UNIT 14 TOUR OPERATOR

Structure



14.0 Objectives
14.1 Introduction
14.2 Tour Operator and Operations
14.3 Main Partners
14.3.1 Hotel/Accommodation Industry
14.3.2 Transport Industry
14.4 Package Tours
14.5 Planning a Tour
14.6 Costing a Tour
14.7 Marketing Material
14.8 Tourist Transport Operations
14.9 Let Us Sum UP
14.10 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

14.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit you will be able to:

- know the definition of a tour operator,
- understand what all is included in tour operations,
- learn about the role of wholesaler and retailers in this area,
- identify the main partners in tour operations,
- get an idea of package tours,
- know the steps involved in the planning and costing of a tour, and
- have an idea of tourist transport operations.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

After having read about Travel Agency in the previous Unit, we discuss the role of Tour Operator in this Unit. Generally people confuse the Travel Agency with Tour Operator. However a close look into their roles and functions reveals that they have different roles to play. In some cases travel agencies also work as or offer the services of tour operators. But again it is the functions from which we distinguish the two and in case a travel agency is doing so we may say that it is also performing the role of a Tour Operator. This Unit attempts to familiarise you with the functions of a Tour Operator along with the basic knowledge and requirements to handle such functions.

14.2 TOUR OPERATOR

You must have seen advertisements in the newspapers or magazines regarding three day or one week tour that mentions the total price of the tour along with the itinerary. For example, one week in Kathmandu, 1000 Rs. (350 Rs. worth casino coupons free or ten days in Goa—heavy off season discounts, beaches, music, Rs. 10000 inclusive meals. etc. These are the offers of package tours which are available to individuals as well as groups. But have you ever paid attention to this that who packages such tours and why? or how they are packaged and marketed? Well many individuals work out their own details of travel and pleasure. But this is a time consuming process. There are many who don't want to bother themselves about planning and organising their journeys, stay etc. Rather they want this to be done by some one else. It is precisely this demand that led to the origin of package tours. Today many tourists buy these package tours as per their interests, priorities and budget at a price that is pre-determined. The complete holiday package tour includes travels (air/surface),

accommodation, escort/guide and so on. The person who puts together all these aspects into a package is known as the Tour Operator.

In other words we can say that Tour Operator is a person who provides information, plans and coordinates travel with various agencies to create a package or service. At the same time he also **ensures smooth operation of the tour**. He can thus, also be called a Tour/Travel consultant or Tour Coordinator. The tour operator may or may not necessarily have any product of his own but act as an intermediary to tailor a package to meet the needs of a traveller. In fact, a tour operator plays an important role in organising explorations, research expeditions and holidays. We must remember here that tour operations originated ever since people wanted to explore new areas, go on pilgrimage or trade expeditions, individually or in groups. However, in the modern sense a tour operation involves:

1) Information of the area of operation i.e. indepth knowledge of the places of interest, the accommodation, transport facilities and other logistics required for planning a tour.
2) Planning of a tour in the most efficient manner.
3) Coordination with allied industries or services such as hotel reservations, airline, rail or road transport reservations. Local assistance, guides, etc.
4) Operations of tour mean **a close monitoring of the tour** i.e. all that is packaged together is working in smooth coordination. **In case of break in the circuit an alternate is to be organised with least inconvenience to the client.** This is another vital segment in the planning and operation of a tour.

There are different kinds of tour operators. These could be:

i) **individual/independent** tour operator,
ii) **a Travel Agency which also functions** as tour operator,
iii) **in house Tour Operators** like an airlines doing the functions of tour operator also,
iv) **Incentive Travel Agencies** who deal only with the sponsors and not with individual clients.

There are three broad classifications of Tour Operators according to the functions performed.

1) **Inbound**: who handles tours coming into the country from overseas is called an **Inbound Tour Operator.**
2) **Out Bound**: who operates tours to other countries is called an **Out Bound Tour Operator**.
3) **Domestic**: who handles tours of people of same country for travel within the country is called a **Domestic Tour Operator**.

It is not necessary that these have to be separate or one does not operate the other types. But it is seen that since the markets and the style of operations in each one are distinctly different then the other the operators prefer to stay in their own specialised field. However one agency can be doing all three or any two of the operations.

