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**UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PROSPECTS REGARDING CAREER  
IN TOURISM INDUSTRY: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE OF  
KURUKSHETRA UNIVERSITY KURUKSHETRA**

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### INTRODUCTION

No doubt tourism is a growing sector based on service industry. It is creating employment directly or indirectly as well as has become a major source for generating foreign exchange. In 2011, 16.56 billion US\$ were generated from tourism in India. In this way it is contributing to the economy of our country. According to Ex. Prime Minister *Shri Atal Bihari Wajpai*, "Tourism is a major engine for the economic growth of the country." Actually tourism is not based on single aspect; it is the amalgam of four components such as attraction, accessibility, accommodation and ancillary services. Therefore it has large scope in terms of employment generation directly or indirectly. Let us see the following table which is represented by ministry of tourism, India:

**Table: - 1**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>FEE*</b>   | <b>AGR*</b> | <b>ITA*</b>  | <b>AGR</b> |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|------------|
| 2011        | 16.56 Billion | 16.7 %      | 6.29 million | 8.9 %      |

**Source:** Ministry of Tourism

The above table clearly shows that there were 6.29 million arrivals of international tourists and 16.56 billion foreign exchange was generated through tourism in India which is really appraisable achievement for the economy. More over five year plans have been made for enhance its growth. According to former central minister *Subokant Sahai*, Tourism has potential to create 25 million jobs by 2016.<sup>i</sup> In spite of all these things it is always being criticized and it is believed that jobs in tourism industry is less paying salary as well as does not provide the secure future.

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## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study awareness of the students about tourism's scope and prospects.
- To study techniques as how to pursue students for Tourism career in future.
- To study as how to eliminate the discrepancies and doubts in the mind of would be students.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Although there is huge literature about the employment in tourism industry but a limited number of research studies were conducted to know the perception of students towards the career in tourism industry. It means that more research studies must be conducted about the perception of students because they will work in the industry in future. If they have negative attitudes then how they will provide the better services to the clients and hospitality sector is totally depend so heavily on people to deliver a service. However several researchers have surveyed regarding it, let us see about the details of those one.

**Casado's survey (1992)<sup>ii</sup>** on student expectations of hospitality jobs revealed that, although they tended to be fairly realistic before their graduation, the turnover of these students seemed to be high. **Barron and Maxwell (1993)<sup>iii</sup>** examined the perceptions of new and continuing students at Scottish higher education institutions. They found that in general the new students had positive images of the industry, whereas the students with supervised work experience were much less positive in their views. **Ross(1994)<sup>iv</sup>** had surveyed the perceptions of secondary school students in Australia and found that they have a high level of interest in management positions in the tourism industry. **Getz(1994)<sup>v</sup>** surveyed high school students in the Spey Valley in Scotland and showed that perceptions towards a potential career in tourism had become much more negative over a period of 14 years. **Purcell and Quinn (1995)<sup>vi</sup>** surveyed 704 former tourism students and discovered that graduates complained of having little opportunity to develop their managerial skills. **Airey and Franotists(1997)<sup>vii</sup>** compared the attitudes of secondary school students towards tourism careers in Greece and the United Kingdom. They showed that the U K students had a less positive attitude towards tourism than their Greek counterparts. **Kozak and Kızılrnak (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

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UK and in the Netherlands, **Jenkins (2001)<sup>viii</sup>** also showed that, as they progress in their degree, the students' perceptions of the industry tend to deteriorate. **Birdir (2002)<sup>ix</sup>** surveyed those junior and senior tourism students at the University of Mersin in Turkey in order to find out the reasons why some students were not eager to work in the industry after graduation. The main reason stated was the lack of quality education in tourism to enable them to be successful in the sector. Irregular working hours in tourism was the second major reason. Another study, conducted among the tourism students of Adnan Menderes University in Turkey, examined what tourism and hospitality internship students expect from working in the industry (**Yüksel et al., 2003<sup>x</sup>**). **Aksu and Köksal (2005)<sup>xi</sup>** at the Akdeniz University School of Tourism and Hotel Management in Antalya, investigated the main expectations of students from the tourism industry. The results indicated that generally they had low expectations. However, positive perceptions were found among respondents who had: chosen the school as one of their top three choices at the university entrance exam; chosen the school willingly; and carried out practical work experience outside of Turkey. **Akis Roney and Öztin (2007)<sup>xii</sup>** indicated that the general notion of tourism employment appears to be neither positive nor negative. Even if new students start with a more optimistic view of the industry, after the internship period and (for some students) part-time work experience, they develop a less favorable perception. **Richardson, S. (2009)<sup>xiii</sup>** indicated that despite the different types of education that are available for tourism and hospitality students, many students form similar perceptions of working in the tourism and hospitality industry. While there are many negative perceptions, including, low pay, long working hours, little respect and needing a degree is unnecessary, students in this research recognize some positives where physical working conditions are good and it is easy to make friends with work colleagues. **Costley(2011)<sup>xiv</sup>** stated that interpersonal and communication skills which are largely not being taught to students but are what the industry seeks in a graduate. **Kirsten Lee Bamford (2012)<sup>xv</sup>** surveyed and concluded why students choose tourism/hospitality courses students' indicated a variety of reasons which suggests that there is an individualistic approach taken to career decisions. There are common themes, however, which suggest interest, travel, working with people and career options as being prominent. Although the results also show that students perceive a degree as unnecessary to work in the industry they recognize they need a degree to move in the industry to a position above an entry level job.

