

HAND OUT

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UNIT-I:

1. DEFINITIONS, SCOPE & IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM MARKETING

According to Kotler, " **Marketing is a social and managerial process by which consumers obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging product services and values with other.**" He has emphasized more on wants, needs, satisfaction, demand, and marketers.

According to the British Chartered Institute of Marketing, " **It is the management process responsible for the identification, anticipating, assessing and satisfying the customer's client's requirements profitable.**"

The modern marketing concept is not limited only to the identification and satisfaction of customers. It is a comprehensive process which encompasses research and analysis of society's as well as consumer's needs, asserts the company's resources and marketplace and delivers the products/services to those whose experience provides a set of satisfactions which are preferable to those of the competitors.

Krippendorff defines tourism marketing, " **as the systematic and coordinated execution of business policies by both private or public sector tourism organizations operated at the local, regional, national, or international level to achieve the optimal satisfaction of the needs of identifiable tourist groups, and in doing so to achieve an appropriate return.**"

According to Paynter (1993), " **tour marketing is a systematic process consisting of marketing objective, strategies, schedules, marketing media, focused on the specific market segment and based on a substantial return on investment.**"

World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) at Ottawa Seminar, has defined tourism marketing as, " **a management philosophy which, in the light of tourist demand, makes it possible through research, forecasting and selection of tourism products/services from suppliers, on the line with organization's purpose and tourist satisfaction.**"

The following aspects can be identified from the above definitions:

- Tourism marketing is a thought-provoking process.
- Identification and selection of the target market.
- Positioning and product lifecycle is important.
- Future tourism marketing strategies.

Understanding the concept of Tourism Marketing

Tourism marketing is associated with marketing strategies in the field of tourism. Today there are many countries in the world, where tourism plays a major role in enhancing their GDP.

In such cases, tourism marketing becomes an important thing. Many of the places are generally the hotspot for tourists like Taj Mahal in India. Now places like these are considered the perfect areas where one can boost tourism marketing.

The places which are more likely to be the major spots for attracting tourists are the places where tourism marketing flourishes the most. Now tourism marketing is all about applying several marketing techniques and strategies to boost the tourism industry of that place.

For a successful tourism marketing to take place, the thing that is required the most is that the brands should speak for themselves in such a way that their voices can be heard in the targeted markets. This way they will be able to generate cleanest successfully. Also, they need to be really careful in providing services to clients.

This is because if the customers are happy with the services chances they will spread the word and this may bring them more customers. In the case of tourism marketing, it becomes easy to find and draw the attention of the targeted customers towards the website by providing encouraging contents. Thus strategic planning and branding is the key to effective tourism marketing.

With it is carried out by keeping these two points in mind, chances are that the company that is involved in tourism marketing will be able to gain the advantage over their customers in no time and become a monopoly in the tourism industry.

What are the different ways in which Tourism Marketing Can Be Done?

Now there are various methods that are applied for tourism marketing to flourish. Below are some of the important ways in which the tourism marketing of any place is given a boost.

1) Location marketing

In this type of marketing, the main focus of tourism marketing is one bringing the attention of the people to a specific location. In this, no recommendations are made with respect to a particular site or any accommodation. Now there are some locations that are already so popular all over the world that the tourism marketers don't have to make many efforts in attracting their attention to such places.

All they need to do is to remind them of such locations and chances are that the consumer can easily get convinced of visiting any such place. For example 'Las Vegas' is popular for its undying charm and full of life kind of prospect. Now there is also a popular slogan related to the Las Vegas which is 'What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas'. This slogan has gained worldwide popularity and almost everyone wants to visit Las Vegas at least for once.

So here the tourism marketers have to simply remind people of how amazing this city is and what are the different ways in which they can have the time of their lives here. Another example that can be taken is of Florida.

They use a more 'benefit oriented' approach. Their slogan is 'The Sunshine State'. This way they are presenting their state with a joyous and charming

climate and as a perfect place for the beach and the football lovers. Also with their slogan they are successfully able to present their state as an ideal 'summer vacation' destination and are definitely a dream for many to visit this place.

Thus location marketing is one of the simplest forms of tourism marketing in which without even putting much of an effort, with the brand value and the popularity of some specific location, the customers can be attracted.

2) Activity marketing

Now, this type of tourism is carried out keeping in mind both the location and the activities that are performed in such places. This type of marketing usually keeps in mind the travelers who are adventure lovers or activity freaks.

There are many locations all over the world which are famous for some specific activities. Like Alaska is famous for snowboarding, the Yellowstone national park is famous for thrilling activities like hiking, camping and is a perfect place for all the nature lovers, similarly, there is 'Colonial Williamsburg' which attracts all the history lovers.

Thus depending upon the type of activity that a particular place is famous for, tourism marketing can be carried out. Some people may be adventure lovers, some people may be looking for art and culture some people love hunting, depending upon their area of interest, the tourism marketers can segment the groups of customers and approach to them.

Thus activity marketing is a form of tourism marketing which emphasizes on bringing the attention of a customer to particular places on the basis of the activities that are performed there.

3) Corporate marketing

This is quite an interesting approach to tourism marketing. Now it has been found that a large number of people working in corporate sectors have to travel to different places to attend a conference or a meeting.

Then according to research, it was found if these locations were ideal for tourist, the number of people came to attend those places. Also, they brought their families and their loved ones as well. Now considering these scenarios in mind, corporate marketing can contribute a lot to the tourism marketing as it has significant potential.

Here the tourism marketers take advantage of the fact that by planning the business meeting in touristy places, people come in large numbers thus they can make a lot of profit out of it.

Importance of Tourism marketing: A tour marketing plan is a structured guide for carrying out marketing operations. It provides a common structure and focuses on all the company's management activities. The purposes of a marketing plan include:

- It provides a clear direction for marketing operations.
- It coordinates the resources of the organization in order to eliminate confusion and misunderstanding and achieving cooperation.
- Identifying different market segments.
- Setting targets/goals.
- Identifying the organization's strengths and weaknesses.

- Corporate mission and goals.
- External and Internal Audit.
- Business situation analysis.
- Creating the objectives.
- Providing an effective marketing mix strategy.
- Monitoring the plan.

Thus, it has become imperative to discuss the tour marketing segment, tourist generating market, and tour marketing mix before developing a tour marketing plan.

Scope/Functions of Marketing The term scope of marketing can be understood in terms of the functions of the marketing manager. The major purpose of marketing manager is to generate revenue for the business by selling goods and services to the consumers. It lies in insuring the customer needs and converting them into product or services and moving the product and services to the final user or customer, to satisfy the wants and needs of specific segment of customers with emphasis on profitability and ensuring the optimum use of resources available with the organization. The marketing manager has to perform the research functions and exchange functions. They are discussed below:

Functions of Research The modern marketing activities start with consumer research. It is referred with the analysis of consumer attitudes, tastes, habits, reactions and preferences to the company's product so that the products may be produced according to the needs of the consumers. The major function of the marketing research are as follows:

Marketing Research: The marketing research is helpful in analyzing the customer's behavior, popularity of product, effectiveness of advertising, pricing policy etc.

Product planning and development: Under modern marketing activities, product planning is determined before the start of actual production. It is the process in which shape, size, color, weight, design, packing, etc. of the product is determined on the basis of information gathered with the help of marketing research.

2.WHAT IS THE MEANING OF TOURISM MARKET? CONCEPT, DEFINITION OF TOURISM MARKET

It is where flow the supply and demand of tourism products and services. A tourist market consists of buyers and sellers. Vendors offer different kinds of

products and services that can be adjusted to different needs and reasons for purchase of buyers, so it is necessary to recognize and classify the latter clearly differentiated segments or groups.