In each of the above classifications there are two categories:

1) **Wholesaler**: who plans the tour, puts a package and markets the tour.
2) **Retailer**: who sells the tour to the passenger. He is normally the personal travel agent with whom the client is buying other services such as tickets, facilitation of passports and visa etc. The retailer is the **coordinator between the wholesaler and the client**.

This is in turn is passed on to the operation side as follows:

1) **Inbound Tour Operators:** The Wholesaler who markets the tour consolidates the members of the group through many retailers. Finally the group thus formed is given by the wholesaler as a package to Inbound Operator of that country or that region. The coordination of hotels, transport and other allied services is than done by the Inbound Operator.
2) **Excursion Agents:** Inbound Tour Operators further pass on the services of the group to some body in the city of visit. This somebody is known as the **Excursion agent** who in

turn, coordinates with hotel reservations, organises transport and guides and generally meets the needs of the tourists in that city.

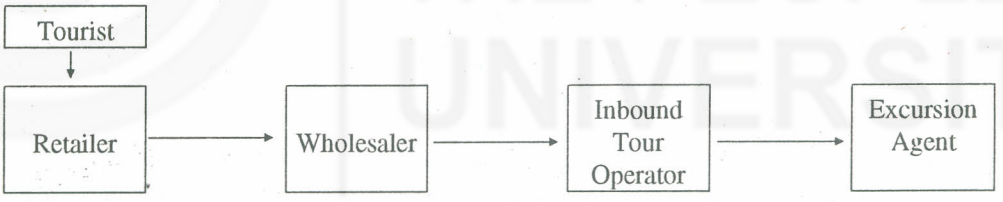
Example

One person in USA wants to visit India but does not know how to go about. He walks in the Travel Agency (Retailer) which he normally uses or thinks that it can help him. He meets the Travel Consular who talks to him and finds out his interest, the time he could spend for travel, the tour he could afford, the luxury he is looking for and the season of travel. The Travel Consular then shows him the brochures of the various types of tours which he could recommend with the cities or areas of interest, type of facilities, etc. These are normally the tours produced by the Tour Operator (wholesaler). Such tours have a **schedule date of departure and a set programme**. He then books his name on one such group. The wholesaler collects people from all over the country and forms a group. Message of this group with names, itinerary and flight details etc. is sent to an Inbound Tour Operator who has organised reservations for hotel, transport and other services all over the country. This Inbound Tour Operator then gives message to Excursion Agents in each city of visit about the groups strength, arrival and departure details and request for services to be arranged in that city.

The Excursion Agents are normally requested to provide:

1) Receiving the group at the airport and taking them to the hotel and vice versa.
2) Provide appropriate transport for the group to travel in the area.
3) Provide Guide for sightseeing tours.
4) Provide tickets for entrance fee at places of visit.
5) Any special services for the group.
6) Reconfirm hotel reservations.
7) Reconfirm Onward flight/train/bus reservation confirmation.

And so the group moves from one excursion agent to another while the Inbound Tour Operator is closely monitoring the movement being the chief coordinator. This way an Inbound Tour Operator is able to provide pickup service and transport and excursions at each city in India even though he does not have an office in more than one city.



At the same time there are different categories of Package Tours:

1) **Escorted Tours** This is an organised and planned tour in which a tour escort serves the group or individual by **accompanying throughout the tour.**

2) **Unescorted Tours** Though organised and planned, in this tour there is no escort accompanying the tour. Instead the group or individual is **taken care of at every destination by Tour Host/Excursion Agent** whose services have been taken for that particular destination.

14.3 MAIN PARTNERS

The **main partners** in Tour Operations are:

1) Hotel/Accommodation Industry.
2) Transport Industry.

A Tour Operator must know the details about these two.

14.3.1 Hotel/Accommodation Industry

Most group movement in India of foreign tourists is done on star category hotels. The hotel have a **Star rating** from the Department of Tourism, Government of India. This helps in ascertaining the quality of hotel expected.

There are following categories of Star rated Hotels.

1 Star

2 Star

3 Star

4 Star

5 Star Deluxe

Heritage Hotels.

> The Department of Tourism Govt. of India has set up a **Hotel and Restaurant Approval and Classification Committee** for award of star category. There are certain requirements to be met in this regard. The address is HRACC, C-1 Hutments, Dalhousie Road, New Delhi - 110 001.

