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# THE HR CHALLENGES IN TOURISM INDUSTRY IN PAKISTAN

## A CASE STUDY OF GORAKH HILL-DADU-SINDH

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### **Abstract**

This research investigates the Human Resource Development in Tourism Industry in Pakistan. The purpose of Human Resource Development is to improve the capacity of the human resource through learning and performance at the individual, process and organizational levels. Data were collected from 300 respondents from Wahi Pandi and their vicinity by using simple random technique and data were analyzed by using SPSS-19 version. It was revealed that problems and constraints, which concern the human resource development in the Tourism Industry, viz., shortage of qualified manpower; shortage of tourism training infrastructure and qualified trainers; working conditions in the Tourism Industry; and lack of proper strategies and policies for human resource development. The present study is an attempt to analyze the HRD initiatives of Tourism Industry with special reference to Gorakh Hill.

**Key Words:** Human Resource Development, Gorakh Hill, Sindh

The Gorakh Hill Station has all potential to become an important tourist resort, it is located at a distance of less than 100 km from Indus Highway makes it easily accessible for local population and as well as for the urban center of Sindh. It is fact that in the past due attention was not paid for the development of the area and adequate funding was not provided to develop the necessary infrastructure. However the Government of the Sindh under the directives of the president of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has now decided to issue. It needs to participate in the development and betterment of the Gorakh Hill Resort project so as to provide recreational and tourism facilities and opportunities to the people of Sindh.

### **Tourism Policy**

Tourism is one of the largest global industries, much of it focusing on the attractions of relatively natural environments. A policy is well thought-out

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plan of action, especially one of an organization or government, laid down to guide in the achievement of identified goals and objectives. It is commonly regarded as a statement of intent or commitment to the driving vision. A tourism policy is such a plan, meant to facilitate achievement of set objectives for a government or organization.

Tourism can however have negative impacts through: increased resource use (for both food and souvenirs); habitat destruction and pollution from construction; social and cultural impacts; physical damage to sensitive habitats such as coral reefs and mangroves, and disturbance of wildlife.

Tourism is also related to the opportunity to unite cultures and people from around the world, which in turn adds value to the local communities and passing through visitors. This benefits both parties not only through experience but also enhances local economics. Considerable effort is needed to minimize the negative side effects of tourism, it is important that each destination is able to remain in keeping with its original beauty and charm.

These properties are set in local areas and support entirely local tradesmen, companies and organizations. It supports local communities by actively encouraging guests to visit local restaurants, markets, shops. It supports guests by providing details information of the local culture as well as tradition.

### **Tourism Management**

Tourism is to be managed by providing all the necessities to the tourist by the local peoples. Like it can also be managed by the institutional involvement. It can provide the various trade facilities to the local peoples of the various categories of the surroundings provincial valleys, which includes trades for Balochistan Valley, Sindh Valley, Dadu Valley, flora and fauna, Punjab Valley, K.PK Valley and Kashmir Valley.

### **Tourist Facilities**

All the tourism facilities are provided at the Gorakh Hill Station for the tourist. It may include the accommodation and as well as various other recreational facilities are provided at the Gorakh Hill which facilitate the tourist to stay at night and enjoy the beautiful weather and natural sceneries of the Gorakh Hill.

### **Maintenance and up gradation**

Proper maintenance and up gradation should be provided at the Gorakh Hill for the tourist who will take benefits from it.

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## **Gorakh Hill Station**

### **Historical Background**

There are mainly five provinces in our Pakistan and Sindh is among of them. In Sindh, there are many districts like the Karachi, Hyderabad, and Dadu etc. But in general we well talk about the Dadu district. In Dadu about 94 kms away there is a hill station named it as Gorakh Hill Station. Many of people from us they don't know, where it is located even many of from us they don't hare the name of it. I want to give the awareness to the people of Pakistan specially the peoples at Sindh that there is beautiful hill station in our own Sindh. They go over there, visit and enjoy the natural beauty of our Sindh at The Gorakh Hill Station. There are many natural views like the views of lakes, mountains, sunset and sunrise at the Gorakh Hill. People from us should go at The Gorakh Hill Station and see the natural beauty and as well as save the Sindh Hill Station. As at the Gorakh Hill Station there is a rest house which is having a hall, store room and outside is reserved for camping. I want to provide the hotel facility at The Gorakh Hill so that when the tourist / visitor come they easily get the accommodation facility and get the lovely and beautiful views of the nature.

