

# REVAMPING THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN KARNATAKA THROUGH ENHANCED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

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## Abstract

Post COVID Medical tourism is at a junction scenario. The industry is still using data, information, concepts, and processes that were developed more than 2-decade years ago. The medical tourism industry has not progressed significantly, assuming innovations widely available in other sectors. Still, medical centres are focused on they are the best & they feel that "I am the best, come to me" rather than "why will a consumer choose them"; OR "send me a WhatsApp" rather than "understand Customer Experience/Journey" that will help attract them to the centre. In this article covered eco-system creation in the field of medical tourism & Health Care industry, using the different stake holders like Hospital, Consultants and International patients, in these connections how hospitals, Agents (Consultants) can add value to the medical facility to attract more patients from the abroad.

## Keywords:

KSTDS, MT, LLP and Health Tourism (HT).

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This article seeks to ascertain how the associated ecosystem can be tweaked to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state through enhanced customer experience. In the process, this seeks to fulfil "to understand how the hospitals can contribute their power to the growth of the medical tourism industry" objective of the study. The primary data collected from the three categories of respondents, namely, KSTDC executives (numbering 50), tourism consultants (numbering 30) and customers (numbering 300) is analysed for the purpose.

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Tourism industry has been rising fast in the country. None believed in the past that the industry would emerge as a major revenue generator for the country. If one realises that a good chunk of the revenue is denominated in a foreign currency, one will appreciate even more the role played by the tourism sector in the country's economy. In the circumstances, the government of India, the various state governments and the agencies or organisations set up by these governments departmentally or otherwise should focus on providing positive customer experience. Having generated positive

customer experience in this manner, they should manage the positive customer experience in such a way as to promote the tourism industry. Being a concurrent list item, the Central as well as the State governments have been putting in efforts at the national level and the regional level to promote the tourism sector. In Karnataka, the department of tourism through one of its agencies, namely, the Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC) has been operating hotels and restaurants among other things. Thus the perception of customer experience management on the part of the KSTDC workforce is of relevance to the state's tourism industry. But then the tourism industry as well as the hospitality segment of the tourism industry have problems too in handling the various issues that arise in their day-to-day operations. The issues need to be identified and dealt with promptly. But by the very nature of its activity, the tourism industry has to utilise the services of intermediaries for its operations. Intermediaries complement the tourism industry. Thus to enhance customer experience and accelerate the growth of the tourism industry, these issues have to be addressed jointly with the regulator. After all the regulator and the government are the facilitators of business. Hence the regulatory regime has to be fine-tuned in such a way as to engender an ideal ecosystem in which the state's tourism and hospitality industry can be revamped through enhanced customer experience.

### **3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Customer experience management is an important aspect of the tourism industry. Tourism players have to target an enhanced level of customer experience leading to positive customer experience. Having generated positive customer experience, the tourism player should manage it optimally to improve the bottom line of the business. Such optimal management will facilitate promotion of the tourism industry eventually. Hence this study sets out to gauge the level of perception of customer experience management on the part of the stakeholders associated with the tourism industry - in particular, the KSTDC executives and travel

intermediaries associated with the tourism industry and last but not least, the customers themselves. However, customer experience cannot be enhanced unless and until the problems that plague the tourism industry, the hospitality industry and the intermediaries thereof are addressed. Hence this study sets out to devise measures that can address the said problems. Since no measure can yield results unless and until the associated ecosystem is fine-tuned, the study seeks to examine how the ecosystem can be tweaked to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state of Karnataka through enhanced customer experience.

### **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study is descriptive in nature and has used the 'fact-finding' survey method.

#### **4.1 Summary of findings**

In the following paragraphs, the findings arrived at by analysing the primary data collected from KSTDC executives, tourism consultants and customers is furnished.

#### **4.2 Analysis of primary data collected from KSTDC executives**

In the following paragraphs, the primary data collected from the 50 KSTDC executives is analysed.

#### **4.3 Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience**

It is believed in informed circles that the tourism and hospitality industry in Karnataka could do with a revamp that is targeted at enhancing customer experience. However, to give the revamp, certain fine-tuning measures are needed. Hence the researcher sought to know from the respondents the fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience. Their replies to the query appear in the following Table.

**Table-8.1**

**Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience**

| <b>Fine-tuning measures</b>                                                                          | <b>Number of respondents</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings.                    | 46                           |
| On outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed.                  | 46                           |
| Tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers | 44                           |

46 respondents state that GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings. 46 respondents state that on outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed. 44 state that tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers.

