people working in government tourist offices in India should change, with greater emphasis on etiquette and a Proactive positive attitude to the foreigner. Cultural-specific tourism should be given importance and the ' Buddhist Circuit' actively promoted in Japan and South-East Asia. The Himalayas, from Leh to Arunachal Pradesh , would interest many in the west and should be marketed effectively. Whitewater rafting, paragliding, sailing, hand-gliding, fly-cruise and other adventure sports should be sold to foreigners. Cultural Attaches in India's embassies abroad, should do much more to market India as tourist destinations and should be more effective as cultural Ambassadors. The visa process should

smoothen. Training facilities for tourist operators, travel agents and others connected with the industry need to be strengthened to instigate professionalism. The most effective tourism promotion is the " image of happy memories of the India visit" that the tourist carries back home with him. The tourism motto should be " welcome a visitor warmly and send back a friend".

Role Of TAAI In The Tourism Industry.

The travel agents association of India (TAAI) was formed towards the end of the year 1951 by a group of 12 leading travel agents, who felt that the time had come to create an Association to regulate the travel industry in India along organized lines and in accordance with sound business principles. The primary purpose was to protect the interests of those engaged in the industry, to promote its orderly growth and development and to safeguard the traveling public from exploitation by unscrupulous and unreliable operators. TAAI is a professional coordinating body of different segments of the travel and tourism industry and it is the National Association of India. It is non-political, non-commercial and a non-profit making organization. TAAI is recognized as the main representative body of the travel and tourism industry. The symbol of TAAI is enforcement for reliable and professional service. TAAI is conscious of the interest of the traveling public and maintains high ethical standards within the trade. TAAI aims at the development of the travel and tourism industry in India by constantly improving the standards of the service and professionalism in the industry, so as to cater to the needs of the travelers and tourists from within India and overseas. TAAI is also engaged in promoting mutual co-operation among the

different segments of the travel and tourism industry, among TAAI members by, contributing to the sound progress and growth of the industry. The travel agents association of India (TAAI) represents all that is professional, ethical, and dynamic in our nations travel related activity. TAAI has been recognized as the voice of the travel and tourism industry in India. TAAI endeavors to build in its constituents and others it deals with a commitment to: Apply superior technical skills to the jobs on hand; Deliver the highest quality of service; Act responsibly with sound financial parameters; Build trust and credibility in the marketplace. In fulfilling its mission and supporting traditional values as well as embracing changes. TAAI's objectives are to work towards: A committed national membershipWidening its area of influence by judiciously delegating authority and responsibilities to regions, chapters and city committees. Professional Management of its affairs at all levels. A responsive and well equipped secretariat which benefits all membersThe manner in which TAAI conducts itself on issues of trade principles and practice will determine its contribution to travel industry.

Government Facilitates Tourism

Rationalization of Taxes

" The country needs a tax structure that is tourism friendly and symmetrical. I am planning to recommend to the committee that like the sales tax, we adopt a floor rate of taxation for the tourism sector also" In a move to boost to the tourism industry of the country, the tax reforms committee is expected to recommend specific measures to rationalized taxes on the tourism sector. Accordingly, the commission set up by the government to recommend changes required in the present taxation system to simplify

procedures and increase tax compliance is likely take up specific cases pertaining to taxation on the tourism sector. It would also try and evolve ways to reduce disparity in high levels of taxation." Realizing the fact that India is considered as an overtaxed destination. The country needs a tax structure that is tourism friendly and symmetrical. I am planning to recommend to the committee that like sales tax, we adopt a floor rate of taxation for the tourism sector also," said N K Singh, member - planning commission and chairman - tax reforms commission. As a significant move, the government is also planning to increase the allocation for tourism in the Tenth Five Year Plan. Though, the quantum of increase has not been spelled out yet, rough estimates suggest that it would be a substantial jump of over 0. 9 per cent of the total plan allocation that was reserved for tourism in the current plan period." Allocation for tourism would be bigger than ever before in the tenth plan period," added Singh. Currently, the incidence of tax (sometimes) amounts to over 35 per cent of the total billed amount for a tourist. The tourism industry is at present heavily taxed with sales tax, entertainment tax, luxury tax, expenditure tax, excise duty, service tax etc which are imposed by both the centre and states. Although, these taxes vary from one state to another. " Tourism being an important component of service would evolve benefits from the suggestions made by these committees. Committees like Parthasarthy - We have to rationalized taxes for the sector as contribution of service tax as a proportion to GDP is growing," Singh concluded.

