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# UNIT 13 TRAVEL AGENCY

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## 13.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this Unit you will be able to:

- know the role of a travel agency,
- understand its various operations,
- learn in brief about ticketing, and
- appreciate the relationship between a tourist/traveller, travel agent and the suppliers of services.

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## 13.1 INTRODUCTION

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There are many facets of travel that need careful planning and handling. For example, mode of transport, link transport, accommodation, meals, shopping, entertainment, etc. A traveller who is able to manage all these by oneself is in fact one's own travel agent. Though many may claim to be doing so but in reality there are few such cases. This is because the person who has even planned or organised his own tour or travel may be lacking in information about the alternatives available. Many more take the pains to stand in a queue or waste time. Hence, dependence on a travel agency.

Humans have travelled since long and even depended on others for travel. However, the concept of a travel agency in the modern sense originated in England. The ship operators in order to market their capacity appointed agents who would help in filling the ship. In 1729 was started the first travel agency Cox and the Kings (Thomas Cook).

This Unit familiarises you with the operations of a travel agency and the basic skills required for employment there. Ticketing, booking, cancellations, facilitation, etc are some other aspects dealt with in the Unit.

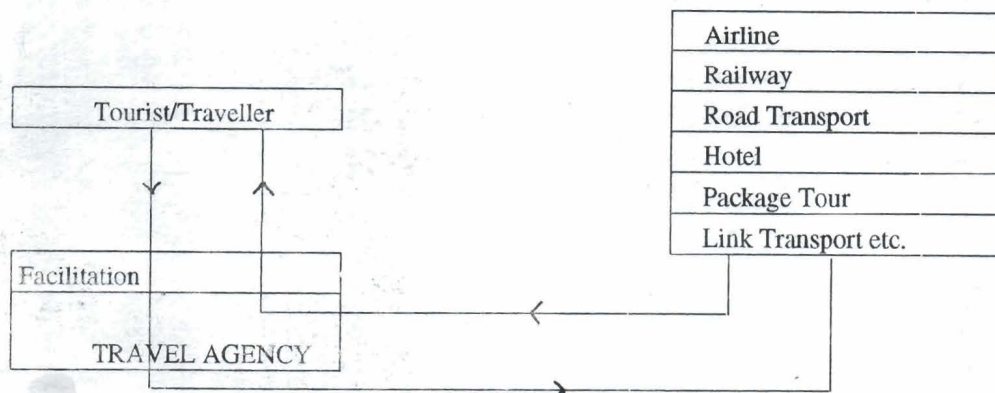
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## 13.2 THE TRAVEL AGENCY

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Travel Agency, as the name suggests, is responsible for organising travel. It in fact, is a travel consultant and organiser for the tourist. At the same time it provides a link to the suppliers of services with the tourists/travellers. Hence we can say that a travel agency is like a retail store, the uniqueness being that it acts on behalf of both, the suppliers as well as the clients. For example, a tourist visits a Travel Agency to meet his travel demands. The Travel Agency books his air tickets, arranges for his pick from the airport, books him on the hotel and so on. Now at the surface it appears that it is only the tourist who is being catered to or looked after. However, a close look reveals that the travel agency has also served the airline by booking the seat or the hotel by booking the room. **In all these services the Travel Agency has provided business to the suppliers of services while serving the tourist at the same time.** This demonstrates the importance of the Travel Agency whose role is growing more and more in the

modern world. Not every traveller has the energy or time to organise all travel arrangements. The suppliers too don't have the reach to every prospective customer. Hence, the need for Travel Agency. A Travel Agency also sells the packages of tour operators or hotels.



Before we go further to explain the various functions and operations involved there in let us look at some of the basic qualities the personnel working in a travel agency should have. One should be:

- courteous and helpful,
- able to look at minute details,
- ready to work under pressure,
- prepared to work for solving problems, and
- proficient in languages etc.

Besides there are certain other factors that are also important. For example:

- a sound knowledge of geography — particularly map reading and seasonality,
- a fair knowledge of customs and practises in different countries or at the destinations one is dealing with,
- information about health, visa, permit and foreign exchange rules,
- knowledge of arithmetic as fares are to be calculated or worked out,
- should know typing or working on computers, and
- have proficiency in communicating skills (see Unit 25).

