

# **WHAT INDIA SHOULD DO TO GROW INTERNATIONAL TOURISM**

This talk is available on line at: [www.mikespinelli.com](http://www.mikespinelli.com)

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## Opening Remarks

### TOURISM IS THE ENGINE OF PROSPERITY

The three direct routes to world peace, economic growth and solving the balance of payments problem of all nations of the world ...are:

# 1. TOURISM # 2. TOURISM and # 3. TOURISM!

When Jiang Zeming became President of China he stated that his first goal would be LOWERING THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS!!

He need look only to TOURISM.

Tourism is the invisible export although it is sadly mistaken for a luxury by most governments; Particularly my own government, which eliminated the U.S. Travel Administration in 1995! It became a function of the U.S. Department of Commerce. YET, their own publication states: "International Travel is one of the major EXPORTS of the United States. Ranking AHEAD of Agricultural goods, Consumer Goods and Motor Vehicles!

I mention this ONLY to impress you with the tough peddling ahead to convince most government officials of what tourism is, and it's PRIME importance to the welfare of a nation.

Unfortunately, the nature of the tourism industry, which appears as pleasure, leads many in government to treat us as a frivolous segment; hence, (from what I hear) your tourism budget has been operating on a shoestring. I was happy to learn that your government has raised your tourism budget five fold. While five times a shoestring budget may still be low, never forget that it is not the amount of the money in your budget, but how and where it is spent.

Tourism is the engine of your prosperity, however the road to success is always under construction and it has no rest areas!

When I was President of the American Society of Travel Agents, my turf was tourism to the 170 Countries where we had chapters. Every Minister of Tourism that I met around the world had the same question for me:

"How do I jump start tourism to my country!"

My standard answer being: "The road to success is always under construction ... and there are no rest areas!"

**The rules of growth in tourism are basic and are immutable:**

1. Ample budget funding. Many nations use a departure tax. You may want one, which is earmarked for TOURISM. Since your citizens pay departure taxes at many nations they visit, then, there should be no reluctance to impose one, PROVIDED, the revenue is earmarked for Tourism. Bermuda has been most successful in this arena.
2. "Play to the Grandstand" with your most recognized icon.
3. Develop your infrastructure. (Observe China)
4. Know where and how to spend your tourism dollars.

If you are selling the UK, do what the UK sellers do. If you are selling in the USA, do what the USA sellers do. Do not attempt to run everything from India. Local people know their own markets best.

*ANECDOTE: "Houston - we have a problem." (This is an anecdote on the importance of knowing exactly where a problem lies and how to fix it)*

As simple as this may seem, making changes in the way any nation promotes tourism is no easy task. FOR A NATION TO WANT SIZEABLE INCREASES, IT REQUIRES A MAJOR PARADIGM SHIFT... A MAJOR CHANGE WHICH IS NOT EASY.

The reason dates back to 1531, the words of Nicole Machiavelli in the Prince.

"It must be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to plan, more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to manage than the creation of a new system. The initiator has the enmity of all who would profit by the preservation of the old institution and lukewarm defenders in those who would gain by the new system".

Tourism should be placed on the front burner with the knob on HIGH.

Everyone in the tourism industry must have a BURNING DESIRE to convince your Parliament to provide the funding. A copy of this talk even in the hands of your Prime Minister would do nothing but good.

*SOCRATES-PLATO ANECDOTE (A short story of what a Burning Desire really means to achieve a goal)*

So, as we go into the meat of this discussion, keep in mind:

"If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you always got!"

You must know where exactly where to TAP. (No different than tapping for water or oil)

You must have a burning desire to change the ways of old.

### WHAT OUR TALK WILL COVER

1. Tourism: The birth and growth of this magic bullet.
2. What we learned about the power of travel and tourism through the unfortunate effects of 9/11.
3. Proven rules to spark tourism.

## 1. WHAT IS TOURISM?

This is a simple question for us in the industry!

Unfortunately, in most governments, there is a lack of understanding of the power of tourism.