### **5 Analysis of primary data collected from tourism consultants**

In the following paragraphs, the primary data collected from the 30 tourism consultants is analysed.

#### **5.1 Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience**

It is believed in informed circles that the tourism and hospitality industry in Karnataka could do with a revamp that is targeted at enhancing customer experience. However, to give the revamp, certain fine-tuning measures are needed. Hence the researcher sought to know from the respondents the fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience. Their replies to the query appear in the following Table.

**Table -2**

**Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience**

| <b>Fine-tuning measures</b>                                                                          | <b>Number of respondents</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings.                    | 27                           |
| On outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed.                  | 27                           |
| Tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers | 25                           |

27 respondents state that GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings. 27 respondents state that on outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed. 25 state that tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers

### **6. Analysis of primary data collected from customers**

In the following paragraphs, the primary data collected from the 300 customers is analysed.

#### **6.1 Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience**

It is believed in informed circles that the tourism and hospitality industry in Karnataka could do with a revamp that is targeted at enhancing customer experience. However, to give the revamp, certain fine-tuning measures are needed. Hence the researcher sought to know from the respondents the fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience. Their replies to the query appear in the following Table.

**Table-3**  
**Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience**

| Fine-tuning measures                                                                                 | Number of respondents |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings.                    | 133                   |
| On outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed.                  | 133                   |
| Tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers | 108                   |

133 respondents state that GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings. 133 respondents state that on outbound tours, only that part of the service

rendered in India should be taxed. 108 state that tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers

**7 Crosstab with respect to consultants**

In the following Tables, crosstabs are attempted to summarise the relationship between variables concerning the category, Consultants.

- ✓ Among the 27 respondents who state that GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings, eight are sole proprietorships, 18 are partnerships and one is an LLP.
- ✓ Among the 27 respondents who state that on outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed, 10 are sole proprietorships, 16 are partnerships and one is an LLP.
- ✓ Among the 25 respondents who state that tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers, nine are sole proprietorships, 15 are partnerships and one is an LLP.

**Crosstab – 1**

Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience Vs Constitution of the respondents (SPSS Variables: \$T\_8.2\_Fine\_tuning\_measures\*T\_3.5 Crosstabulation)

| Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience | Constitution of the respondents |             |     | Total |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|-----|-------|
|                                                                                                                               | Sole proprietorship             | Partnership | LLP |       |
| GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings.                                             | 8                               | 18          | 1   | 27    |
| On outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed.                                           | 10                              | 16          | 1   | 27    |
| Tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers                          | 9                               | 15          | 1   | 25    |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                                                                  | 11                              | 18          | 1   | 30    |

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

**Crosstab – 2**

Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience Vs Business experience of the respondents. (SPSS Variables: \$T\_8.2\_Fine\_tuning\_measures\*T\_3.6 Crosstabulation)

| Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience | Business experience of the respondents |                             |                    | Total |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------|
|                                                                                                                               | Up to and including 10 years           | Above 10 but below 20 years | 20 years and above |       |
| GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings.                                             | 6                                      | 10                          | 11                 | 27    |
| On outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed.                                           | 5                                      | 9                           | 13                 | 27    |
| Tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers                          | 4                                      | 10                          | 11                 | 25    |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                                                                  | 6                                      | 10                          | 14                 | 30    |
| Percentages and totals are based on respondents.                                                                              |                                        |                             |                    |       |
| a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.                                                                                      |                                        |                             |                    |       |

✓ Among the 27 respondents who state that GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings, six have “Up to and including 10 years”, 10 have “Above 10 but below 20 years” and 11 have “20 years and above” of business experience.

✓ Among the 27 respondents who state that on outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed, five have “Up to and including 10 years”, nine have “Above 10 but below 20

years” and 13 have “20 years and above” of business experience.

✓ Among the 25 respondents who state that tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers, four have “Up to and including 10 years”, 10 have “Above 10 but below 20 years” and 11 have “20 years and above” of business experience.

**8 Crosstab with respect to Customers**

In the following Tables, crosstabs are attempted to summarise the relationship between variables concerning the category, customers.