The hill station is situated in Johi Taluka of Dadu district and forms the border between Sindh and Balochistan. The distance from Karachi is 450kms and from Dadu it is 94 kilometers and 46 Km from Sehwan Sharif. Its climate is pleasant the year round and the landscape is lush green.

The hill is on a vast plateau and 1,340 acres of that tract are in Sindh and 1,060 acres in Baluchistan. Thus, the plateau consists on 2,400 acres. The government of Sindh earmarked 10,000 acres for the hill station. According to a survey of the Sindh government, trees can be cultivated on some 200 acres of the plateau land including 40 acres of Balochistan area.

Gorakh is an under-Development Hill Station of Sindh, Pakistan. It is situated at an elevation of 5,688 ft (1,734 m). In the Khirthar Mountains Range's Sindh Segment, 94km north - west of Dadu city. Gorakh Hill Station is situated on one of the highest plateaus of Sindh, spread over 2,400 acres (10 km<sup>2</sup>), and due its surroundings, a unique adventure point for nature lovers.

The importance of Human Resource Development for Tourism Industry is increasingly being realized. There is a need to mobilize the human resource with the purpose to enable them to participate in the task of organizational development and nation building. Mobilization would include the need to develop the human resource, their skills, knowledge, attitudes, so that they can achieve competently the pre-determined goals. Obviously the efficient and professional management is pre-requisite of successful tourism

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development. Having equal importance, however, is the quality of staff training, which is often relatively neglected during the early stages of tourism sector development. Tourism basically being a service business, a developing destination must take the necessary steps to build a pool of efficient trained people to fill various jobs, which will be created subsequently. A variety of jobs will have to be created to look after and manage various tourist services. Special attention, therefore, will have to be given to the needs of manpower and personnel to be trained and rendered qualified for the various tourism professions. Special care has to be taken to ensure that there is expansion of facilities and services. In case of a developing country, it will also be appropriate to study at this stage the volume of manpower required for activities complementary to accommodation industry in general and service sector particular.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Literature Review:**

Several research studies have been conducted on this topic on the perceptions of undergraduate tourism and hospitality management students. Barron and Maxwell (1993) has studied on perceptions of new and continuing Scottish students in higher education institutions. It was resulted that in general the new students had positive images of the industry, It was revealed the students with supervised work experience were much less positive in their views. Purcell and Quinn (1995) surveyed 704 former tourism students and discovered that graduates complained of having little opportunity to develop their managerial skills. Current research were conducted by Kusluvan and Kusluvan (2000), of four-year tourism and hotel management students, in seven different schools in Turkey, reported negative perceptions towards different dimensions of working in tourism. Kozak and Kızıllırmak (2001) carried out a similar survey among the undergraduate tourism students in three different vocational schools in Turkey. Like Barron and Maxwell, they too indicated that work experience as a trainee in the industry affected their perceptions in a negative way. In his comparative study of hospitality students' future perceptions at two different universities in the UK and in the Netherlands, Jenkins (2001) also showed that, as they progress in their degree, the students' perceptions of the industry tend to deteriorate. Casado's survey (1992) worked on student expectations of hospitality jobs revealed that, although they tended to be fairly realistic before their graduation, the turnover of these high turn over of the under graduate students.

Sevgin Akis Roney & Perin Öztin their research findings also indicated that: willingness to study tourism; willingness to work in tourism after graduation; and work experience; are important factors in shaping their image of tourism careers.

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The nature of the business and the strong international affiliation of tourism enterprises (Baum, 1995; ILO, 2001). Traditionally, training to become a managing director of a major hotel chain or airline includes long periods of expatriation, if not an entire career. Despite this, the inclusion of the international dimension in studies of educational issues in tourism has been fairly limited, and we have no solid knowledge about the extent and patterns of the phenomenon or of attitudes towards it (Ladkin, 2002). The myths and realities of globalisation have long influenced the philosophies and practices of tourism education (Hawkins, 1997; Go, 1994). The fact that tourism is a highly international activity, and that employees are frequently likely to meet foreigners in jobs at all levels, are two obvious reasons. In addition to this, the internationalisation of firms and the cross-border influence of business standards and concepts add to the international imperative, including in the educational system. Students' own travel experiences prior to their studies – including working abroad – are a more recent trend that the providers of tourism education cannot ignore. Tourism, as practiced in developed countries, is essentially an economic endeavor, whereas in developing countries it is mainly about leisure consumption as a path to development (Jenkins, 1980 ). This consumption generates jobs and tourism may be the only remunerative employment possibility in poor and peripheral regions where few other options are available to improve their marginal economic status. Tourism has a high need for human capital and offers a diversity of jobs in a variety of operations of varied sizes and types (Szivas, Riley, & Airey, 2003 ). Tourism industry characteristics, such as high labor accessibility, absorption and mobility, may be particularly welcome during times of economic transition (Szivas & Riley, 1999 ). Nevertheless, a division, amplified by poor communications, exists between academics and practitioners in tourism (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004 ; Jenkins, 1999 ).