A Travel Agent should be **always current in fares, schedules, costs, availability, seasons, regulations** etc. Why we emphasis on these can be well, illustrated through the following:

#### Example-1 (Good)

Traveller walks to the counter

TA: Morning, Can I help you

TR: Pl. book me for Bangalore

TA: Well seats are available with two airlines

TR: I want to travel Indian Airlines  
(TA busy in making the ticket)

TR: Can you suggest some places I can go to from Bangalore

TA: Well Sir, you have all types of places to visit, Brindavan gardens, and Nandi hills for nature, Mysore for heritage

TR: That's great, thank you  
(Collects the ticket pays)

(TA: Travel Agent; TR-Traveller)

Same Situation

TR: Can you suggest..... from Bangalore

TA: I don't know, my job is to book your ticket

TR: But who else will tell me?

TA: Ok Ok have a look at that map on the wall you will know it.

TR: Well I will do that at home looking at my daughters School Atlas

(TR leaves)

**Check Your Progress 1**

1) Define a Travel Agency.

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2) Mention the qualities needed in a person to work in a Travel Agency.

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**13.3 OPERATIONS**

As mentioned earlier a Travel Agency performs a number of tasks i.e. from booking tickets to baggage insurance, facilitation etc. Among these the primary operation starts with booking on travel modes. This is known as **ticketing**.

**13.3.1 Ticketing**

This is probably the most obvious and common function of a Travel Agency. There are primarily two modes of transport most Travel Agencies do ticketing for in India. Air Travel and Rail Travel.

Air travel has two main departments:

- Domestic Tickets, and
- International Tickets

**A) Domestic Tickets**

This is a term used for all travel within the country. With the growing of the airline network, frequency and competition between airlines it is the most busy department of any Travel Agency.

The Executive of the Desk need to know:

- 1) How to read a flight Schedule.

There are primarily two types of Schedule.

2) Point to Point Schedule.

This gives all flights between City A and City B.

**Example:**

AGRA (Uttar Pradesh) (AGR)			
Destination	Arr(A)	Dep(D)	Flight
DELHI			
Daily	1745	1825	IC 407
KHAJURAHO			
Daily	0925	1010	IC 407
VARANASI			
Daily	0925	1125	IC 407

**b) Flight Route Schedule**

This shows the way the Aircraft flies for the journey.

**Example:**

IC 494	B-737	IC 493
1715 D	Bombay	A 2155
1830 A	Udaipur	D 2045
1900 D	Udaipur	A 2015
1940 A	Jodhpur	D 1935
2010 D	Jodhpur	A 1905
2050 A	Jaipur	D 1820
2120 D	Jaipur	A 1750
2200 A	Delhi	D 1710

(Here IC 494 and 493 are flight numbers and B-737 type faircraft) In both the flight Schedules you need to look for:

**1. Departure and Arrival Timings**

Most schedules work on 24 hrs Time clock and no AM/PM. A look at these things also makes it clear whether it is a direct flight or a hopping one. For example a direct flight from Delhi is 0630 and arrival in Bombay is 1010, this means that it is a hopping flight covering other airports also.

- i) Days of Operations: The indicators on time table are 1 for Monday, 2 for Tuesday and so on. For example if the flight is operational on Tuesday and Saturday the time table will mention 2,6.
- ii) Number of Stops it makes
- iii) Type of Air Craft i.e. whether Boeing or Airbus, etc.
- iv) Types of meals service on board expected.
- v) Types of class of travel available
- vi) Fare applicable or any restrictions.

**C) Air Fare**

It is important to know the Air Fare applicable for the Journey.

With the growing of competition there are many Air Fare now available for domestic tickets.

Normal fares are based on the following classes of travel:

Travel Agency

- Economy,
- Business, and
- First Class.

But there are Special Fares also offered by many airlines:

1) **Point to Point Fares:** This fare allows passengers, to break journey during the route of the flight. For example, if the passenger buys a ticket from Delhi to Varanasi he could break journey at Agra and Khajuraho without paying extra fare.

Fare Delhi to Varanasi is Rs. C Class (Business)	2176.00
Y Class (Economy)	1744.00

If he is not made aware of this he would end up paying Sector fare i.e.

Delhi-Agra	Rs. 650.00
Agra-Khajuraho	Rs. 962.00
Khajuraho-Varanasi	Rs. 962.00
Total	Rs. 2582.00

2) **Students fare:** These include:

- A) **Domestic:** 50% Discount on all the domestic sectors.
- B) **International:** 25% Discount on all International Sectors and as well as connecting domestic Sectors.