This happens in my country and virtually all democracies.

9/11 drove home to most nations the fact that the economy of most nations is tied into travel.

It is the engine of prosperity!

Tourism is fast becoming the world's largest industry and generator of jobs.

Tourism provides direct and indirect employment to over 250 Million Jobs and one out of every 9 workers!

Our problem is that tourism is **invisible!**

Tourism is not like Steel, which you can see, and measure, Agriculture that can be seen and touched.

Hence, our heads of state can have little understanding of an invisible product, which is truly an INVISIBLE EXPORT!

All nations of the world confront the same problem:

"A need for a low balance of payments."

Tourism is the quickest way to lower the balance of payments!

The wonderful byproduct is providing JOBS.

One example is Airline statistics which show that for each person employed by an airline, 5 jobs are created! Think for example of all the jobs that an airline creates? Baggage handlers, paper cup makers, plastic utensils, cleaners of aircraft, maintenance people, food and beverage growers and preparers, luggage manufacturing, clothing and cloth manufacturer, to name just a few!

However, Mass Tourism, because it is young, yes young, is barely understood by people out of our profession.

India's present democracy was born in 1947, while Tourism began to grow heavily in the 1950's with the birth of Commercial Passenger Jet Service.

Prior to the JET,

- In the days of propeller aircraft only the affluent traveled internationally.
- In the 30's, pre World War II, extended Business Travel was a luxury, as even a trip from New York To Dallas Texas would entail a week to ten days with high-speed trains. Today this same trip is done in a day.
- Prior to 1968 it was unheard of to take a weekend trip from New York to London or Paris, or a One Week Trip to Hong Kong, yet, today this has become common practice.

What 100% of all parliamentarians need to know is that Travel, the invisible export, is now one of the biggest EXPORTS in the world.

- Visitors arrive to buy and take home your nation's production in their suitcases or via the mail. This is no different than commercial goods loaded on a container.
- Every time a Jet touches down at an airport, it affects your economy. These visitors fuel your restaurant and hotel business and buy from the smallest Street Vendor to the Luxury Specialty Stores. In 1960, there were just 69 Million International Arrivals. Today the number is staggering and growing. It reached 697 million in 2000. It also represents \$ 595 Billion dollars and 11% of the world's GDP and 8% of the Global Employment.

Travelers' spending affects countless jobs and production.

**What types of travelers exist in the world? Who are they?**

There are only three types of Travelers.

1. Business or Corporate Travel.
2. V.F.R. Visiting Friends and Relatives
3. Vacation Travel.

Of these three, our legislators need to understand, the most important one, which is:

#### VACATION TRAVEL.

**Why?** Business and VFR travel are virtually non-elastic demand products. Price may stimulate some VFR; it does not affect business travel. No matter how low the price is from New York to Mumbai, it does **not** stimulate more business trips! This type travel is based on need and need alone.

VACATION TRAVEL is the only type that has **demand elasticity** and delivers the biggest spenders!

The more skilled a nation is on "Knowing where to Tap," to expand this market, the faster their nation will move on the road to economic prosperity.

Growing the Tourism Market will enrich your people, which in turn will enrich your country.

Your market is the world.

The amount of dollars in your tourism budget is NOT as important as WHERE AND HOW YOU SPEND IT. **"Knowing where to TAP."**

Example: A tourism budget of \$ 275 million dollars would apply just a dollar a person to the population of the USA! Hence, it is not the amount dollars in your budget, but how and where you spend the dollars.

Your Director General of Tourism was quoted at the PATA conference in New Delhi this year saying that India Tourism office has been operating on a "Shoestring Budget."

Does it not follow that a shoestring budget has had to be one key reason that your tourist arrivals have trailed most other nations. Remember that if you spend peanuts you buy peanuts! You have increased this budget 5 fold; however, you may need much more which can be funded via a departure tax.

So far, from what I see, you have been picking the "Low Hanging Fruit".

Is it not time to go after the HIGH HANGING FRUIT?

