

**Indian Journal of  
Applied Hospitality and Tourism Research**

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## **Preface**

We would like to present, with great pleasure, the seventh volume of Indian Journal of Applied Hospitality and Tourism. This journal is devoted to the gamut of Hotel, Travel and Tourism issues, from theoretical aspects to implementation of the policies and the validation of emerging trends and issues.

This journal is envisioned to share knowledge, understand and develop new approaches for growth with a precise focus on advancement in Hospitality, Travel and Tourism. The primary purpose of publishing this journal is to acquire knowledge through multidisciplinary approach and dissemination of the knowledge to the industry and academia.

Research based comprehensive coverage of certain timely, crucial and challenging issues of the Tourism and Hospitality Industry beside papers with contemporary perspectives is the real strength of the Journal.

This volume includes 10 papers studying various issues and trends in Hospitality and Tourism. The study on Service Quality in Chain Restaurants aimed at finding out the difference score of perception and expectation to assess the service quality of the restaurants. The paper on Attitude of Tourism Students towards use of ICT in Indian Universities speaking about the way tourism students gather information about their course and use ICT. Customer Behavior Study for Sugar Free Food Products in Five Star Hotels of New Delhi aims to find the choices of sugar free foods with which the customer associates with while eating out in five star hotels. A Case of Indian Silk Route aims to study the impact of destination logo and taglines on creating the awareness of Indian Silk Route and its induced destinations as a tourism destination brand. The paper Corporate Growth Strategies of Successful Indian Hotel Companies is an effort to analyze the corporate growth strategies followed in the identified hotel chains and which differentiates them from their other counterparts.

Having significance in the present-day circumstances, the paper Hospitality Crisis Management and Recovery: Comparison of India and USA study compares and examines Hospitality Crisis Management Practices and Recovery within the context of Luxury hotels in India. Reinventing the Traditional Guest Satisfaction Survey study explores the possibilities of making use of online reviews to determine better ways to administer and use survey data. Study on Contribution of Role Modelling and Education Institutes in Promoting Tourism Entrepreneurship among Students- a case study of J&K is an optimistic paper to support and boost entrepreneurship among students. The paper on Perception of Service Quality of Budget Hotels in Delhi-NCR recommends how budget hotels can improve their overall image and customer satisfaction. Emerging Trend of Incorporating Ancient Grains into Modern Meals reflects that ancient grains are persistently returning to modern diets, and ensure a promising market.

We would like to express our gratitude to all our authors for their excellent contribution and humbly acknowledge the work of all researchers on whose contribution this Journal build on.

We would like to thank every single person who has assisted in the publication of this issue. It could not have been possible without the dedication and enthusiasm of our editorial team and referees.

This Journal is an expression of our vision of the advancement in the Hospitality, Travel and Tourism Industry. With this informative, inspirational and comprehensive journal, we aspire to serve the need of the hour.

## **Chief Editor**

## Assessment of Service Quality in Chain Restaurants of Kolkata applying Modified DINESERV Scale

Amitabh Dey<sup>1</sup> & Sutheeshna Babu S<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to test the service quality of the upscale restaurant chains in the city of Kolkata. The secondary research helped in identifying the “DINESERV” per questionnaire. It also helped in identifying a model to study the service quality of the restaurants under five parameters of Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. The study is based on the earlier studies conducted by Stevens et al (1995) and later on modifications suggested by Andaleeb and Conway (2006). The present study also referred the study of Markovic et al (2010). A modified DINESERV scale was applied to gauge the expectations and perceptions of the customers at the selected upscale restaurants which were part of the chain of restaurants. The responses were received, when the customers had finished their meals and were paying their bills. The study aimed at finding out the difference score of perception and expectation to assess the service quality of these restaurants. The other objectives were to study the relationship of satisfaction as a dependent variable with the service quality dimensions as independent variables. The study also aimed at testing the reliability of the applied scale.

The higher average expectation score than the average perception score projected service quality below expectation in the restaurants under study and suggested the areas where the score has been negative. Food as a separate dimension was tested, but without much significant score in item wise correlation and hence it was further studied under reliability as per the suggestions of Andaleeb and Conway (2006). To meet the study objectives Descriptive and Inferential (Bivariate Correlation as well as Multiple Regression Analysis) statistics were performed using SPSS 17.0. The result of the study shows that there is good relationship between the dimensions of Service Quality and customer satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Restaurant, Service Quality, SERVQUAL, DINESERV & Statistical Analysis.

### Introduction

In recent times the change in life style, the change in family structure, the influence of the internet coupled with the propensity of the families to be mobile and exploring in nature has brought in a paradigm shift in the way people look at things. With this trend dining out has become commonplace and people look forward to newer tastes, exposure to varied cuisine, pleasant memories as well as more comfort in life, as they are affordable now. To cater to this trend the restaurant industry demands high standards of customer service and continuous quality improvement to attract, satisfy and retain customers through a product called overall dining experience. (S. Markovic, 2010)

To create the dining experience for customer satisfaction calls for comprehending the dynamics from the customers' perspective as the buying decision lies with the customers. A satisfied customer brings in many new customers. Here we refer to the satisfaction as the result of the satisfaction from a single encounter, than the satisfaction acquired due to repeated events. Therefore understanding the factors that satisfy customers and devising a quality dining experience in a restaurant calls for an interaction with the customers for their feedback and thereby with the inputs received, the restaurant operators i.e. the proprietors and the managers can design and deliver the right kind of products which speaks of quality. (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006) Research findings tell us that a restaurant's ability to deliver quality service brings in returns in terms of long term financial viability and sustainability of business. (Keiser, 1988) (S. Markovic, 2010)

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1. Professor, NSHM School of Hotel Management, Durgapur, India. Email: [amitabhdey@rediffmail.com](mailto:amitabhdey@rediffmail.com)

2. Associate Professor & Nodal Officer, Institute of Water Sports Management, Goa. Email: [babspillai@gmail.com](mailto:babspillai@gmail.com)

The parameters to judge the dining experience in restaurant have been defined as service quality in the service literature and comprises of both tangible and intangible components. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry in 1985 have defined service quality as a difference of Perception and Expectation. Zeithaml and Bitner in 2003 have defined Expectations as beliefs about the service process, which forms the standards against which the actual performance is measured. The measurement of performance is based on the perception or actual experience of a customer about the different service delivery parameters. In the context of a restaurant, expectations are defined as what customers think a restaurant has on offer. (S. Markovic, 2010)

Although the service quality determines the success or failure of a service organization as well as the customer satisfaction, the determinants of service quality are complicated with reference to the dynamic business environment. Thus, the measurement dimensions or the parameters of the service quality are industry specific. (Abdullah & Rozario, 2009) SERVQUAL- an instrument to measure service quality in service industries was developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (PZB) in 1988. Their measurement involved measuring service quality as a difference score of Perception and Expectation of service based on five dimensions- Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. Since then there has been a number of research attempts to measure the same in diverse fields from service industry. In spite of the best efforts the empirical results for the framework has not always been encouraging. This lead to further research and researchers suggested various measuring frameworks specific to various industries. (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006) Nineteen conceptual models of Service Quality have been reviewed since 1984 till 2003 (Seth, Deshmukh, & Vrat, 2005). Research based on the SERVQUAL framework has been applied to restaurant sector by Stevens et al with some success and they devised a restaurant specific measuring instrument called DINESERV. (Stevens, Knutson, & Patton, 1995)

For this study, the upscale restaurants of Kolkata those are part of the restaurant chain have been chosen. There are over 270 restaurants in Kolkata that has been classified by rating and classification agency Hotel & Restaurant Approval and Classification Committee (HRACC). These restaurants are assumed to reflect the overall trend of such restaurants operating in West Bengal but varied attributes of this fast growing segment has not been properly understood, especially in West Bengal. Given this, main purpose of this study was to seek answer on critical deliverables/ parameters of service quality in a full service upscale restaurant in Indian context and whether the attainment of those could lead to post purchase satisfaction. Specifically, it was attempted to assess: a) the customer's expectations about the offerings of the restaurants under study and their perceptions or experiences of the services received; b) the difference between expectation and perception scores to gauge the service quality level of the restaurants understudy; c) whether there exists a relationship between the dimensions of established service quality and customer satisfaction; d) the reliability of the applied DINESERV scale in Indian context

## **Literature Review**

### ***Service Quality***

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry in 1985 based on their exploratory research to understand the service quality and its determinants, defined service quality as the difference of the customers' normative<sup>1</sup> expectations and their perception of the service delivery performance. (Parasuraman.A, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1994) The concept has been debated upon and later on in 1990 Grönroos also proposed similar views (S. Markovic, 2010) Parasuraman, Zeithaml and

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<sup>1</sup> Normative Expectations are the customers' beliefs about what a service provider should offer

Berry in 1985 developed a conceptual model of service quality that resulted in the development of the measuring scale SERVQUAL. (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). SERVQUAL is an instrument to measure the gap between the services the customers feel should be provided with what they feel has been actually provided. The instrument measures the customers' expectations and perceptions on 22 item scale based on five dimensions (Exhibit 1).

**Exhibit 1:** The Five Dimensions of Service Quality

<b>Reliability</b>	Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
<b>Assurance</b>	Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence
<b>Responsiveness</b>	Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service
<b>Tangibles</b>	Physical facilities, equipment and appearance of employees
<b>Empathy</b>	Caring, individualized attention

“The indicators were developed by A. Parasuraman; Valarie A. Zeithaml and Leonard L. Berry and originally published in: “SERVQUAL: A Multiple Item Scale for Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality,” Journal of Retailing, Vol. 64 (Spring 1988), pp. 12-40”

### ***Service Quality Studies using SERVQUAL***

Parasuraman et al (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988) developed a 22 item instrument named SERVQUAL to begin with and refined it in 1991 (A.Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml, 1991). Initial studies on service quality were based on the notion of a positive or negative disconfirmation of the customer's prior expectation (E) forming a subsequent perception (P) of service quality (E-P). The SERVQUAL instrument has received attention from the academicians over the years as it is a useful tool for monitoring and assessing the service provider's performance. (S. Markovic, 2010) It has also served as the basis of measurement in the published studies examining service quality in different contexts- e.g. real estate brokers by Johnson, Dotson and Dunlop in 1988; physicians in private practice by Brown and Swartz in 1989; public recreation programmes by Crompton and Mackay in 1989; a dental school patient clinic, a business school placement centre and a tire store by Carman in 1990; motor carrier companies by Brensinger and Lambert in 1990; an accounting firm by Bojanic in 1991; discount and department stores by Finn and Lamb in 1991 and by Teas in 1993; a gas and electric utility company by Babakus and Boller in 1992; hospitals by Babakus and Mangold in 1992 and Carman in 1990; banking, pest control, dry cleaning and fast food by Cronin and Taylor in 1992; higher education by Bolding, Kalra, Staelin and Zeithaml in 1993 and Ford, Joseph and Joseph in 1993. (Parasuraman.A, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1994)

As can be seen above, a lot of studies have been done applying SERVQUAL to measure service quality. However, there has also been a lot of criticism towards this scale in service marketing literature. The main criticism has been the interpretation and implementation of the instrument in the service industry. (Ekiz & Bavik, 2008). Cronin and Taylor identified methods to assess service quality and attempted to define an alternative scale to SERVQUAL. They questioned the conceptual basis of SERVQUAL and found some confusion in measuring service satisfaction (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). They therefore advocated discarding the expectation (E) component and stick to Performance (P) only. What they proposed is known as SERVPERF. (Jain & Gupta, 2004) Various other researchers also worked on different service quality models. Teas in 1993 examined the conceptual and operational issues associated with P-E scale and went on to propose Evaluated Performance (EP) and Normed Quality (NQ) models, which had been empirically

tested by the author (Teas, 1993).. Service quality studies using SERVQUAL has been widely used by various researchers in the insurance sector in India and outside as well.