Elements that make up the tourist market

Supply and tourist demand in the region We define as tourism demand to the set of attributes, values, services and products to the market (public) require tour operators to meet certain needs of recreation, leisure, leisure or vacation. Visitors (including tourists and excursionists) compose the tourist demand, and is affected by factors internal to the demand, as the motivations that animate to travel; external, such as the economic improvements, demographic and social changes, technological improvement, political, planning and ecological factors, safety, etc.; and finally proper factors market (derived from their relationship with the offer), as the knowledge of the offer, development of tourist products, etc. Instead, the tourist offer is composed of the elements that attract tourists to a particular destination and satisfy all your needs, so we could indicate as components of the offer the tourist resources, tourist plant (set of companies related with the sector), infrastructures and transport and institutional elements that develops.

Definition of tourism market

Concept and components of the tourist market.

The tourist market is where converge the offer of products and tourism services and demand that is interested and motivated to consume those products and tourist services. Tourist offer is based on resources (potential that has a tourist center to attract and motivate the tourists) and infraestructuras(elementos fijos que componen el mercado para atender las necesidades de los turistas) to attract and provide the relevant services to tourists. These products and tourist services should compete in the market against others to achieve a solid demand.

Tourism demand is the set of tourists are motivated towards a series of tourism products and services to meet their needs for rest, recreation, leisure, business...

Concept of tourist market

The tourist market is comprised of all the companies that offer their products and services agents of travel, hotels, restoration companies, inhabitants of the destination, the plaintiffs and the entire infrastructure that can be used by tourists.

To understand how the tourism market is structured, it must first define the characteristics of the products it offers. The tourism product has very special characteristics and which are not shared with other sectors of business products.

3. Tourism Market segmentation: Market segmentation certainly isn't the latest and greatest tool on the market. In fact, it began taking shape in the 50's when brands like Proctor and Gamble and General Foods began pouring a lot of money into brand management—or marketing as we know it today. In 1956, Wendell Smith introduced the concept of market segmentation in *Product Differentiation and Market Segmentation as Alternative Marketing Strategies* (not a thrilling read so we'll save you some time) “Market segmentation

Considering the travel market is far too large and diverse to reach effectively, tourism marketers use segmentation to better understand customer needs and allocate marketing dollars effectively. Effective segmentation is based on extensive quantitative research focusing on large numbers of people and grouping them together based-upon shared characteristics such as demographics, behavioral patterns, or cognition ratings. Once identified, these groups are referred to as particular segments and able to be targeted by particular product offerings, services, and tailored marketing messages.

Some popular segment names for the travel and tourism industry are: escapists, learners, planners, dreamers.

Seize the (micro) moment

Often tourism and travel market segments are created by one, or a combination, of the following:

- Age / Life Stage (e.g., millennial, retiree)
- Motive
- Socioeconomic status
- Type of travel (e.g., business, leisure, extended stay)
- Geography

With online research easier and more portable than ever, we like to think about marketing segments a little differently. Travel brands and destination marketers should consider the moments your potential customers may jump online from their phone or computer—as the biggest marketing opportunity.

While the **who** still matters when you're trying to reach an audience—the **when** is more vital than ever.

For example, think about how you planned your last vacation. If you were like most, you bounced back and forth between dreaming about and loosely planning your next getaway—zooming in on a destination and quickly bouncing around in search of inspiration only to zoom out and consider all the options yet again. This quick spurt of research to answer an immediate need (usually turning to a search engine) has been coined “a micro-moment” by Google and is a huge opportunity for destination marketing organizations and the key to attracting and earning a savvy traveler's consideration.

Market segmentation is the first step in the development of a total marketing strategy of a firm or an enterprise. It helps in converting as many potential tourists into actual ones. Marketing strategy thus developed would now attempt to penetrate and persuade the target markets through a variety of tools mainly promotion and advertising. The strategy of market segmentation in tourism recognizes that a few vacation areas are universally accepted and desired. The best marketing strategy is to isolate those segments of the entire market which are likely prospects and aim at the promotional efforts specifically to the needs of selected groups. One of the early steps in marketing tourism is to divide the present and potential market on the basis of meaningful characteristics and then concentrate on promotion, supply and pricing efforts on serving the target markets. The segmentation of tourist is usually on the following basis:

- ™ Vacation tourist: They are the most common tourist. They are easily affected by the changes in price and influenced by aggressive marketing effort.
- ™ Business tourist: Market for these types of tourists have increased considerably. These types of tourists give least preference for price and marketing. They give more importance for exhibitions, fairs, conferences etc.
- 85 ™ Common interest tourist: It comprises people who make visits to their relatives, friends, for education and pilgrimage purposes. They are also not influenced by price and promotion. The visits made are not frequent and the stay is comparatively for a short period.

Tour Market Segmentation

It involves a division of the prospective market into identifiable groups. The reasoning behind this is that a tour package can be sold more effectively if efforts are concentrated towards those groups which are most potential.

According to Middleton, **“Market segmentation is the process whereby producers organize their knowledge of customer groups and select for particular attention those whose needs and wants they are best able to meet their product.”**

The main purpose of tour market segmentation in tourism marketing are:

- Segment the tourists generating markets.
- Identify the network of intermediaries.
- Identify the nature of demand for one's product.
- Identify the prospective tourists.

An effective market strategy will determine exactly what the target market will be and to attempt to reach only those markets. The target market is that segment of a total potential market to which the tourist attraction would be most saleable.

Targets markets are defined geographically, demographically and so forth market segmentation must be employed in the marketing programmes to both the long-term strategies. Every tourism attraction can

appeal to a multitude of market segments, and the market segment can overlap a great deal. The tour manager must look at market segments and determines which one offer the promising potential for his/her service.

Tour market segment further categories into the following types:

1. Geographic Segment
2. Demographic Segment
3. Psychographic Segment
4. Socio-Economic Segment
5. Price Segment

Geographic Tourism Market Segmentation

This segment is based on the idea that customer needs differ according to geographic regions.

Demographic Segmentation

Under this segmentation, the tourism market is divided into various groups, keeping in view the demographic variables such as age, income, sex family size, occupation, education, religion etc.

Behavioral Segmentation

In this segmentation, prospective tourists are segmented on the basis of their knowledge, attitude, use or response to the tour product. Under this segmentation, the marketing strategies of a four-company include:

- User Status
- Usage Rate
- Loyalty Status
- Buyer Readiness Stages
- Attitude

Psychographic Segmentation

Under this, the tourists are divided into different group on the basis of their social status, lifestyles, and personality characteristics. For example, upper class, upper middle, lower classes, product preferences, adventure sports, etc.

Price Segmentation

Price ranges often come in handy in segmenting the tourist markets, such as

- Those who want to take a low priced vacation.
- Those who may take a moderately priced vacation.

4. CONCEPT OF TOURISM PRICING :

Price is part of the marketing mix: "A product's price is that which consumers exchange with the market in order to purchase the product. Consumers consider price to be an important criterion in their evaluation of alternatives, both before and after making a purchase. Furthermore if a product's design

requires consumers to exchange both time and money, then the actual price includes more than just its monetary price"

Price ranges communicate to the tourists the quality expectation of a product along with the producer's image. While determining the price of a tour package a tour planner must understand the paying capacity of the tourist.

Main factors affecting price determination of product are: 1. Product Cost 2. The Utility and Demand 3. Extent of Competition in the Market 4. Government and Legal Regulations 5. Pricing Objectives 6. Marketing Methods Used.