It is not enough to say that we are on the right track. When you are on the right track, you must move or you get hit by the train.

You deserve to move from the minor leagues to the big leagues with a collaboration of Government and the Private Sector working together and using all resources available to raise your numbers. I am sure that this concept is not new to you; however, it must now take the front position.

As I said earlier, the travel business is very young. Well, so is India. It was not until 1947 that you pulled up your stockings and took control over this great nation. India became a republic in 1947 taking control from another nation that was making all the decisions. India of old was denied the right to manufacture even a safety pin until 1947! Today, India must make all the decisions through her own parliament.

It is now time to make the necessary changes to Jump Start the big numbers.

The goal must be going far beyond the numbers which existed prior to 9/11

Currently, your arrivals have been predominantly from the UK, Europe, Asia and the Pacific Asia region. I would tap Pacific Asia heavily as it is now the fastest growing outbound tourism market in the world, according to your Director General of Tourism comments at PATA India.

The USA, one of the biggest exporters of travelers, needs a major focus.



Moving up the ladder in a buyer's mind is well covered in a book: "Positioning" By Reiss and Trout. An all time best seller. This is a must read book. It covers methods to grow your position in the mind of a buyer.

Where do you place your tourism efforts?

Knowing "Where to TAP" will be the key to success.

When you learn where to TAP, you must give your efforts the force of an elevator crushing a Walnut.

An elephant crushing a walnut.

I call it OVERKILL for success. This tactic was the hallmark of my 43 past years in travel and it worked every time! We shot for a star to reach the moon.

Tourism will soon be the biggest industry in the world and its importance to prosperity was driven home to many nations following the tragedy of 9/11.

The world now knows how 9/11 caused massive unemployment brought on by the worldwide slowdown in travel.

If the slowdown of travel can cause such a business downturn then boosting travel will have the opposite effect. A positive upward effect.

I do not normally speak world affairs from a podium, however, since the Internet and Satellite Television has placed all of us into one global village

I must touch upon this important subject.

9/11 compounded the biggest enemy of tourism, which is terrorism.

As your Prime Minister said to P.A.T.A. in April:

"Terrorism is the foe of Tourism." "Tourism is an antidote for Terrorism."

And I must add that Terrorism does not affect only the country where it occurs,

but whole regions. All of India is feeling the effects of the Jammu-Kashmir incidents, in addition to 9/11. Terrorism is the foe of Tourism.

You cannot stop terrorism by shooting terrorists. It can only be stopped by world leaders denying a haven for the perpetrators.

Perhaps these items may convince world leaders that fortifying their tourism efforts will strengthen their economy! Here are some facts that followed 9/11

- IATA reported 2001 as the Worst Year in the history of air travel.
- Airlines outside the U.S. lost \$ 20. Billion in 2001; they will lose 4-8 Billion in 2002. Recovery may wait until 2004 if world tension eases, of course.
- US Airways, a major U.S. carrier declared chapter 11 bankruptcy. Swissair, Sabena, Ansett, Midway and Vanguard airlines closed down. American Hawaii cruises closed their doors!
- United and American Airlines are losing billions annually.
- Total passengers were down 4% in 2001 and expected to fall an additional 3% in 2002, with yields declining even faster.
- Trans-Atlantic travel dropped 30%, and is still down 20%.
- 200,000 jobs have been cut by the airlines alone! U.S. Carriers are cutting service, meals, destinations and more, in an effort to halt the losses they currently face. Each item cut, affects many area. Take a simple meal cut. It will affect cleanup crews, food producers, paper goods companies and many more. Also affected are Hotels, Travel Agents, Car Rentals, Theme Parks, taxicabs and countless businesses all serving the tourist needs.
- Few nations have realized the importance of Tourism. Those who have, understood this have received countless rewards. A key example is France, who has a great infrastructure for tourist

travelers as well as a very high return per dollar spent on tourism. They have one of the highest per dollar returns for tourism dollars spent in the world.