Therefore, although students do not choose tourism/hospitality courses solely to gain work in the industry they choose it also for the ability to move into management positions.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to examine the career perceptions of undergraduate tourism students in Kurukshetra University Kurukshetra, a sample of 200 students was taken who are studying the bachelor degree in tourism management and A 5-point Likert Scale (strongly agree = 5; agree = 4; neither agree nor disagree = 3; disagree = 2; strongly disagree = 1) was used to measure the respondents' degree of agreement or disagreement with various statements given, to assess relevant perceptions regarding career in tourism industry. It was composed of two sections. The first section was comprised of 04 questions designed to know the profile of the respondents. The second section contained a set of 12 statements about career perceptions. In order to analysis the data, a simple percentage method and mean value has been used. Secondary data has also been studied to have the parameters of questionnaire and for the research paper.

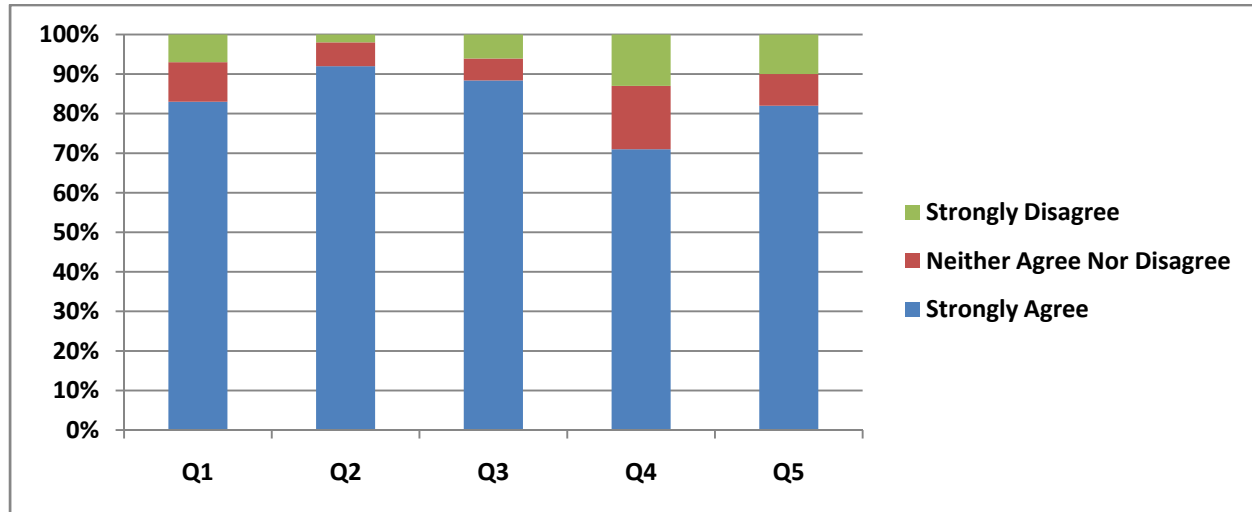
## FINDINGS & SUGGESTIONS

A set of 12 questions was asked by 200 students to know their perception regarding career in tourism sector so that we can know what they really think about their future prospects so that discrepancies can be eliminated by academicians. Let us see the following figure 1 (Degree of agreement of Table 2) and figure 2 (Degree of agreement of Table 3) which shows details of the degrees of agreement with each statement provided in the second part of the questionnaire. For simplicity, perceptions are summarized in group percentages as “strongly agree and agree” and “strongly disagree and disagree”.

