

UNIT 16 TOURISM INFORMATION: SOURCES

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16.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit you will:

- have a general idea of the importance of information on tourism for a professional,
- possess details of the main government agencies which provide tourism related information,
- know about the private agencies as sources of tourism information, and
- learn to look for such information at appropriate places in the print media.

16.1 INTRODUCTION

Word of mouth or oral communication has been the most common source of information. A variety of questions are posed like where did you stay? Which airlines you travelled? Was the service better than the other? etc. But here one must remember that the answers coming back are that of an individual's experiences. It is possible that this individual was not aware of the options available or in other words had access to limited information only. Yet oral communication remains the initial information seeking channel. However, tourism services and operations are specialised skills. It is therefore, imperative on a professional working in the tourism industry to acquire knowledge and information in as many diverse forms as is possible. We cannot overemphasize the significance of information as a sure ingredient of success in tourism industry.

This Unit is intended as a guide for both the beginner and a more experienced hand in tourism industry as to the possible sources of information pertaining to tourism. The learner, with a little bit of practice, will surely be able to grasp the technique of culling similar information form a score of other sources.

16.2 IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION

There may be ample illustrations to suggest that collecting and possessing information is vital for a successful career in tourism. We cite for you some priority areas below:

16.2.1 Planning

Planning is the backbone of tourism services and operations. Even when you have to repeat the operations year after year, there has to be fresh input of planning each year. In fact a four-pronged strategy for planning seems to work well. The elements of this strategy are:

- retrospective analysis,
- current perceptions,
- introspective analysis, and
- futuristic vision.

In each case a sufficient information base becomes an inevitability. Moreover, a thorough overhaul of this information at periodic intervals becomes another necessity. This calls for a specific consideration to information collection from as varied sources as one can actually tap.

16.2.2 Management

Management is the life of tourism industry. It is at this level that a tour can make or break. "Admirable management" is the most common accolades won for a tour. Besides training, therefore, it is the different kinds of information input that tourism professionals in the job of managing the tours most urgently require.

Some major heads under which information is mostly needed while managing tours are:

- Kinds of tour packages available,
- different modes of travel that can be arranged,
- types of accommodation,
- knowledge of the destination area, and
- kinds of ancillary services that can be procured.

It is most desirable that a variety of information on these subjects is collected by the tourism professionals. A successful management of the tours hinges, rather heavily, on the availability of this information.

16.2.3 Promotion

Promotion is what sells the tour. The central objective of all promotional efforts is **to inform, interest, and involve**. Here again, interest and involvement may be generated by stuffing the tourist with interesting, attractive and useful information.

Some of the more common and oft repeated methods of promotion are:

- **Presentations** — introductory in nature and essentially aimed at providing information,
- **Publicity** — a more vigorous promotion, with the help of detailed information, and
- **Advertising** — providing specialized information with promotional mix.

You would notice that the common denominator in all these is "information". **The role of information (from different sources) is thus central to all the services and operations pertaining to tourism.**

16.3 SOURCES OF INFORMATION: GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

In India, Government is the largest sources of tourism related information. Through various agencies and at several levels, often overlapping, the government, both at the centre and in the states generates information that is directly relevant to the tourism industry in the country. We

have discussed below the main agencies which are the most potent sources of tourism information.

16.3.1 Department of Tourism

Since tourism industry is one of the biggest foreign exchange earner, the government at the centre has a Department of Tourism to oversee the planning, development, promotion and administration of tourism in the country. At present the department runs twenty offices within India and sixteen in foreign countries. The department generates and disseminates tourism related information at three levels, viz. planning, promotion and development. Besides the domestic tourists, the department also caters to a large number of foreign tourists. For this reason the information disseminated by the department has a substantial content geared almost exclusively at attracting foreign tourists.