1. Product Cost:

The most important factor affecting the price of a product is its cost.

Product cost refers to the total of fixed costs, variable costs and semi variable costs incurred during the production, distribution and selling of the product. Fixed costs are those costs which remain fixed at all the levels of production or sales.

For example, rent of building, salary, etc. Variable costs refer to the costs which are directly related to the levels of production or sales. For example, costs of raw material, labour costs etc. Semi variable costs are those which change with the level of activity but not in direct proportion. For example, fixed salary of Rs 12,000 + upto 6% graded commission on increase in volume of sales.

The price for a commodity is determined on the basis of the total cost. So sometimes, while entering a new market or launching a new product, business firm has to keep its price below the cost level but in the long run, it is necessary for a firm to cover more than its total cost if it wants to survive amidst cut-throat competition.

2. The Utility and Demand:

Usually, consumers demand more units of a product when its price is low and vice versa. However, when the demand for a product is elastic, little variation in the price may result in large changes in quantity demanded. In case of inelastic demand, a change in the prices does not affect the demand

significantly. Thus, a firm can charge higher profits in case of inelastic demand.

Moreover, the buyer is ready to pay up to that point where he perceives utility from product to be at least equal to price paid. Thus, both utility and demand for a product affect its price.

3. Extent of Competition in the Market:

The next important factor affecting the price for a product is the nature and degree of competition in the market. A firm can fix any price for its product if the degree of competition is low.

However, when the level of competition is very high, the price of a product is determined on the basis of price of competitors' products, their features and quality etc. For example, MRF Tyre company cannot fix the prices of its Tyres without considering the prices of Bridgestone Tyre Company, Goodyear Tyre company etc.

4. Government and Legal Regulations:

The firms which have monopoly in the market, usually charge high price for their products. In order to protect the interest of the public, the government intervenes and regulates the prices of the commodities for this purpose; it declares some products as essential products for example. Life saving drugs etc.

5. Pricing Objectives:

Another important factor, affecting the price of a product or service is the pricing objectives.

Following are the pricing objectives of any business:

(a) Profit Maximisation:

Usually the objective of any business is to maximise the profit. During short run, a firm can earn maximum profit by charging high price. However, during

long run, a firm reduces price per unit to capture bigger share of the market and hence earn high profits through increased sales.

(b) Obtaining Market Share Leadership:

If the firm's objective is to obtain a big market share, it keeps the price per unit low so that there is an increase in sales.

(c) Surviving in a Competitive Market:

If a firm is not able to face the competition and is finding difficulties in surviving, it may resort to free offer, discount or may try to liquidate its stock even at BOP (Best Obtainable Price).

(d) Attaining Product Quality Leadership:

Generally, firm charges higher prices to cover high quality and high cost if it's backed by above objective.

6. Marketing Methods Used:

The various marketing methods such as distribution system, quality of salesmen, advertising, type of packaging, customer services, etc. also affect the price of a product. For example, a firm will charge high profit if it is using expensive material for packing its product.

Factors that affect price strategies in tourism:

According to Mcintosh and Goeldner (1995: 433-434) marketing managers must take the following factors into account that affect price strategies:

- Product quality. The quality of the product really determines the price-value relationship. It is logical that that product that offers greater utility and fills the consumer needs more effectively than a competitive product can command a higher price.
- Product distinctiveness. A standard or staple product with no distinctive features offers little or no opportunity for price control. But, a novel and different product may be able to command higher prices. For instance, the Lost City as an attractive novelty, combined with excellent services and facilities, makes it possible for Sun International to command higher prices (Jooste, 1995: 269).
- Extent of the competition. A product that is comparable to that of competitors' must be priced taking the prices of competitors into consideration. To some extent the product's price determines its position in

the market.

- Method of distribution. The price of the product must include adequate margins for tour operators, travel agents or the company's own sales force.
- Character of the market. The type and possible numbers must be considered. If there is a limited number of consumers, then the price must be high enough to compensate for a limited market. But, one must also consider consumer ability and propensity to buy.
- Cost of the product and service. The price must be higher than cost over the long run or the business will not survive. Both cost and market conditions should serve as guides to pricing.
- Cost of distribution. Distribution costs must also be included in the pricing equation. They are much more difficult to estimate than other costs.
- Margin of profit desired. The profit margin build into the product's price must be higher than the returns realised on more conventional investments in order to compensate for the risk involved in the enterprise.
- Seasonality. Most tourism products are affected by seasonality because of school-year and holiday patterns. Consequently, the seasonal aspects must be considered when developing prices.
- Special promotion prices. It is often a good strategy to offer introduction prices and special one-time price offers to introduce the product to consumers. However, these must be carefully planned so that they achieve the purpose and do not become a regular price.
- Psychological considerations. Throughout the economy psychological pricing is applied, usually in the form of prices that are set in odd amounts such as 99c, R19,95 or R29,99. Generally consumers respond well to odd pricing, and there seems something particularly magical about prices that ends in a nine.

UNIT-II:

5. Definition of 'Rail Transport'

Definition: Rail transport is also known as train transport. It is a means of transport, on vehicles which run on tracks (rails or railroads). It is one of the most important, commonly used and very cost effective modes of commuting and goods carriage over long, as well as, short distances. Since this system runs on metal (usually steel) rails and wheels, it has an inherent benefit of lesser frictional resistance which helps attach more load in terms of wagons or carriages. This system is known as a train. Usually, trains are powered by an engine locomotive running on electricity or on diesel. Complex signaling systems are utilised if there are multiple route networks. Rail transport is also one of the fastest modes of land transport.

In 1964, Japan became the first country to build and operate a High Speed Rail line. Photo by bass_nroll.

While California breaks ground this summer on the United States' first bullet train and Iraq gets into the game with a planned High Speed Rail (HSR) line from Basra to Baghdad, other nations have a long history of fast, efficient and environmentally friendly rail transportation.

Five countries – Germany, China, Spain, Japan, and France – are global standouts, providing their citizens with long distance lines, a broad network of stops, and incredible high speeds. Some, like Japan, have been building high speed rail since it was invented in the '60s. Others, like China, have demonstrated how quickly a high speed rail network can be built in just a few years. Here are the five best high speed rail networks in the world:

Japan: The Land of the Rising Sun invented High Speed Rail with the first bullet train, called Shinkansen (new trunk line) opening in 1964. Japan Railways Group now operates 2,664 km (1,655 mi) of tracks with 782 km (486 mi) under construction.

Germany: The Federal Republic got into the HSR game in 1991 and now features 1,334 km (829 mi) of HSR track in operation with 428 km (266 mi) under construction. DB Bahn's InterCityExpress trains reach a top speed of 300 km/h (186 mph).

China: China is the newest high speed rail giant. Photo by Taylor McConnell.

China has been building high-speed rail at a furious pace since 2007 and now boasts the world's largest network with 9,356 km (5,813 mi) of HSR track, including the longest line the world from Beijing to Guangzhou at 2,298 km (1,428 mi). The China Railway Corporation has no plans on slowing down, as there are currently 14,160 km (8,799 mi) under construction.

Spain: Spain runs the biggest HSR network in Europe with 3,100 km (1,926 mi) of track and 1,800 km (1,118 mi) under construction. Spain started HSR service in 1992. RENFE operates the Alta Velocidad Española (AVE) at speeds up to 310 km/h (193 mph).

France: Passengers board high speed trains at Gare de Lyon. Photo by Eric Allix Rogers.