Hotels have various working codes. These are referred to in packages designed for the consumers:

1) **Category of Rooms**.

i) a) Normal b) Deluxe c) Executive d) Suite e) Deluxe Suite f) Presidential Suite.

ii) Air Conditioned or Non Air conditioned rooms.

iii) Facing particular view-Sea, Pool, Garden, monument, etc.

2) **Plans of Hotels**

Hotels have various Meal Plans which they work on:

EP (European Plan) Room Only basis.

CP (Continental Plan) Room plus Breakfast basis.

MAP (Modified American Plan) Room plus Breakfast plus one meal i.e. Lunch or Dinner. Also called **Half Board**.

AP (American Plan) Room plus three Meals. (Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner). Also called **Full Board**.

3) **Tariff** of Hotels are presented as follows:

FIT (Free Independent Traveller). This is applied for individual travelling.

GIT (Group Inclusive Tours). This is applied for a group of persons travelling together. It is determined for a minimum group strength of 15 persons. Normally hotels given One Tour Leader free for every fifteen persons except that they may have an upper limit.

Season and Off-season Tariff. This can have two rates or even more. For example: Season and Off-season Tariff for a hotel at a hill station and different tariffs for different months at a beach resort.

Hotel tariffs often have some additional charges as taxes or services. These should also be looked upon while packaging a tour.

A hotel can be an independent Unit or a single hotel Unit of a Chain Hotel. Chain Hotels are hotels where they **own or manage** more than one hotel and form a network of hotels. Some of

the Chain Hotels are Ashok Group of Hotels. Taj Group of Hotels, Welcome Group of Hotels, etc.

Some hotels join in marketing network such as Quality Inns, Best Western, Green Flag Hotels etc. while other single hotels give regional representations to a Reservations service. This is the most recent development in India. The advantages to the tour operators to work with chain hotels or the marketing/reservations representation is that:

1) Can get **instant reservation** by a local telephone call for one or more hotels around the country.
2) Marketing Plan of the Chain can give advantages for **price, reservations** and **preference**.
3) help in **accounting, credits,** and **centralized information system**.

14.3.2 Transport

You have read in Unit 8 about the importance and forms of transport. Here we give you the specific functions of a tour operator in relation to organisation and conduct of tours:

Air: This requires coordination with Travel Agencies and Airlines, International or Domestic, for flight reservations. In a large country it becomes one of the important mode of transport for convenience and to save time.

There are some special services Airlines offer for Tourists such as Indian Airlines who offer confirmation of flights on any sector for groups if reservation is made 60 days in advance and for individuals 30 days in advance.

It is important to **reconfirm all flights** in all cities where the break of journey is more than 72 hours ahead of the journey. It is therefore the responsibility of the Tour Operator/Excursion agent to reconfirm the flight.

Railways: Indian Railways network is extensive. With this one is able to travel to remote parts of the country with relative comfort. They offer computerised reservations. The Railways offer facilities for Yatri Niwas, Retiring rooms, waiting rooms, Dinning rooms etc. as well. Indian Railways, in order to promote tourism, offer special fares. For example Indrail Passes enables foreign tourists to enjoy unlimited travel on Indian trains within the period of their validity. They are exempted from paying reservation fee, sleeper charges, supplementary charges for travel on superfast trains or meals. They also offer special itineraries. (See Annexure for Railway Package Tour introduced in 1994).

Railways run special trains in special tourist sectors to meet the demand like the Taj Express.

There are many types of Accommodation in Trains like:

I AC Sleeper,

II AC Sleeper,

AC Chair Car,

First Class,

Second Class Sleeper, etc.

For group travel tourist cars (special boggies) are available in all categories and their haulage programme by regular trains can be made to suit the convenience of the group.

Rail journey is also an interesting experience.

Road Transport: There are specially registered vehicles as Tourist Cars and Coaches with specific requirements and permits to operate. For example in Delhi a DLT taxi is the normal city taxi service which cannot operate beyond the Delhi borders. A DLY has the permit for inter-state travel where as a DLZ is an imported car to cater to tourists only.

Similarly, today there are many types of tourist coaches like for 8 seats, 12 seats, 15 seats, 18 seats, 30 seats and 55 seats etc.

Unlike in your private vehicle where you do not need to stop at inter-state border, the tourist vehicles, since they are commercial vehicles, are required to pay Road Tax each time they visit another state. They Travel on a permit (Permission) which contains the passenger names, sex and age, the route they intend to follow and the duration of the journey. They are supposed to follow the route.