The main categories under which the information is available with the Department of Tourism are:

- 1) **Compilation and Collections:** several kinds of posters, booklets, pamphlets and leaflets are printed after collecting information from different organisations etc. They contain thematic as well as destinational information. For example the booklets, monuments, group of monuments.
- 2) **Enquires:** attending to the specific enquiries of domestic and international tourists regarding tourism in India. Like a booklet on Hotel Tariffs.
- 3) **Geographical and Topographical:** tourist guide maps of individual towns as well as zonal/regional maps showing the site/s, accessibility and accommodation.
- 4) **Facilitation:** such as simplifying the procedural formalities for international tourists; regulations, etc.
- 5) **Visuals:** photographic and video documentation of heritage etc. for tourism purposes.
- 6) **Data Base:** in respect of statistics and market research on domestic and international tourist traffic.

Some of these items are given free of cost where as others are priced. You should now be able to select the category of your interest and use and obtain relevant information from the Department of Tourism or ITDC.

16.3.2 ITDC

You have read about ITDC in Unit-5. Since its inception the Corporation has been involved in diverse kind of operations. These include:

- **Accommodation and Catering:** Hotel Ashok Network
- **Transport:** Ashok Travels & Tours,
- **Publicity services,**
- **Duty Free Shops:** Ten in number, at Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Trivandrum Airports,
- **Entertainment:** Son-et-lumiere at Srinagar, Ahmedabad, Delhi. Also cultural festivals,
- **Conferences**
- **Management Consultancy:** in Collaboration with State Governments, etc.

On each of these activities the Corporation generates information in the form of brochures, pamphlets and leaflets. It also uses visual media and produces video-cassettes on all the above activities. These can be procured from ITDC head quarter in New Delhi or even from the regional offices.

16.3.3 State Tourism Departments

The State Tourism Departments and State Tourism Development Corporations have been set up by all the state governments and the governments of Union Territories. Yet the level of tourism development in the States/Union Territories has been uneven. Whereas the states like

Kerala, Haryana and Gujarat have made rapid advances, there are states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa where tourism development has to be geared up.

In the generation of information most states have emulated the Department of Tourism and ITDC. You may, therefore, expect to get similar information, with focus on respective states, from the tourism offices of state governments.

16.3.4 Air-India

You will read about Air-India in greater detail in Unit 29, (Block-8 TS-2). We intend to give you a brief description of Air-India's tourism promotion activities and the variety of information provided by them.

Air-India has a tourism Division which works on a four-pronged strategy, viz.

- Tourism Promotion
- Congresses and Conventions
- Adventure Tourism, and
- Corporate Communications.

The information on the above is published in brochures and directories aimed at promoting inbound traffic to India. It facilitates the tourist/traveller by making his visit value-oriented and pleasant. Air-India also undertakes research and analysis of traffic from tourism-generating markets and publishes profile of tourist markets and their trends.

16.3.5 Railways

Railways are the latest entrants in tourism promotion activities. They have plans to develop tourism through the network of railway communications and appended facilities such as rest-houses/hotels, restaurants and waiting-rooms.

The main activities of the railways include the following:

- **Palace-on-Wheels:** The concept envisages first class accommodation with catering on wheels. Initially the railways had run one Palace-on-Wheels which consisted of renovated railway coaches used originally by the rulers of the princely states. It ran between Delhi and Udaipur via Jaipur & Jodhpur. Now the railways have built new broad-gauge coaches and plan to run several Palaces-on-Wheels.
- **Circular Tours:** The concept emanated principally from the traditional pilgrim routes touching important religious places in different parts of the country. Later the railways included many tourist places in the itineraries.
- **Week-end Tours:** In the latest activity of the railways such places of tourist/general interest have sought to be connected by trains which can be visited and enjoyed in two days time. The package includes the cost of local transportation and boarding.

Details of these schemes along with reservation queries availability of seats, train timings, etc. can be had from the nearest railway station or the headquarters of the railway ministry at Rail Bhawan, New Delhi.