3) **IAC Discount Fares:** These include:

- a) **Armed Forces:** A discount of 50% permitted on the normal adult fares including fuel surcharge on the domestic sectors of Indian Airlines.
- b) **Teachers:** a teacher accompanying a group of 10 or more students travelling together is allowed 50% discount on domestic and Indo-Nepal sectors.
- c) **Blind Persons:** 50% discount is available to a blind passenger on the domestic services.
- d) **Cancer Patients:** 50% discount is offered to the cancer patients travelling on domestic and Indo Nepal Sectors.
- e) **Port Blair:** A discount of Rs. 50/- on the one way fare, when at least two members of a family travel together from Madras/Calcutta to Port Blair and Calcutta/Carnicobar or Vice Versa.
- f) **Gorkha Personnel of Indian Defence Services:** 40% discount to the Gorkha Personnel in the active service of Indian Defence Forces on Indo-Nepal Sectors.
- g) **Common Interest Group:** 10% discount is offered to the group of 10 or more adults travelling together on International sectors as well as connecting domestic services.
- h) **Employees of Govt. of India Foreign Mission.** 40% discount on round trip fare on International Sectors once in a calendar year.
- i) **21 Days South India Excursion:** 30% Discount on US Dollar Tariff on any or all of these sectors of Madras, Trichirapalli, Madurai, Trivandrum, Cochin, Coimbatore and Bangalore.
- j) **Ships Crew:** 25% discount is available on all sectors against US Dollar Fare. In case of Group Travel — minimum 20 passengers, 44-45% of Discount available.
- k) **Airline/IATA Employees;** A 50% discount on the normal US Dollar Fare.
- l) **Youth:** 25% Discount on US Dollar tariff on Domestic and Indo-Nepal Sectors.
- m) **Tour Conductor's:** A Tour conductor accompanying at least a group of 10 tourists is permitted at half the normal fare and for 15 or more tourists is allowed to travel free.

- n) Discover India Fare (US DOLLAR 400): Allows unlimited travel for 21 days with certain routing restrictions of domestic sectors of Indian Airlines.
- o) India Wonderfare (US DOLLAR 200): Travel for a week within the North, East, West or South India Region, with an additional charge of US Dollar 100, if Port Blair is included.
- p) Indian Airlines Approved agents: Indian Airlines gives concessional passages to its approved agents.
- q) Invalid Passenger/Stretchers Case: On all the types of journeys on Indian Airlines domestic as well as International sectors in Economy class, three times the normal adult fare.
- r) War Disabled Persons: 50% concession on Domestic fare including fuel Surcharge.
- s) War Widows: A 50% Concession in Air Fares as applicable to Armed Forces Personnel.
- t) Promotional Fares SARC: 20% for individual passenger and 30% for group travel within SARC Countries (India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka), when three countries are included in the itinerary.
- u) Personnel of GREF: a 50% concession in air fares to personnel of General Reserve Engineering Force, on the same terms as applicable to Armed Forces.
- v) Bravery Award Winners: A concession of 50% is also extended to Ex-Armed Forces Personnel who are recipient of highest bravery award of Level I.

4) **Night Fares:** In order to maximize the use Air line introduces Discount fare for Travel in off peak Hours. Air India offers 25% discount fares for travel between 2200 hrs and 0600 hrs.

More incentives are being introduced by private Airlines such as:

- Travel one way Return free,
- Discount on excursion fare (seasonal)
- Travel 10 journeys get one free, and
- Building Mileage for Air Travel etc.

**Note:** all special fares carry a set of rules that apply. For example certification by principal in case of student, etc. You must know them well.

It becomes important for a Travel Agent to keep himself updated with the latest fares, incentives or any other marketing strategy of the airlines. Since the client is more vigilant and expects his Travel Agent to know more it may happen for lack of information the Travel Agent may loose the clients.

### 13.3.2 Booking and Cancellation

**Booking:** The first practical approach to any reservation request is to be able to book on a flight. Always first check:-

- 1) Flight operating between the two points and their flight Number.
- 2) Days of operation.
- 3) Routing and stops it makes.
- 4) Class of Travel Available.

For Reservation of flight one must be familiar with:

- 1) the city/Airport Codes
- 2) Reservation Codes
- 3) Special Request Codes.