## 2. The effects of 9/11 and similar events

This month the World Tourism Organization reported that Tourism enjoyed exceptional years in 2000 and 2001. In 2000, International arrivals grew by 40 Million Arrivals, reaching unprecedented levels.

In 2001, international arrivals declined by .6%, the first downturn since 1982!

The magnitude of 2000 distorted all statistics, which would have been in line with the trend of the past decade.

WTO further pointed out that the effects of the economic downturn on inbound tourism in regions such as Americas, South Asia and the Middle East were felt during the first eight months of 2001.

This was compounded by media overkill highlighting images of tragic events.

The magnification of diplomatic and military responses, etc., led to a decline in international tourist flows.

The sad news here is that the way people travel was restructured.

They continue to travel, but are staying close to home due a feeling of uncertainty in the world.

An interesting point is how your area was highlighted in the report.

"Tension between India and Pakistan threatens the development of tourism in certain destination areas." Tourism from the USA came to a virtual halt.

## HERE ARE SOME NEW TRENDS in travel post 9/11

Source: WTO & Canadian Tourism Research Institute

- ◆A clear tendency toward shorter stays when going on holidays.
- ◆Higher demand for customized holidays
- ◆The shift from active holidays to holidays as an experience.
- ◆Increased numbers of senior tourists.
- ◆The advent of emerging destinations
- ◆Increase in auto versus air travel
- ◆More late bookings.
- ◆Popularity of rural and back to basics travel.
- ◆Increased use of the Internet for travel research.
- ◆Increased family related trips.

The latter item is an ideal opportunity for India.

You can find the entire list on the WTO website.

The KEY for us to know now is that there are CHANGING PATTERNS of travel due to UNCERTAINTY.

THE ONE FORMULA THAT REMAINS VALID is that cooperation between government and the private sector is a must!!

India tourism from overseas was growing at an average annual cumulative rate of 4.5% between 1990 and 2000. Predictions for you are 2.2 Million arrivals for 2002, which compare poorly with figures of similar neighbors like Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, China and Nepal, without even including Hong Kong and Singapore.

To be down in 2001 compared to 2000 is understandable as 2000 was an outstanding

travel year for the world. 2002 should have given you some comeback, however, as I mentioned previously, the excessive media coverage of any tragic event is in itself, a tragedy.

Hence India suffers from this adverse publicity.

The media thrives on tragedies. My daily news broadcasts at home thrive on everything from car accidents to kidnappings.

On the World Wide scene, all major incidents negatively impact tourism.

The worst of all words is nuclear. Your northwest neighbor has bantered around this word.

I told many friends of mine that I would be traveling to India. I also asked my daughter in law, who lives in New York City to ask all of her friends how they felt regarding travel to India.

Due to the media saturation of the border problems in Jammu-Kashmir

8 out of 10 of them said: "Is it safe," or words to that effect. Even a little U.S. town like

Southbridge, MA elicited a note from one of my cousins about my trip here.

Her closing remark in the note was: "Be careful."

**Why?** Because Perception is reality. What the public will perceive, they will believe. Their feelings are fueled by media saturation of incidents. Sadly, most Americans have a limited knowledge of Geography. They avoid entire regions when any bad news appears.

One example was IRELAND. The IRA campaign and terrorism in Northern Ireland effected the South. It took 10 years to get tourism there back to normal.

However, this short-term problem must not be allowed to affect your long term planning as Tourism takes long term promoting to be effective!

A recent survey by H.A.I. (Hotel Association of India) drove home some vital data.

147 Experienced International travelers staying at 17 Leading hotels and 12 major tourist destinations in India were surveyed. While these travelers shrugged off the

travel advisories and warnings as colored by political situations or inadequate knowledge,

the major point driven home was the effects on Travel, Tourism and Hospitality.

Businessmen in the survey indicated that their hotels had no tourists and of the

15 Tourists within the survey group, none were from the USA.

While this survey is positive, the problem is that it did not make the New York Times!

A major public relations drive is needed with the keynote being safety.