Check Your Progress 1

1) What is the importance of information for a tourism professional?

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2) What kind of information does the Department of Tourism, Govt. of India provide?

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3) Write a note on Palace on Wheels.

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16.4 SOURCES OF INFORMATION: PRIVATE AGENCIES

Private agencies have, over the years, acquired a greater share in tourism development and promotion in the country. We discuss them below:

16.4.1 Tour Operators

Tour operators are intended at basically packaging or managing a tour. The promotional activities were, in the beginning, ancillary in nature. However, of late, the tour operators have become promoters and managers together. In the process of operating a tour they generate information which would help and benefit their clients. The main categories of such information are given below:

- **Tourist Attractions:** The Tour operators like the **Department of Tourism and State Tourism Department** issue brochures on main tourist attractions in India. However, each one of them confines to the area or interest on which he is doing business. The popularity of the **Golden Triangle** (Delhi-Agra-Jaipur) is the direct result of this kind of promotion.
- **Boarding and Lodging:** Accommodation and catering is the next main concern. You will, therefore, find an equally large number of books/brochures, serving the purpose of a hotel and restaurant guide, flooding the book mart. The FHRAI publishes every year the **Hotel and Restaurant Guide of India**. This is the most informative source in the area.
- **Shopping:** Tour operators also promote the crafts of India in a big way. You will thus find a large number of books describing the craft traditions of India. Additionally you may also come across guides describing the Central/State Govt. Emporia as the shops for the craft goods of India.

16.4.2 Hotel Industry

There are many hotels in the country which sell package tours to both the domestic as well as international tourists. The information generated thus includes the following details of the area:

- historical attractions,
- craft attractions,
- exotica,
- cuisine,
- room tariffs and services available, etc.

In many cases the information is just a duplication of the one available in the brochures issued by the **Department of Tourism** or by tour operators. but sometimes you may come across a new and genuine piece of information. We, therefore, advice that for your area, try to scan through the information available from the hotel industry and keep safely the new, valuable information.

16.5 SOURCES OF INFORMATION: MEDIA

As a source of information the print/other media generally serves the purpose of **addendum**. The main categories of print media information have been discussed below.

16.5.1 Newspapers, Magazines and Advertisements

The newspapers and magazines have today started publishing tourism related information in a big way. In almost all the national dailies important magazines and in the regional language newspapers there is periodic reporting of special supplements on tourism (See Unit 23). They contain information on the general and specific destinations under the following heads:

- history
- geography and topography
- craft traditions
- accessibility and accommodation
- cuisine and catering, etc.

Most of these write ups are today done by reputed travellers/tourism experts and should therefore be preserved by you. Advertisements are an important source of information in tourism. They tell you about tariffs, off season discounts, tour packages, types of accommodation, view resorts, airline schedules and fares, etc.

16.5.2 Specialized Publications

With the promotion of tourism as an important industry there have begun appearing specialised monographs on various aspects of tourism. These can be categorised as under:

- Travel and Tourism Definitions
- Tourism Management
- Tourism Guiding
- Culture Tourism
- Wildlife Tourism
- Island and Beach Tourism
- Desert Safaris
- Hill Resorts
- Adventure Tourism etc.

Some of these publications are a hotch-potch of information gathered from random sources. They should be discarded. But the other books are a good source of information, as is evident from the categories mentioned above, on specialised themes pertaining to the tourism studies. You must select, from among several titles, the books you find as easy and intelligible reading. This will update your knowledge and help you in evolving new skills pertaining to your profession.

16.5.3 Non-Print Media

Today TV serials, sponsored programmes, films, commercials, documentaries, promotional films etc are important sources of information in tourism. With the help of video films one can show the tourists the type of services available or one can have a look at the quality and size of

rooms in a hotel before packaging them in the tour and so on. In fact non-print media is fast picking up.