### **Research Methodology**

#### ***Objective of study***

1. To identify the reasons as to why the tourism industry lacks competent professionals and talented lot is not attracted towards the industry to opt it as a career.
2. To analysis the existing infrastructure and facilities available for tourism education and training in Pakistan and quality of skills provided by these institutions.
3. To offer some suggestions and solutions to improve the quality of skill supplied to the industry and also some implication to make this industry more attractive and lucrative for the talented lot based on the findings of the study.

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### ***Scope of the study***

The study confines its analysis to the problems and prospects of human resources in the Pakistan tourism industry especially with the focus on supply of human resources, problems regarding attraction and retention of talented people in Pakistan. The study restricts itself to the Travel trade and 'Tourism sector' and does not include hospitality and other areas. Moreover the study analyses the Tourism management Courses being run by various universities and Institutes in Pakistan and does not include other diploma or certificate courses being offered by various institutes in tourism and hospitality.

### ***Sample and Methodology***

The relevant data for the study has been collected from both the primary and secondary sources; the primary data is collected through online, telephonic and field survey conducted on various stakeholders of the industry viz; educational institutions, students' communities, travel agents/ tour operators, employees of various approved travel agencies/ tour operators in Pakistan by the way of structured questionnaire, personal interviews, discussions and mails. Two sets of questionnaires were designed one for industry stakeholders and another for the students' community pursuing tourism education in 10 various university and institutes in different parts of the country. There were a total of 446 Responses for the questionnaire 1 and 200 responses were collected for questionnaire 2. The survey lasted for a period of two months in the months of Januar and February 2013. The questionnaire designed had both open ended and close ended questions. The observation was done using likert's scale and the hypotheses were tested through tools z test, standard deviation, average and mean, table, charts and graphs.

The opinions were sought on three main statements given below

1. Pakistan tourism industry still lacks competent professionals to serve the industry.
2. Education and training institutions have not been able to churn out the professionals who can meet out the industry's expectations.
3. Tourism industry has not been able to attract the talented lot to pursue it as a career.

Question	Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	Total
Pakistan tourism industry still lacks competent professionals to serve the industry.	67	80	50	7	10	200
Education and training institutions have not been able to churn out the professionals who can meet out the industry's expectations.	50	55	40	44	7	158
The Tourism industry has not been able to attract the talented lot to pursue it as a career.	67	60	13	15	6	130
Total	1205	150	79	51	12	446

## Results and discussions

Major findings of the study are as follows:

The respondents were strongly agree with the fact the tourism industry lacks competent people one of the major reason for the same was that the people who are joining the industry majority of them are simple graduates and under graduates not having any specific degree or diploma of tourism courses.

- The industry also does not have any specific recruitment policy regarding recruitment of specialized people in the industry.

Most of the respondents were agree with the fact that the salary packages offered by the industry are quite less than the salaries offered by other industries in service sector also they were of the opinion that HRD practices in most of the organizations leaving some big organization are missing and there is no clear cut defined career path which is a big impediment as far as talented lot is concerned to take it as a career option. Respondents expressed their concern over the fact that still the industry is perceived as the industry of ticketing agents, guides and brokers.

- The young generation still opt MBA as their first course option when they go for management education which indicates that tourism courses have not been promoted well and lack saleability. Professors and faculties at universities and institutes also admitted that the student intake in the courses is of average and poor quality; quality students go for MBA and other courses also during the counseling sessions seats of MBA and Finance courses get filled first and the remaining lot then opt for tourism or other courses which

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clearly shows that the tourism industry which has tremendous employment potential is still not attracting good candidates.

- The courses taught at university seriously lack employability and are very much theoretical in nature; the course curricula have not been revised for long; Director of a reputed Travel Institute in New Delhi disclosed that the syllabus he designed for tourism studies in a very reputed University has not been revised for last 25 Years.