Based on the permit each State charges taxes. There are different systems in each state. Some charge on **mileage covered** in that state, some on the **number of days** in that state while others on the **total duration** of the tour immaterial of the distance or the journey on the tour.

For the smoother tourist flow at the interstate tourist borders the government has come out with a regional permit.

Water: There is not much use of Water Transport in Tourism industry in India except to ferry across the river, travel from Airport to Island Hotel at Lakshadweep or Andamans, or a journey in Backwaters of Kerala or in Adventure Sporting Activity, etc. In some places it is used for sightseeing trips like going to Elephanta caves near Bombay. Though the cruise industry is doing very well in the Western world in India it is not that popular and few companies like the Travel Corporation (India) have ventured into this area.

14.4 PACKAGE TOURS

A program developed to cater to a group of people travelling together for a particular journey which involves hotels and transport arrangements and may also involve visits to places, guides, special meetings and functions is called a Package Tour. Package tours are also defined through their:

- destination, and
- interest.

Among the destinations would be:

1) **Single Country** Tour
2) **Area** tour i.e. visiting more than one country.
3) **Two city tour**
4) **Single City** tour, etc.

From the interest point of view most common in India are **cultural tours** (since India is one of the oldest living cultures), i.e. people visiting cultural sites in India.. Quite often it is the historic sites such as Red Fort, Taj Mahal, Temples and Palaces for which itineraries are made.

Though majority of tourist travel in India is to historical sites of India, a large number of travellers are now looking at new types of travel i.e. something that interests them more. This has initiated development of **Special Interest Tours**.

Special Interest Tours are developed with a particular theme in mind. It could be visiting Mughal Architecture, Gardens of India, Textile Centres of India. Gourmet Tour— learning about various kinds of foods in India, Rail tours—travel by different types of Railway systems specially Steam Locomotives, Darjeeling Toy Train, Palace on Wheels, etc.

Tours that deal with Adventure activities are called **Adventure Tours.** These include packaging tours for Trekking, Mountaineering, River Rafting, Canoeing, Kayaking, Boat Cruises, visiting remote areas such as tribal areas, Island explorations, Wildlife Safaris, Camel Safari, Elephant Safari, Horse Safari, Walking Safari, Cycling Safari, Jeep Safari, Camping Safari, Hang Gliding and Para Gliding, etc.

Another vary important aspect of tourism now is **Sports Tours.** Golf Tours are being promoted very enthusiastically, while there are others like Polo and Car racing, which are also

coming up. Tours are also being packaged to coincide with sports events such as Cricket, Hockey and Football Matches. This is another very popular form of tourism that is coming up. A similar situation is in relation to fairs and festivals as **primary** or **secondary** attractions.

Quite often companies offer incentives to their dealers or employees such as additional payments, gifts of some kind or a holiday. The **holiday incentive** is becoming increasingly popular. This is often a large group movement which may vary from 10 to 500 persons. Known as Incentive Tours, they are normally of short duration but expensive. In such tours special attention needs to be paid on:

- **Size of Movement,**
- **Cuisine,**
- **Theme Parties,**
- **Gifts,**
- **Baggage Handling**, and
- **Promotion and Information material**

Whenever there is a conference in a country it brings large number of people together (Convention Tourism). This requires organisation with special skills. Tour Operators assist in:

- initial organization
- marketing the conference so that more people participate, and
- conference arrangements of hotels and transport.

Apart from this another important aspect is pre and post conference tours.

Special attention needs to be paid on the following aspects:

- Marketing a Conference,
- Conference secretarial help,
- hotels,
- transport,
- Pre and Post conference tours,
- Special events,
- Size of volunteer forces,
- Entertainment,
- Conference facilitation like registration, interpreters, etc.

Some Tour Operators also charter aircraft to bring in tourists from a country. The fares of the charters are low which enable many people who are not able to afford expensive air tickets on scheduled airlines to travel. The Charter is large volume travel and requires Hotel, Transport and tours commencing from Charter destination.