Storing of Information

An important aspect here is that how do you store the information that you have collected from various sources. Maintaining files of clippings thematically is one method and the files can be numbered and catalogued. The other method is keying in the computer if you have one. The information thus stored should be available for ready reference.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) What kind of tourism related information the tour operators provide?

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- 2) What is the role of newspapers and magazines in disseminating tourism information?

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- 3) Write 50 words on non-print media as a source of tourism information.

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16.6 LET US SUM UP

You have noticed how information becomes a crucial ingredient of success in your trade/profession. The sources discussed by us only serves a model. You may initially select and acquire a few of these relevant to your interest. But we strongly advice that you must not remain content with this information for ever. A continuous upgradation of knowledge is the key to success, more so in your profession.

16.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) A tourism professional will be able to plan, manage and promote a tour better with the help of tourism related information. See Sec. 16.2.
- 2) Mainly six kinds of information are provided. For details See Sub-sec. 16.3.1.
- 3) See Sub-sec. 16.3.5.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) They provide information on tourist attractions of particularly places/regions, the boarding, lodging and shopping facilities there. For details see Sub-sec. 16.4.1.
- 2) Being on large circulation, tourism related articles get a wide readership. See Sub-sec. 16.5.1.
- 3) See Sub-sec. 16.5.3.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS FOR THIS BLOCK

Donald Lundberg, **Tourist Business**, New York, 1990.

David, W. Howell, **Passport**, Ohio, 1989.

Kathleen Lingle Pond, **The Professional Guide**, New York, 1993.

Susan Webster, **Group Travel Operating Procedures**, New York, 1993.

Virendra Kaul, **Tourism and the Economy**, New Delhi, 1994.

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS BLOCK

Note: Discuss the activities with your counsellor at the study centre.

Activity 1

Prepare a package tour for a group of 10 persons from your city to Andamans.

Activity 2

Learn how to read an airline time table.

Activity 3

Suppose you are an Excursion Agent. The tour operator has demanded the following services:

- 1) Receiving a group of 20 persons at the railway station and taking them to their hotel.
- 2) Arranging a local guide for two days.
- 3) Inner-city tour for two days on an AC Coach.
- 4) Transportation from hotel to Railway Station.

What steps will you take to arrange these services and see that they are going smooth?

Activity 4

On the basis of Activity 3, write a letter to the Tour Operator confirming the services, asking for dates and quoting your tariff.

Activity 5

Prepare an itinerary for a tour of your city.

Activity 6

Pay a visit to a tourist attraction site in your area. Seek information about its history, special features etc. Now take your friends or relations there and act as their guide.

Activity 7

Collect all ads in newspapers for 15 days that deal with hotels, airlines and tour packages. File them thematically.

Activity 8

Pay a visit to the nearest tourism office and collect brochures. How would you use them in making itineraries?

Activity 9

Buy from a bookshop the **Hotel and Restaurant Guide India, 1994**. Learn how to use it.

Activity 10

Meet some of your friends and relations who have travelled as tourists. Seek information from them about the destinations visited, modes of travel, accommodation, entertainment and shopping. How will you use this information if you are a tour operator?

TS-1: Block 4

Subject: Updated data for “TS 1: Understanding Tourism”

Dear Students,

Elements of tourism markets are dynamic in nature and are subject to great fluctuation corresponding to changes in related market forces. This is an industry where statistics and figures keep changing almost on a daily basis and as tourism professionals we need to keep ourselves abreast of these changes.

The course book TS Series was prepared a few years back and many of the data are now a little outdated. To properly understand tourism markets, we need up-to-date information and while it is not possible to update the entire course without totally restructuring it, we provide you with some latest data available. For easy reference, sections/pages in which the new data are to be incorporated are also mentioned.

Hope you will go through it.