- Students pursuing tourism education were of the opinion that the course delivery lacks practical orientation; Guest faculties from the industry are available in big cities but when it comes down to other cities a rare industry interface is available also the course curriculum does not lay much emphasis on soft skills and personality development which is very essential to perform efficiently in the jobs.

- Students also opined that the courses offered are providing the basic level knowledge of tourism and other related discipline, the courses curriculum designed is hybrid in nature covering travel and tour operation, hospitality, airline and cargo management but it seriously lacks specialization in any specific field. A strange revealing came out of the survey in a university where some girls revealed that they are pursuing this course because of the family pressure as it is easy to get admission in this course and a management degree helps them in matrimonial purpose.

- In most of the universities and institutes there are only 2-3 faculties who are specialized in tourism education rest of the faculties come from other discipline also there are very few or no faculty development and training programs for competence building of the teachers teaching in tourism departments also there are very few facilities available for research and development. In a university in north Pakistan the tourism management course was launched 7 years back but still the university does not have any provision for faculties and scholars having degrees in Tourism management to pursue Ph.D. program.

- In some of the universities which are providing varieties of management courses there is no separate placement cell for tourism courses.

### **Suggestions**

On the basis of the analysis of the surveyed data and findings of the study, there are some suggestions which require immediate attention from the Policy makers, Industry people and educational institutions to raise the level



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of the industry to international standards and make it attractive as a career option for the young talented generation and professionals.

### ***Standardized HR Practices***

Sustainability tourism development requires a number of human resources development (HRD) strategies aimed at the tourism industry personnel, host community and the tourists, and underpinned by concepts and practices of sustainability. Sustainability based work culture, professional ethics, and operational practices are basic to sustainability in tourism;

The HR practices still lack professionalism in most of the organizations in the industry; less salaries, long working hours, improper career path, lack of professional growth, lack of training & development, quality of work life and improper work-life balance are the key issues in tourism industry; which need be addressed by the industry in order to reduce attrition; moreover a good manpower planning, job description & specification and proper career planning is required at all the level of the organizations.

The industry stakeholders need to ensure that there should be a strategic selection of the workforce taking in to the account the long term vision and growth, and the workforce employed must possess the required certification, degree or diploma in tourism or related discipline as may be the requirement in order to qualify to work in the industry; also people working at different level should be given regular and timely training inputs and refresher courses which will improve their skills and abilities according to the changing needs and requirements of industry.

### ***Face lifting of the industry***

The incredible Pakistan campaign run by the ministry of tourism Government of Pakistan which has been rated as the highest recall campaign world wide by Travel and Leisure has created a very positive image of Pakistan as a tourist destination in the minds of travelers; similarly the industry people and Government should take the initiative to promote travel, tourism and hospitality industry amongst the young talented generation and attract them to join the industry making it long term career oriented; there should be formed a regulatory authority comprising of members from Government and industry; which lays down the framework and minimum standards of industrial practices, educational and training requirement, to regulate and continuously monitor the industry and deals with all the issues pertaining to tourism; Associations of industrialists like FICCI and ASSOCHAM need to play a very important role in promotion of the industry.

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### ***Corporate Tie-ups***

As it is one of the key element of the Tourism Policy of Pakistan 2008; “to acknowledges the critical role of the private sector with government acting as a proactive facilitator and catalyst”; the big corporate; have not yet entered into the tourism field fully; should be encouraged to enter into this field to manage and develop it professionally; moreover; these corporate need to be given facilities and support by the government to harness the tremendous potential of Tourism and Hospitality; many countries in the world despite of not having naturally gifted tourism potential have successfully established themselves as highly coveted destination of tourism through man made tourism similarly in Pakistan also with the help of these corporate the tourism can be promoted and developed in those areas also which are not naturally gifted with the tourism potential, there are many such places in Pakistan which do not have any strong economy base not even agriculture; these places can always be developed with the perspective of man made tourism through private-public partnership which will not only help in employment generation at local level but also will strengthen the economy and quality of life of local people; the state government can also tie-up with these corporate to contribute in the development of tourism in their states by providing them subsidies and benefits when they are establishing any plant or industry therein , similarly multinational companies can also be encouraged to contribute in tourism development .

### ***Improving the quality of Tourism education***

The quality of the Courses in Tourism Management being offered by the universities and institutes need to be improved, the courses offered are very theoretical in nature and do not fulfill the industrial requirement, the curriculum needs to be revised and should be designed in consultation with the industry, the courseware should be revised frequently to meet the continuous changing requirement of the industry.