### ***Review of Service Quality Studies in the Restaurant Industry***

Several researchers (Bojanic & Rosen, 1994); (Lee & Hing, 1995); (Yuksel.U, 2002); (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006) have applied SERVQUAL instrument in Restaurant industry as well (S. Markovic, 2010). Now a day there is a number of models that are used to improve the quality of service in the hospitality industry, and some are exclusively created for the restaurant sector. LODGSERV (Knutson, Wullaert, Patton, & Yokoyama, 1990); DINESERV (Stevens, Knutson, & Patton, 1995), HOLSERV (Mei, Dean, & White, 1999), TANGSERV (Raajpoot, 2002), DINESCAPE (Ryu & Jang, 2008) are the chronological models applied in the hospitality sector. The most used measuring tools to evaluate the service quality in restaurants are the DINESERV and the DINESCAPE. While the DINESCAPE measures the Service scape or the man made and human surroundings of the upscale restaurants, the DINESERV utilizes the five dimensions defined by SERVQUAL to measure service quality in restaurants. (Gagić, Tešanović, & Jovičić, 2013)

DINESERV, the instrument to measure the customer perceptions of service quality at a restaurant, was designed by Stevens, Knutson and Patton in 1995. The instrument is an adaption from SERVQUAL and has been proposed as a reliable and relatively simple tool to measure customers' perception in a restaurant of the service. The final version of DINESERV contained 29 items measured on a seven point scale and the 29 items fall into five service quality dimensions. (S. Markovic, 2010). The instrument was used to measure consumer expectations for service quality in three restaurant segments: quick service, casual/theme, and fine dining. (Stevens, Knutson, & Patton, 1995). DINESERV was found to have a high degree of reliability. The alpha for the total index was found to be .95, while the reliability coefficients (alpha levels) for the five dimensions ranged from .89 to .92 (Stevens, Knutson, & Patton, 1995). Results show that DINESERV is a valid and reliable index by which consumer expectations for service quality in a restaurant experience can be measured. This led to the use of the scale for the present study.

### **Hypothesis Development**

Despite all endeavors, one of the essential element of overall dining experience “food quality”, was not included as part of DINESERV measure. However, research has shown that food quality have positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction and loyalty (Ha & Jang, 2010). The similar results have been put forward by Almanza et al. in 1994; Petition et al. in 1997; Qu in 1997; Kivela et al. in 2000 and Matilla in 2001. (Gagić, Tešanović, & Jovičić, 2013) Andaleeb and Conway while studying the service quality in Full service restaurants in USA also found food as an important parameter in restaurant service quality and they have even related the “food Quality” to reliability in terms of freshness and temperature of food as well as receiving the food error free food as ordered. (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006)

Food continues to play an important role as a pulling factor for a restaurant and thus food is considered as an important parameter for service quality assessment and proposes to examine the hypothesis:

***H1: Better Quality of Food served gives higher customer satisfaction***

The tangibles in a restaurant can be considered next for assessing service quality and when we talk about tangibles, we refer to the ambience which can be measured through senses. In a restaurant the ambience refers to the restaurant's physical design, appearance of staff and cleanliness, which are tangible in nature. When we consider a restaurant product it has two

tangible components- the food quality and the pulling ambience. The other aspects of the restaurant products are the intangible components of service comprising of the other four dimensions of service quality viz. reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. We have already discussed the food quality in the above paragraph. As per Mehrabian and Russell (1974) in environmental psychology when we speak about physical design, individuals react to places with two general and opposite forms of behaviour-approach or avoidance. (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006) Thus whether a customer will be attracted to a facility or will avoid it, all depends on how the ambience is maintained and definitely it has a profound effect on the customer satisfaction. Therefore, it is proposed to examine:

### ***H2: Super tangibles create super customer satisfaction***

Andaleeb and Conway (2006) in their study have argued about the inclusion of the dimensions assurance and empathy in the service quality measurement in a restaurant setting. They opine that “assurance”, which means the knowledge and courtesy plus the ability of the employees to inspire trust and confidence in the customer, is more suitable for the credence based services like healthcare or legal services, where the result can be felt only after consumption. The customers in a restaurant judge the product through experience and hence assurance cannot be a part of the service quality measurement construct. (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006) This argument of theirs is logical; however there has not been any consensus amongst the researchers on this thought. We therefore consider it to be an important dimension of service quality measurement. However, the knowledge of the employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence may not have any apparent influence on the service encounter satisfaction in a restaurant; no hypothesis is proposed here.

Similarly empathy has been defined as the individualized caring attention provided by the employees to the customers. Andaleeb and Conway stresses that this is more apt for the kinds of services that rely on relationship building than in the transaction specific services like restaurant service, where the empathy of the employees when there is long waiting in a restaurant on weekends may not result in any satisfaction. However, in case of Indian context personalized service without being intrusive is looked upon positively by the customers, and hence we consider empathy to be an important construct for service quality assessment.

Interestingly Andaleeb and Conway have interpreted reliability with the food quality. However in the DINESERV model Stevens et al have exclusively judged the delivery of service in the restaurant through reliability. The study sticks to the reliability factor as per original DINESERV. Per questionnaire and propose to examine that in the context of our study:

### ***H3: More the reliability in service, more the customer satisfaction***

Responsiveness has been defined in the service literature as the willingness of the staff to be helpful and provide prompt service and correctly interpreted by Stevens et al whether employees shift to help each other during busy period to maintain the pace, provide quick service and give extra effort to handle guests' special request, definitely have a bearing on the customer satisfaction process. Hence, it is proposed to examine:

### ***H4: More responsive the service provided, the greater is the customer satisfaction***

## Research Methodology

For this study, a vast amount of information has been reviewed and analyzed from a number of earlier studies in the relevant field. Further research gaps have been identified and attempts have been made to address the same in this work. The work has been completed using numerous references from tested and validated prior work. The empirical research was conducted with the help of primary data. On the basis of literature review questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire was developed in three parts. The first part captured the demographic profile of the respondents. The second part captured the service quality expectations of the respondents based on the identified parameters and the third part of the questionnaire recorded the perception of the respondents regarding the service quality dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy (RATER) along with Food as a separate dimension and satisfaction. The questionnaire was developed based on five expectation parameters of RATER, where in the respondents were asked to mark in percentage value of their expectations for each parameter, so that they sum up to hundred percentage. The perception measurement part of the questionnaire contained 39 variables. The first 29 variables were adapted from the DINESERV. Per interview questionnaire developed by Stevens et al (1995); Food and Satisfaction contained 4 and 6 variables respectively which were developed based on the study of Andaleeb and Conway (2006). The perception for the first 33 variables of RATER along with Food were measured using a 7 point Likert scale with anchors, “Strongly Disagree” as 1 and “Strongly Agree” as 7. To measure the Satisfaction the respondents were asked to exercise the options in affirmative or negative to express their feelings regarding the choices there in. The mean value of expectation, perception and satisfaction was used for the purpose of this study.

To ensure a fair representation of the study population a stratified random sampling procedure was adopted. The stratification of the customers was done at the restaurant category levels viz. International, National and Local Chain of restaurants. In the classified Table Service restaurants of Kolkata, the Average per Cover (APC) was found to be in the range of Rs. 400 to Rs. 1700. Therefore, the restaurants’ where average per cover was found to be more than Rs. 1000/- were only considered to assess the service quality of upscale restaurants. Data was collected from six restaurants, who agreed to participate in the survey. The measurement was done through the questionnaire once the customers’ were through with their meals. The survey was conducted over a period of a week and out of 400 questionnaires distributed to the customers through the restaurant service employees. 120 filled in responses were received, out of which 106 questionnaires were found to be valid responses for the purpose of the study, which is about 26.5%.

The data collected through the questionnaires were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0. Two major approaches for data analysis used were descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

### *Demographic Profile:*

The analysis of the demographic data, presented the following in seriatim:

1. The population consisted of 79% male respondents and 21% female respondents
2. The ratio of married and unmarried respondents in percentage was 70:30
3. 59.4% respondents were young into the age group of 20-40; 36.7% respondents were into the age group of 40-60 and 3.7% respondents were more than 60 years in age.
4. 31 % respondents were Post Graduate Degree holders where as 69% were undergraduates
5. 60.3 % respondents were service holders; 27.3% people were businessmen; and the rest were students, housewives or retired people.



6. 46.22% respondents were into the high income group of >5 lacs per annum; 33.01 % respondents belong to the income bracket of 2-5 lacs per annum; 15.09% had their income between 1-2 lacs per annum and 6.68% people who visited these restaurants had their annual income less than a lac of Rupees.
7. The profile of the diner does indicate that the young population frequents the restaurants more, followed by the middle aged.

