

# Hospitality Education in India: Issues and Challenges

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## Abstract

In the last two decades, tourism has been contributing 6% of world output, one in 15 jobs and 7% of capital investment. According to UNWTO, it can double its contribution to world's output, increase jobs by 33% and capital investment can jump by 80%. India has a distinctive culture and way of life, there is amazing cultural diversity throughout the country. Every state has carved out its own cultural niche. Unlike other export industries, there is comparatively little investment needed for promoting tourism. The scope for its expansion is unlimited. It is an industry, a source of income, especially of foreign exchange and an exercise in national image building. Government of India felt the importance of hospitality education and under the umbrella of ministry of tourism set up IHMs and ITTMs. IHMs were set up to cater the manpower demand in the field of catering and hotels. Similarly, ITTMs were dealing with manpower requirement in travel and tourism. Values and culture are inculcated in normal Indian since childhood hence automatically becomes an inbuilt component of hospitality education. This gives Indian hospitality graduates broader horizons towards the trade and opens scope of their employment globally. Institute-industry interface existed in form of industrial exposure and other short term training programs as part of curriculum. There is a need of educational and administrative reforms in hospitality institutes, teaching and research. Teacher's perks and pays are to be made comparable to other sectors to attract better talent in hospitality education. There is a lot of scope of research and projects on various aspects of hotels. There could be very innovative, meaningful and useful for society as well as industry. So, higher education and research bodies are required to recognize it as important and potential area for study. Accordingly, encouragement in form of financial-funding and support is the need of the hour.

**Keywords:** Hospitality; Tourism; Indian culture; Education; Research

## Introduction

In the last two decades, tourism has been contributing 6% of world output, one in 15 jobs and 7% of capital investment. According to UNWTO, it can double its contribution to world's output, increase jobs by 33% and capital investment can jump by 80%. (UNWTO 2006:2008) Tourism is an important sector of the economy and contributes significantly in the country's GDP as well as Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE). With its backward and forward linkages with other sectors of the economy, like transport, construction, handicrafts, manufacturing, horticulture, agriculture, etc., tourism has the potential to not only to be the economy driver, but also become an effective tool for poverty alleviation and ensuring growth with equity.

The tourism sector in India has fared quite well. Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE) from tourism in India during 2011 were \$16.56 billion as compared to \$14.19 billion in 2010, showing a growth of 16.7%. The growth rate of 8.9% in tourist arrivals in India was almost double the growth of 4.4% in tourist arrivals worldwide [1].

The Indian hospitality industry was projected to grow at a rate of 8.8% between years 2007-2016. Hence, India has been the second-fastest growing tourism market in the world. Hospitality industry contributes 8.78% of total employment in India. More than 5 million annual tourists arrived over here and there are around 562 million domestic tourists per year. These statistics show a rosy picture and there have been a boom in the hospitality sector. Even, the Planning Commission of India has identified it as the second largest sector in the country in providing employment opportunities for low-skilled workers in its 12th plan. The union ministry of tourism has estimated that there is a requirement of about 2.03 lakhs professionals in the industry in India. In contrast only around 21,000 hospitality graduates pass out annually [2].

## Journey of hospitality education in India

As tourism started shaping into an industry, Government of India felt the importance of hospitality education and under the umbrella

of ministry of tourism; IHMs and ITTMs were set up. IHMs were set up to cater the manpower demand in the field of catering and hotels. Similarly, ITTMs were dealing with manpower requirement in travel and tourism. Further to regulate hotel and catering education a separate autonomous body called NCHMCT under act of parliament was formed. NCHMCT is a society registered under societies registration act (1860). Set up by the govt. of India, ministry of tourism in the year 1982, the council functions as the national body for coordinated growth and development of hospitality management education imparted through the government sponsored Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology society and its affairs are looked after by the Board of Governors appointed by the central Government. Minister of Tourism is chairman of the society.