France started developing its High Speed Rail network soon after Japan launched theirs in 1964, however the TGV (Train à Grande Vitesse, high-speed train) service didn't open to the public until 1981. National rail operator SNCF runs the fastest conventional train network in the world, with average top speeds of 320 km/h (200 mph). In April, France launched the low fare HSR service called Ouigo, costing as little as 10 Euros for a trip from Paris to southeastern France.

The United States has the world's longest railway network, followed by China and India. Railway-technology.com profiles the 10 largest railway networks in the world based on total operating length.

United States: 250,000km

The US rail network, with an operating route length over 250,000km, is the biggest in the world. Freight lines constitute about 80% of the country's total rail network, while the total passenger network spans about 35,000km.

The US freight rail network consists of 538 railroads (seven Class I railroads, 21 regional railroads, and 510 local railroads) operated by private organisations. Union Pacific Railroad and BNSF Railway are among the largest freight railroad networks in the world. The national passenger rail network Amtrak comprises of more than 30 train routes connecting 500 destinations across 46 American states.

A plan is in place to build a 27,000km national high speed rail system in four phases by 2030. Construction of the California high-speed rail, the country's first high-speed rail project, was well underway by the beginning of 2014. Three more high-speed projects including the Midwest high-speed rail line connecting Chicago with Indianapolis or St. Louis, Texas high-speed rail, and the Northeast High-Speed Corridor are under development.

China: 100,000km

China's rail network, with a route length of over 100,000km, ranks as the second biggest rail network in the world. The extensive network, operated by state-owned China Railway Corporation, carried 2.08 billion passengers (the second highest after Indian Railways) and 3.22 billion tonnes of freight (the second highest after the US railway network) in 2013.

Rail is the principal mode of transport in China. The country's rail network consists of over 90,000km of conventional rail routes and approximately 10,000km of high-speed lines. The total rail network of the country is targeted to exceed 270,000km by 2050.

The rapid expansion of China's high-speed rail network in recent years makes it by far the largest in the world. The 2,298km Beijing – Guangzhou high speed line is the world's longest high-speed railway line. The total length of China's high-speed rail network is projected to reach 50,000km by 2020.

Russia: 85,500km

Russia's whole network, operated by state-owned monopoly Russian Railways (RZD), runs for over 85,500km. In 2013, the network carried 1.08 billion passengers and 1.2 billion tonnes of freight – the third highest freight volume after the US and China.

The Russian railway network incorporates 12 main lines, many of which provide direct connections to the European and Asian national railway systems such as Finland, France, Germany, Poland, China, Mongolia and North Korea. The Trans-Siberian Railway (the Moscow-Vladivostok line), spanning a length of 9,289km, is the longest and one of the busiest railway lines in the world.

RZD introduced the Sapsan high-speed rail service between St. Petersburg and Moscow in 2009, but it has not proved successful due to sharing existing lines with low-speed train operations. A dedicated high-speed corridor between the two cities has been planned with a proposed investment of \$35bn. RZD expects to have 2,500km of high-speed rail between Moscow and Kiev, Minsk and Kursk by 2015.

India: 65,000km

The Indian nationwide rail network, the fourth longest in the world, is owned and operated by state-owned Indian Railways and includes an operating route length of more than 65,000km. The network carried about eight billion passengers (the highest in the world) and 1.01 million tonnes of freight (fourth highest in the world) in 2013.

The Indian railway network is divided into 17 zones and operates more than 19,000 trains per day, including 12,000 passenger trains and 7,000 freight trains. The national railway operator plans to add 4,000km of new lines by 2017, as well as significant gauge conversion, doubling and electrification of its existing aging lines. It also plans to add 3,338km of exclusive freight network by 2017 with the implementation of Eastern & Western Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFC), two of the six identified dedicated freight corridors in India.

Six high-speed corridors have also been identified for implementation in the country. The 534km Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed link is being advanced as a pilot project with an estimated investment of \$9.65bn.

Canada: 48,000km

Canada's 48,000km of rail lines makes its national network the fifth longest in the world. Canadian National Railway (CN) and Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) are the two major freight rail networks operating in the country, while Via Rail operates the 12,500km intercity passenger rail service. Algoma Central Railway and Ontario Northland Railway are among the other smaller railways providing passenger services to certain rural areas in the country.

Three Canadian cities – Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver – have extensive commuter train systems. In addition, the Rocky Mountaineer and Royal Canadian Pacific offer luxury rail tours to view the scenic beauty of certain mountainous areas in the country.

Canada, however, does not have a single high-speed line on its railway network. Many high-speed lines such as Toronto-Montreal, Calgary-Edmonton and Montreal-Boston have been proposed, but none of these have progressed beyond preliminary studies as of January 2014.

Germany: 41,000km

State-owned Deutsche Bahn dominates Germany's 41,000km railway network, accounting for about 80% of the total freight traffic and 99% of the long-distance passenger traffic.

More than 150 private railway companies apart from Deutsche Bahn operate on the network, providing regional passenger and freight services. The S-Bahn serves major suburban areas, while the Hamburg Cologne Express (HKX) is the major long-distance passenger operator after Deutsche Bahn.

The German railway network had more than 1,300km of high-speed railway track operational as of mid-2013 and more than 400km of new high-speed line under construction. Deutsche Bahn opened high-speed services, under the name InterCity Express (ICE), for the first time in 1991. The high-speed network, operated at speeds up to 320km/h, now connects major German cities and neighbouring countries such as France, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands and Austria.

Australia: 40,000km

The Australian railway network is the world's seventh longest at more than 40,000km. Most of the railway network infrastructure is owned and maintained by the Australian government either at the federal or state level. The majority of the trains on the network are, however, operated by private companies.

Aurizon (formerly QR National), Genesee and Wyoming Australia, and Pacific National are among the major freight operators on the network. Great Southern Railway, NSW TrainLink and Queensland Rail are the leading long-distance passenger rail operators. Metro Trains Melbourne, Sydney Trains, V/Line and Adelaide Metro operate commuter passenger services in major suburban areas. In addition, a number of private mining railways operate in the country.

The Australian railway network does not have a high-speed line yet. A high-speed rail network connecting Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne is proposed to be built with an estimated capital cost of \$114bn, but the first phase of the 1,748km high-speed network will not be realised before 2035.

Argentina: 36,000km

Argentina's current rail network spanning over 36,000km in length ranks the eighth largest in the world. Argentina used to have about 47,000km of rail network at the end of the Second World War, mostly operated by British and French-owned railway companies. But the decline of profits and the rise of highway construction in the subsequent decades reduced the network to the 36,000km of line that exists today. The railway companies operating on the network were nationalised in 1948 with the creation of the state railroad corporation Ferrocarriles Argentinos.

The Argentinean railway was privatised between 1992 and 1995 with the grant of concessions to different private companies for operating six divisions of the formerly state-owned rail network. Cities such as Buenos Aires, Resistencia and Mendoza offer extensive suburban passenger services, as well as the long distance passenger lines in the country.

The much talked-about Argentine high-speed railway is not a reality yet. An announcement was made in 2006 to develop a 310km high-speed line between Buenos Aires and Rosario. The project was, however, not implemented as of 2013. A second high-speed line stretching 400km between Rosario and Cordoba has also been proposed.

France: 29,000km

At 29,000km, the French railway network is the second biggest in Europe and the ninth biggest in the world. The French railway network is predominantly passenger-centric and more than 50% of the country's lines are electrified. State-owned Société Nationale des Chemins de fer Français (SNCF) is the principal railway operator in the country.