### ***Reliability of the applied Scale***

The reliability analysis was conducted on 7 factors that contained 39 items of the modified perception scale. Dineserv Per scale instrument was found to posse high reliability, but as the scale was modified, we conducted the test to find out the reliability of the applied scale. The results are shown in the table below:

**Table 1:** Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	106	100
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	0
	Total	106	100

a. List wise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Table 2:** Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.881	7

**Table 3:** Item Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Tangible(10 Items)	32.54	18.841	0.542	0.878
Reliability(6 Items)	32.93	15.091	0.76	0.852
Responsiveness(3 Items)	33.25	16.911	0.699	0.859
Assurance(6 Items)	33.21	16.623	0.734	0.854
Empathy (4 Items)	33.15	16.777	0.785	0.849
Food (4 Items)	31.92	20.821	0.239	0.908
Satisfaction(6 Items)	32.59	16.053	0.946	0.829

The results show that the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the seven factors vary from.829 to.908 with overall scale having Cronbach's alpha value as.881. These values are well above the generally agreed upon lower limit of 0.60 (S. Markovic, 2010) (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006) or 0.70 (Field, 2009). This shows good internal consistency of the factors and high reliability of the scale. We also observe that though we tested Food as a separate dimension, it does not show a significant value (.239) in the Item Total Correlation. Nunnally (1970) recommended omission of the items (<.30) with low corrected item-to-total correlations (Nunnally Jr., 1970) (Ekiz & Bavik, 2008), so in this study we reframed the questionnaire and included the food as part of reliability based on the observations of Andaleeb and Conway 2006. According to them the SERVQUAL literature defines Reliability as the ability to perform the promised services dependably and accurately and for the restaurant industry reliability refers to

freshness and temperature of food (promise) and receiving the food error free and as ordered the first time (dependably and accurately). They translated this item of reliability to food quality and considered food as a part of reliability. (Andaleeb & Conway, 2006)

Accordingly we did the reliability analysis again by merging two dimensions and bringing the dimensions to six with same number of items. Only reliability now has ten items in place of the original six.

**Table 4:** Reliability Statistics with dimension reduced

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.902	6

**Table 5:** Item Total Statistics with dimension reduction

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Tangible (10 Items)	26.92	13.926	.539	.910
Reliability/Food Quality (10 Items)	26.58	13.102	.698	.889
Responsiveness(3 Items)	27.62	12.161	.716	.887
Assurance (6 Items)	27.58	12.036	.730	.885
Empathy (4 Items)	27.53	12.118	.792	.875
Satisfaction (6 Items)	26.97	11.609	.936	.853

With this exercise the overall Cronbach's alpha for the scale improves to.902 and the item wise Cronbach's alpha ranges from.853 to.910. Thus the internal consistency of the factors was found to be very good and the measurement scale showed high reliability.

### ***Descriptive and Inferential Analysis***

The result of descriptive statistical analysis is presented in Table 6 below. The table shows the respondents expectation and perception means of the dimensions of the restaurant service quality and the difference scores to measure service quality as Perception-Expectation (P-E).

**Table 6:** Customers' Expectations and Perceptions of Service Quality (Summary)

Attributes	Expectations		Perceptions		Gap (P-E)=SQ
	Mean(E)	Std. Deviation	Mean(P)	Std. Deviation	
<b>Tangible</b>	5.44	.916	5.73	.775	+0.29
<b>Reliability/ Food Quality</b>	5.24	1.038	6.06	.779	+0.82
<b>Responsiveness</b>	5.49	.621	5.02	.926	-0.47
<b>Assurance</b>	5.40	1.152	5.06	.934	-0.34
<b>Empathy</b>	5.62	1.018	5.11	.865	-0.51
<b>Service Quality</b>	5.44		5.40		-0.04

According to the results in the above table, we find that the customers' expectation of service dimensions range from 5.24 to 5.62; whereas the perception mean ranges from 5.02 to 6.06. The overall service quality gap is 0.04 on the negative side and indicates that the restaurants under study, lack in service delivery to the customers. The service quality value is not widely deviated but is close to average customer expectations. The results indicate that Tangibles, Reliability or the ability to deliver promised services have got slight positive service quality and Food has

shown to be the greatest pulling factor for the restaurant. Thus the results agree with our initial assumption that customers are attracted towards a restaurant due to Food Quality, Pulling Ambience and Service. The restaurants under study have scored less into the intangible aspects of responsiveness, assurance and empathy and this creates an opportunity for the owners and managers of the upscale chain restaurants of Kolkata to incorporate these aspects into the training and improve the score if they aspire for positive service quality score and customer delight.

### ***Bivariate Analysis***

As we know that Bivariate Analysis tests the linear relationship between two variables, to meet the study objectives and to test the hypothesis, we tried to find out the correlations between satisfaction as a dependent variable and the others as independent variables, using Pearson's Correlation Coefficient(r), as the variables have a scale level of measurement. (Garczynski) We conducted this test amongst the six variables as already mentioned in table 7 and studied their significance of correlation. The results show strong positive correlation of the independent variable viz. Tangible, Reliability/ Food Quality, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy with the dependable variable satisfaction. The results are plotted in the table below:

**Table 7: Correlations Of Dependent And Independent Variables**

		<b>Tangible</b>	<b>Reliability</b>	<b>Responsiveness</b>	<b>Assurance</b>	<b>Empathy</b>	<b>Satisfaction</b>
<b>Tangible</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.563**	.485**	.298**	.416**	.579**
	Sig. (1-Tailed)		.000	.000	.001	.000	.000
	N	106	106	106	106	106	106
<b>Reliability/ Food Quality</b>	Pearson Correlation	.563**	1	.448**	.598**	.570**	.746**
	Sig. (1-Tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	106	106	106	106	106	106
<b>Responsiveness</b>	Pearson Correlation	.485**	.448**	1	.582**	.675**	.771**
	Sig. (1-Tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	106	106	106	106	106	106
<b>Assurance</b>	Pearson Correlation	.298**	.598**	.582**	1	.734**	.792**
	Sig. (1-Tailed)	.001	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	106	106	106	106	106	106
<b>Empathy</b>	Pearson Correlation	.416**	.570**	.675**	.734**	1	.815**
	Sig. (1-Tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	106	106	106	106	106	106
<b>Satisfaction</b>	Pearson Correlation	.579**	.746**	.771**	.792**	.815**	1
	Sig. (1-Tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	106	106	106	106	106	106

\*\*Correlation Is Significant At The 0.01 Level (1-Tailed).

From the above table and the table of regression analysis conducted in the next part when we interpret the results, we find that all the service quality Dimensions have strong positive correlation with the dependent variable satisfaction and thus we can summarize the results as under:

**H1: Better Quality of Food served gives higher customer satisfaction**

Result:  $r(104) = .746, p < .001$ , one-tailed

- Pearson Correlation( $r$ ) is .746, so it's a strong positive correlation between Food Quality and Satisfaction
- Our significance is .000, and the t-value for two degrees of freedom referring to the regression table (Table 10) is 5.201. This is greater than the positive critical value, so we reject the null hypothesis and accept the hypothesis stated above.

**H2: Super Tangibles create super customer satisfaction**

Result:  $r(104) = .579, p < .001$ , one-tailed

- Pearson Correlation Coefficient is .579, so it's a positive correlation between Tangibles and Satisfaction
- Our significance is .000, and the t-value for two degrees of freedom referring to the regression table (Table 10) 2.631. This is greater than the positive critical value, so we reject the null hypothesis and accept the hypothesis stated above.

**H3: More the reliability in service, more the customer satisfaction**

Result:  $r(104) = .746, p < .001$ , one-tailed

- Pearson Correlation Coefficient is .746, so it's a strong positive correlation between Food and Satisfaction
- Our significance is .000, and the t-value for two degrees of freedom referring to the regression table (Table 10) 5.201. This is greater than the positive critical value, so we reject the null hypothesis and accept the hypothesis stated above.

**H4: More responsive the service provided, the greater is the customer satisfaction**

Result:  $r(104) = .771, p < .001$ , one-tailed

- Pearson Correlation Coefficient is .771, so it's a strong positive correlation between Food and Satisfaction
- Our significance is .000, and the t-value for two degrees of freedom referring to the regression table (Table 10) 5.738. This is greater than the positive critical value, so we reject the null hypothesis and accept the hypothesis stated above.

**Regression Analysis**

To further substantiate our third objective of the study i.e. whether there is a relationship between service quality dimensions and the customers' perceived satisfaction; we applied multiple regression analysis with five factors as independent variables (predictors) to test the model of customer satisfaction (outcome). The model summary is given as under:

**Table 8:** Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.939 <sup>a</sup>	.882	.876	.295

a. Predictors: (Constant), Empathy, Tangible, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance

b. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

**Table 9: ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	64.746	5	12.949	148.895	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	8.697	100	.087		
	Total	73.443	105			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Empathy, Tangible, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance  
 b. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

**Table 10: Multiple Regression Analysis (Dependent Variable: Satisfaction) Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Non-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.397	.252		-1.575	.118
	Tangible	.128	.049	.119	2.631	.010
	Reliability/ Food Quality	.281	.054	.261	5.201	.000
	Responsiveness	.260	.045	.288	5.738	.000
	Assurance	.238	.050	.266	4.772	.000
	Empathy	.220	.056	.228	3.933	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

The full model was found to be significant as indicated by overall F statistics ( $p < 0.001$ ). The regression model explained 87.6% variation in the dependent variable satisfaction, explained by the adjusted R square value. Moreover the value of R square (.882) is close to adjusted R square (.876) and indicates that the cross-validity of the model is very good. (Field, 2009)

Four out of five factors have very high significance on customer satisfaction. These include responsiveness ( $b = .288$ ;  $p < .001$ ); assurance ( $b = .266$ ;  $p < .001$ ); reliability/ food quality ( $b = .261$ ;  $p < .001$ ); empathy ( $b = .228$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Tangibles also has a significant effect on the customer satisfaction ( $b = .119$ ;  $p < .020$ ). Based on the standardized regression coefficients responsiveness appears to be the most important dimension for customer satisfaction, followed by assurance, reliability or food quality, empathy and finally the tangibles.

On analysis of the results it seems little surprising that the reliability or the food quality appears third in rank, when a meal or food is supposed to be the prime factor for satisfaction. Perhaps, the upscale restaurants have improved the level of cooking to such an extent that food quality no more throws up any surprises and the customers always expects good quality food from such establishments. Similar views for similar results have been expressed by Andaleeb and Conway in 2006. Never the less, the model explains well the relation between the independent service quality dimensions and the dependent dimension satisfaction in the restaurant industry. The standardized beta coefficients and the significance along with the F value explain the strong relationships of these variables of service quality with customer satisfaction. The standardized values of the beta coefficients explain the multiple regression equation, as:

$$Y_i = (b_0 + b_1X_{i1} + b_2X_{i2} + \dots + b_nX_{in}) + \epsilon_i \dots \dots \dots (I)$$

Where Y= Outcome Variable;  $b_0$  = constant;  $b_1, b_2, \dots, b_n$ = beta coefficient values of the predictors  $X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n$ .