## Aims and Objective

The aim is to study significance of hospitality education and based on that; discuss emerging issues and Challenges in Indian context.

## Methodology

This study is based on combination of unstructured interview and discussion on the subject with all the stakeholders of hospitality education in India-Hotel industry Professionals/Promoters, Academician (Teacher and Researchers), Educational Administrator/Promoters and Students.

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## Secondary sources

Combination of newspaper, magazines, internet, books, periodicals and journals are the secondary source.

## Review of Literature

### Overview Indian hospitality education

The national council is the apex body and around 54 institutes are affiliated to NCHMCT including 21 central institutes and 12 state Government institutes. The National council also lays down the curriculum for the courses to ensure uniformity in the academic standards. Initially it was offering 3 years diploma after 10+2 which was later converted into 3 years bachelor degree by collaborating with IGNOU in 2002. Both NCHMCT and IGNOU has signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2002 at New Delhi. Further from 2005 National council (NCHMCT) with IGNOU started offering Master degree in Hotel administration (NCHMCT and IGNOU'S MOU Circulated to IHM's, 2002). Beside IHMs several other private Hospitality Institutes also mushroomed. Out of which most of them were awarding unapproved degrees and diploma. Some of them tied up with State Technical Education Board. Many Private hospitality institutes got affiliated to universities ([www.ugc.ac.in](http://www.ugc.ac.in)) and AICTE.

### Other institutes

In total there are more than 180 institutes, both government and private by Oberois, Taj etc., offering certificate, diploma or degree courses in hotel management or in specialized areas like food and beverage production, housekeeping etc.. There are also around 25 institutes, which impart short courses on particular crafts skills required in the industry. These courses are run as per the guidelines issued by All India Council of Technical Education. Various universities such as Rohilkhand University at Bareilly, Bundelkhand University at Jhansi, Nagpur University, Bangalore University, MKU, Mudarai, HNB Garhwal University at Srinagar and Amity University at Noida etc. are offering Bachelor degree in Hotel Management. MDU, Rohtak and Kurukshetra University are also offering two year Master's Degree in Hotel Management.

From the year 2009 onwards under Central Financial Assistance of Rs.2 crore; lot of universities like BPS Women University, Sonipat, Punjab University, Chandigarh, H.P University, Shimla, MLS University, Udaipur and Jiwaji University, Gwalior etc. have introduced Hospitality courses at Bachelors level.

### International studies on hospitality education

Internship/industry experience, preparation for industry employment, leadership, hospitality management and organization, and ethics have been consistently ranked as the most important top five course subjects by industry professionals during the last 10 years. The most important factor in developing a curriculum that ensures graduates' success in their career is the hospitality program's ability to deal with change [3].

Of the 29 common subject-matter variables to both studies, leadership was ranked the most important (replacing ethics in the previous study)—followed by internships/industry experience, preparation for industry employment, ethics, and overview of the hospitality industry [4].

The challenges brought by tensions between liberal and vocational values are faced by all designers, deliverers, and students in higher

education curricula. Three themes emerged from the analysis: food and beverage orientation, the relevance of skills acquisition, and human nature/experience. The implications are important for devising curriculum for higher education in hospitality in order to determine how curricula should be more optimally managed [5].

The perception of practitioners and educators were ranked according to the importance of culinary manager trainee competencies to prepare students for an entry-level managerial position in the culinary industry. The 6 competencies that were identified in Tas's study as being essential centered on human relation skills. The perceptions of the two groups in regard to core competencies are notably similar, indicating the lack of a significant variance [6].

The perspectives of senior students and managers, both students and graduates lack confidence in their employability, particularly in areas of professional management skills. Students in Taiwan have to consider carefully their career planning in order to comply with the demands of the hospitality industry's competitive environment [7].

The framework, which lay its foundation in Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning, covers the fundamentals of designing, monitoring, and evaluating students' internship practices, as well as providing an exploration of the theory and rationale of internships as effective educational practice. It can serve as a guide for the provision of a pedagogically sound internship experience to the next generation of hospitality professionals [8].