**Crosstab – 3**

Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience Vs Sex of the respondents. (SPSS Variables: \$T\_8.3\_Fine\_tuning\_measures\*T\_3.7 Crosstabulation)

| Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience | Sex of the respondents |        | Total |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------|-------|
|                                                                                                                               | Male                   | Female |       |
| GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings.                                             | 91                     | 42     | 133   |
| On outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed.                                           | 92                     | 41     | 133   |

|                                                                                                      |     |    |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| Tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers | 74  | 34 | 108 |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                                         | 125 | 57 | 182 |
| Percentages and totals are based on respondents.                                                     |     |    |     |
| a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.                                                             |     |    |     |

- ✓ Among the 133 respondents who state that GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings, 91 are male and 42 are female.
- ✓ Among the 133 respondents who state that on outbound tours, only that part of

the service rendered in India should be taxed, 92 are male and 41 are female.

- ✓ Among the 108 respondents who state that tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers, 74 are male and 34 are female.

**Crosstab – 4**

Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience Vs Age of the respondents (SPSS Variables: \$T\_8.3\_Fine\_tuning\_measures\*T\_3.8 Crosstabulation)

| Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience | Age of the respondents       |                             |                                 |                    | Total |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|-------|
|                                                                                                                               | Up to and including 20 years | Above 20 but below 35 years | 35 and above but below 55 years | 55 years and above |       |
| GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings.                                             | 19                           | 41                          | 47                              | 26                 | 133   |
| On outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed.                                           | 18                           | 41                          | 48                              | 26                 | 133   |
| Tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers                          | 14                           | 38                          | 41                              | 15                 | 108   |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                                                                  | 24                           | 59                          | 68                              | 31                 | 182   |
| Percentages and totals are based on respondents.                                                                              |                              |                             |                                 |                    |       |
| a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.                                                                                      |                              |                             |                                 |                    |       |

- ✓ Among the 133 respondents who state that GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings, 19 are “Up to and including 20 years”, 41 are “Above 20 but below 35 years”, 47 are “35 and above but below 55 years” and 26 are “55 years and above” of age.

- ✓ Among the 133 respondents who state that on outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed, 18 are “Up to and including 20 years”, 41 are “Above 20

but below 35 years”, 48 are “35 and above but below 55 years” and 26 are “55 years and above” of age.

- ✓ Among the 108 respondents who state that tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers, 14 are “Up to and including 20 years”, 38 are “Above 20 but below 35 years”, 41 are “35 and above but below 55 years” and 15 are “55 years and above” of age.



**Crosstab – 5**

Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience Vs Marital status of the respondents (SPSS Variables: \$T\_8.3\_Fine\_tuning\_measures\*T\_3.9 Crosstabulation)

| Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience | Marital status of the respondents |           | Total      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
|                                                                                                                               | Married                           | Single    |            |
| GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings.                                             | 84                                | 49        | 133        |
| On outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed.                                           | 84                                | 49        | 133        |
| Tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers                          | 59                                | 49        | 108        |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                                                                  | <b>110</b>                        | <b>72</b> | <b>182</b> |
| Percentages and totals are based on respondents.                                                                              |                                   |           |            |
| a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.                                                                                      |                                   |           |            |

- ✓ Among the 133 respondents who state that GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings, 84 are married and 49 are single.
- ✓ Among the 133 respondents who state that on outbound tours, only that part of the service

rendered in India should be taxed, 84 are married and 49 are single.

- ✓ Among the 108 respondents who state that tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers, 59 are married and 49 are single.

**Crosstab – 6**

Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience Vs Occupation of the respondents (SPSS Variables: \$T\_8.3\_Fine\_tuning\_measures\*T\_3.10 Crosstabulation)

| Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience | Occupation of the respondents |              |                   |           | Total      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|
|                                                                                                                               | Business                      | Professional | Salaried employee | Student   |            |
| GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings.                                             | 24                            | 38           | 39                | 32        | 133        |
| On outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed.                                           | 25                            | 38           | 38                | 32        | 133        |
| Tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers                          | 15                            | 34           | 31                | 28        | 108        |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                                                                  | <b>32</b>                     | <b>53</b>    | <b>56</b>         | <b>41</b> | <b>182</b> |
| Percentages and totals are based on respondents.                                                                              |                               |              |                   |           |            |
| a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.                                                                                      |                               |              |                   |           |            |

- ✓ Among the 133 respondents who state that GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings, 24 are business persons, 38 are professionals, 39 are salaried employees and 32 are students.
- ✓ Among the 133 respondents who state that on outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed, 25 are business persons, 38 are professionals, 38 are salaried employees and 32 are students.

- ✓ Among the 108 respondents who state that tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers, 15 are business persons, 34 are professionals, 31 are salaried employees and 28 are students.