In the survey results you can see that the Europeans are more familiar with India as

they have a long history with you and go beyond the headlines. In the USA,

there is far too little accurate knowledge of the actual situation. This is why not one

of the 15 Vacation Travelers was from the USA.

I am sure you all have copies of this survey, which is dated June 2002.

The fact is that India is SAFE; the unsafe perception in the U.S.A. is due to advisories

and the media.

## LET US LOOK NOW AT SOME STATISTICS

### ON INTERNATIONAL ARRIVALS

In International arrivals, the U.S., France, Spain and Italy always head the charts.

India does not appear on the first screen. However, always remember that statistics

measure only what they measure. Total International Arrivals include Buses, Trains and Airlines.

Do these three apply to India?

Asian tourism must not be lumped into these charts, as India arrivals are virtually

all via the airways. Europeans on the other hand, just pack their car and drive on holiday.

Many even hitchhike!

As you know, Asian travel is not the same.

Certainly there can be no tourism from your northern neighbors by car, bus or train.

Additionally, the majority of your border is surrounded by water.

Having said that, my concern is that you have attracted from what I read, just 1% of the world tourism dollars, while Europe gleans some 50% of them.

There is excellent room for growth.

Let us now compare apples to apples.

While not mentioning other countries by name, I would wonder which in this whole region has the resources for tourism that you do.

**What other nation has all these! All magnets of tourism!**

- The most recognized tourism icon in the world: The Taj Mahal
- Adventure opportunities like Safaris.
- A culture of 5000 years, that brought the world the earliest literature and Value systems with the Upanishads and Vedas.
- You have a way of life that the Western World is eager to explore.  
Ayurveda, Meditation and Yoga, which is sweeping the world community.
- And... one other important factor that few nations can boast?

You speak English. This is obviously a blessing.

It is important to understand that you cannot recite the above list and sit back on your laurels! All villagers know where their Church is located. Yet, the Church chimes its bells every Sunday as a reminder!

Now, think of all other nations in your region and ask which other nation has this much going for them? Now, think of their international arrival numbers and ask why do they lead?

So when I see the high arrival numbers for Singapore, Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia versus India, I see vast opportunity for you.

The keys I mention once more are:

- The need for collaboration between Government and the Private Sector.
- Adequate funding of the tourism effort and then, knowing where to TAP.
- Knowing where and how to spend.

You have a well-kept secret and, as we would say in the states, you are "A Sleeping Giant," and I say this with humble flattery.

Remember my opening remarks: "If you always do what you have always done you will always get what you always got."

The H.A.I. (Hotel Association of India) recent survey of the 147 experienced International travelers to India highlights what I have been saying about the effects of the media reports of the border tension.

The U.S.A. was taught the rigors of terrorism on 9/11, so when they hear the word "Terrorism" associated with a region; it deters travel to that area.

Virtually all of those surveyed in the H.A.I. report had nothing but praise for the safety here.

However, as I mentioned, this report did not receive full exposure in the USA.

Example: Arrivals to Mumbai alone indicated a decline of 24.2% in May of this year.

While I mentioned the need for a Public Relations effort to combat the Media reports and the harsh advisories, the Internet can be used to take advantage of the current scenario in the business world.

### **3. A SUMMARY OF SOME PROVEN RULES TO SPARK TOURISM**

**FOR THE SHORT RUN:** The key can ONLY be a barrage of positive public relations messages to at least get back to where India was. Give good media coverage to all notable people who come to India. Example, Paul McCartney and Goldie Hawn



who recently visited India. I am sure there are many others.

Unfortunately there is a fear prevalent in the U.S. that the Jammu/Kashmir border intrusions could spark the worst kind of war. Remember: 80% of those told of my trip in both New England and New York raised the safety issue.

We know the opposite is true! Unfortunately your northwest neighbor has used the term Nuclear to the press when responding to questions on the problems in the Jammu/Kashmir area. This has been reported in the press as Nuclear blackmail.

The current feeling by many in the USA is that conflict between India and Pakistan would be Nuclear as this has received excessive press. Only time can allay this type harmful press.