In our case we can define the model as:

$$\text{Satisfaction}_i = b_0 + b_1 \text{tangibles} + b_2 \text{reliability/food quality} + b_3 \text{responsiveness} + b_4 \text{assurance} + b_5 \text{empathy} = -.397 + (.128 \text{tangible} + .281 \text{reliability} + .260 \text{responsiveness} + .238 \text{assurance} + .220 \text{empathy}) \dots\dots\dots (II)$$

Thus in this data all five predictors have positive values of the coefficients hence they represent a positive relationship with the outcome variable. (Field, 2009) This further validates the earlier result.

### Conclusion

The research study was able to answer the research question and the objectives. Firstly, the review of the secondary data and the literature helped in identifying the parameters that are important to understand the service quality in the restaurants under study. It has also been proved beyond doubt that each of the parameters has vital contribution in overall dining experience for a customer. If the perception value of any of the parameter falls below a certain level, it affects the overall service quality measurement. In the present case also the negative value of service quality is due to the negative difference scores obtained by the restaurants under study in the intangible parameters of responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The near perception and expectation score was due to high perception scores of reliability or food quality and the physical design or the tangibles. Thus the first two research objectives of understanding the service quality parameters and assessment of service quality by obtaining the difference scores of perception and expectation have been explained well.

The study also established the strong relationship between the service quality parameters and the customer satisfaction by means of correlation and regression analysis. This was the third objective of the study and was explained satisfactorily at the end. The fourth and the final objective were to test the reliability of the modified DINESERV scale that was used for this study. The research results have shown that there was good internal consistency of the factors and high reliability of the measuring instrument. Thus the present study was able to meet all its objectives.

### Research Contribution & Future Implication

The study in general implies two contributions. Firstly, it helps understand the restaurant management what are the requirements of the customers in terms of expectations of service from a restaurant. Secondly, the identified parameters of service quality, each has a prominent role in customer satisfaction, which has been explained by this study. The fulfillment of these parameters in terms of service delivery can bring in sustained business for the restaurants.

In spite of its implications for the restaurateurs, the study has certain limitations. Firstly the study was conducted in the limited geographic area within a short span of time and therefore for generalization of the results it should be replicated in various locations. Further to the above, food quality parameters can be researched further separately to understand their effect on the overall customer satisfaction.

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**Appendix**

**Modified Dineserv Scale Questionnaire:**

**A. Restaurant Service Quality**

Pls. express your opinion by putting a tick (√) in the appropriate box.

Strongly Agree	Some what Agree	Agree	No Comments	Disagree	Some what Disagree	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree	Some what Agree	Agree	No Comments	Disagree	Some what Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Expected of a upscale restaurant</b>							<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Experience of this restaurant</b>						
							Visually attractive parking areas and building exteriors.							
							Visually attractive dining area.							
							Staff members are clean, neat, and appropriately dressed.							
							Décor is in keeping with its image and price range.							
							Menu is easily readable.							
							Visually attractive menu that reflects the restaurant's image.							
							Dining area is comfortable and easy to move around in.							
							Dining areas that are thoroughly clean.							
							Rest rooms are thoroughly clean.							
							Have comfortable seats in the dining room.							
							The staff serves you in time in the dining room.							
							Employees quickly correct anything that is wrong.							
							The staff is dependable and consistent.							
							It provides an accurate guest check.							
							Serves your food exactly as you ordered it.							
							During busy times the employees shift to help each other maintain speed and quality of service.							
							Provides prompt and quick service.							
							Gives extra effort to handle your special requests.							
							Employs staff who can answer your questions completely.							
							Makes you feel comfortable and confident in your dealings with them.							
							Employs personnel who are both able and willing to give you information about menu items, their ingredients, and methods of preparation.							
							Makes you feel personally safe.							
							Have personnel who seem well-trained, competent, and experienced.							
							seems to give employees support so that they can do their jobs well							
							Have employees who are sensitive to your individual							

							needs and wants, rather than always relying on policies and procedures.								
							Makes you feel special.								
							Anticipates your individual needs and wants.								
							Have employees who are sympathetic and reassuring if something is wrong.								
							Seems to have the customer's best interest at heart.								

(Reference: The Dineserv. Per interview)

**B. Which of the following can be said about the Food, its quality, in this restaurant?**

S. No	Attributes	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Bad	Very Bad
1	The freshness of the food served were							
2	The presentation of food served were							
3	The consistency in taste of a particular dish every time ordered, is							
4	Food Temperature maintained at the time of service was (Pointer: Hot Food to be Served hot and cold food served cold)							

**C. Please write the one you feel appropriate about your experience in this restaurant:**

Sr. No	Attributes	Yes/No
1	Considering the type of restaurant, the quality of service was excellent.	
2	Food items were expensive	
3	You paid more than you had planned	
4	Overall, you were satisfied with your dining experience.	
5	You would return to the restaurant in the future	
6.	You would recommend the restaurant to others.	

## Attitudes of Tourism Students towards use of ICT: The case of an Indian University

Bhupinder Singh<sup>1</sup> & Dr D. K. Dhusia<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

In today's world technology is a very significant, beneficial and indispensable part of everyone's life and it becomes all the way more important when we talk about university students. ICT plays a very important role in all phases of the educational process and internet comes out as the most important driving force for its dynamic development. Antecedents of the current ICTs started with the radios and telecommunications which were delivered by copper wire. Advances in ICTs brought a paradigm shift from analog to digital systems. The new ICTs include mobile phones, television, computers, video conferencing outfit, the internet and expert systems to name but a few. ICTs have transformed work patterns and have ushered in a new paradigm in which many activities such as shopping, banking, learning and examinations are available online. Within education, ICT has begun to have a presence but the impact has not been as extensive as in other fields. The use of ICT in education lends itself to more student-centred learning settings and with the world moving rapidly into digital media and information, the role of ICT in education is becoming more and more important and this importance will continue to grow and develop in near future. The present study speaks about the way tourism students gather information about their course, how they access the Internet and other resources, and their trends in preparing assignments using the Internet. Also the diversity of Internet resources which are used for homework, course projects, and interaction with peers and parents and accessibility of these resources have also been assessed. In the present study, an attempt has been made to determine which factors are considered more important by students while using ICT for various works. The result of this paper shows that the ICT is become inevitable and intrinsic for the overall development of the students of higher education.

**Keywords:** Higher education, tourism, internet, ICT.

### Introduction

Communication is the livelihood of today's business. Electronic data communication is widely used in areas such as education, payment of bills; video conferencing, and group work collaboration, etc. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) are a diverse set of technological tools and resources used for creating, storing, managing and communicating information, and to support teaching and learning and research activities. It enables anytime, anywhere learning, the ability to check from anywhere contacts, receive and send an email, book an air ticket, an accommodation in a hotel, locate a map, take multi-modal notes etc. It provides tools for direct communication with clients and the internet has changed the way distribution and sales of goods and services takes place. The shape of travel and tourism value chains is changing in a fundamental way. (Achimugu, 2010; Vajargah, 2010; Carey, 2013; <http://cendoc.esan.edu.pe>)

The world is moving at an unimaginable speed in the area of information use and dissemination. Information Communication Technology (ICT) is a force that has changed the way we live. If one was to compare such fields as medicine, tourism, travel business, law, banking, engineering and architecture, the impact of ICT across the past two or three decades has been enormous. It has become the main influential determinant in economic, social and human development because it has been integrated into the modes of operation of different professional practices. The education sector is one of the most vibrant sector of the national economy and Science and Technology is the bedrock of this development which in general and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), in particular, represent areas that must be addressed for sustainable technological growth. (Collis, 2002; Oliver; Khasawneh, 2012; Olatoye, 2011; Achimugu, 2010)

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1. Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, College of Vocational Studies, University of Delhi. **E-mail:** [singhbhupinder3@gmail.com](mailto:singhbhupinder3@gmail.com)

2. Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce and Business Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi. **E-mail:** [drddhusia@gmail.com](mailto:drddhusia@gmail.com)

In today's tourism world, using ICTs and the Internet is no longer a distinctive characteristic by itself, and only effective and efficient use of it can help in obtaining a competitive advantage. Different ICT tools when used properly strengthen and increase the quality and performance of higher education. It has reflective implications for the tourism industry and is being used extensively in a variety of purposes. ICT adoption in tourism industries usually involves e-mail and internet and the potential of internet, as a commercial medium is a key to many new markets. Its role in tourism industry is very crucial in today's world which gives new tools, enabled new distribution channels; provide connectivity with all the allied services of tourism industry and thereby creating a new business environment. It is an extremely cost-effective marketing medium, which has the potential to level playing-field for small tourism businesses. (Sigala, 2001;Sari, 2012;Buhalis D., 2003;Njoroge, 2011;Morais E. P., 2013;Ashari, 2014)

The most important benefits of ICT are namely; it increases the supply of information, reduces cost of production, overcome the constraints of distance and last but not the least it led to more transparency. The use of ICT has impacted every aspects of everyday life including education. Today teachers are no longer become learning resources, but they have to be more than those which are capable of acting as facilitators, companions, mentors, and also as partners in developing the skill and knowledge. Using developed ICT in learning process have increased the interest of both academic and non-academic institutions which raises the issue of quality resulting in both theoretical and practical evidence of how to achieve high quality but successful implementation of ICT relies on variety of factors such as instruction participation, institutional readiness, applicable course curriculums and designs etc. It also relies on teacher as well as student factor. In light of this successful implementation, increase on the performance of students and effectiveness of ICT technology will be inevitable. (Sigala, 2001;Surjono, 2013;Ismail, 2008;Sari, 2012)

### ***Some Trends***

According to (Li, 2010) attitude is the psychological tendency of which a person evaluates some respects of the environment around him in his/her way of like or dislike which includes symbols, objects, concept and people. Whereas (Lin, 2009) defined attitude as the internal reaction tendency of which an individual interact with the environment toward people, things or situations. According to (Chang, 2009), the motivation to learn is a mental process to bring up and maintain the student's learning activity and leads such activity toward the goal set by the teacher. (Li, 2010), stated that the motivation to learn is a psychological factor that causes, controls, and sustains the student's behaviors towards a desired goal.

(Majó, 2004), does highly relevant considerations regarding higher education in Tourism and particularly on ICT. According to the author:

- ICT should not only be seen as a specific matter and individual of tourism;
- ICT should be seen as essential to achieving the goals of higher education in tourism;
- The working hours available for some course units may call into question the quality of their teaching, as may be the case of ICT course units;
- The teaching staff should be aware that recycling and training must also be to update your computer skills and thus improve the performance of their classes;
- The problem that is associated with the number of computers per student and free time for self-learning in the classroom is closely connected with problems of costs;
- Students should be aware that the learning of ICT tools does not end in the classroom.
- Institutions of higher education should not only teach the basic content but also give other advanced content and specific of tourism for a good preparation of future Professionals;

- Finally, the time spent on technology education should not be devoted to teaching programming, but learning to use tools, because the goal is to form good and knowledgeable users of the medium in order to enjoy all the features offered by ICT.