Government Facilitates Tourism Through Airlines

Indian Airlines

Indian Airlines is presently fully owned by the Government of India and has total staff strength of around 19600 employees. Its annual turn-over, together with that of its subsidiary Alliance Air, is well over Rs. 4000 crores (around US$ 1 billion). Indian Airlines flight operations centre on its four main hubs- the main metro cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta and Chennai. Together with its subsidiary Alliance Air, Indian Airlines carries a total of over 7. 5 million passengers annually.

PRIVATE SECTOR FACILITATES TOURISM

Airlines

Sahara Airlines

At Air Sahara has always made an effort to be the most customer oriented and friendly Airline. We are the proud pioneers of several innovative schemes and programmes in the domestic aviation and have won the goodwill of our valued fliers through hardwork, dedication and a will to reach out for the skies. The unsurpassed successes of our schemes have inspired us to work ceaselessly towards more such schemes. " Wings & Wheels" is the result of our endeavour to offer maximum value for money to our fliers where in we offer to take care of their worries of commuting between the airport and various designated city points at select metros Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore & Kolkata on certain timings. Under this scheme, we offer complimentary air-conditioned coach services on various routes with add-ons like provisions for mineral water, soft drinks, magazines and newspapers,

audio / video entertainment, coach attendants and many other refreshments.

Travel Agents

Travel agents have played a pivotal role in fostering tourism in India. They are the one's who inculcate or boost the customer or the client to actually buy the destination. Travel Agents do not only sell or trade in for destinations; they also market it to a level that the expected customer is indeed forced to buy the destination. The Travel Agents are also in a complex situation where they have to let go their own name and goodwill to attract their customers. The networking or the competition has helped the travel agents today to provide better services and products to the traveler. Agents today have learned to provide also Auxiliary Products with the Core product. They see to it that no customer is unhappy or unsatisfied. They also take good care of the customer if the customer reports any complaints with the service provided. This is the way how travel agents have helped the growth of Tourism Spread in India.

Hotel Industry

The recent developments in the transportation and communications services, the liberal cultural exchange policy of government, the development of tourism as an industry, the development of corporate culture, a change in the lifestyles of masses are some of the important factors opening new vistas for the development of hotel industry in India. Today, the customer's services are planned, automated, audited for quality control and regularly reviewed with the motto initiating qualitative improvements which make the industry internationally competitive. A new

vision for the development of hotel industry has been found the world over and it is essential that hotel planners assign due weight age to the same even in the Indian perspective. The moment we find a change in the taste and preferences of customer's, it is pertinent that we make possible an analogous change in our service mix.

Privatisation – A Key to all Success…

Shahnawaz Hussain, Minister of civil aviation, Government of India is highly optimistic that the privatization of the four metro airports will be completed soon. He personally brushed aside any doubts in this regard. According to him, there were some confusions about the recently taken cabinets decision pertaining to the privatization process. As a result, the ministry is working desperately to place the report before the cabinet to oppose the same. Giving an update on the privatization process he said that the necessary steps for the restructuring of four metro airports in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata and for their up gradation to world class standards, through public – private partnership had been nearly complete, " the objective is to focus on the implementation of superior Airport Management Methods and installation of modern facilities in order to enhance the satisfaction level of the users". Parallel to this a new initiative has been taken up to develop ten other Airports of the next level like Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Udaypur, Trichy, Trivandrum, Calicut, etc. On the basis of the proposals of the Civil Aviation Ministry, a package of concession for setting up of ' Green Field' Airports was announced during the budget speech, 2002-03, which is expected to benefit the proposed new Airports at Bangalore, Hyderabad, and Goa. The ministry is actively supporting the initiative of the state governments to establish the

new International Airports at Bangalore and Hyderabad through Public – Private partnership. Apart from the metro privatization and modernization of certain airports Hussain Indicated that many other developments had taken place during his just one year tenure. Security the most crucial subject for the Aviation Industry, at present was duly taken care of with some strong measures. Stringent security measures have been laid down at all the airports in India as recommended by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Sky Marshals have been deployed on all routes of the Indian Airlines as well as on the Schedule Private Airlines. Besides this, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), has been inducted at 42 Airports. Small Airports have also been given due attention during the last one year. A number of major works have been completed at airports like Dimapur, Agartala, Kangra, Jammu, Lilabari, and Leh for improving connectivity in far flung areas, including the North-East. Guwahati, Lukhnow and Jaipur Airports have been upgraded to facilitate the operation of international flights. Commencing on the recently amended charter-flight policies, Hussain said that the act was amended to attract more inbound traffic. As per the new provision, each tourist with a foreign passport will have an endorsement to visit India. Moreover the Indian Passport holders may be allowed to travel, in certain cases, to countries which do not have scheduled air transport services to India. Thus by providing several of these facilities to the inbound traveler Shahnawaz Hussain has proved his status in increasing traffic into India. These facilities till today were a threat to the inbound traveler which has now been easily available to the International traveler.