**Table: - 2**

| Statement (N=200)   | Code |
|---|------|
| Students were really interested in tourism course that is why they took admission.                      | Q1   |
| One can good money by working in tourism industry   | Q2   |
| To study at the university level is a correct investment in career.                                     | Q3   |
| You adopted this as career because you will get the opportunity to travel abroad and other destinations | Q4   |
| Interaction with seniors motivates them to go for industry  | Q5   |

Figure : 1



Willing power always encourage the students for the participation and involvement in the curriculum. The above *figure 1* shows that 83 % students were really interested in tourism course and on the other side 10 % were undecided (neither agree nor disagree) and rest 7 % students have showed that they were not willing. But in contradiction 71 % students are agree that they have taken admission in this course because they will get the opportunity to travel in abroad and local destinations. Most of the students ( 92 %) agree that one can make good money by working in the tourism industry and tourism jobs provide good salary package to tourism's students (81 % agree). On the other side 82 % students are agree with this statement that promotion opportunities are satisfactory in this industry. Therefore it deduces the advantage of the both previous statements. It is also significant that 82 % students are agreeing with this statement that interaction with seniors motivates them to go for industry. These were general questions which are analyzed on whole data. But let us see the following table which shows the perception of trained students:-

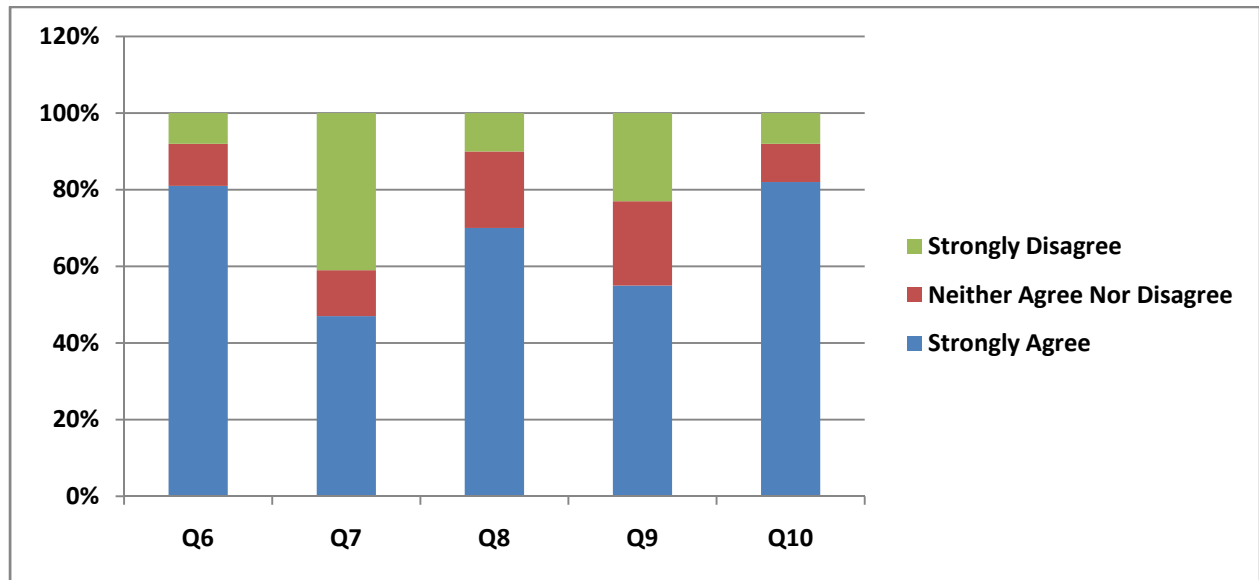
Table: 3

*Perception of those students who got internship during their study*

| Statements (N= 100)  | Code |
|--|------|
| Promotional opportunities are satisfactory in the tourism industry.              | Q6   |
| Tourism employment in private industry does not provide secure future.           | Q7   |
| It is not necessary to have a university degree to work in the tourism industry. | Q8   |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Irregular working hours in tourism affect family life negatively.                     | Q9  |
| Tourism jobs in private sector provide the good salary package to tourism's students. | Q10 |

Figure: 2



The above *figure 2* shows that 81 % promotional opportunities are satisfactory in the industry. In addition 70 % students believe that it is not necessary to have a university degree to work in the tourism industry which is really bitter true. On the other hand 82 % students are agreeing that tourism's students get the good salary package than others. That is why this point overweights the previous disadvantage. More than 50 % students are in the favor that irregular working hours in tourism effect family life negatively and 47 % students believe that tourism jobs do not provide the secure future due to flexibility.

The main focus of the study was to find the perception of tourism's students as choosing the career in tourism industry. From all 12 statements, few were really favorable which shows the interest of the students but some statements overweight advantages of those. By this study it is clear that students are required face to face interactions with industrialists periodically and these must be updated with tourism news and events.

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