Another way in which emerging ICTs are impacting on the content of education curricula stems from the ways in which ICTs are dominating so much of contemporary life and work. (McCausland, 1999). In some teaching activities teachers optimize the use of ICT including administration, communication, learning resources, Material delivery, and evaluation activities in and outside the classroom, self-study, and professional development. However, it is not easy for teachers and students to be able to optimally utilize ICT in learning (Surjono, 2013).

(D'Esposito, 1999), presented a study on Internet usage trends of the university students, and found that when university students have the opportunity to use internet resources, almost all of them prefer to use these, rather than classical libraries for their studies.

(Nyvang, 2003), established that implementation of ICT in higher education learning environments was a complex task. Teachers, students, management, administration and ICT support were affected by the implementation of ICT. To facilitate the study of the changing processes, the first step was to understand what problems and challenges implementation of ICT led to and how it affected the existing practices

However (Cheung W. &, 2005) stressed on the effects of Internet as an effective teaching tool in university education, and proposed that it is insufficient for university lecturers and administrators to use the Internet as a good teaching tool, and that students' internet use should be investigated.

(Peng, 2006), in their study revealed that there is a positive effect if the students use the Internet as a functional tool or functional technology.

(Chen, 2008), studied the basic connection between the internet use of university students and their academic performance and their results show that non-heavy internet users have better relationship with administrative staff, academic grades and learning satisfaction than heavy users.

(Ramos, 2009), argues that competitiveness and exploitation of the tourism industry increasingly depends on the ability of professionals and managers take advantage of the emerging ICT to increase competitive benefits, since ICT allows adding value by facilitating the differentiation of the tourism product and increasing efficiency.

Tourism in India is the largest service industry, with a contribution of 6.8% to the national GDP and 7.8% of the total employment in India (<http://knoema.com>). According to World Travel and Tourism Council, India will be a tourism hot-spot from 2009 to 2018 having the highest 10 year growth potential (<http://www.ficci.com>). Students represent the future of the tourism industry and tourism industry needs more students in field of tourism and Hotels management. It needs also academics and we need raise the skills of the existing tourism studies and hotel management academics, one of the ways to strengthening education process is by using ICT. (Bob McKercher, 2013;Ismail, 2008)

## Review of Literature

Information and communication technologies (ICT) play a critical role for the competitiveness of tourism organizations and destinations as well as for the entire industry as a whole. ICTs have also changed radically the efficiency and effectiveness of tourism organizations, the way that businesses are conducted in the marketplace, as well as how consumers interact with organizations. (<http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk>).

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are proving to be an effective mechanism to transmit information on the intangible tourism product as the functionality of this industry depends upon the transmission of accurate and reliable information (Kiplangat, 2005). Buhalis D. L., 2002, states that ICTs gradually change the function of distribution from facilitation of information exchange and reservations to a much more sophisticated mechanism of adding value and providing service. Goeldner (1988) comments that tourism is still an emergent subject and that tourism and hospitality education has grown significantly during the last 50 years, but its knowledge is still fragmented. (Goeldner, 1988, July). Student are attracted to undergraduate or graduate in Tourism and Hospitality Management program because the industry provide benefits through its contribution to cultural enrichment and economic growth. (Bushell, 2001)

Using the internet in tourism education creates some benefits for both students and the staff members, beside Information source the revolution of the amount of information for academics and students alike who can access to internet to all locations at any one time. They can obtain the information from more sources than ever before, which provides new teaching and learning opportunities, furthermore motivator that many students and lecturers feel stimulated, and improve their time on task, when using the internet, the internet and its world wide web (www) provide a variety range of study methods and contains many resources such as broadcast, video conferencing, virtual classroom, recording ....etc. (Shendy, 2009;Deyaab, 2008;Nagar, 2006). Using developed information and communication technologies (ICT) in learning process have been increased the interest by both academic and non-academic institutions in e-learning (Ali, 2010). The Increasing of e learning especially in higher education raises the issue of quality resulting in both theoretical and practical evidence of how to achieve high quality as well as benefiting from e learning (Ismail, 2008). There has been a considerable change in student attitudes to technology in the learning environment over the last few years. Technology-enabled tourism, commonly referred to as e-tourism, is now impacting every aspect of how hospitality and tourism organizations conduct business. (Haywood, 2004; Morais E. P., 2013) It is through the training of human resources in the tourism industry, especially in ICT, which improves their ability to adapt and consequently is increased flexibility and interactivity productive processes which result to be increasingly complex, due to the competitiveness and globalization currently existing. (Buhalis D. &, 2008)

(Cheung L. &., 2000), recommended that educators constantly update teaching content to provide an adequate supply of graduates with IT skills to meet the growing demands of the hospitality and tourism industry. (Ashari, 2014) Law and Jogaratnam (2005) advocated that technologies can become part of the strategic planning process of a business only when managers make full use of it. ICT developments have direct impacts on the competitiveness of enterprises; they determine the two fundamental roots to competitive advantage, i.e. differentiation and cost advantage. After an extensive literature review in computer-based or supported learning, (McDonald, 2002) summarised three students' factors related to technology having a significant impact on student performance: computer experience and familiarity; computer anxiety; computer attitude.

The tourism and hospitality industry has been described as an industry with one of the highest levels of skill shortages and staff turnover. Moreover, training is a critical success factor for the hospitality industry, a factor which is considered to be expensive and time consuming. Despite all the above-mentioned aspects, little attention has been paid to the role that new technologies already play in the tourism learning sphere, now and in the future (Cantoni, 2009).

(Caton, 2011) Try to explore the theoretical roots of critical management pedagogy and elucidate its benefits to tourism education. They suggested that the inclusion of critical pedagogy in tourism education may confer positive outcomes in three domains namely, individual freedom, social justice, and business productivity and expected that it will improve and help constructive relationship between the managerial profession and management education and ultimately tourism education to grow in new and productive pedagogical directions.

(Hsu, 2010) try to analyzed the Higher Vocational Education environment in relation to tourism and hospitality and explore the feasibility of incorporating tourism and hospitality education management in the development framework for tourism and hospitality and recommend areas for future development based on attempts to solve current educational problems.

(Pinar, 2014) analyses and discusses the different organizational structures of higher tourism education in Turkey through SWOT analysis and concluded that they are very promising for the future development in tourism education and help in overcoming the lack of qualified staff which is stated as one of the biggest deficits of Turkish tourism industry by providing tailored made education for the industry needs.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To assess the level of awareness about Information Communication Technology among under graduate students.
2. To identify the various factors that affects the students' use of Information Communication Technology.

### ***Locale of the Study***

In present study undergraduate students from an Indian university were approached. The study was conducted in 2014 in the months of January and February. All the students were in the age group of 18 to 21 years of age of both male and female.

### ***Sampling and Sample Size***

A descriptive study was conducted to achieve the objectives. Judgmental sampling method was followed. The study was conducted on 125 respondents but 15 questionnaires were rejected due to inadequate information. Thus analysis was conducted on 110 respondents.

### ***Survey Instrument***

Well-structured questionnaire was developed for conducting the study. Questionnaire had two sections. First section contained questions regarding demographic profile of tourist while second section contained a list of 16 questions pertaining to various attributes of Information and Communication Technology pertaining to the students used in their routine life. Questions are of two types i.e., Yes/No and statements in which respondent has to just tick one parameter of each statement depending on whether respondent feel that statement “Strongly Agree (score 1)”, “Agree (score 2)”, “Neutral (score 3)”, “Disagree (score 4)”, or “Strongly Disagree (score 5)”. Thus lowest mean score implies that respondent favour that particular statement. For analysis SPSS version 19 has been used.

## Analysis and Interpretation

**Table no. 1:** KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.680
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	Df
	Sig.
	435.051
	78
	.000

Factor analysis is a good way of categorizing latent or underlying factors from an array of seemingly important variables. It is a set of techniques, which, by analyzing correlations between variables, diminishes their number into fewer factors, which clarify much of the original data, more economically (Nargundkar, 2005).

Bartlett's test of sphericity is a test to study that variables are uncorrelated in the population whereas Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy is used to examine the appropriateness of factor analysis (Malhotra N K., 2011). A value close to 1 show that patterns of correlations are quite compact and factor analysis produces discrete and consistent factors. Kaiser (1974) recommends accepting values greater than 0.5 and values above 0.9 is superb (Fields, Discovering statistics using SPSS, 2005). Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) for individual variance was calculated. It found sufficient correlation for all the variables (KMO & Bartlett's Table 1). To test the sampling adequacy Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (MSA) is computed which is found to be .68 it showed that the sample is good enough for sampling. Bartlett's measure tests the null hypothesis that the original correlation matrix is an identity matrix and we want this test to be significant. For our data, Bartlett's test is highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), and therefore factor analysis is appropriate (Fields, Discovering statistics using SPSS. , 2005).

**Table no 2:** Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.842	29.551	29.551	3.842	29.551	29.551	1.901	14.626	14.626
2	1.803	13.871	43.423	1.803	13.871	43.423	1.893	14.565	29.191
3	1.270	9.766	53.189	1.270	9.766	53.189	1.798	13.828	43.019
4	1.153	8.873	62.062	1.153	8.873	62.062	1.786	13.735	56.754
5	1.055	8.115	70.177	1.055	8.115	70.177	1.745	13.423	70.177

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Exploratory factor analysis is used in order to categorize constructs and investigate relationships among key interval scaled questions regarding attitude of tourism students regarding use of ICT. (<http://annemary.org>)

Cronbach's alpha is an index of reliability associated with the variation accounted for by the true score of the underlying construct (Santos, 1999). It is based on the average covariance among items in a scale. The use of Cronbach's alpha is recommended highly as a good measure for measuring internal consistency (<http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in>). Cronbach's alpha Measure of reliability that ranges from 0 to 1, with values of .60 to .70 deemed the lower limit of acceptability. (Hair J. F. Black W. C., 2009) Whereas, (Nunnally, 1978) has indicated 0.7 to be an acceptable reliability coefficient but lower thresholds are sometimes used in the literature.



