

Accessible Tourism in India: The Right Moves

A small proportion of Indian travelers with distinctive needs and disabilities explore the world; spend money to explore destinations that boost barrier-free travel. Though there is still far away before India becomes a seamless destination for accessible tourism.



The Indian hospitality industry, for example, has a long way to go through awareness has improved in the years. It is no doubt that apart from a quite few 5* hotel chains, the mid-market and the budget category has a huge potential in terms of implementation access friendly options. Mrs. Gupta, who has degrees in both – Hotel Management and Architecture, works extensively with the Park Hotels and the ITC Hotel division. “While most 5* hotels do make sincere efforts to offer at least one barrier-free room, this is not the situation in majority budget hotels. Few business hotel chains have also started in providing disabled friendly accommodation. However if somebody wants to organize an international event with a number of disabled participants finding a suitable accommodation facility remains a tough task,” says Mrs. Gupta. On the other hand Mrs. Gupta emphasizes that Lemon Tree Hotels and ITC Hotels have made admirable efforts.

Along with providing consultancy to hotels to make their infrastructure much more guests’ needs friendly, accessible, comfortable and safe for guests with disabilities, Mrs. Gupta also offers audits the existing hotel infrastructure and as a result endorses modifications to make it accessible for guests with special needs. For newly developed hotels, Gupta helps by examination the architectural plans to certify that accessibility is offered effectively at the development stage. “I do feel that the Tourism Ministry must be firmer in providing that accessibility is offered in majority of accommodation facilities. Even this days when visiting 5* hotels that have an appropriate star rating from the government but no options for accommodation needs of disabled needs. They have to have correct assessment system, especially that all hotel categories have some basic accessible facilities,” notes Gupta adding that it is very right time to revise hotel classification system in terms of specifying a percentage of rooms that are available for disabled people. She argued, for example, that the accessibility requirement for US hotels was revised to include having of pool elevators for disabled guests to get into the pool and non-following the restriction would mean financial punishments. “In today’s India I cannot even dream of applying such regulations even though the use of pool is bundled into the accommodation rate. In case of a disabled guest if no effort is made towards accessing to the pool, charging the cost of pool use, which is usually included in accommodation price, as a part of the room rate to disabled guests is unfair,” argues Gupta.



Accessible tourism is comprised by a wide range of specific facilities of the infrastructure – from access friendly hotels to transportation, to approaching to tourist attractions and shopping centers – all that mean upgrading the whole travel infrastructure in all regions of the country, which sure take few more decades.

NOTE: Top barrier-free travel destinations: in Europe – northern European countries, Spain, Portugal, UK, Germany, France, in the Middle East – UAE, Oman, generally USA, Canada, Australia

Date: 2012-05-01

Article link:

<http://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-accessible-tourism-in-india-the-right-moves-article-1823>