Strategy For Tourism Development

While adopting a strategy for tourism Development in Maharashtra, the government needs to concentrate at three specific aspects, namely Awareness, Infrastructure & Marketing (AIM). The pillars of strategy include the following:

Awareness

Marketing

Infrastructure

AIM

Awareness

It has vital importance in the development of tourism. The government should create awareness among the people about the tourism so as to enable them to understand its importance and benefits.

Infrastructure

The most urgent and vital requirement for development of the tourism industry is the availability of basic infrastructure, such as roads, railways, telecommunication, land, power, water, etc. It is therefore necessary to develop proper & efficient infrastructure in the state.

Marketing

It is yet another important aspect for the growth of the tourism industry. With extensive marketing, the tourist destinations can be made popular and this could also bring to the notice of the people, the various tourism schemes. Marketing will encourage people to visit tourist places.

Tourism Marketing

The tourism resources of Maharashtra need to be promoted aggressively in the international and domestic tourism fraternity by adopting extensive marketing strategies. The creation of consortiums as has been done by travel agents in Thailand could open new avenues. The MTDC needs to pool in adequate resources to increase its buying power in campaigns and advertisements in international travel marts, regional travel fairs, etc. Informative literature enriched with glossy photographs and travel schemes is the need of the hour. The internet could be used as an effective medium in this regard.

Dual Benefits.

1) Benefits to the State 2) Benefits to the tourist and hosts Benefits to the State

Availability of funds for the government which can be fruitfully deployed for debt-servicing. Creation of opportunities for direct and indirect employment in the urban as well as in the rural areas. Increase in the likely flow of domestic as well as foreign private investment into the stateA boost to the growth of tourism activities in the rural areas, and the consequent improvement in the standard of living of rural people. Encouragement to the growth of ancillary units related to hotel and tourism industry. Evolving adequate marketing strategies through an effective use of the mass media in their promotion could bring additional revenues to the state.

Benefits to the tourist and hosts

Development of infrastructure required for tourism growth such as roads, transportation and accommodation facilities. Availability of new places/sites for tourists. Promotion of varied forms of unconventional tourism. Popularization of tourism awareness programmes among the tourists and hosts for the preservation and conservation of the natural and cultural heritage.

Action Plan for Development of Tourism

Aggressive Marketing

Blessed with beautiful beaches, forts and other architectural monuments State should aggressively market its rich assets. Popularize the tourist destinations through mass media (publicity campaigns, televisions, internet, participation in travel fairs etc.)Popularize guide assisted cost-effective tours and special incentives for less frequented destinations. The ambience at the airport and railway stations should give a feel of Maharashtra through display of posters, paintings depicting Maratha history, monuments, and architecture and heritage buildings. Various festivals, wild life sanctuaries, Bollywood-film city, food, dress and culture specialties need to be promoted. Permitting mega retailing to encourage shopping. Co-marketing with key travel operators.

Strengthen Infrastructure

The main hindrances to steady tourism growth include insufficient aviation seating capacity, pathetic road and airport conditions, poor rail infrastructure, and adequate hotel accommodation. There is an urgent need

to beef up the infrastructure in the state, especially in the tourist location. Along with planning of projects, enforcement / actual implementation of infrastructure projects is equally important.

Use of Information Technology

The government should bridge the information gap through proper statistical documentation of the impact of tourism to create awareness so that economic and social significance of tourism is well recognized. Need for e-booking facilities for tourists, give special attention to air-safety norms, modernize airports and security. Extensive use of IT in tourism industry – right from process of getting visas to providing instant bookings of hotel rooms in distant places.

Privatization

Private sector should be encouraged to make investment in tourism from a long-term perspective and create the required facilities in areas identified for tourism development. Private hotels, resorts of the government owned corporation i. e. MTDC , by transferring their ownership to private investors.