**Table no 3:** Factors Analysis

	Statements	Factor Loading	Reliability
<b>Student friendly</b>	Use of ICT in students presentation	.910	.811
	Use of ICT in students assignments	.820	
<b>Internet based activities</b>	Use of ICT as video conferencing	.763	.675
	Use of ICT for online courses	.755	
	Use of ICT as teleconferencing	.531	
	Use of ICT in Credit cards	.519	
<b>Linking students and teachers and parents</b>	Impact of ICT on student parent communication	.808	.652
	Use of ICT in delivering lectures	.743	
	Impact of ICT on student-student communication	.434	
<b>Banking activities</b>	Use of ICT in Debit Cards	.916	.760
	Use of ICT as ATM Machine	.778	
<b>Communication link</b>	Use of ICT in sending e mails	.857	.612
	Use of ICT in Mobile phones	.594	

After the standards indicate that data is suitable for factor analysis, Principle Component Analysis was employed for extracting the data which allows determining the factor underlying the relationship between a numbers of variables (<http://annemary.org>). The higher the loading the more important is the factor. However anything above 0.44 could be considered salient, with increased loading becoming more vital in determining the factor. All the loadings in the research are positive (Bharathi, 2010). Rotation is necessary when extraction technique suggests that there are two or more factors. The rotation of factors is designed to give an idea of how the factors initially extracted differ from each other and to provide a clear picture of which item loads on which factor (<http://www.freepatentsonline.com>). The percentage of total variance is used as an index to determine how well the total factor solution accounts for what the variables together represent. (Pavleen, 2006)

The present table shows that solution accounts for 70.177% of the total variations with respect to tourism student's attitude towards use of ICT. It is a decent extraction which reduces the number of factors (from 13 it has reduced to 5 factors). The percentage of variance explained by factor one to five for factors effecting tourism students attitude towards use of ICT are 29.551, 13.871, 9.766, 8.873 and 8.115 respectively, each having Eigen value exceeding 1. The rotation of factors is designed to give an idea of how the factors initially extracted differ from each other and to provide a clear picture of which item load on which factor (Kaur, 2014). In the special vocabulary of factor analysis, the parameters of these linear functions are referred to as loadings (<http://www.yorku.ca>). It suggests that there are five factors namely: (Student friendly, Internet based activities, interlinks among students teachers and parents, Banking activities, and Communication link) which together explain 70.177% of the total variance. The five factors are as follows:

1. Student friendly: It is the most vital factor which explains 29.5% of the total variation. ICT is used by tourism students maximum for two purposes first and foremost is for making presentation(.910) and then for making assignments(.820). These two factors are most important when one looks for attitudes of tourism students towards use of ICT.
2. Internet based activities: There are four loads in this factor. It is the second most important factor which accounts for 13.871% of the variations. It includes use of ICT for

- video conferencing (.763), online courses (.755), teleconferencing (.531) and for using credit cards (.519).
3. Interlink among students teachers and parents: This factor includes three variables namely, impact of ICT on student parent communication (.808), in delivering lectures (.743), and on student-student communication (.434).
  4. Banking activities: this factor include use of ICT as debit cards (.916) and in ATM machines (.778)
  5. Communication link: Last factor also include two variables for using ICT in the form of sending e mails (.857) and in the form of using mobile phones (.594).

## Conclusion

The reason why ICT is being used widely by tourism students is simple that it is student friendly as it is used by them for making assignments and presentation. It is internet based so it is practice by students in the form of video conferencing, online courses, teleconferencing and use in the form of credit cards not only in the campus or college but from anywhere. Also it is quite manifest that it work as interlink among teachers-students-parents for their communication which make them connected all the time. Also, student use them as debit cards and in ATM machines for various purpose due to which they don't have to carry heavy cash with them all the time and last but not the least it is the most economical option which is being used by students for sending e mails and as mobile phones and keep in touch with rest of the world.

From the above discussion one can easily summarized that how significant are ICT in the day to day life of the students. It not only makes their life easy and simple but also facilitate in so many ways which make them well-informed, intelligent, knowledgeable and expert in their desired field.

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## Customer Behaviour Study for Sugar Free Food Products in 5 Star Hotels of New Delhi

Garima Parkash<sup>1</sup> & Kavita Khanna<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

Replacing sugar in the traditionally containing sugar foods is the key focus of food and beverage industry across the globe. People throughout the world are becoming increasingly convinced that the foods they consume cannot only modulate their performance and appearance but also influence the risk of acquiring a variety of diseases. Nutrition awareness, health reasons and branding are trends that have changed and are continuing to change the nature of hotel foodservices. According to various market analyst the market of artificial sweeteners and products made using these are set to grow phenomenally in the coming few years.

As the popularity of products using alternative sweeteners is increasing day by day, this study aims to find the choices of sugar free foods with which the customer of New Delhi associates with while eating out in 5 star hotels of the capital. Further the study explores how factors like quality, price and taste of such products affect the satisfaction level of the customers consuming them.

**Keywords:** *Sugar free Foods, Customer Satisfaction, Hotels, Food and Beverage Segment.*

### Introduction

In today's time of ever changing dynamic economy it is very difficult to successfully establish and sustain food and beverage business. The business of food is challenged by various factors like pricing of raw materials, ingredients availability, changes in life style of customers which further changes the consumer demands for this industry. The consumer of today are more than ever conscious of their health and corresponding food choices they make and this dynamics shall be of most importance to the food industry for the coming few years.

With every passing year more and more people of various age groups are eating out and are willing to pay more for healthy and varied choices due to the demand of the lifestyle changes and individual's work habits and demands. The capital has seen major surge in the eating out pattern of the population along with the bold experimentation in terms of tastes and cuisines being made popular. The same can be said even for both business and leisure travelers in developing nations. As the disposable incomes are on a rise especially in developing countries the customers of food service industry are willing to buy time by eating out than to prepare food at home.

The hotel's food and beverage outlets business strategies are undergoing a drastic change due to the influence of customer's making healthy eating choices in this century. Out of these choices in the top slots is the choice of controlling sugar intake because of health or calorie reasons. Going sugar free is quiet like a fashion statement catching up with all the age groups of the generation world over. But on the flip side of the coin, the healthy eating being a today's mantra most consumers get confused and although desiring to buy healthy land up making unhealthy food choices. Also not to forget that healthy have different meanings for different people like sugar free, fat free, gluten free, low calorie – all are healthy choices that one can indulge in while eating out. By large two important factors are most likely to contribute in future menus and recipes in the food production area of the hotels are people on fad diets and those of all ages who travel and need to keep as close to home food as possible when eating out. A sugar-free product has a large market potential besides offering the consumer more choice. The artificial sweeteners that the government has permitted for use, with a specification of a maximum limit, are saccharin sodium, aspartame, acesulfame potassium and sucralose. As per good manufacturing practices, whenever the above mentioned substitutes are used to make any dish they should be used in the lowest possible recommended levels as required to create the desired quality of the products and also these additives to be used and handled as the same way as any other food ingredient.

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1. Associate Professor, G D Goenka University, Sohna, Haryana, India. **Email:** garima.parkash@gdgoenka.ac.in

2. Assistant Professor, Amity University, Noida (U.P) India. **Email:** kkhanna@amity.edu

With the evolution of creative chefs and easy availability of ingredients across the globe in the past decade, areas of special dietary foods take new dimensions in the hotel industry. In addition, now-a-days consumers all over the world have a strong belief that the food they consume has not only a direct impact on their active performance in work life and acceptable personal appearance but also is a defining factor in their acquiring or not acquiring a life style disease which are on a rise. Nutrition awareness, health reasons and branding are trends that have changed and are continuing to change the nature of hotel foodservices. These trends have evolved from opposing customer motivations: a desire to improve health and wellness and a need to have expectations of food products met. Customer requirements has developed as a result of research into various health practices recommended for improved health, awareness and availability of sugar free food options along the globe. Branding has emerged from customer desire to have familiar products that consistently meet their expectations. By developing a better understanding of the nature of the customer dining requirements of sugar free foods, food-service administrators of the hotels will be positioned for more effective, proactive strategic planning.

### **Research Objectives**

In stressing the growing popularity and subsequent demand of healthy foods, drinks and dishes by the customers in the hospitality sector, this paper seeks:

- To identify the customer satisfaction level related to Quality, Price and Taste of Sugar Free Food Products in 5 star hotels of New- Delhi.

### **Review of the Literature**

Biswas S, 2013, not only in front of house areas is the development happening in hotels but also the kitchens of 5 star hotels are undergoing visible sea changes. With the introduction of various innovative ideas and use of latest technology in cooking methods the product in terms of dishes and recipes are generated with distinct, unique flavors with dynamic presentations. Bhatia, 2011, healthy eating has taken a new dimension and are no longer the stale food options making their presence on the menu. There has been an introduction of various gourmet fares in the healthy eating section and the customers are pleasingly willing to pay price for good healthy options when eating out.

With an increasing number of youngsters knowing the problems faced by our changing life style, the trend for treatment of lifestyle diseases like Hypertension, Atherosclerosis, Diabetes, Obesity and Cardiac problems is gradually shifting from curative to preventive. The media has played a vital role in bringing about a change in our food habits through food shows and advertisements. A number of wellbeing initiatives have been recently introduced by leading international hotel chains. The industry has realized that there is a strong correlation between lifestyle related factors such as obesity, inadequate consumption of fruits and vegetables, lack of regular exercise etc. and the duration of sick leave and loss of productivity at work.

Mogelonsky, 2008, shift in the consumer's choices of sugar free alternatives as against the normal sugar has been the result of ever increasing cases of overweight/ obesity and diabetes due to life style choices of the today's population. Both conditions are prevalent among the general population: according to the National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse, 20.8 million children and adults in the U.S. in 2005 (7% of the total population) had some form of diabetes. Preliminary figures from the "2006 National Health Interview Survey" suggest these numbers may be even higher and, based on current trends, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) predicts that one in three Americans born in 2000 will develop diabetes. According to a research conducted by Mintel it is evident that diabetes is one of the major decisions which influence the purchase decisions regarding sugar free food products. Then follows the factor of overweight and

obesity which influence the purchase decision for such products as dieting becomes instrumental in weight management and thus opens a wide window of opportunities for the manufacturers of sugar-free foods. According to Mintel's exclusive research, 29% of respondents are extremely or very interested in sugar-free or low-sugar products as a form of diet plan or part of a regulated diet program. Sugar-free foods provide a way to assist consumers in making diet choices that could lead to weight loss or control. Brown, 2014, recent research suggests that the upward trend in obesity that has vexed public health officials for decades may have leveled out, while the healthy eating movement remains on the upswing. Still, nearly 100 million Americans are watching their diet to lose weight or to maintain their current weight. Successful weight management remains a tough and never-ending battle for many Americans trying to stay on a traditional diet plan. Between 2009 and 2014 the number of consumers watching their diet to maintain their weight grew 12.8%, or nearly twice as fast as the growth in the population of those seeking to lose weight.