The competencies being taught in the classroom for hospitality tourism students versus what lodging and food and beverage professionals believe are the most important competencies to be taught. To study that Personal interview were conducted with hospitality educators and industry professionals working in accommodation sector or hotels and the food and beverage industry. The results were incorporated into a competency domain model which indicated that there are small gaps between professionals and educators in both industries. This discovery suggests that lines of communication are not fully open between educators and professionals and there is lack of institute-industry interface [9].

Significant changes in the competitive environment of business and education, along with changes in the macro-environment, point to the need for curriculum reform in hospitality management. It would be better to determine relevant competencies and skill sets. It will help human resource managers to improve hiring and selection practices and developing strategies to retain managers as well in career planning initiatives [10].

To meet the needs of the rapidly changing hospitality industry educators must continually investigate which competencies are essential for graduates to possess and revise the curriculum to meet these needs. Of the competencies deemed essential, 86% were soft competencies. Between functional work areas, no difference in importance was found for 76% of the competencies. The results indicate that programs should stress teaching hospitality student's soft competencies in favor of hard competencies [6].

The desired hotel management competencies that graduates are required to possess seems to be central to the success of hospitality management education. In the past, a large number of researchers have examined the issue of hospitality management competencies and its implications for hospitality education. The views of the general managers of top Greek hotels and recent graduates of hospitality management courses are compared in a survey with those of three other

similar studies that took place in three different countries. "Soft skills" were found to be among the most important competencies required by employers and recent graduates [11].

The findings of practitioner perceptions of desired knowledge, skills, and attitudes demonstrate the overall impressions of practitioners concerning levels of preparation for entry-level positions in the industry. Collaborative initiatives aimed at improving the preparation of individuals from secondary and tertiary institutions for successful entry into hospitality and tourism industry employment [12].

Assessment was the importance of generic and technical managerial competencies needed by hospitality management graduates in India from the perspectives of industry professionals and educators. Results of this research identified 6 dimensions of generic managerial competencies and 7 dimensions of technical managerial competencies. The differences between industry professionals' and hospitality educators' perceptions of the importance of managerial competencies were further identified [13]. Leaders in hospitality management education are facing diverse challenges in today's competitive and changing environment. One of the keys to success is the understanding of the administrative challenges that will define the necessary skills for effective leadership. The data were analyzed in two levels; the examination of aggregate data and the comparison of opinions between the two groups. Key challenges include dealing with faculty, budgetary and fiscal challenges, administrative management, curriculum and program development, increasing the diversity of faculty and students, and technological challenges. This study also notes the importance of the relationship between leadership skills and challenges, and the dynamics between the two concepts, while suggesting the importance for hospitality institutions to invest more fully in formally training their academic leadership [14].

A study was conducted to analyze the current status of Illinois's hospitality higher education to identify issues, challenges, and opportunities with an insight into the expectations of hospitality students and faculty. Issues and challenges included the identity struggle of hospitality programs, perception of home economics, curriculum, and administrative support. Opportunities were anticipated, including the location of the campus, the growth of graduate education, and demand for distance education [15].

In a study, the authors examine the current structure of core curricula across 44 hospitality and tourism management schools in the United States from an organizational ecology perspective and propose a structure for programs to consider from the context of environmental forces that are driving change, so as to streamline core course offerings across programs. The authors posit that such an approach would standardize the quality of education and improve the output of hospitality and tourism management programs while providing a framework for hospitality and tourism educators to consider during curriculum formulation and revision [16].

Sustainability should be incorporated into the hospitality curriculum because it has become a new standard in the hospitality industry. The interviewees also agreed that students should learn about sustainability in a comprehensive way rather than focusing only on 1 dimension (i.e., protecting the environment) so that they can operationalize the concept in any given situation. Meanwhile, each manager's definition of sustainability varied, despite some commonalities. Our findings imply that the hospitality curriculum should be updated and more progressive to help students harness conceptual and practical competencies about sustainability [17].