Travel Coping With Changing Trends

The travel industry is constantly evolving. New destinations, revamped schemes, overnight mergers or airline launches - the industry is marked by regular transitions. Keeping track of the shifts in the industry is the travel agent. From new timetables for airlines to changing alliances and partnerships, travel agents are required to keep pace with the ever-evolving industry. Hand in hand, they mould their operations in keeping with changes in the industry. Sub-agents are an integral part of the travel business, and

include those who have been in the industry even before IATA accreditation came into play. IATA was formed in 1919 essentially to act as a ' responsive and forward-looking' organization to keep pace with what they describe as one of the ' fastest-changing industries in the world'. However, without a regulatory body like IATA, sub-agents have to contend with changing trends themselves. These agents sometimes find themselves swept by different currents in the industry, and have learned to cope and even conquer by adapting to the changing environment. When the travel industry is on a decline, they pump up their marketing efforts. When the city's go dry, they garner clients from rural areas. When technology comes in, they replace outdated methods of operation. What are some of the changes that this segment has adopted? How have sub-agents reacted to emerging industry norms? We discovered that non-IATA agents are thinking on their feet, quick to adopt new strategies, venturing into new territories.

Talking Technology

The influx of technology in any domain is inescapable. The travel industry is no exception. While several non-IATA agents operate out of one-room offices, oblivious to the world of technology, a significant number are nevertheless inviting new systems into their operations. One of the important developments in the industry has been the introduction of the Central Reservation Systems (CRS) - traditionally considered a stronghold of IATA-accredited agencies - into sub-agents' offices. While only IATA agents can book tickets using the system, sub-agents also have access to it, and can confirm reservations using the system. K Gunasekar from Four Seasons, a non-IATA travel agency, believes that with the implementation of CRS, the

work of sub-agents is undoubtedly changing. " With the introduction of technology, especially CRS, the only difference between us and IATA agents is that we can't issue tickets. All other services, including blocking tickets, providing the latest information on bookings and timings, are now well within our grasp," says Gunasekar. One outcome of the increasing dependence on CRS and computer databases is the corresponding downsizing in terms of manpower. Says R Pandean from Charu Travels & Tours, " With everything going online, including things like hotel bookings, the need for human resources is likely to come down. At the same time, as the business picks up, the need for guides, tour managers, spot guides and so forth increases. They cannot be replaced by technology." He adds that while the CRS allows for operational ease and cell phones are convenient, they are unlikely to actually rake in business. " It all depends on the reputation that you've built up over the years," his contends. John Angel from Vimy Travels has been in the business since the last 20 years. Operating independently as a sub-agent, he has seen many changes in the business. Although he doesn't have access to a CRS, he conducts a large portion of his business when he is on the move - attributing its success largely to the mobile phone. Says Angel, " Today, with the cellular phone a large portion of the business is carried on over the phone. Just because I am out marketing doesn't mean I have to miss out on business." He adds that with cut-throat competition defining the market place, the travel agent has no choice but to adopt aggressive marketing tactics. " Before, one could stay in the office to receive business. Today, we aggressively pursue clients. There is no possibility of letting go of even one client as he could translate into more business later on. The onus

of selling is definitely on the agent. That's the big difference between IATA agents and us - they just sit in their office and we give them the business."

Supplementing Business

Another emerging trend in the travel agent business is that many sub-agents complement their travel business with associated work. Due to the constant lulls in the business determined by circumstances far beyond agents' control, the travel trade can take turns that are not always pleasant. Sub-agents couch revenue slumps by operating other businesses on the side. Says Angel, " We have to supplement our business with other ventures, at least those which are related to travel and tourism. We therefore run operations like hotel bookings, tourist taxis, arranging for visas etc. We can't depend only on one business, especially as it is so seasonal." While many sub-agents run travel-related services, several may simply operate photocopying machines or phone booths to rake in more funds. Sam from Suja Tours says that he supplements his travel business with a card shop and an STD booth." When people come here into a travel agency, they expect a variety of services. If you don't offer, say, STD services, then they complain that the travel agency doesn't meet their requirements. The greeting cards shop is one way of drawing people into the travel agency." Whether it is for attracting new clients, or to maintain consistent revenue, this trend of operating associated businesses seems to be here to stay.

Networking in Villages.