15.12.2008

Prof. Kapil Kumar
(Programme Coordinator)

7.7 World Tourism Arrivals and Receipts

Table: International Tourist Arrivals and Tourism Receipts Worldwide and by Regions 2005-2007*

Region	Arrivals (in million)			Receipts (in billion US \$)		
	2005	2006	2007*	2005	2006	2007*
World	803.0	847.0	903.0	678	742	856
Africa	37.3	41.4	44.3	21.6	24.6	28.3
Americas	133.5	136.8	142.5	144.7	154.1	171.1
Asia and Pacific	155.4	167.0	184.2	134.5	156.5	188.9
Europe	438.3	462.2	484.9	350.5	376.9	433.4
Middle East	39.2	40.9	47.4	26.2	29.9	34.2
India	3.9	4.4	5.0	7.5	8.6	10.7
India's % Share	0.49	0.52	0.55	1.1	1.2	1.3

* Provisional

Source: World Tourism Organization (Barometer June 2007 and October 2008)

7.8 Tourism Statistics in India

7.8.1 International Tourist Arrivals

Given below are the figures of international tourist arrivals in India through the years. It has been a long journey of slow steady progress, from a little under 17000 arrivals way back in 1951 to welcoming the first million in 1980 and eventually the fourth million in 2006. Provisional figures for 2007 shows an estimated 5 million international tourists in the country.

Table: International Tourist Arrivals to India

Year	Arrivals	
	Number	% Change
1951	16829	-
1960	123095	-
1970	280821	-
1980	1253694	-
1990	1707158	-

1st million

→

2nd million

1995	2123683	-	→	
1996	2287860	8.0		
1997	2374094	3.5		
1998	2358629	-0.4		
1999	2481928	5.1		
2000	2649378	6.9		
2001	2537282	-4.2		
2002	2384364	-6.3		
2003	2726214	14.7		
2004	3457477	26.7	→	3 rd million
2005	3918610	13.3		
2006	4447167	13.5	→	4 th million
2005	50,81504	14.3	→	5 th million

Source: Bureau of Immigration

7.8.2 Duration of Stay

The average length of stay of international tourist in India as per the International Passenger Survey in the year 2003 is about 16 days.

7.8.3 Indian going Abroad

Table: Indian Nationals going Abroad (in millions) 1996-2007

Year	Number of Outbound Visits (million)	% Change over the previous year
1996	3.46	13.3
1997	3.73	7.6
1998	3.81	2.3
1999	4.11	8.0
2000	4.42	7.3
2001	4.56	3.4
2002	4.94	8.2
2003	5.35	8.3
2004	6.21	16.1
2005	7.18	15.6
2006	8.34	16.1
2007	9.78	17.3

Source: Bureau of Immigration, Government of India

7.8.4 Domestic Tourist Statistics

Table: Estimated Domestic Tourist Visits During 1996-2007*

Year	No. of Domestic Tourist Visits (in million)	Percentage Change over the previous year

Year	No. of Domestic Tourist Visits (in million)	Percentage Change over the previous year
1996	140.12	2.5
1997	159.88	14.1
1998	168.20	5.2
1999	190.67	5.2
2000	220.11	15.4
2001	236.47	7.4
2002	269.60	14.0
2003	309.04	14.6
2004	366.23	18.5
2005	391.95	7.0
2006	461.76	17.8
2007*	526.57	14.0

Table: Top 10 States/UTs of India in Domestic Tourist Visits in 2007

Rank	Domestic Tourist Visits *	
	State	Percentage Share
1	Andhra Pradesh	24.3
2	Uttar Pradesh	22.1
3	Tamil Nadu	13.5
4	Karnataka	7.2
5	Rajasthan	4.9
6	Uttarakhand	3.8
7	Maharashtra	3.7
8	West Bengal	3.5
9	Madhya Pradesh	2.6
10	Gujarat	2.6
Total of top 10		88.2
Others		11.8
Total		100.0

* Provisional

(Source: "Tourist Statistics 2007", Market Research Division, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India)