**A) City Codes:**

<b>IXA:</b>	AGARTALA	<b>CCU:</b>	CALCUTTA
<b>AGR:</b>	AGRA	<b>IXC:</b>	CHANDIGARH
<b>AMD:</b>	AHMEDABAD	<b>COK:</b>	COCHIN
<b>ATQ:</b>	AMRITSAR	<b>CJB:</b>	COIMBATORE
<b>IXU:</b>	AURANGÁBAD	<b>CMB:</b>	COLOMBO
<b>IXB:</b>	BARGDOGRA	<b>DEL:</b>	DELHI
<b>BLR:</b>	BANGALORE	<b>DAC:</b>	DHAKA
<b>BHU:</b>	BHAVNAGAR	<b>DIB:</b>	DIBRUGARH
<b>BHO:</b>	BHOPAL	<b>DMU:</b>	DIMAPUR
<b>BBI:</b>	BHUBNESHWAR	<b>GOI:</b>	GOA
<b>BHJ:</b>	BHUJ	<b>GAU:</b>	GUWAHATI
<b>BOM:</b>	BOMBAY	<b>GWL:</b>	GWALIOR
<b>IMF:</b>	IMPHAL	<b>HYD:</b>	HYDERABAD
<b>JAE:</b>	JAIPUR	<b>IDR:</b>	INDORE
<b>IGA:</b>	JAMNAGAR	<b>IXJ:</b>	JAMMU
<b>JRH:</b>	JORHAT	<b>JDH:</b>	JODHPUR
<b>KHI:</b>	KARACHI	<b>KBL:</b>	KABUL
<b>IXL:</b>	LEH	<b>KTM:</b>	KATHMANDU
<b>MAA:</b>	MADRAS	<b>LKO:</b>	LUCKNOW
<b>MLE:</b>	MALE	<b>IXM:</b>	MADURAI
<b>NAG:</b>	NAGPUR	<b>IXE:</b>	MANGALORE
<b>IXZ:</b>	PORT BLAIR	<b>PAT:</b>	PATNA
<b>RPR:</b>	RAIPUR	<b>PNQ:</b>	PUNE
<b>IXR:</b>	RANCHI	<b>RAJ:</b>	RAJKOT
<b>SXR:</b>	SRINAGAR	<b>IXS:</b>	SILCHAR
<b>TRZ:</b>	TRICHY	<b>TEZ:</b>	TEZPUR
<b>UDR:</b>	UDAIPUR	<b>TRV:</b>	TRIVANDRUM
<b>VNS:</b>	VARANASI	<b>BDQ:</b>	VADODARA
		<b>VTZ:</b>	VISAKHAPATNAM

**B) Reservation Codes:**

<b>NN:</b>	NEED	<b>KK:</b>	CONFIRMING
<b>UU:</b>	HAVE LISTED	<b>HN:</b>	HAVE ALREADY REQUESTED
<b>HK:</b>	HOLDING CONFIRMED	<b>HL:</b>	HAVE ALREADY WAIT LISTED
<b>XX:</b>	CANCELLATION CONFIRMED	<b>XN:</b>	CANCEL NEED
<b>IX:</b>	IF HOLDING CANCEL	<b>XL:</b>	CANCEL FROM WAITLISTED
<b>KL:</b>	CONFIRMING FROM WAITLISTED	<b>UC:</b>	UNABLE HAVE NOT WAIT LISTED
<b>UN:</b>	UNABLE FLIGHT DO NOT OPERATE	<b>OX:</b>	ONLY IF REQUIRED
<b>FS:</b>	FREE SALE	<b>SS:</b>	SPACE SOLD
<b>XA:</b>	IF NOT AVAILABLE THEN		

### C) Special Request Codes

<b>OSI:</b>	Other Services Information
<b>AFTKNC:</b>	Applied for Ticket Number
<b>TKNO:</b>	Ticket Number (Prefer Window Seat, Blind with seeing Eye Dog, Elderly Lady),.
<b>VIP:</b>	Very Important Person
<b>TCP:</b>	The complete party is now (Follow with total of Party E.G. TCP 15.)
<b>SSR:</b>	Special Service Requirement
<b>BBML:</b>	Baby Meal
<b>SPML:</b>	Special Meal
<b>VGML:</b>	Vegetarian Meal
<b>WCHR:</b>	Wheeled Chair
<b>FRAV:</b>	First available give flight and date
<b>BSCT:</b>	Bassient
<b>HTL:</b>	Hotel Accommodation
<b>IHC:</b>	Intercontinental Hotel, Escort/Hostess
<b>SVC:</b>	Service
<b>THRU:</b>	Through
<b>TL:</b>	Ticket Time limit (Follow TL with Hour of Day and date e.g.TL 1500/12
<b>TUR:</b>	Tour
<b>TKT:</b>	Ticket, Portable Oxygen Mask

For Indian Airlines Reservations are made with proper codes and sent to Central Space Control (CSC) which through its computer confirms its status available.

