

HOTEL INDUSTRY EXPECTATIONS VERSUS ACADEMIC DELIVERABLES: GAP ANALYSIS WITH REFERENCE TO PUNJAB STATE

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ABSTRACT

Hospitality is a large profit-generating industry of any progressive country and is main contributor towards national economic growth. Over the years India has urbanized as one of the strong economies of the world. The demand for trained work force is growing every year in almost every field and more in the hospitality industry due to the advent of India as one of the desired destinations for conferences and convections. There is always a demand for well educated, more knowledgeable and multi-skilled workers capable of holding administrative and supervisory level positions in the industry. The hospitality industry offers immense employment opportunities in various departments such as food production, food service, housekeeping, engineering, human resource, security and other operational departments. Introduction of better communication, dotcom culture, e-marketing, social media networking and low priced airlines the demand for hotel rooms increased many folds. This, all of a sudden growth required the availability of qualified man power in the hospitality industry. Hospitality industry condemns the hotel management educational institutes for not sufficiently preparing students for the employment in the industry. An understanding of how best to educate and develop human resources would benefit the hospitality industry as a whole. Employer's opinion of the "employee's skills" is a useful assessment for training and providing quality education. This research is an attempt to identify gaps between hotel industry expectations and academic deliverables

Keywords: Work force, Non-employable, Employee's skills, Competencies

1. INTRODUCTION

Hospitality industry is the chief pillar in almost every country's economy, while some countries are really outstanding at promoting themselves; others need to still do some serious work. Hospitality is a large profit-generating industry of any progressive country and is responsible for the main contribution towards national economic growth. Some of the countries like Mauritius, Malaysia Seychelles & Jamaica have thrown light on how interactions in academia and hospitality industry could support, sustain and ensure all round development of nations.

Over the years India has developed as one of the strong economies of the world. The demand for trained work force is growing every year in virtually every field and more in the hospitality industry due to the advent of India as one of the desired destinations for conferences and convections. There is always a demand for well educated, more knowledgeable and multi-skilled workers capable of holding administrative and supervisory level positions in the industry.

According to the travel and tourism competitiveness report 2017 India ranked 40th in the list of words attractive destinations. Recent initiative by Indian Government like Electronic tourist authorizations, E – Tourist Visa, resulted increase in the number of tourist visa issued in the country. In 2016 India was ranked 3rd among 184 countries in terms of travel & tourism's total contributor to GDP. India's foreign exchange earnings (FEEs) from tourism increased approx. 21% during the year 2017 and expected to grow by 7.9 % per annum by the year 2026.

1.1 POTENTIAL OF HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

The hospitality industry offers immense employment opportunities in various departments such as food production, food service, housekeeping, engineering, human resource, security and other operational departments. This is the only industry which is directly or indirectly associated with various sectors like agriculture, tourism and travel industry, transport (Air, Rail, Sea, Land) shopping malls and dairy industry. These all leads the hospitality industry to contribute a major share to the economic prosperity of the country. Presently hospitality industry is providing direct and indirect employment to approx. 42 million people and the number is expected to grow by approx. 3 per cent per annum by 2026.

1.2 HOSPITALITY EDUCATION

In the year 1954 the first hospitality education course was started in India by the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition, Mumbai. There were very few students who opt

for this course at that time. The Diploma Program in Hotel Management & Catering Technology (three years full time) was started in 1958 which was recognized by the Directorate of Technical Education, Maharashtra.

IHM, Mumbai was the only parental institute which becomes father and mother of hospitality education in India causing many such Institutes to blossom in other parts of the country. In 1963 three more Regional Institutes were made functional at New Delhi, Calcutta and Chennai.

The first Food Craft Institute in India was opened at Kerala in the year 1996. Later eight more IHM'S and Food Craft Institutes were opened in the eight states of India. Progressively most of the Food Craft Institutes were upgraded in 1982-83.

Presently, there are 21 Central Government sponsored Hotel Management Institutes, 21 State Government sponsored, 15 Private and 7 Food Craft Institutes that function in different parts of the country, affiliated to the National Council for the Hotel Management & Catering Technology, New Delhi.

Introduction of better communication, dotcom culture, e-marketing, social media networking and low priced airlines the demand for hotel rooms increased many folds. This, all of a sudden growth required the availability of qualified man power in the hospitality industry. The present institutional capacity was incapable to match this demand supply ratio which finally gave rise to private colleges/ institutions/ deemed/central/state universities to run Hospitality management courses. In the race to win the huge share of students many institutions miscarried to match the expectations of the industry and finally created a pool of non-employable alumni.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

(Mishra, 2010) attempted to recognize the ways to reinforce the delivery mechanism of Hospitality Management education in India by applying the implications of sound pedagogical theories. The authors are of the opinion that curriculum should be developed in consultation with the industry and social sectors of the society.

(Mccool, 2010) in paper "Incorporating crisis management into hospitality education" made attention on providing crisis management education to hospitality management students. The study concluded that only skills related to service are incorporated in the syllabus but the situations like terrorist attacks and crisis are not covered.

(Spowart, 2011) concluded that Curricula need to be assessed for the outcomes to be achieved in Work Integrated Learning and faculty need to be aware of the competencies that are required when preparing students for the workplace.

(Sharma & Broman, 2012) concluded that institutions need to be improve and upgrade themselves and there should be good cooperation and coordination between the management and students. Institutes must keep abreast with the new technologies and teaching style so as to upgrade the quality of teaching the students.

(Asirifi & Polytechnic, 2013) concluded hospitality education needs articulate and a well implemented hospitality syllabus to achieve a meaningful development. The courses which are being taught should be practical and skills oriented. Trainings should be well dedicated on providing leadership skills, managerial communication and employee relation to the students.