The country's high-speed long distance passenger services are known as Train à Grande Vitesse (TGV) and the standard long-distance passenger services are branded Intercités. The short and middle distance passenger rail services are known as Transport Express Régional (TER). The network offers linkages to adjacent countries such as Belgium, Italy and the UK.

France was one of the early adopters of high-speed rail technology; SNCF brought into operation the TGV high-speed rail in 1981. The country's current high-speed network exceeds a length of 1,550km. The Tours-Bordeaux high-speed rail project, which is due for completion in 2017, will add another 302km into the network.

Brazil: 28,000km

The first railway line in Brazil became operational in 1984. The railway network was nationalised in 1957 with the creation of Rede Ferroviária Federal Sociedade Anônima (RFFSA). The country's railway network was divided into different services to be operated by a range of private and public operators by 2007.

The 28,000km network is predominantly freight-focussed and includes major iron ore rail lines. The country's passenger rail services are mostly concentrated in urban and suburban areas. Eight Brazilian cities have metro systems, São Paulo Metro being the biggest among them.

In 2012, the Brazilian government announced the construction of 10,000km of new lines comprised of freight and high-speed passenger lines by 2042. A 511km high-speed rail link between São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro has been planned for development in the country, but the project is yet to take off.

World's Top 25 Trains

Golden Eagle

No question about it: there is no better way to see Siberia. The Golden Eagle was launched in 2007 to much fanfare in Moscow. The UK operators of this train have made a huge push to up the ante with the Imperial Suites, as well as Gold and Silver Class accommodations, all with en-suite bathroom. The train also has two dining cars and a lounge car. It plies the famous Trans-Siberian route between Moscow and Vladivostok, as well as special tours of the Silk Road, Russia's Arctic, Iran and the Caspian region.

Five Imperial Suites are available on all Golden Eagle departures. This type of compartment, the most spacious at 120 square feet, has been a huge success for luxury travelers. It offers a fixed king-sized bed, a dedicated dressing table, and lounge area. All passengers will enjoy the upgraded service, presence of a quality control manager and improved food and beverage service throughout the Golden Eagle.

Latest News: Click [here](#) for owner and IRT President Eleanor Hardy's blog on the fantastic Imperial Suites aboard the Golden Eagle.

Venice Simplon-Orient-Express (VSOE)

The Venice Simplon-Orient-Express (VSOE), with its restored, 1920s vintage cars, is the world's most authentic luxury train. Made famous in the Agatha Christie story, the train still runs on the legendary route between Paris and Istanbul. Many other itineraries are also available, featuring European gems such as Prague, Vienna, Budapest, and Paris.

Rovos Rail Pride of Africa

Rovos Rail's Pride of Africa offers an old-world elegance and luxury to a degree that was never equaled in the 1920s. Many seasoned IRT Society travelers consider it their favorite rail experience. Celebrated not only for its fabulous equipment, the train is rightfully proud of its stellar dining and on-board service. In short, the entire experience is an exciting luxury rail adventure.

Golden Eagle Danube Express

The Golden Eagle Danube Express has a capacity of 64 passengers and comprises seven sleeping cars, a lounge car and two dining cars. Four of the sleeping cars contain Deluxe cabins, while three new sleeping cars contain Superior Deluxe accommodations.

The Superior Deluxe and Deluxe cabins are spacious and offer some of the best sleeping accommodations in mainland Europe.

Well-planned itineraries on the Golden Eagle Danube Express take in highlights of Eastern and Western Europe, such as Budapest, Prague and Sarajevo.

Tours on the Golden Eagle Danube Express are fully inclusive (food, drinks, gratuities, touring, transfers), making it a truly worry-free adventure.

Belmond Royal Scotsman

Belmond Royal Scotsman is a standout train and one of our favorites in the world.

A small venue—just 40 passengers—it's great for those who wish for a more intimate, luxury setting with gourmet, five-star dining, wine-pairing, superior service and thrilling excursions.

All the train's cars, save the 1928-era diner, are of 1960s vintage equipment, but they have been recast into an Edwardian confection of varnished woods, polished brass and fine fabrics.

Simply put, it is one of our favorite hotel trains.

Latest News: Click [here](#) to see our video of Society President Eleanor Hardy's May, 2012 trip on the Belmond Royal Scotsman.

El Transcantabrico Gran Lujo

El Transcantabrico Gran Lujo was inaugurated in 2011 and includes all en-suite Preferente Suites, which are each half a train car. These cabins are about 129 square feet. This can make a huge difference to travelers requiring more space and private lounge area.

The Preferente Suites have a double bed, long sofa, flat-screen DVD, computer for your private use (wifi when in stations) and lots of storage in closets, under the bed, and under the sofa. El Transcantabrico Gran Lujo takes only 28 passengers, and thereby offers a much more intimate travel experience. Alternatively, these cabins can accommodate three persons.

Latest News: Click [here](#) for our blog about the El Transcantábrico Gran Lujo Santiago to San Sebastián journey.

Belmond Grand Hibernian

The company that brings you the **Venice Simplon-Orient-Express** and the **Belmond Royal Scotsman** has built another of its "Grand Hotels" on wheels: the Belmond Grand Hibernian.

The Society of International Railway Travelers® was honored to charter Ireland's first luxury train for its inaugural journey, in August 2016. It was Ireland's first luxury overnight rail experience.

IRT inspected the Belmond Grand Hibernian again in April 2019. Rachel Hardy, IRT's Vice President, Sales & Marketing, traveled on the Belmond Grand Hibernian as part of the annual Bravissimo party thrown by the train's

operator, Belmond. Read more about Rachel's experience **here on Track25, the IRT blog.**

The train tours the magnificent open countryside, dramatic coastal scenery and fascinating cities of both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Eastern & Oriental Express

In 1991, the Orient-Express company acquired New Zealand's famed Silver Star, transported it to Southeast Asia and, following refurbishment, rechristened it the Eastern & Oriental Express (E&O). The train runs 1,262 miles between Singapore, Malaysia and Bangkok, Thailand. It has been on The Society of International Railway Travelers' World's Top 25 Trains list since it started.

Southern Spain's opulent, broad-gauge Al-Andalus returned to the rails May, 2012, with its 1920s-era cars newly renovated. Many of the carriages were used by the British Royal Family in their journeys from Calais to the Cote d'Azur. The Al-Andalus includes bar, lounge and two dining cars, as well as all-en suite cabins. The train combines stellar service, exquisite Art Deco styling and excellent cuisine for a unique tour of Andalusia. Maximum occupancy is 64 passengers. Please see IRT's review of Al-Andalus in our **Track 25 blog** from spring, 2012.

Rocky Mountaineer

The Rocky Mountaineer has graduated to international status, as it has added Seattle, Washington to its repertoire in addition to Western Canada. The train is comfortable and classy. Its luxury GoldLeaf Service, with custom-built glass dome coaches, offers fine dining on the lower level, including local wines, plus wind-in-the-face, outdoor viewing at the rear platform.

There are four routes offered by this train: Vancouver to Banff and Lake Louise; Vancouver to Jasper via Kamloops; Vancouver to Jasper via Whistler and Quesnel and Vancouver to Seattle.

Belmond Andean Explorer: Luxury Sleeper Train

South America's first luxury sleeper train, the Belmond Andean Explorer, launched in May, 2017.

Running along one of the world's highest rail routes, traversing the Peruvian Andes from Cusco to Lake Titicaca and Arequipa, the new luxury train explores natural wonders and ancient kingdoms on two- and three-day journeys.

Guest have the opportunity to explore the vast Colca Canyon, then continue towards the city center of Arequipa, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The reverse itinerary, from Arequipa to Cusco, also is possible.