With the introduction of computers' terminals, Reservations can be made through CRT. This is now made available to a Travel Agency also who subscribes the service. This helps in instant confirmation of Reservation status.

Through this you are regularly updated with the schedule, change of rules, change of fare, etc.

The CRT however can reserve only 8 seats at a time and each agency has its own code and access limitation.

When ever the reservation is made a file is opened in the computer for that person or group of persons and it automatically generates, a file No. which is called PNR. (say H43EF).

PNR is the only reference No. required to check all the flights of that person or group.

For all other Airlines the reservation is made by making a phone call to them since they are not on the computer.

**Cancellation:** It is very important to know and make passengers aware of the cancellation rules each particular Airline would apply.

Indian Air lines have following cancellation rules.

Postponement of the Journey is treated as a cancellation and rebooking charges are made according to the following schedule:

- Cancellation 48 Hours or more before flight departure: Rs. 20/-
- Cancellation less than 48 Hours before flight departure: 10% of the basic fare
- Cancellation less than 24 Hours before flight departure: 25% of the basic fare
- Cancellation less then 01 Hours before flight departure or No show: 100% of the fare.



Passengers who check in on time limit but fail to embark on the flight are taken as gate NO SHOWS and are not entitled to any refund. No cancellation charges are levied when the travel is against the Dollar tariff. Cancellation of open-dated tickets is charged at Rs. 20/- service charge. For the refund of unused International tickets Rs. 100/- is charged as Refund Admn. Fee.

### 13.3.3 Special Services

While making a reservation you could also make request for special facilities which are available for your clients specific needs to make the journey a pleasant one. These are:

- Meal Request: Vegetarian/Non Vegetarian,
- Special Seat Assignment i.e. window, front, back etc.
- Wheel Chair or any other type of assistance.
- Infant Crib, etc. and
- Unaccompanied minor.

Airlines obligation to passengers cover:

- 1) **Insurance Coverage.**
- 2) **Delayed flight:** For flight delayed more than 30 minutes Airline offers light snacks, if meals time then appropriate meal is offered. If the flight is delayed more than 6 hours a hotel room is offered.
- 3) For **missed flight** or **cancelled flight:** Airline offers next flight available, or make arrangements by surface if feasible and if time gap is substantial then hotel accommodation with all meals.
- 4) If flight **overflies** your destination then it makes arrangements to get you their or gives you a coupon to make that journey in near future.

### Revenue

Travel Agent receives from the airlines a standard commission on the fare he sells. In some cases for promotional reasons there is an overriding commission or other kind of benefits. Many travel agencies claim service or booking charges from clients also.

### International Ticketing

All Travel Internationally is dealt in this department. Because of the enormous number of cities and Airlines involved along with countries the working is more complex. Yet, the basic procedures and steps remain the same. For Rail bookings also it is must to know the railway time table and procedure to book tickets.

**Check Your Progress 2**

- 1) What is a Flight Route schedule?

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- 2) For booking on a flight what all should be known to the person at the disk?

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3) Why is it necessary to make a passenger aware of cancellation rules?

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4) If the flight is late by 6 hours what are the obligations of the airlines?

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5) If a traveller is not aware of discounts will you make him aware?

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## 13.4 FACILITATION

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Facilitation is a service available to a traveller by the Travel Agency to facilitate his travel. This is an important part of a travel agency which it offers generally as a courtsey service or for a nominal fee.

1) **Passport:** This is the most important document to travel abroad. The agency helps the traveller with obtaining proper forms and submit it to the passport office on behalf of the client as well as receive it from that office. Also, it is important to check if:

- there is an old passport,
- it is still valid, and
- more pages are required for stamping in VISA of different countries.

2) **VISA:** After obtaining Passport, a VISA from each country of visit needs to be obtained to travel . Assistance of submission and collection of papers is done by the Travel Agency. But quite often some countries wish for a private interview with the traveller.

3) **Health:** Travel Agency needs to advise the traveller of the Health Regulations for travel such as requirement of Cholera inoculation, Yellow fever, etc. It should give guidelines of what precautions to take while travelling and whether insurance is advisable.

4) **Insurance:** Travel Insurance specially for health is available in India for overseas travel and in some countries like Germany it is mandatory to have such insurance for the period of their stay.