There are Luxury Cruises that travel around the world or in some part of the tour. They are normally expensive, demanding high quality and high volume.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Mention the different kinds of Tour Operators along with their broad categories.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) What are the different categories of tours?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3) Give full form of the following:

a) AP

b) CP

c) FIT

d) GIT

e) MAP

f) EP

4) Which aspects will need special attention in packaging an Incentive Tour?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

14.5 PLANNING A TOUR

For Tour Operators, while working on a tour programme, it is important to consider the following matters:

1) **Interest**: Interest of the person for whom you are planning the tour is most important—Planner must know if the theme is Sightseeing, Cultural, Religious, Historical (any particular period of history), Architectural, Wildlife, Trekking, Adventure sport or Leisure, etc.

2) **Time of Visit**: When the person wishes to visit. This is important for season, flights, tariffs etc.

3) **Duration**: Duration of the tour is important. This helps plan the tour including areas to be visited, shopping, entertainment, etc.

4) **Pace**: This is important as different nationalities and different age groups like to move differently. Some like to spend one day at each place while others like to spend two to three days or even more.

5) **Budget**: This is important as this will determine the quality of hotels, the amount of travel and activity and other variables—meals, special party, theater or shows, special visits etc.

Once we know the above parameters we need to find out:

1) The **proposed points of visit**, their location and accessibility by road, train and flights.

2) **Facilities available** i.e. types of hotels, local transport, local agent, telephones, etc.

3) **Entrance Formalities** and other rules. See Unit 6.

4) Any permits if required and who will issue and what are the requirements. See Unit 6.

5) **Any Holidays during the period of the tour**. Since it may happen that the place of visit may be closed on that day. For example, most Museums are closed on Mondays.

6) **Fairs and Festivals**. This always adds to increasing the possibility of value to the tour. For example, Goa Carnival, Holi, Urs at Ajmer or Gurpurab, etc.

7) Any **special event** taking place which can be included to enhance the usefulness of the visit like Book fair, handloom exhibition or a special crafts mela.

8) About the **time of operation** i.e. what is the season and any problems with it such as heat, snow, floods etc. One should also see **if accessibility is there** because, for example, a few important National Parks are closed for three to five months in a year and Ladakh cannot be accessed by road except between July and September, etc.

9) The **time taken to travel**. It is variable depending on the road conditions. For example a 100 Km drive may take in Gujarat 1.15 hrs, in Rajasthan 1.45 hrs. in Madhya Pradesh 2 hours and Himachal Pradesh 3 hrs. The type of transport will also determine the travel time since bus is 20 to 25 per cent slower.

10) The **time required to visit** a monument, temple National Park or a particular event and the timings.

11) The **availability of guides** and what **languages** can they speak.

12) The **details of shopping**, etc.

Here we give you an example of planning a package tour.

Nature	:	Package Tour.
Interest and Age-group	:	Forts and Palaces; 30 - 40
Budget	:	High
Time and Season	:	October (winter; peak season for tourism)
Number	:	Ten
Duration	:	One week (10 to 17 October)
Visiting Points/ Destinations	:	Delhi, Jaipur, Agra and Gwalior
Pace	:	Delhi, Jaipur and Agra—Two days each, Gwalior—One day.
Modes of Transport	:	Delhi to Jaipur (Air) Jaipur to Agra (Air) Agra to Gwalior (Road) Gwalior to Delhi (Air)
Permits	:	NIL
Holiday	:	NIL
Hotel Range	:	5 to 3 Stars.
Coach	:	AC. Deluxe at destinations.
Guides	:	Local at destinations.
Shopping	:	Delhi—Janpath and Chandni Chowk Jaipur—Johari bazar Agra—Kinari bazar Gwalior—NIL
Entertainment	:	Delhi—Food Festival Jaipur—Folk dances Agra—Theme diner; Indian Music Gwalior—NIL
Meal Plans	:	Delhi, Jaipur, Agra—AP. Gwalior—NIL
Special event	:	Textiles fair, Delhi.

After this exercise the next step is to look for information on these aspects. For example, flight timings, availability of guides, coaches, accommodation etc. Now make the itinerary for each day taking the one below as an example:

Itinerary 1. Delhi

Day 1; 10 October, Monday

8-8.30 A.M.	Breakfast.
9 A.M.	Take seats in the Coach.
9.05 A.M.	Guide explains the day's itinerary. Gives tips for do's and dont's.
9.15 A.M.	Coach moves.
9.30 A.M.	Arrival Qutab Minar.
10.30 A.M.	Departure from Qutab Minar
10.50 A.M.	Arrival Tuglaqabad Fort.
11.50 A.M.	Departure from Tuglaqabad.
12.10 P.M.	Arrival Humayun Tomb.
12.55 P.M.	Departure Humayun Tomb.
1.05 P.M.	Arrival Hotel.
1.30-2.15 P.M.	Lunch.
2.20 P.M.	Take seats in coach and departure.
2.30 P.M.	Arrival Purana Qila.
3.30 P.M.	Departure Purana Qila.
3.40 P.M.	Arrival Firozshah Kotla.
4.15 P.M.	Departure Firozshah Kotla.
4.30 P.M.	*Arrival Lodhi Gardens:
5.15 P.M.	Departure Lodhi Gardens.
5.20 P.M.	*Arrival Safdarjung Tomb.
5.50 P.M.	Departure Safdarjung Tomb.
6.00 P.M.	Arrival Hotel.
7.30 P.M.	Food Festival at Hotel.

* Interchangeable as per availability of time (Lodhi Garden opens till late).

On the basis of this you can make similar itineraries for Jaipur and Gwalior.

14.6 COSTING A TOUR

For everyone who is buying a tour, it is important what the cost is going to be. Similarly for a Tour Operator, it is important to analyse how much profit can be made over the cost.

The cost will depend on:

- Duration of the tour.
- Transport Type—Air Conditioned or Non Air conditioned, Cars, Jeeps, Mini coach or Large Coach, Charter of Boat or seat in a boat etc., Air Travel or Train Travel.
- Number of persons travelling together.
- Category of Hotels required.
- Types of rooms required.
- Types of service required—all meals or part of meals.
- excursions and sightseeings required.
- Time of operations—change of Tariff, peak season or off season rates will be applicable.
- Guides and their allowances and expenses.

A Tour Operator takes **one to two years to plan and organise the product.** He also takes risks in this regard by making advance bookings and reservations to ensure availability. In case there are no takers the Tour Operator suffers heavy losses.

Costing

Wildlife Name & Code	Persons 2-5	10-14	15+	SGL	AIRFARE
Indian Wildlife Tour (23 N/24 D) DYT/WL/00		2410	2215	800	
Andaman Is (5N/6D		635	590	150	40
	1050	1050		450	440
of Kutch (6 /WL/004			35	280	158
Rhino Land (4 N/5 D) DYT/WL/005				175	298
Kipling Tiger (7 N/8 D)			90	200	140
Ter			550	462	
			180	16	

EXPLORE
Indian Adventures!

ITINERARY

DAY 01 : ARRIVE/DELHI : Arrive Delhi. Afternoon sightseeing tour Old and New Delhi.

DAY 02 : DELHI/BAGDOGRA/GAN Morning flight to Bagdo

DISCOVER INDIA

SIKKIM
GOE-CHA LA
PASS TREK
Tour Code DYT / AVN / 002

Place : Sikkim
Time of Operation : May, June, September
: Moderat

DAY ONE

— Arrival Cochin Airport
— Transfer to Hotel Taj Malabar
— Evening — Kathakali — the famous drama of Kerala
— Stay at Cochin

DAY TWO

— Breakfast
— Sightseeing tour of Cochin b
— Overnight stay at Cochin

DAY THREE

— Breakfast
— Leave for Kozhikode (Calicut)
— Enroute visit Kerala Kalamandalam - training centre for the classical danc Kerala
— Overnight stay at Hotel

DAY FOUR

— Breakfast
— Visit Kappad Beach whe Gama first came to I

AMENITIES

- Centrally airconditioned room
- A telephone in every room
- A television in every room
- 24-hour room service
- Money exchange
- Travel counter
- Doctor on call
- Parking facilities
- Laundry and dry clean
- TV lounge
- Shopping, arcad
- Library
- Palace m
- Golf an
- Fitness

Delhi
Agra
Jaipur

FABULOUS TOURS

- A-to-Z tourism services
- Meet-and-greet (including c welcome
- Airport transfers
- Hotel Reservations
- y and speedboats, luxury



ELEPHANT
SAFARI
Tour Code DYT / SAF / 003

DAY 01 : DELHI/DEHRADUN/CAMP : Morning drive to Dehradun, later wildlife sanctuary, wher overnight at the first c

DAY 02 : ELEPHANT SAFARI : E Elephant safari, vie as spotted Deer Elephants, Tige