With the glut of travel agents in any city, it is only natural that the industry would gradually look at new pastures to drum up business. Many non-IATA agents have intricate networks, sometimes comprising more than a dozen

agents who manage to get a steady stream of small-town residents interested in travelling by air. Agents credit globalization and the penetration of television in the rural areas for the increased business from these areas. Contends Angel, " Much of my booking, about 60 per cent, is carried on through smaller sub-agents who form a good network in rural areas. About 20 agents filter into villages and smaller towns to book tickets for me." Pandean has seen several changes in the business since 1985. One shift that he has noticed has been the increased number of bookings from rural areas. With about 15 agents working for him in towns like Erode, Thirunelveli, and Salem, Pandean organizes about eight outbound tours a year comprising people from these regions. " One tour that we're organising for December is a Madras-Colombo-Kuala Lumpur-Singapore-Madras. We will be taking a group of about 25 people from villages to these countries. Thanks to globalisation, people in smaller towns are more aware of the concept of travelling, staying in hotels, and seeing new places. I would definitely say that this is a recent trend," states Pandean. He concludes that about 30 to 40 per cent of his business is culled from smaller areas around Tamil Nadu, although his main office itself is based in Chennai.

Reacting to New Industry Norms

With e-ticketing making inroads into the industry, non-IATA agents are increasingly apprehensive. The new era of high-tech travelling is liable to see a corresponding shrinking in the number of travel agents, both IATA and non-IATA. According to industry sources, many prominent airlines, including British Air, KLM, Lufthansa, have expressed an interest in issuing e-tickets in India. Reacting to the new norms, Gunasekar says, " e-ticketing will definitely

gain popularity in India and this is sure to affect both IATA and non-IATA agents. Profit margins will only get more thin and the percentage we charge on tickets will come down." However, Pramila Laskhmanan from Cee Yes Travel Service says that e-ticketing will be confined by restrictions, including lack of access to databases, that will make it a less viable option. " I think only about five percent of ticketing will take place through this system at the present time," says Lakshmanan. A different industry trend that has been taking its toll on sub-agents is that of ' Advanced Purchase Schemes', more commonly known as Apex fares. While the scheme engenders bulk booking especially among corporate clients, the revenue that agents rake in is lower than on regular tickets. Lakshmanan says that business people are more prone to booking tickets last minute, and hence Apex is not hampering agents' revenues. " Agents end up getting normal commission," she says, adding that Apex is extremely beneficial to travelers and allows for travel schedules to be fixed ahead of time.

Looking Ahead

With sub-agents outnumbering IATA agents by four times, it is imperative for the industry to take note of changes that are taking place within the segment. While most sub-agents are still operating without much incorporation of technology, it is evident that the trend is changing. It may take several years before computers hooked on to the CRS become as ubiquitous as the cell phone in the travel business. Meanwhile, non-IATA agents boldly contend with changes, striding ahead into new territory. Whether it be reacting to Apex fares or marketing in villages, sub-agents are undoubtedly keen on keeping pace with dynamic industry norms.

Specific Suggestions To Boost Tourism

Set up duty-free shops in all major cities to provide tourist with better shopping alternatives. Instead of promoting five star hotels, three-star or less luxurious functional, clean and hygienic accommodation, with good service should be made available to the tourists near attractive tourists spots. Develop unconventional tourism (Adventure tourism, Wildlife tourism, Cultural tourism). Involve participation of local people in tourism for benefiting them through income, employment and opportunities for social interaction. All states should be encouraged to follow the path of Rajasthan and Kerala in promoting tourism. A Travel Development Authority should be set up for a specific tourist destination with a view to decline the development of that specified tourist location from the local administration. This authority will be responsible for the development, promotion as well as maintenance of the tourist destinations. Need for ‘ Tourism Theme And Logo’! several countries have specific themes to attract tourist and their marketing strategy. We should stop wasting time in " visit India" and " explore India" campaigns and change the entire marketing strategy. Every state has to define and distinguish their unique selling points and then target only those countries and people who are interested in their products. Privatize management of tourist spots like forts, historical places, temple, natural-spots. Beggary be banned in and around tourist places. Tourism education and training are critical aspects of the tourism industry's international competitiveness. Programs relating to the same should be carried out to develop the tourism sector.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

Mission Statement

…………. To promote tourism as a means of securing a more meaningful and wider understanding of India and its people amongst all sections of societies both within the country and abroad and to achieve sustained economic development and positive social change while preserving and protecting the environment and heritage…………