Travelers should be aware that journey involves high altitudes. Bottled oxygen will be available if needed.

Deccan Odyssey

The Deccan Odyssey is one of the subcontinent's most luxurious trains, with comfortable private cabins, lounges, and even a luxurious spa car. Recent reviews of the service and food on board have been excellent. In addition to its popular Rajasthan itinerary, the Deccan Odyssey ventures to fascinating parts of India not covered by other luxury trains, such as Gujrat, Nashik & Hyderabad.

Shangri-La Express

The private Shangri-La Express is not a luxury train, but it is at this writing the most modern hotel train in China. It far surpasses regular train service.

During our fall 2013 trip, we (Society of IRT co-owners Eleanor and Owen Hardy) were pleasantly surprised by the train's comfort. The glass-like Chinese rails made for one of the smoothest rides we've had anywhere.

The train is modern and air-conditioned. It has two cabin classes.

Diamond Class cabins are en-suite and have a double bed. Heritage Class cabins have two lower twin beds and shared toilets and showers.

Glacier Express

The Swiss proudly hail the Glacier Express as the world's slowest express. The train takes almost eight hours and the services of two private, narrow-gauge railroads to traverse the 168 mountainous miles between two posh resorts—Zermatt and St. Moritz. The Alpine route of the Glacier Express is what makes this train so marvelous. A serious quibble: we long for the old, second-class equipment which allowed us to open windows and photograph the fantastic scenery.

Kyushu Seven Stars

Since its inception in 2013, the Kyushu Seven Stars, Japan's very first luxury train, has been selling space based on a lottery system to account for the overwhelming demand for this exclusive and utterly unique rail travel experience.

This "Cruise Train" is a beautifully designed fusion of Japanese and Western elements, painstakingly thought-out with an eye to detail. Intricate woodwork and sumptuous textiles abound in the lounge and dining cars as well as in the fourteen all en-suite cabins.

On the Seven Stars, passengers can enjoy the beautiful Kyushu scenery as it flows by their windows. The courses on the Seven Stars are highlights of the best that Kyushu has to offer. The train does not just push through the journey. At certain points passengers will alight from the train to participate in excursions, making this train a new kind of travel experience.

Bergen Railway

The complete Oslo-Bergen line was opened in 1909 as the only year-round land transport between Norway's two largest cities. The 300-mile length of track passes through 200 tunnels and 18 miles of snowsheds in addition to crossing more than 300 bridges. The scenery on the 7-hour Bergen Railway trip across the Hardanger plateau, the largest wilderness area in Europe, is breathtaking.

Maharajas' Express

The Maharajas' Express was custom-built to be the most luxurious train in India—and perhaps the world—offering state-of-the-art facilities and amenities. All cabins have large windows, LCD televisions, wi-fi access, individual temperature controls and full en-suite bathrooms. There is one Presidential Suite which comprises a full train car—the largest suite available on any train in the world. The two elegantly decorated dining cars serve a choice of multi-course Indian and continental cuisine. Two lounge cars provide cool drinks and comfortable seating. The train is 22 cars long, taking a maximum of 84 passengers.

Bernina Express

The spectacular Bernina line was completed in 1910 and is run by Rhaetian Railways. Beginning in Chur, St. Moritz or Davos, it passes the glaciers of Piz Bernina, making this the highest railway crossing in all of the Alps. It travels over 38 miles, climbing grades of up to 7%—without rack and pinion—to more than 7,391 feet at the Bernina Pass summit, and drops down to just 1,408 feet at Tirano, Italy.

Golden Pass Panoramic Express

Switzerland's Panoramic Express trains boast vista-dome cars for maximum viewing of the spectacular mountain scenery between Montreux and Zweisimmen. Super Panoramic Express trains also have a special, eight-passenger viewing area in the front of the train, above the driver, for the ultimate in ringside seats.

Belmond Hiram Bingham

The gleaming blue-and-gold cars of the Belmond Hiram Bingham makes the 3.5-hour trip between Cusco and Machu Picchu every day but Sunday. The train has two 42-seat dining cars serving excellent Peruvian specialties for brunch on the journey to Machu Picchu, and for dinner on the evening return to Cusco. The train also has a gorgeous bar/observation car. This train is easy to love, with its great staff, wonderful views and interesting dining options.

Tren Crucero

The Tren Crucero began service in 2014 and was just reviewed by The Society of International Railway Travelers in April, 2017. The daytime-only train consists of four carriages—two dining cars and two lounge cars, with a capacity for 54 passengers. It operates between Quito and Guayaquil on a 4 day/4 night journey, with touring along the way and overnights in local hotels. Perhaps the star of the show is the fabulous outdoor viewing platform — a great places to take in volcanoes, cloud forests, and Andean towns.

When Eleanor & Owen Hardy, co-owners of The Society of International Railway Travelers, reviewed this train in April, 2017, they were thrilled with what they found: great, warm and professional staff; interesting off-train outings, beautiful train equipment, lovely haciendas and hotels for overnight stays, wonderful food. And all with a refined sense of social responsibility to the communities through which the train travels. If you have been waiting for the “Gold Star” from The Society of IRT for this program, here it is. This train was just awarded **World's Top 25 Trains** status by The Society of International Railway Travelers in June 2, 2017.

This wonderful video, **just posted**, is a great look at the entire program.

The Blue Train: The Blue Train is one of the world's great luxury trains, running between Pretoria and Cape Town. And now it's even better: The train just announced a new schedule offering a three-day package. It departs either station at 6:30 p.m., allowing for two nights on board. The route — 994 miles — now includes a guaranteed, longer sightseeing stop in either direction. The train, operated by the state-run Spoornet, is gorgeous in every detail, from the golden brown of the walls, to the upholstered closets to the “B” logo just about everywhere. Butlers can be called any time from your in-room phone. The unfolding journey is shown on a TV screen in the club car and on one of the TV channels in guest suites. Service is professional and experienced.

Belmond British Pullman: The British Pullman is a luxury, vintage day train that completes the British leg of Orient-Express journeys between Paris and London. Passengers from the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express disembark in Calais, France, and board a special bus for the short “piggyback” train ride through the Eurotunnel to Folkestone. There, they board the British Pullman for the ride to London's Victoria station. What's not to love about this experience? Fabulous food, lovely scenery and riding on such a gorgeous and historic train.

Canadian: The Canadian is VIA Rail Canada's flagship train. It runs between Toronto and Vancouver three times a week, traveling 2,775 miles.

IRT recommends VIA's new Prestige Class, introduced in 2015, with large bedroom with double bed, full en suite bathroom, plus a host of amenities including flat-screen TV (for videos only), unlimited free drinks, including alcoholic drinks, 24-hour butler service and first choice for meals (included in your fare). A major delight is exclusive access to the great dome cars for seeing the sights day or night.

The schedule from Toronto to Jasper allows three nights on board (10 p.m. departure Vancouver, 1:00 p.m. arrival Jasper.) All the way to Vancouver is four nights (three days, 14 hours and 42 minutes!) Arrival in Vancouver is scheduled for mid-morning.

The Sweet Train: Japan's diminutive Sweet Train — it comprises just 2 cars — proves that good things come in small packages.

Conceived by the fertile minds of railway company JR Kyushu, the Sweet Train is aptly named: it's a four-course feast on wheels. Any trip to Kyushu, Japan's southernmost island, should definitely include it.

The two-hour trip gives ample time for diners to enjoy an exquisite light lunch, followed by four “sweets” courses.

A dedicated, smiling staff fusses over passengers, who enjoy Kyushu's natural beauty and the train's gorgeous, naturalistic interior.