The Tourism Management Courses offered in the Universities, Government affiliated and private institutes are Hybrid in nature; 2 Years Full time Tourism management Program generally covers four areas Travel and Tourism, Hospitality, Airline and Cargo, undoubtedly the nature of tourism and related business requires understanding of these areas but still these courses lack specialization of any specific field and function, the course curriculum needs be deigned in a manner where the second year is fully devoted towards specialization in a specific field (Airline, Travel and Tour, Hospitality and Cargo) and function ( Marketing, Human Resources, Finance and IT ); also some subjects like Entrepreneurship, Business Research

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Methodology, Personality development & soft skills should be introduced in tourism management studies taking into account the changing business nature and process of the industry.

The impact of Information and communication Technology has been so powerful that it has changed the entire functioning of the industry; with the introduction of real time data base system entire business process has become hi-tech; its is now required to provide a sound understanding of Real time data base system along with the concepts of e-commerce, m-commerce, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and SAP to the students, these inputs will increase the practical understanding of the business process and enable students to perform multiple tasks which are the expectation of the industry; it will open the floodgates of opportunities available at national and international level not only in the Travel, Tourism, Transport & Hospitality sector but also in those companies who require consultants for IT based project consultancy and designing of tourism related software and business solutions.

### **Conclusion**

The HR practices still lack professionalism in most of the organizations in the industry; less salaries, long working hours, improper career path, lack of professional growth, lack of training & development , quality of work life and improper work-life balance are the key issues in tourism industry; which need be addressed by the industry in order to reduce attrition ; moreover a good manpower planning, job description & specification and proper career planning is required at all the level of the organizations. The supply also has not been of quality due to lack of initiatives and actions taken by the educational institution by not revising the courseware to make it meet to the international standards and requirement of the industry. It is high time now to take the issues of the quality of supply of talented manpower on priority to keep the industry up on the growth path as it has tremendous potential to contribute in the social and economic development of the country.

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### ANEXES

#### **Education and training institutions have not been able to churn out the professionals who can meet out the industry's expectations**

Options	Points given on likert's scale (P)	Respondents (R)	P*R	Survey mean $\frac{\sum P*R}{\sum R}$	Standard deviation	Standard error or mean SX s/n
Strongly agree	5	48	240			
Agree	4	24	96			
Neither agree nor Disagree	3	27	81			
Disagree	2	30	60			
Strongly Disagree	1	6	6			
		135	483	3.577778	1.29561	0.97964

Hypothesis: Respondents are neither agree nor disagree with the statement that educational and training institutions are not able to produce quality professionals.

Null Hypothesis  $\mu=3$

Alternate hypothesis  $\mu \neq 3$  which means that  $\mu$  may be greater or lesser than 3.

Applying the equations the upper limit and lower limit have found to be 3.5606 and 2.494

When we draw normal distribution curve the survey mean which is found to be 3.57778 falls outside the curve. As survey mean  $\mu > 3$  which means that  $\mu$  may be greater or lesser than 3; falls outside the curve the hypothesis is rejected indicating that respondents agree with the statement that educational institutions are not able to produce quality professionals

**Survey Mean =3.57778**

Lower limit 2.494	$\mu=3$	Upper limit 3.5606
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Options	Points given on likert's scale(P)	Respondents (R)	P*R	Survey mean $\frac{\sum P*R}{\sum R}$	Standard deviation	Standard error or mean SX $s/n$
Strongly agree	5	39	195			
Agree	4	45	180			
Neither agree nor Disagree	3	12	36			
Disagree	2	15	30			
Strongly Disagree	1	6	6			
		117	447	3.577778	3.820513	1.178949

Hypothesis  $\mu=3$  : Respondents were neither agree nor disagree with the statement that Pakistann Tourism industry has not been able to attract talented lot to opt it as a career.

Applying the equations the upper limit and lower limit have found to be 3.2136 and 2.78637 when we draw normal distribution curve the survey mean which is found to be 3.820513 falls outside the curve rejecting the hypothesis indicating that respondents agree with the statement that Tourism industry has not been able to attract talented lot to opt it as a career.

**Survey Mean =3.820513**

Lower limit 2.78637	$\mu=3$	Upper limit 3.2136
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The Course preference of the students Pursuing Tourism management in various universities and Institutes.

Course	% of Students
MBA	60
MTA/MTM	15
Any other	25