Lambert 2013, all across the globe people are becoming more and more aware about the health problems related to excessive sugar consumption. Sugar in today's world is considered as a prominent health risk to human race. To emphasize the importance of controlling sugar consumption world has started a "No Sugar" movement when it comes to individual choices of personal eating habits. Stokel-Walker 2014, nearly Fifty years ago the Pepsi was the first company to market Diet Pepsi to give the consumer an idea of weight loss with tune to consumption of sugar free carbonated drinks But today, the very term "diet" on food and drink almost seems a little retro. "Consumers demand additional benefit from products and if the product evokes an active lifestyle, along with the inherent benefit of having no sugar it's a win for sales, leaving 'diet' as a bland and slightly dated alternative," says Forster.

(CCS) Calorie Control Council Light products usage and weight control, 2004, now a day's lot of good quality ingredients are prominently available in the market at reasonable prices which can act as substitute for fat and sugars in various dishes giving a an opportunity to chefs to create sugar free food products keeping in mind the demand of such items in today's world. But one consuming such products should remember that all such lower sugar, lower fat products are not necessarily also low in calories. However, the most popular reduced sugar products (diet carbonated and noncarbonated soft drinks, tabletop sugar substitutes, and sugar-free gums and desserts [CCS 2004]) are lower in calories than their comparable full sugar products and may be useful in preventing obesity

Assn, ADA, 2004, also, now according to (ADA 2004) the non – nutritive sweeteners are safe to consume and play a great role in improving dietary requirements of health conscious along with helping individuals to manage their calories. According to a 2004 consumer survey, 84% of American adults use low-calorie, reduced sugar (RS), and/or sugar-free foods and beverages, compared with 73% of adults in 1998 (CCC 2004). A majority (63%) of users consume these products several times per week, whereas 44% of users consume these products daily (CCC 2004). Survey respondents stated they use these products to "stay in overall better health," "to eat or drink healthier," and "to reduce calories" (CCC 2004). Additionally, 85% of low-calorie, RS, and sugar-free product users would like additional products offered in this category (CCC 2004). Considering the high consumer use and demand for low-calorie, RS, and sugar-free products, little research has been conducted that illustrates the dietary quality of these products. Benefits of low calorie sweeteners can be summarized in both physiological and psychological headings. Some effective uses of the same can be in weight maintenance, weight reduction, diabetes management, reduction in risks of dental caries and obesity to name some. Sharma S, 2012, many researched done the world over reflects that consumption of such low calorie, sugar

free foods and beverages lead to an overall healthy lifestyle. Low-calorie products is used primarily for staying in better overall health, which includes achieving and maintaining a proper weight.

Besides this people use low-calorie foods and beverages for many reasons other than dieting. Sixty-eight percent of low-calorie product consumers are not on a diet. For these people, "calorie consciousness" does not mean a commitment to weight control or weight reduction. Instead, these "non-dieters" use low-calorie products as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Maxwell J., 2013, many leading global hospitality brands are committed to health and wellness. Hyatt Hotels and Resorts have partnered with The Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA) to improve the nutritional profile of food menus at full-service managed Hyatt properties across US and Canada.

In coming years the ongoing trend of remaining healthy and controlling lifestyle diseases like diabetes shall be explored to its full potential as the consumers are striving very hard to achieve optimum health and wellness in their lives. The next few years shall see an increased surge in available products meeting the various customers' desired nutritional guidelines as being provided by various food and beverage manufacturers. The prevailing popularity of sugar free foods and beverages and striving of hotels to outdo each other in the trendy new wellness menus containing less or no sugar in hotels world-wide, its link with customer demands, lifestyle related diseases, developments in food technology and sustainable food sourcing, and a dearth of such research in the hotel industry of an emerging economy like India, became the impetus for current study.

Toops, 2012, Hartman Group ([www.hartman-group.com](http://www.hartman-group.com)), Bellevue, Wash., finds consumers increasingly understand wellness to be a "positive" proposition rather than a "perfunctory" one, a cultural shift from "health" toward "quality of life." Non-physical notions of well-being (mental, emotional and spiritual) are just as important as physical well-being for consumers, the market research firm notes in its "2011 Health and Wellness Deep Dive" report. Quality of life accommodates variation in individual desires, needs, lifestyles and goals and illuminates the role of indulgence and pleasure as essential components of wellness.

### **Research Methodology**

To achieve the objective and to examine the growing popularity and customer satisfaction of sugar free food products Guests visiting various 5 star hotels who come to eat out were selected. A random sample of 5 star hotels (10 in no.) of the capital was selected and a survey was conducted targeting 10 guests from each hotel. An exhaustive questionnaire was developed with the help of reviews of literature and past researches done in this field. The responses to the questionnaire were filled in interactive style by intercepting guests in the hotel lobby. The questionnaire comprised of 25 questions in Section 1 which concerned gathering information on the following broad parameters as follows:

- Customer's understanding and respective consumption of Sugar free food products.
- Availability and consumption of various categories of sugar free food products when eating out.
- Reasons for such choices of sugar free food products.
- Information regarding Customer Satisfaction of various parameters like taste, quality and price of sugar free foods.
- Comparison of quality, price and taste of various available sugar free food products in hotels as per customer feedback.



Section 2 – Collects demographic information of the guests.

### Sample Size

**Sample Size Determination:** The sample size is determined to estimate a proportion of customers who rates the sugar free food product with relation to Quality, Taste and Price.

Parameters are set before calculating sample size:

1. Margin of error less than 10%.
2. 95% confidence intervals
3. Conservative assumption of 50% or 0.5 for the value of  $\hat{p}$  being unknown a priori.

The margin of error is 1.96 times the standard error and that the standard error is  $\sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n}}$  in general the formula is:

$$ME = z \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n}}$$

Where,

ME= the desired margin of error

z= the z-score, e.g. 1.645 for a 90% confidence interval, 1.96 for a 90% confidence interval, 2.58 for a 99% confidence interval.

$\hat{p}$ = is our prior judgment of the correct value of p. which we selected as 50%.

n = the sample size (to be found)

Calculation:

ME equal to 0.1, z = 1.96 and  $\hat{p} = 0.5$

$$\begin{aligned} 0.1 &= 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{0.5 \times 0.5}{n}} \\ &= 96.15 \end{aligned}$$

We assume that the sample size of 100 is better to estimate the population instead of 96 with the Margin of error less than 10% or 0.1. The Margin of error is considered high because it is a pilot study to evaluate the finite population.

**Total sample size of 100.**

### Hypothesis

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is an impact on the customer satisfaction rating because of quality, price and taste of sugar free food products in 5 star hotel of New Delhi

**H<sub>a</sub>:** There is no impact on the customer satisfaction rating because of quality, price and taste of sugar free food products in 5 star hotel of New Delhi

### Statistical Tests

1. Correlation between different parameters of quality, price and taste.
2. Chi Square test is applied on the correlated variables ( quality, price and taste)

The study focuses on analyzing the behavior of the customer consuming sugar free food products in relation to parameters of quality, taste and price. By use of Correlation technique most correlated values are identified which make an influence in the choices of sugar free food products of customers. Further to test our hypothesis and analyze we use Chi Square test as the data collected is non- parametric which is based on frequency distribution and not on mean, median and variance.

## Analysis of the Data

### *Frequency chart with cross-tabulation for demographic analysis*

The collected data was analyzed with splitting of gender in both male and female and was analyzed in four age groups i.e. 21-30 yrs, 31-40yrs, 41-50 yrs and 51-60 yrs. The cross tabulation table of age group with gender is as follows:

**Table 1.** Demographics

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Age group	21-30	15	11	26
	31-40	24	9	33
	41-50	16	10	26
	51-60	8	7	15
Total		63	37	100

### *Distribution of Gender related to Age Group*

As per the above table and the graphical representation in the form of Bar chart below gives detail of the sample used for the study. Out of 100 respondents 63 were male and 37 were females falling in the 4 specified age groups as reflected in the bar chart.

### *Correlation between different parameters of quality, price and taste*

Below is the application of CORRELATION TOOL to access the degree of correlation between various categories of sugar free food products on offer in 5 Star Hotels and the different parameters like Quality, Price and Taste.

With the findings of the table 1 where the value of Correlation Coefficient  $r = .687$  with 2-tailed significance level of  $p < .05$  - we can observe that when people are consuming sugar free food products they are highly concerned regarding quality of Sugar Free Desserts and Bakery Confectionary items.

With the findings of the table 2 where the value of Correlation Coefficient  $r = .684$  with 2-tailed significance level of  $p < .05$  - we can observe that when people are consuming sugar free food products they are willing to pay higher prices for good quality of Sugar Free Cereals and Sugar Substitutes followed by Sugar Free Desserts, Bakery and Confectionary (tabulated value of Correlation Coefficient  $r = .637$  with 2-tailed significance level of  $p < .05$ )

With the findings of the table 3 where the value of Correlation Coefficient  $r = .752$  with 2-tailed significance level of  $p < .05$  - we can observe that when people are consuming sugar free food products they expect very good taste of beverages both alcoholic and non- alcoholic followed by Sugar Free Desserts, Bakery and Confectionary (tabulated value of Correlation Coefficient  $r = .728$  with 2-tailed significance level of  $p < .05$ )

**Table 2:** Correlation Table Quality Assessment

		Correlations						
		Quality Beverages – Alcoholic	Quality Beverages – Non Alcoholic	Quality Sugar Substitutes	Quality Cereals	Quality Deserts	Quality Bakery & Confectionary	Quality Others (E.g.)
Quality Beverages – Alcoholic	Pearson Correlation	1	.428**	.361**	.286**	.355**	.428**	.461**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.004	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	99	99	100	100	93
Quality Beverages – Non Alcoholic	Pearson Correlation	.428**	1	.361**	.252*	.282**	.251*	.263*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.012	.004	.012	.011
	N	100	100	99	99	100	100	93
Quality Sugar Substitutes	Pearson Correlation	.361**	.361**	1	.347**	.408**	.389**	.308**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.003
	N	99	99	99	98	99	99	92
Quality Cereals	Pearson Correlation	.286**	.252*	.347**	1	.406**	.456**	.250*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.012	.000		.000	.000	.016
	N	99	99	98	99	99	99	92
Quality Deserts	Pearson Correlation	.355**	.282**	.408**	.406**	1	.687**	.438**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.004	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	100	100	99	99	100	100	93
Quality Bakery & Confectionary	Pearson Correlation	.428**	.251*	.389**	.456**	.687**	1	.441**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.012	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	100	100	99	99	100	100	93
Quality Others (E.g.)	Pearson Correlation	.461**	.263*	.308**	.250*	.438**	.441**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.011	.003	.016	.000	.000	
	N	93	93	92	92	93	93	93

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Table 3:**Correlation Table PRICE ASSESSMENT