6. Aviation law is the branch of [law](#) that concerns flight, [air travel](#), and associated legal and business concerns. Some of its area of concern overlaps that of [admiralty law](#) and, in many cases, aviation law is considered

a matter of [international law](#) due to the nature of air travel. However, the business aspects of airlines and their regulation also fall under aviation law. In the international realm, the [International Civil Aviation Organization](#) (ICAO) provides general rules and mediates international concerns to an extent regarding aviation law. The ICAO is a [specialized agency](#) of the [United Nations](#).

In the United States and in most [European](#) nations, aviation law is considered a federal or state-level concern and is regulated at that level. In the U.S., states cannot govern aviation matters in most cases directly but look to Federal laws and case law for this function instead. For example, a court recently struck down New York's Passenger Bill of Rights law because regulation of aviation is traditionally a federal concern. Aviation law, however, is not in the United States held under the same Federal mandate of [jurisdiction](#) as [admiralty law](#); that is, while the [United States Constitution](#) provides for the administration of admiralty,^[1] it does not provide such for aviation law. States and municipalities do have some indirect regulation over aviation. For example, [zoning](#) laws can require an airport to be located away from residential areas, and airport usage can be restricted to certain times of day. State product-liability laws are not preempted by Federal law and in most cases, aviation manufacturers may be held strictly liable for defects in aviation products.

[Space law](#), which governs matters in outer space beyond the Earth's atmosphere, is a rather new area of law but one that already has its own journals and academic support. Much of space law is connected to aviation law.

Air transport agreement

An **air transport agreement** (also sometimes called an **air service agreement** or **ATA** or **ASA**) is a bilateral agreement to allow international commercial air transport services between signatories.

The bilateral system has its basis under the [Chicago Convention](#) and associated multilateral treaties. The Chicago Convention was signed in December 1944 and has governed international air services since then. The convention also has a range of annexes covering issues such as aviation security, safety oversight, airworthiness, navigation, environmental protection and facilitation (expediting and departure at airports).

In 1913, in what was probably the earliest such agreement, a bilateral exchange of notes^[1] was signed between [Germany](#) and [France](#) to provide for airship services.

One of the first ATAs following [World War II](#) was the [Bermuda Agreement](#), which was signed in 1946 by the [United Kingdom](#) and the [United States](#). Features of this agreement became models for the thousands of such agreements that were to follow, although in recent decades some of the traditional clauses in such agreements have been modified (or "liberalized") in accordance with "[open skies](#)" policies adopted by some governments, notably the [United States](#).^[2]

In principle all ATAs should be registered by the [International Civil Aviation Organization](#) in DAGMAR,^[3] the ICAO's Database of Aeronautical Agreements and Arrangements, but this source is not absolutely comprehensive.

Air service agreements (ASA) are formal treaties between countries – accompanying memoranda of understanding (MoU) and exchanges of formal diplomatic notes. It is not mandatory to have an ASA in place for international services to operate, but the cases where services exist without treaty are rare. ASAs cover the basic framework under which airlines are granted economic bilateral rights to fly two countries. The frequency, the designated airlines of the two signing countries, origin and intermediate points, traffic rights, type of aircraft and tax issues are normally covered by MoUs.

Bermuda Agreement:

The Bermuda Agreement (formally Agreement between the government of the United Kingdom and the government of the United States relating to Air Services between their respective Territories), reached in 1946 by American and British negotiators in Bermuda, was an early bilateral air transport agreement regulating civil air transport. It established a precedent for the signing of approximately 3,000 other such agreements between countries. The Agreement was replaced by the Bermuda II Agreement, which was signed in 1977 and effective in 1978.

National Civil Aviation Policy

National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP 2016) is [government policy](#) approved by [Union Cabinet](#) on 15 June, 2016.^[1] The NCAP 2016 covers the broad policy areas, such as Regional connectivity, Safety, Air Transport Operations, 5/20 Requirement for International Operations, Bilateral traffic rights, Fiscal Support, Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul, Air-cargo, Aeronautical 'Make in India'.^{[2][3][4]} The [UDAN](#) Scheme which was launched on April 27, 2017 by PM [Narendra Modi](#), is a key component of the National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP).^{[5][6]}

The broad key features of the NCAP are:

- VGF for operation under Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS).
- Revival of un-served or under-served routes under RCS.
- Introduction of a new Category 'Schedule Commuter Operator' under Commercial Air Transport Operations.
- Rationalization of Category-I routes under Route Dispersal Guidelines (RDGs) on the basis of criteria given in NCAP 2016.
- The requirement of 5 years and 20 aircraft for international operation has been modified to 0 years and 20 aircraft or 20% of the total capacity (in terms of average number of seats on all departure put together) whichever is higher for domestic operations.
- Liberalization of domestic code share points in India within the framework of ASA

7. 1. Transit - a facility consisting of the means and equipment necessary for the movement of passengers or goods. While Transit transport refers to transport of a load through one country while the places of departure and

destination are in another country or countries and the load is transported through the transit country without loading or unloading.

Documents When travelling by road:

A lot of us who live in the urban jungle often look forward to taking a long road trip away from the noise and stress of the city. It could even be an impromptu plan that involves a picnic with your special someone. Before we head out of the city, we generally go about making a checklist of the essentials that we may need on the trip. This could include your mobile phone, music, maps, snacks, etc. But what about the documents of your car and insurance policy? A long road trip can be a therapeutic experience, but, on the flip side, it can also be quite an ordeal if you are stranded, away from home, without any documents related to your vehicle.

An experienced traveler will tell you that it is very important that you carry your vehicle documents when travelling on the road. There are general inspections carried out at state borders and highways, during times of riots, or the police could even stop you for an inspection. You might get stopped for breaking a traffic rule and the police have every right to ask you for the documents of your vehicle. It is a good habit to carry all your documents needed when you travel on the road. There is no need to put yourself in a tough spot when you're far away from home and help isn't easily available.

Let us take a look at the important documents that everyone should carry with them when on a road trip or a long drive:

Registration Certificate of your vehicle: The Registration Certificate (RC) of your vehicle is the most important document that you should carry when on the road. The RC book is an official document that provides proof of registration of the vehicle that is driven. The RC book contains technical details about the vehicle such as vehicle number, chassis number, address of the owner, etc.

Pollution Under Control Certificate: A Pollution Under Control (PUC) certificate is an important document to carry when travelling on Indian roads. Every vehicle emits smoke and gases that are a product of fuel being burnt within the engine. These gases need to undergo a stream of filters that clean them to ensure that no harmful or pollution causing gases are emitted out into the atmosphere. A PUC certificate can be obtained at any computerized facility that is authorised to issue the certificate. These facilities are commonly found at petrol bunks and workshops.

Driving Licence: A driving licence is an official document that is issued by the Regional Transport Authority/Offices (RTA/RTO) to people who clear the driving test. This document is important to carry when travelling on a long road trip and also acts as an identity card. Another point to keep in mind is that it is illegal to drive on Indian roads without a valid driving licence. This

is also one of the first documents that officials ask for if you are stopped on the road by the police.

Certificate of Insurance: Every vehicle that plies on Indian roads has to have an updated insurance coverage for the vehicle. This was mandated in 1988 by the Motor Vehicle Act. This applies for both cars as well as two-wheelers. According to Rule 141 of the Act, an insurance agency will provide a Certificate of which will contain the particulars pertaining to your automobile. A copy of this certificate can be carried in the vehicle while it is advisable to leave the original at home or at the office. Apart from inspection or spot checks, you will require the details of your insurance policy in case your vehicle breaks down. Without these details, seeking help from the insurance company becomes quite a hassle.