**8.1 Crosstab with respect to KSTDC executives**

In the following Tables, crosstabs are attempted to summarise the relationship between variables concerning the category, KSTDC executives.

**Crosstab – 8.1**

Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience Vs Age of the respondents (SPSS Variables: \$T\_8.1\_Fine\_tuning\_measures\*T\_3.2 Crosstabulation)

| Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience | Age of the respondents |             |                | Total |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|----------------|-------|
|                                                                                                                               | 25-35 years            | 36-46 years | Above 46 years |       |
| GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings.                                             | 17                     | 17          | 12             | 46    |
| On outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed.                                           | 17                     | 19          | 10             | 46    |
| Tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers                          | 15                     | 18          | 11             | 44    |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                                                                  | 18                     | 19          | 13             | 50    |
| Percentages and totals are based on respondents.                                                                              |                        |             |                |       |
| a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.                                                                                      |                        |             |                |       |

- ✓ Among the 46 respondents who state that GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings, 17 are “25-35 years”, 17 are “36-46 years” and 12 are “Above 46 years” of age.
- ✓ Among the 46 respondents who state that on outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed, 17 are “25-

35 years”, 19 are “36-46 years” and 10 are “Above 46 years” of age.

- ✓ Among the 44 respondents who state that tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers, 15 are “25-35 years”, 18 are “36-46 years” and 11 are “Above 46 years” of age.



**Crosstab – 8.2**

Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience Vs Educational qualification of the respondents (SPSS Variables: \$T\_8.1\_Fine\_tuning\_measures\*T\_3.3 Crosstabulation)

| Fine-tuning measures required to revamp the tourism and hospitality industry in the state to help enhance customer experience | Educational qualification of the respondents |               |          | Total |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------|----------|-------|
|                                                                                                                               | Doctorate                                    | Post-Graduate | Graduate |       |
| GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings.                                             | 3                                            | 14            | 29       | 46    |
| On outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed.                                           | 4                                            | 15            | 27       | 46    |
| Tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers                          | 2                                            | 14            | 28       | 44    |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                                                                  | 4                                            | 15            | 31       | 50    |
| Percentages and totals are based on respondents.                                                                              |                                              |               |          |       |
| a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.                                                                                      |                                              |               |          |       |

- ✓ Among the 46 respondents who state that GST should not be levied on export of services against foreign exchange earnings, three are doctorates, 14 are post-graduates and 29 are graduates.
- ✓ Among the 46 respondents who state that on outbound tours, only that part of the service rendered in India should be taxed, four are doctorates, 15 are post-graduates and 27 are graduates.
- ✓ Among the 44 respondents who state that tour operators should be allowed CENVAT credit on service tax charged by all their service providers, two are doctorates, 14 are post-graduates and 28 are graduates.

**8. CONCLUSION**

Tourism promotion had better be left to the private players with the government ideally playing the role of the facilitator. It should focus on infrastructure projects that require a longer period to return the capital invested in it since private players are not known to be a patient lot. This warrants that the government, to begin with, ensure that the right ecosystem is created for the purpose. Once this is done, the rest of the things could be left to the private players. Investors should not be trapped in a menacing maze of

petty regulations. Regulatory overlaps should be weeded out. In this backdrop, the researcher suggests a study that examines whether task-specific, project-specific and other purpose-specific cess or tax or levy collected by the various governments and local self-governments has been used for the intended purpose and if not, why not. Such an examination should be followed up prompt action that leads to quick and proper investment of the funds for the intended purposes.

Medical tourism is booming component of the Karnataka economy, study reveals increasing medical tourism ecosystem awareness with a rise in the standard of living and infrastructure development has lead to increases demand for medical tourists, medical consultants, and hospitals. Thus, research focuses on the prospectus of the hospitals, tourism consultant and medical tourist sectors, it considering major urban and semi urban cities in Karnataka and thereby increasing visibility of Karnataka on the India and global map has a medical tourism hub. It is found in the study that solving medical tourist's issues by proper coordination of consultants and hospitals, it reveals information to hospitals like accreditation, set of rules and regulations, problems faced by patients and tourists expectations. In order to enhance medical

tourist's issues like security, particularly for women tourist, not taken seriously, set of rules to travel facilitator and infrastructural issues need to be addressed on priority bases. The proper functioning of the medical tourism consultants and hospitals will lead to attracting more and more medical tourists to Karnataka. The following theoretical model may help for future growth.

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