Research was conducted to determine roles of hospitality management (HM) program administrators and examined how roles have changed in the past and how they will be different in the future. HM program administrators reported spending more time now compared to ten years ago on activities such as meeting with faculty or administrators, preparing reports, and performing non-hospitality program related tasks. Administrators indicated they expect to spend more time in the future on finding ways to operate more efficiently and generating external funds. Changes may be needed in current job descriptions of HM program administrators to allow time for these tasks [18].

Key competencies essential for a master's level graduate are identified and subject areas of critical importance in graduate programs are uncovered. Differences in opinions among the segments of the industry are reported and evaluated as well. This study presents vital implications for driving the future development of hospitality graduate education programs and curriculum [19].

This study provides some pivotal educational findings as to how hospitality educators perceive the preparation of hospitality students relative to business ethics. There are three distinctive findings. Female educators have a significantly higher level of agreement toward statements about business ethics in the hospitality industry than do male educators. Educators whose own level of education was a doctorate degree were significantly less concerned about ethics education than educators whose own level of education was a two-year college degree or a master's degree. And, educators who were employed in institutions offering graduate degrees were significantly less concerned about ethics education than educators who were employed in institutions offering undergraduate degrees. In addition to those three significant findings, this study also showed that educators perceive that organizations should not only practice business ethics with customers but also with employees. Additionally, this study showed that educators are concerned about multinational companies (MNC) and students' ability to understand ethical issues while operating businesses in foreign countries. Educators are also concerned about the strong influence of business organizational leadership and management on business ethical practices [20].

The role of peer assessment in managing student performance in hospitality education issues, such as reliability and effectiveness for students and educators, are investigated with a focus on the impacts of group size on the practice of peer assessment. Differences between peer assessment in groups of less than five students and groups with five or more are explored. Findings indicate differential patterns of marking based on group size with smaller groups tending to mark peers more generously than larger groups [21].

Many governments in western liberal democracies have, over the past twenty-five years, implemented policies to increase the number of girls completing high school and progressing onto university. In spite of this in industries such as hospitality and tourism, which are generally described as female industries, most senior positions are held by men. Victoria University is the oldest and largest hospitality and tourism school in Australia. In the last 20 years the profile of students and their subsequent performance has altered considerably in favour of women, but after entering the industry female graduates are more likely to leave than their male counterparts. However, there is evidence that female workers employed in the hospitality and tourism industries are more interested in and involved in personal and professional development activities than males. This suggests that there is an emerging cohort of highly competent, focused and ambitious females entering the

hospitality and tourism industries. Further, these industries have a long tradition of steep hierarchy and patriarchy, which has tended to alienate ambitious women [22].

A study was done to identify characteristics of continuing education programs in hospitality, and determine if there were significant differences between two-year and four-year post-secondary hospitality institutions in the continuing education programs they offered and the methods of delivery. While statistical tests did not reveal significant differences between the two types of programs, it was observed that some differences do exist [23].

The case study summarizes students' perceptions of the educational experience via observations, surveys, and student reflections. Students' experiences were primarily positive; however, communication and technological issues were present. Overall, the project produced encouraging results and recommendations are made to assist with future applications of this type of project in hospitality and tourism education [24].

A Research study was carried out to examine current leadership issues and challenges in the tourism industry with a particular focus on Hong Kong, a trend-setting locality for the industry. The findings of study highlighted specific skills (business knowledge, communication, self-reflection), personal characteristics (determination, open-mindedness) and excellent relations with other parties (team support, respect) as key attribute requirements of industry leaders. The industry's universal "people orientation" emerged as the dominant issue that requires particular leadership skills with regard to interpersonal relations and communications. The emergence of new technologies and changes among employees were identified as the two key industry trends that require changing leadership skills [25].