DAY 03 : ELEP the cr great v safa

SPICE HOLIDAYS

ST / EX 2013

NIGHTS / 04 DAYS PACKAGE FRO

COCHIN * PERIYAR

DAY ONE

* Arrival Cochin, transfer to hotel * 1800 hrs. watch Kathak dance drama of Kerala at Cochin * Stay overnight at Coch

DAY TWO

* 0700 hrs. - Leave for Thekkady, Periyar wild life sanctury (2 * Enroute visit Pepper, Cardamom, Cinnmon, Tea and Rubber p Arrival Thekkady, check in at hotel at Thekkady. * Stay overnight at

DAY THREE

* 0700 hrs. - Boat ride in the Periyar Lake to watch the wild a for Kottayam (110 kms, 3 hrs.) * Fro ney - a cru

Maharashtra

There are several **Bombay** tours starting and finishing from the Government of India Tourist Office, and suburban tours including cover the Agha Khan Palace, Parvati Temple, Saras Bagh (Gardens), the Raja Kelkar Museum, and Maheel Shjinde's Chhatri (Tel: 666697). **Aurangabad/Ajanta/Ellora Caves:** Tours of the caves take all day and start and finish at the Railway Station. The Ajanta excursion includes a stop at View Point and also takes all day. (Tel: ITDC 24143, MTDC 24713).

14.7 MARKETING MATERIAL

A Tour Operator has to prepare marketing material for selling the product. This has to be well thought and carefully planned. This will reflect the image of the company and your professionalism. This is done in various ways:

- Providing updated information on the destination,
- Printing tour brochures and confidential tariffs,
- Preparing good itineraries,
- Manuals and other reference materials of help,
- Time Tables,
- Video cassettes,
- Slide presentations,
- Special shows,
- Familiarization visit.

One has to correspond with prospective clients or sponsorers of group tours. For details of marking in Tourism see Unit 20 and 21.

14.8 TOURIST TRANSPORT OPERATION

Tourist Transport is a very integral part of the Tourism Industry. It is important to see that the transport is dependable, clean, in good condition and the driver is courteous, punctual, knowledgeable of the route and a safe driver. As mentioned already, there are mainly two categories of transport—Cars and Coaches.

There are many sizes of coaches and selection will depend on the purpose and area of operation which may vary.

The Bus transport is for long journey for those who can afford a good holiday and are looking for:

- comfortable luxury seats possibly reclaiming,
- Air-Conditioned/Non Air-Conditioned.
- Video.
- Facilities for drinks, fruits etc.
- Toilets
- Baggage Space — the Luggage compartment should be large enough to handle the baggage or there should be a good luggage rack on the bus.
- Hat Rack and Seat Pocket are also very important to keep hand baggage, jackets and reading materials.

It is for this reason that this bus is termed as a deluxe coach and not a bus. Here one must remember that whatever facilities are offered in the coach they must be functional like fan, bell, lights etc.

Tourist Transport is mostly a full charter and does not allow sharing with others. Many tour Operators have their own coaches but many hire them also from the transport operators. In fact Tourist Transport Operators have emerged as another vital component of the tourism industry.

For any journey performed, the commercial vehicle needs to take permits for that particular journey. This is obtained from State Transport Authority.

Besides permits taxes is the most complex part of the transport journey in India. Road tax is a State subject and it varies from state to state. A Tour Operator has to take this into account while planning and packaging a tour.

Check Your Progress 2

1) What aspects would you consider while working out a tour programme?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) What is the distinction between a bus and a deluxe coach?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

14.9 LET US SUM UP

This Unit has given you an idea about the role, functions and utility of a Tour Operator in the Tourism System. While working in any service segment of tourism this important information is of use to you.

Tour Operators job is a difficult one. It is a must that what is offered as a product to the tourist has been experienced by the Tour Operator or his agent/representative/official. This is necessary to know the quality of services one intends to put in the package. Similarly a distinct knowledge of tourist transport operations is also necessary.

14.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) Mention the kinds like in house, individual etc. In categories mention Inbout Tour Operator etc. along with the wholesaler and retailer. See Sec. 14.2.

2) Like, Escorted, hosted and package. See Sec. 14.2.

3) Check your answers with Plans and Tariffs of hotels in Sub-sec. 14.3.1.

4) Baggage handling, cuisine, gifts etc. See Sec. 14.4.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Interest, time of visit, budget etc. See. Sec. 14.5.

2) Condition of seats, video, air-conditioning etc. See Sec. 14.8.