5) **Customs:** Each country has it own customs regulations and allows restricted quantity of items to be brought or taken along with personal baggage. The Agency should inform its

clients on the customs regulations specially of ones own country and some important features of other countries.

6) **Immigration:** This is responsible to check and endorse final permission for the passenger to leave or enter the country. In India one of the important check is the endorsement on the passport.

7) **Permits:** There are areas where your client will be visiting. It is the Agent's responsibility to find out if he requires any special permission to visit the area.

8) **Baggage:** The customer must be told in advance how much baggage can be carried free and the charges for excessive baggage. He should also know what items are not allowed in hand baggage (like battery cells in Indian Airlines). The procedures to be followed for baggage security checks like X-ray, baggage identification etc. should also be told — particularly to the first time traveller.

9) **Airport:** As the air traffic has grown, some cities may have more than one terminals or airports. It is important that the Agents inform the passenger which terminal or airport to go to and which terminal or airport he will land. For example, Delhi has three terminals such are:

- **Domestic Departure Terminal I** which will have all Boeing 737 of Indian Airlines and private airlines.
- **Airbus Departure Terminal IA**, which has Indian Airlines using airbus departures which are mainly the trunk routes such as Delhi-Bombay, Delhi-Hyderabad, Delhi-Madras, Delhi-Calcutta, Delhi-Bangalore; and
- **International Departure, Terminal II.**

It is important to know what Airport Facilities are available at the airports so that the passengers could avail of them. For example:

- Arrival and departure of the Journey
- Check-in counters
- Departure Hall
- Arrival Hall and baggage receiving area
- Pre-paid Taxi service
- Bus: airport to city. Many choices like Non air-conditioned and air-conditioned
- Air-conditioned public area
- Tourist Information counters
- Ticketing counters for domestic flights
- Public Phone with STD and ISD facilities. (Free local phone at International Departure and arrival lounge.)
- Lounge
- Cafeteria
- Restaurant
- Toilets
- Toilets for Handicapped
- Shops — books
- Doctor and first Aid
- Baby Feeding
- Children's corner
- Left baggage
- Parking — short term as well

- Car rentals
- Hotel Reservations
- Police
- Security check
- Duty Free shops
- Mishandled baggage
- Wheel chair
- VIP Lounge
- Dinner Club Lounge
- Airport Manager
- Porters
- Luggage Trolley
- Railway reservations
- Airline reservations

### 13.5 ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Travel Agencies have to be very careful in choosing or going for the suppliers. This is because they are responsible to the clients where as they have no control once a journey has started. There are chances of suppliers errors being attributed to them. Hence, there has to be an **honest representation of the supplier's services at the time of sale**. The client should also be provided with all relevant information regarding visa, customs etc. And to provide such services the travel agency has to update the knowledge and information regarding the services and tourism products from various sources. Taking of FAM trips in this regard is very useful. At the same time Travel Agencies have to do their own marketing and promotions for attracting more and more clients.

<b>Check Your Progress 3</b>
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1) What is facilitation?

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2) Mention any five services offered at the Delhi airport that an inbound tourist may use.

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3) Why should a travel agent be honest in dealings?

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## 13.6 LET US SUM UP

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Travel Agency is not only a crucial link between the tourist/traveller and suppliers of tourism services but it also plays a vital role in destination promotion. A first hand knowledge or experience of services is always good for the travel agent. Certain basic skills are necessary for those who may take jobs in travel agencies. One should be aware of ticketing, facilitation and other operational aspects. Similarly honest dealings and relationships are a must. One also has to have the latest information related to various operations and schedules.

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## 13.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Base your answer on Sec. 13.2.
- 2) These are courtesy, proficiency in languages, knowledge of geography etc, See Sec. 13.2.

### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) The route taken by an aircraft for the journey. See Sub-sec. 13.3.1.
- 2) Ability to read flight schedule, timings, fares, reservation procedures etc. See Sub-sec. 13.3.1
- 3) In case he decides to cancel his ticket he should know the deduction rates in advance and act accordingly.
- 4) Providing hotel room, meals etc.
- 5) Yes. You should be honest in dealings. If you don't it is possible that he finds out later through some other source. You will get a bad image and lose a client.

### Check Your Progress 3

- 1) A service offered by the travel agency to facilitate his travel through offering various services.
- 2) See the services listed in Sec. 13.4.
- 3) Base your answer on Sec. 13.5.