## Results and Discussion

### Quality and accreditation

The state of hospitality education in our country is such that the institutes kept on growing unchecked. Most of them are without any proper recognition and infrastructure. There is no standardization of institutes, curriculum, infrastructure, faculty's norms and qualification, pay and perks. This further causes improper HRD systems in which hospitality professionals are losers and professionals are suppressed a lot and undergo harassment while on job. Thus, best talents are not attracted to take up hospitality as career and in turn industry has to compromise with a mediocre one. Business ethics has become a popular topic in both the academic arena and the business setting within the hospitality industry. This research investigates the perceptions of hospitality educators regarding business ethics in contemporary hospitality programs and the hospitality industry.

Hence, Worlds 2<sup>nd</sup> largest and the fastest growing industry in India is getting mediocre or substandard manpower and that too are trained by unqualified faculties and nurtured in standard less, infrastructure less, and even get equipped with an unapproved degree. There is drastic need to change the picture of hospitality education in India. Hospitality education in India has become very significant in present scenario and cannot be neglected any more. There is lot of scope in higher education and research in hospitality. Though IHM's started by Central Govt. as institutes of National importance for Hospitality education in lines of IIT's and IIM's (for engineering and management). But it has some where lost its way and can't be compared to them anymore. Though from diploma; it started offering Bachelors and Master's degree. Even few have proposed to offer Doctoral programs also. But same faculty

with undergraduate or lower qualifications is teaching and conducting bachelors and masters programs.

The regulatory body of hospitality-NCHCMT has tied up with distance education body-IGNOU for awarding degrees. To create more confusion it is now affiliating private colleges under same arrangements. Other Regulating bodies like AICTE and Universities have also existed but instead of setting up benchmark, they have created only more confusion in hospitality education. So, there is a need of single regulating body/university dedicated for all level of hospitality education in the country.

Industry professionals and hospitality educators agreed on the importance of the 6 generic managerial factors but differed on the importance of technical managerial factors associated with operations management and innovation. Implications for hospitality education programs in India are provided to develop curricula that better prepare graduates for positions within the industry [13].

### Industry linkages and HRD

Institute-industry interface existed in form of industrial exposure and other short term training programs as part of curriculum but it has turned into a practice of industry running their organization on trainees/students. Graduating professionals are harassed by industry and being treated as cheap labour and even offered monthly wages and perks lower than unskilled worker.

There is a need of educational and administrative reforms in hospitality institutes, teaching and research. Government needs to pump in lots of funds to make infrastructure comparable to international standards. The investments are required for up gradation and adaptation to new technologies.

These IHMs and cannot attract qualified faculty as pay and perks are not even comparable to Clerks in Government sector. Teacher's perks and pays in Hospitality organizations are to be made comparable to other sector to attract better talent in hospitality education. Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) are discretionary workplace behaviors not recognized directly by a formal reward system; yet they promote effective functioning in the organization. Exhibition of OCBs has been linked to improved organizational performance and employee performance evaluation scores [26].

## Conclusion

Industry is a major stake-holder as the manpower is produced for them. So, they have to be taken on board developing strong linkages. Curriculum should be devised with industry consultation to produce employable manpower. The deputation of personnel from the industry to the teaching institutes may be encouraged so as to inculcate the latest developments of industry. There is lot of scope of research and projects on various aspects of hotels. These could be very innovative, meaningful and useful for society as well as Industry. So, Higher education and research bodies are required to recognize it as important and potential area for study. Accordingly, encouragement in form of financial-funding and support is the need of the hour.

There is an opportunity to establish a hospitality program at the bachelor's level that should be supported with collaboration with an international institution to enhance the curriculum design and facilitate the program development. Finally, public awareness is vital to support the image and the prestige of employment in the sector [27].

## Limitations

This research is exploratory in nature and aimed at creating big picture of Hospitality education in India. This research will be carried forward and can be used as base for carrying out research taking specific issue and Challenges at a time.

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