(Sarkodie, 2015) highlighted that multi sonant, communication skills, operating skills and computing skills as the most prominent skills that are required by the student's to fit into the hotel industry. The researcher suggested that, there should be a close partnership between the educators and the industry players so that students can understand industry expectations.

(Murray, Elliot, & Simmonds, 2017) concluded that hospitality Industry is more dependent on younger workers and bendable pool of employees that can respond to seasonal fluctuations. Employees will envisage the hospitality industry more as a career if they will receive career-style wages and see the potential future, fair return for their hard work.

3. OBJECTIVES:

- 1) To study the job requirements for entry level staff in a Hotel Industry.
- 2) To identify the various factors that creates gap between industry and academia.
- 3) To suggest initiatives to bridge the gap between hotel industry expectations and academic institutes.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**1) Methods of Data Collection:**

Both primary and secondary sources of data collection were used for this study.

Primary Data:Data was collected through structured questionnaires from HR Managers and Departmental heads from the selected hotels of Punjab

Secondary Data: Research journals, websites, magazines, newspapers etc.

2) Sample Design:

Purposive sampling is used for this research. Total 52 questionnaires were distributed out of which 46 filled questionnaires were received. The rate of response is almost 88%.

3) Analysis of research:

Questionnaires were mailed and also personally sent to around 52 the HR managers & departmental heads of the hotels

5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION:✓ **Hotel management education is essential to be employable in hotel industry**

Most of the respondents felt that basic learning is essential for a hotel business. To have solid knowledge of the current trends, to get an idea of the functioning of the hotel and also to study the complexities of the business, education is beneficial. Nevertheless, few respondents felt better association can be made if people from the hotel industry interact on a regular basis with the learners.

✓ **Hotel management program is relevant to the hotel industry:**

Different replies were received when asked about this. Some respondents felt that the curriculum focuses more on theoretical part and in practical world, these details may not matter greatly, but the program needs to be more skills-based.

✓ **Hotel management institutes produce good candidates for recruitment**

28 out of 46 respondents felt that they got decent candidates in reputed hotel management institutes. Respondent were of the choice that the candidates can be molded into successful employees by some hand on training practices. Yet, it is ostensive that still hotel management institute's lacks in providing practical training exposure to the students which needs to focus more.

✓ **Skills to be possessed by students for employment in hotel industry**

In order to find out how educational institutes prepare the students to façade the industry, respondents were asked about the factors which they consider as important criteria for selection. A single parameter did not get preponderance as many factors were considered similarly important by respondents. Problem solving Skills, Technical knowledge, communication skills, Quick decision making are the criteria in order to sustain and progress as an employee as well as contribute in the hotel's success. Most respondents manifest these skills in the range of 3-5 on the rubric, which indicates neutral to strongly agree. Educational qualification and approach towards work are also factors that respondents look for. Interpersonal and customer care skills and personality of the candidates were next on the list of employers. Nine of the respondents marked these skills on the rubric at and above 4, which indicates they strongly agree that these skills are important.

✓ **Reasons for high attritions in Hotel industry**

When asked about the causes of high attritions in the hotel industry, most of the respondents rated "unsuitability to work for longer time" and "financial benefits are less" as the main reason. Both these criteria's have received the most ratings as strongly Agree. Out of 46 respondents, 30 respondents have marked these two parameters. Job frustration is the thirdly rated reason for leaving the industry. While others felt that dreariness and less career development opportunities are equally strong factors due to which employees tend to leave this industry.

✓ **Propositions to bridge the gap between academics and Hotel industry:**

When asked about the ways in which the existing gap between academia and hotel industry could be bridged, 32 of 46 respondents felt that modifications in curriculum should be made. For illustration, education should include interaction with key figures from the industry, or arranging workshops & lectures from external experts so that students get strong awareness of the functioning of the industry as well as the most mutual suggestion was that internships should be provided to students in reputed hotels and institutes to link themselves with hotels to provide outdoor catering arrangements. These steps could give students a concrete knowledge and help them enhance the management skills as well problem-solving skills.

6. SUGGESTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the study the following are the suggestions:-

- 1) While giving admission to the prospective students the following conditions should be looked upon

- a) Desire of candidate to work in Hospitality sector
- b) Communication Skill
- c) Logical Thinking
- d) Hardworking
- e) Passionate
- 2) While designing curriculum focus should be made upon :-
 - a) Aims, objectives and learning outcomes should be clear and accurately framed.
 - b) Curriculum should be more practical oriented.
 - c) Industrial visits in each semester should be made compulsory
- 3) More Interaction with Industry people should be initiated on regular basis to know current innovations and trends in Hotel industry
- 4) Training programs for faculty members to refresh and update knowledge & skills
- 5) Institutes to be equipped with latest equipment's and Infrastructure
- 6) Enhancement in Industry's human resource policies like better pay scale, better treatment to trainees etc. should be made.

7. CONCLUSION:

In spite of Hotel Industry being accepted as a multidimensional industry with various job opportunities for skilled, unskilled and semi-skilled individuals, the government has yet not able to develop the *Veracious* Hotel Management education system in the country.

Many educational institutes have come up with Hotel Management Course without having proper infrastructure and training facilities for the students. For the purpose of money making educational institutes are cheating with their students by making fake promises and not specified the right scenario of the hospitality industry. To bridge the gap between hotel industry expectations and education deliverables Hotel management students should be trained keeping in mind latest trends and present demands of the industry. To conclude, this research suggests that industry professionals and academicians are aware that there is a need for a change. The industry needs to develop an improved image by changing the salary structures and by providing better working environment so as to ensure a certain level of employee enrollment and retention. Secondly, it is important to outline a clear transferable nationally accepted educational system and skills scheme in terms of qualification, training by the Government.

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