### **FOR THE LONG RUN:**

Remember my original quote: "If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you always got!" Is it not time to awaken the sleeping GIANT? The big elephant of tourism?

**MAJOR OPERATON IS NECESSARY** if you want to TAP the U.S.A MARKET as never before.

A paradigm change is needed.

## **THE USA VISITOR**

### **KNOWING WHERE TO TAP**

Let me review how Travel is purchased in America and how our selling market has changed.

Here are some basics:

- Travel Agents handle virtually all overseas tourism.
- Travel Agents suggest FIRST what they KNOW best. They fear the problems of
- selling the unknown.
- Travel Agents sell from package tours put together by tour operators. These packages have:  
AIR, HOTEL, SIGHTSEEING, etc.

- The major US airlines have eliminated travel agent commissions driving thousands to close their doors and:
  1. Operate from their Home.
  2. Take a desk in a large agency, but remain independent.
- Home Based Agents represent an invisible layer of sellers of travel who now have their own trade associations! NACTA is one of the larger ones, National Association of Commission Travel Agents.
- MORE IMPORTANT. The growth of computers in travel agencies has created **DATA BASE MARKETING**. Major consortiums of travel agents are given the mailing lists of past clients of the agency. The consortium manages the list by type of traveler.
  - They are sorted by type of trip or trip taken.
  - Mailings can then be targeted. E.g.: Person takes a trip to China so they receive mailings on India, Australia, etc. Those who took an upscale cruise only receive upscale cruise offers!

### HERE ARE 11 PLACES TO TAP FOR INTERNATIONAL ARRIVALS

India must now go after the HIGH HANGING FRUIT.

At the April PATA conference in New Delhi, your Director General of Tourism stated that India will be improving highways and railways and reorienting a focus on Southeast Asia and Pacific Asia which is the fastest growing outbound market in the world.

My comments to follow are geared toward the U.S.A. market; however, the principles here would apply most anywhere. From the figures I have seen, U.S.A. appears to be virgin territory for India.

1. Creation of TII (Travel Industry of India) a consortium of Hotel and Restaurant Associations, Airlines, Tour Producers, Travel Agent Organizations and any other industry which benefits from the purchases of tourists. This consortium must work directly with your Government Agency for Tourism. It can function worldwide as the "House of India." A Collaboration of the Government and Private sectors is a must. You must work as a team as you do not compete with each other, but with other regions. This effort must be fortified with a strong TOURISM BUDGET. It is important that your government understands the high priority of tourism to the economy of India. It is the engine of prosperity. The return per dollar spent on tourism can range approximating \$ 75 for Australia to \$ 400 for France.
2. Partner with neighboring areas. An offer of two or more countries sells much quicker than to just one country, especially where the trip entails travel around the world. If a person is coming this way, it would be rare for them to desire one nation alone, unless on a special interest trip. Hence, India trips should include such nations as NEPAL while Nepal offerings should include INDIA, etc. Also, become an extension in every cruise and tour brochure to your surrounding area.
3. LEAD TIME is a must for all promotions of Road Shows and other major events. Following a road show it is important not to lose your momentum as you are competing with other road shows. Never sit on your laurels from the show. A 6-month lead-time is a minimum for major efforts!

Seems like common sense? Common Sense is not always common knowledge.

I have heard of lead times of a month or less!! I also hear that this is being remedied.

4. INVOLVE all Major Travel Networks in the USA in your promotions. We have many which are associations like ASTA, ARTA, PATA, NACTA, VACATION.COM, GIANTS, etc.

Use these groups to identify agents who can sell India. Do not randomly select.

There is an identification process, which can be facilitated by the use of your U.S. Tourism office as well as Air India. I repeat, be sure to qualify specific agents invited to any promotions or your selling efforts will be frustrated.

5. Create a FOCUS GROUP of major tour operators and other key industry leaders to India based in the U.S.A. Careful selection must be made to obtain key people who will contribute to the goal of India tourism.