Each one of us deserves a break from our daily life to recharge our mind and spirits. Therefore, don't spend time on your drive calling home to find out details about documents that you should have been carrying. You don't have to shell out any holiday money as fines if you carry all the documents mentioned above. Most importantly, you get to keep your vehicle as officials can sometimes impound your vehicle if you do not carry these important documents.

Road travel has never been as glorified and sought after as it is right now. So friends, for the love and passion of travel and cross border expeditions , I share the excerpts from my own travel , which will help you draw a plan.

Driving to a foreign locale may be quite an adventure, but planning it right is crucial. India shares its borders with several countries, each with its own set of regulations, and with the news about a section of the new Asian highway linking India, Myanmar and Thailand becoming operational, there's no better time to set out on a road trip to Bangkok, Beijing, Moscow or London.

A cross border road trip had, and still has, its own challenges and difficulties, depending upon the country you are planning to visit.

India shares international borders with 6 countries. Here we are mentioning them in order from easiest to the most difficult ones to enter.

Nepal

You can enter Nepal in your vehicle at any time of the year without prior permissions. The most famous land border crossing is the Sunauli border in Uttar Pradesh, which is around 185 km from Gorakhpur. In less than 30 minutes, all the formalities can be completed at the border and you are ready to drive into Nepal. From Nepal, you can enter China and go on to the Middle East, Russia and Europe.

Documents – Any photo ID proof

Currency – NPR

Conversion – 1INR = 1.60 Nepalese Rupee

Visa – Not required for Indian Nationals

Best places to visit – Kathmandu, Pokhara, Chitwan National park, Sagarmatha National Park, Langtang, Sarankot.

Bhutan

Like Nepal, Indian citizens don't require a passport and visa to enter Bhutan. If you plan to take your own Indian registered vehicle, all you need to do is pre-register yourself. This can be done at the immigration post at Phuntsholing border and at the transport department for vehicle registration. The process takes around 2-3 hours as there are two separate buildings for vehicle registration and individual registration. The most popular land border is the Jaigaon-Phuntsholing border in West Bengal. If you have to go beyond Thimphu (capital of Bhutan), then you need to take permissions again. Another land border is Samdrup Jongkhar in Assam. It's not as popular because the main cities of Bhutan, like Paro and Thimphu, are close to the West Bengal border. Though Bhutan shares a land border with China, there is no land connectivity, so one cannot go anywhere beyond Bhutan.

Documents – Passport/ Voter ID/Adhaar card (Driving license is not accepted as an ID or Address proof)

Currency – Bhutanese Ngultrum

Conversion – 1 INR = 1 Bhutanese Ngultrum

Visa – Not required for Indian National

Best places to visit – Thimphu, Paro, Punakha, Royal Manas National Park, Bumthang, Trashigang, Jigme Dorji National Park

Bangladesh

A 'carnet' (you need to deposit 200 per cent of your vehicle's value to obtain it for your vehicle) is a must to exit India and enter Bangladesh. You don't need to apply for special permissions or permits other than carnet & visa. Visitors can enter Bangladesh from the Petrapole–Benapole border. You can engage any travel company to take care of the hotel bookings and tour planning. Though a guide is not mandatory, it's advisable.

Documents – Valid Passport, Visa, Vehicle documents, Planned Itinerary, Carnet & Third party vehicle insurance

Currency – Bangladeshi Taka

Conversion – 1 INR = 1.17 Bangladeshi Taka

Visa – Required

Best places to visit – Dhaka, Cox's Bazar, Saint Martin, Sundarban, Kuakata, Rangamati, Sylhet.

Myanmar

One has to cross Myanmar on the Delhi to Bangkok Highway, which was talked about a fair bit last year. To exit and re-enter India via the Indo-Myanmar land border (Moreh), one needs to apply for a carnet. You need to pay 200 per cent of your vehicle's value to obtain it. Thailand customs also accept carnet as a valid document should you wish to enter the country driving a foreign registered vehicle.

It is not possible to enter Myanmar without a pre-planned itinerary and hotel booking in place. It is mandatory to hire a local Burmese guide, approved by the Ministry of Myanmar Tourism, who will travel with you. Hiring the services of a travel company that specializes in organizing road trips is ideal. The company needs to be registered with the Myanmar tourism department in order to apply for permits and permissions on your behalf. Vehicle and driver details are to be submitted a month in advance, along with 50 per cent advance payments. Hotels bookings, guides and other formalities are carried out by the agent.

Another mandatory rule is to have a lead car for the convoy — a must, even if it's a single car. This is because of poor signboards along the roads and difficulty in communicating with the locals in a foreign language. This is part of the agent services you would hire for permits.

From Myanmar, you can enter China and go on to the Middle East, Russia and Europe . You can also enter Thailand from Myanmar and go till Singapore via Malaysia.

Documents – Valid Passport, Visa, Carnet, original vehicle documents & Special overland permit & permissions.

Currency – Burmese Kyat

Conversion 1 INR = 17.65 Burmese Kyat

Visa – Required

Best places to visit – Yangon, Bagan, Mandalay, Inle Lake, Naypyidaw, Hpa-An

China

The most time-consuming and uncertain process of taking permissions are to drive in China. You can enter China (Tibet) through Nepal via the Kodari — Zhangmu border. Like Myanmar, China does not accept or recognize carnet and international driving license. You need to take all permissions in advance, and that takes a minimum of two months, as permissions like special overland permits for Indian registered vehicles and temporary driving license come from Lhasa.

Your permits can be cancelled without any refund, so it's a big risk. We hear about the Nathu La pass entry point in the Himalayas these days, but as of now, civilian vehicles have not crossed this border.

Documents – Valid Passport, Visa, original vehicle doc's & Special overland permit & permissions.

Currency – Chinese Yuan

Conversion 10.21 INR = 1 Chinese Yuan

Visa – Required

Best places to visit – Beijing, Shanghai, Macau, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Lhasa

Pakistan

There is no way to enter Pakistan in an Indian registered civilian vehicle. Many foreign citizens who undertake overland expeditions use Wagah Border to enter or exit India during their journey but this option is not open to Indians.

Regional Transport Office

The **Regional Transport Office** or **Regional Transport Authority (RTO / RTA)** is the organization of the [Indian government](#) responsible for maintaining a database of drivers and a [database of vehicles](#)^[1] for various states of [India](#). The RTO issues [driving licences](#),^[2] organises collection of [vehicle excise duty](#) (also known as [road tax](#) and *road fund licence*) and sells [personalised registrations](#).^[3]

Along with this, the RTO is also responsible to inspect vehicle's insurance and clear the pollution test

RTO database: The RTO identifies untaxed vehicles, and identify keepers of cars entering various Indian states, or who exceed speed limits on a road that has [speed cameras](#) by matching the cars to their keepers utilising the RTO database.^[5]

The High Security Registration plates (HSRP) was introduced to help reduce vehicle crime and improve security. It is intended to deter criminals from disguising stolen cars with the identity of written off or scrapped vehicles.^[6]

There are various portals where one can check their license status.^[7]

Vehicle registration certificate^[edit]

The owner of a vehicle can apply and get duplicate copy of the [vehicle registration certificate](#) from the concerned RTO office if it is stolen, lost, destructed and completely written off. A complaint should be lodged to the police station which is situated under the jurisdiction / area of lost before approaching the regional transport officer. After completing the formalities, the owner has to submit FORM 26 and the Police Certificate to the Registering Authority along with the required documents for applying duplicate vehicle registration certificate.