Meet with the focus group once or twice a year. Even a meeting in India, once you get the right focus group, with the correct people who have the "right stuff" would reap wonders.

Be very careful in your selections. IMPORTANT: Take their advice and use it.

Having been on focus groups I have seen many fruitful suggestions written up at meetings but never implemented by the host nation!

The answer of course is the Machiavellian quote which I gave you earlier.

This is the wisdom of the "Prince" in action.

6. Put your best foot forward. You may feel that the Taj Mahal is "old hat" and that India has many other things. This is certainly true, but the Taj Mahal stands over and above other world monuments. EVERYBODY wants to see the TAJ MAHAL. Use it like you use bait. Put it on everything that promotes India. The more they

see it the more they want to see the Taj personally. As I mentioned before, you should be well aware of your vast resources.

I have heard people say: "I do not want to die until I have seen the Taj Mahal!" Have you ever heard this said of the Eiffel Tower? Big Ben? Or even Niagara Falls!

While the Taj Mahal is a prime drawing card, with Nepal added in, you can add in Mount Everest. Two great lures for travelers.

7. Develop an INDIA SPECIALIST PROGRAM. Destination knowledge and a certificate on the wall give travelers confidence to listen to a trained India Specialist. Air India has already pioneered an India specialist manual.

I cannot stress this enough. Travel agents feel safe selling what they know best.

A destination certified travel agent will sell the destination.

You must carefully target agents and operators who have a large database and will promote and sell India.

This program must be without cost to the participant. Certificates are necessary upon completion of the course. The course can be offered at all travel conferences in the U.S.A. and may be coordinated with such organizations as ICTA, Institute of Certified Travel Agents which has much experience in certified programs.

8. Educational trips in major proportions. Careful screening and selection of participants with input from your own tour companies based in India is a must. You do not want sightseers but participants with the knowledge and desire to expand their sales horizon.

Tour operators and large travel agents selling neighboring areas are a bonanza.

9. Target the Senior Citizen Market. People are living longer and the new generation of "seniors" is inheriting the wealth from their parents. Average life expectancy in the U.S.A. just went up from 74 to 77 and women, to 80.

Many retire at as young as 50 years old and have nothing to do but travel.

There are tour companies who specialize in the senior market.

Some are as follows:

Far and Wide's company: Grand European (Far and Wide is the fastest growing US outbound ground operator), Grand Circle, Vantage and Saga of London, to name a few.

If you want to have a leg up on the world, stress ACCESSIBILITY at major sites for older people and the handicapped. I would suggest that you have a study of your area done by the SATH, The Society for Accessible Travel and Hospitality. They are having their annual convention in Miami, Florida January 15-19 2003 which is a great place to market India.

There are 54 to 60 Million Disabled Americans with a half trillion dollars in disposable income to spend on travel.

**ANECDOTE: The Athens the Parthenon and Aristotle's Lyceum (A short story to stress the need for accessibility)**

10: Segment your market. Go after:

- Student Groups
- University Groups Experiential groups. Groups to whom travel is not the goal, but, the purpose of the trip: e.g.: Alumni Groups, Culture Groups, Meditation, Yoga, Ayurveda Groups, etc.

11. Find tour operators that operate to neighboring regions to include India in their offerings.

There could be an excellent Orient operator doing China and Japan who may want to extend their reach to India. Far and Wide is an excellent example of this type tour company.

## Conclusion

You are all aware of the vast tourism resources that your country possesses. I have listed a few in this talk. I have endeavored to give you some guideposts for growing your tourism market. Being a young nation, it is understandable that Tourism has not always been top priority. Hopefully, the powerful force that tourism can be for your economy will reach the proper ears for a growing tourism budget. 9/11 has shown us all what happens when tourism wanes.

I must also remind you that it is not the amount of money in your tourism budget, but, how and where each dollar is spent. I hope that I have been able to give you some areas within this address. To be sure, I have only scratched the surface in this short talk. Some of you are aware of my love of India which goes back many years. Be assured that my door is always open to you in your quest to achieve the maximum in international arrivals.