		Pricing Beverages – Alcoholic	Pricing Beverages – Non Alcoholic	Pricing Sugar Substitutes	Pricing Cereals	Pricing Desserts	Pricing Bakery & Confectionary	Pricing Others (E.g.)
Pricing Beverages Alcoholic	- Pearson Correlation	1	.612**	.509**	.388**	.539**	.619**	.556**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	98	99	100	92
Pricing Beverages Non Alcoholic	- Pearson Correlation	.612**	1	.496**	.446**	.445**	.451**	.422**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	98	99	100	92
Pricing Sugar Substitutes	Pearson Correlation	.509**	.496**	1	.684**	.630**	.520**	.547**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	98	99	100	92
Pricing Cereals	Pearson Correlation	.388**	.446**	.684**	1	.637**	.476**	.430**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	98	98	98	98	97	98	91
Pricing Desserts	Pearson Correlation	.539**	.445**	.630**	.637**	1	.637**	.519**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	99	99	99	97	99	99	91
Pricing Bakery & Confectionary	Pearson Correlation	.619**	.451**	.520**	.476**	.637**	1	.567**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	100	100	100	98	99	100	92
Pricing Others (E.g.)	Pearson Correlation	.556**	.422**	.547**	.430**	.519**	.567**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	92	92	92	91	91	92	92

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 4: Correlation Table Taste Assessment**

		Correlations						
		Taste Beverages – Alcoholic	Taste Beverages – Non Alcoholic	Taste Sugar Substitutes	Taste Cereals	Taste Deserts	Taste Bakery & Confectionary	Taste Others (E.g.)
Taste Beverages – Alcoholic	Pearson Correlation	1	.752**	.626**	.465**	.461**	.450**	.525**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	91
Taste Beverages – Non Alcoholic	Pearson Correlation	.752**	1	.640**	.461**	.510**	.465**	.512**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	91
Taste Sugar Substitutes	Pearson Correlation	.626**	.640**	1	.638**	.453**	.464**	.452**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	91
Taste Cereals	Pearson Correlation	.465**	.461**	.638**	1	.548**	.426**	.502**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	91
Taste Deserts	Pearson Correlation	.461**	.510**	.453**	.548**	1	.728**	.597**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	91
Taste Bakery & Confectionary	Pearson Correlation	.450**	.465**	.464**	.426**	.728**	1	.547**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	91
Taste Others (E.g.)	Pearson Correlation	.525**	.512**	.452**	.502**	.597**	.547**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	91	91	91	91	91	91	91

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

***Analysis of correlated values on the consumer rating***

**Table 5:** Cross tabular calculation of Quality of Desserts and customer satisfaction rating

Quality Desserts * Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels											
Crosstab											
Count											
		Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels									Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Quality Desserts	Extremely Satisfied	2	0	0	5	7	12	2	2	0	30
	Satisfied	0	1	1	2	6	12	13	3	1	39
	Neither Satisfied Nor Unsatisfied	1	1	1	6	5	6	1	0	0	21
	Unsatisfied	0	0	2	3	1	2	0	0	0	8
	Extremely Unsatisfied	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Total		3	2	4	16	19	32	17	5	2	100

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	64.518 <sup>a</sup>	32	.001
Likelihood Ratio	48.939	32	.028
Linear-by-Linear Association	.785	1	.376
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 37 cells (82.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .04.

In the Above give table the  $\chi^2(32) = 64.518$  ( $p < .05$ ) suggests that the Quality of Sugar Free desserts doesn't make any impact to the customer satisfaction rating for sugar free food products being served in 5 star hotels of New- Delhi.

**Table 6:** Cross tabular calculation of Quality of Bakery & Confectionary and customer satisfaction rating

Quality Bakery & Confectionary * Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels											
Crosstab											
Count											
		Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels									Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Quality Bakery & Confectionary	Extremely Satisfied	2	0	1	4	5	8	2	1	0	23
	Satisfied	1	0	0	5	9	14	11	4	1	45
	Neither Satisfied Nor Unsatisfied	0	1	2	2	2	7	3	0	1	18
	Unsatisfied	0	1	1	5	2	3	0	0	0	12
	Extremely Unsatisfied	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Total		3	2	4	16	19	32	17	5	2	100

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	32.937 <sup>a</sup>	32	.421
Likelihood Ratio	36.662	32	.261
Linear-by-Linear Association	.632	1	.427
N of Valid Cases	100		
a. 39 cells (86.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected			

In the Above give table the  $\chi^2(32) = 32.937$  ( $p > .05$ ) suggests that the Quality of Sugar Free Bakery & Confectionary does make an impact to the customer satisfaction rating for sugar free food products being served in 5 star hotels of New- Delhi.

**Table 7:** Cross tabular calculation of Pricing of Cereals and customer satisfaction rating

Pricing Cereals * Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels											
Crosstab											
Count											
		Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels									Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Pricing Cereals	Extremely Satisfied	1	0	1	4	2	9	0	0	0	17
	Satisfied	1	1	1	6	9	11	8	4	0	41
	Neither Satisfied Nor Unsatisfied	1	1	1	2	5	10	5	1	0	26
	Unsatisfied	0	0	1	3	2	2	4	0	1	13
	Extremely Unsatisfied	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total		3	2	4	16	18	32	17	5	1	98

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	29.247 <sup>a</sup>	32	.607
Likelihood Ratio	30.060	32	.565
Linear-by-Linear Association	.581	1	.446
N of Valid Cases	98		
a. 39 cells (86.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected			

In the Above give table the  $\chi^2(32) = 29.247$  ( $p > .05$ ) suggests that the Pricing of Sugar Free Cereals does make an impact to the customer satisfaction rating for sugar free food products being served in 5 star hotels of New- Delhi.

**Table 8:** Pricing of Sugar Free Substitutes and customer satisfaction rating

Pricing Sugar Substitutes * Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels											
Crosstab											
Count											
		Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels									Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Pricing Sugar Substitutes	Extremely Satisfied	2	0	1	3	1	4	2	0	0	13
	Satisfied	1	0	1	7	11	18	9	4	0	51
	Neither Satisfied Nor Unsatisfied	0	2	1	3	5	8	4	1	1	25
	Unsatisfied	0	0	1	3	2	2	2	0	1	11
Total		3	2	4	16	19	32	17	5	2	100

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.872 <sup>a</sup>	24	.360
Likelihood Ratio	24.179	24	.451
Linear-by-Linear Association	.675	1	.411
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 31 cells (86.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected

In the Above give table the  $\chi^2(32) = 25.872$  ( $p > .05$ ) suggests that the Pricing of Sugar Free Substitutes does make an impact to the customer satisfaction rating for sugar free food products being served in 5 star hotels of New- Delhi.

**Table 9** Pricing of Sugar Free Bakery & Confectionary and customer satisfaction rating

Pricing Bakery & Confectionary * Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels											
Crosstab											
Count											
		Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels									Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Pricing Bakery & Confectionary	Extremely Satisfied	2	0	1	3	6	4	0	0	0	16
	Satisfied	1	1	1	4	6	14	8	5	1	41
	Neither Satisfied Nor Unsatisfied	0	1	2	3	4	9	6	0	1	26
	Unsatisfied	0	0	0	6	3	4	2	0	0	15
	Extremely Unsatisfied	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Total		3	2	4	16	19	32	17	5	2	100



Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	34.156 <sup>a</sup>	32	.364
Likelihood Ratio	37.561	32	.229
Linear-by-Linear Association	.937	1	.333
N of Valid Cases	100		
a. 39 cells (86.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected			

In the Above give table the  $\chi^2(32) = 34.156$  ( $p > .05$ ) suggests that the Pricing of Sugar Free Bakery & Confectionary does make an impact to the customer satisfaction rating for sugar free food products being served in 5 star hotels of New- Delhi.

**Table no 10:** Cross tabular calculation of Pricing of Sugar Free Desserts and customer satisfaction rating

Pricing Desserts * Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels											
Crosstab											
Count											
		Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels									Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Pricing Deserts	Extremely Satisfied	2	0	1	2	5	7	3	1	0	21
	Satisfied	1	1	1	7	6	14	9	3	0	42
	Neither Satisfied Nor Unsatisfied	0	1	1	3	3	8	1	0	1	18
	Unsatisfied	0	0	0	4	4	2	3	1	1	15
	Extremely Unsatisfied	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	3
Total		3	2	4	16	18	32	17	5	2	99

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.916 <sup>a</sup>	32	.673
Likelihood Ratio	28.131	32	.663
Linear-by-Linear Association	.337	1	.561
N of Valid Cases	99		
a. 39 cells (86.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected			

In the Above give table the  $\chi^2(32) = 27.916$  ( $p > .05$ ) suggests that the Pricing of Sugar Free Desserts does make an impact to the customer satisfaction rating for sugar free food products being served in 5 star hotels of New- Delhi.

**Table no 11:** Cross tabular calculation of Taste of Sugar Free Alcoholic beverages and customer satisfaction rating

Taste Beverages – Alcoholic * Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels											
Crosstab											
Count											
		Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels									Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Taste Beverages – Alcoholic	Extremely Satisfied	3	0	2	6	5	8	3	0	1	28
	Satisfied	0	0	0	6	6	11	7	3	0	33
	Neither Satisfied Nor Unsatisfied	0	2	1	1	6	12	5	2	1	30
	Unsatisfied	0	0	1	2	1	1	2	0	0	7
	Extremely Unsatisfied	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Total		3	2	4	16	19	32	17	5	2	100

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	31.766 <sup>a</sup>	32	.478
Likelihood Ratio	36.241	32	.277
Linear-by-Linear Association	.968	1	.325
N of Valid Cases	100		
a. 36 cells (80.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected			

In the Above give table the  $\chi^2(32) = 31.766$  ( $p > .05$ ) suggests that the Taste of Sugar Free Alcoholic beverages does make an impact to the customer satisfaction rating for sugar free food products being served in 5 star hotels of New- Delhi.

**Table no 12 :** Cross tabular calculation of Taste of Sugar Free Non- Alcoholic beverages and customer satisfaction rating

Taste Beverages - Non Alcoholic * Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels											
Crosstab											
Count											
		Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels									Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Taste Beverages – Non Alcoholic	Extremely Satisfied	2	0	1	6	4	6	2	2	0	23
	Satisfied	1	2	1	4	7	20	9	2	1	47
	Neither Satisfied Nor Unsatisfied	0	0	0	2	6	3	3	0	1	15
	Unsatisfied	0	0	2	3	1	3	3	1	0	13
	Extremely Unsatisfied	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Total		3	2	4	16	19	32	17	5	2	100

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	31.322 <sup>a</sup>	32	.501
Likelihood Ratio	31.788	32	.477
Linear-by-Linear Association	.173	1	.678
N of Valid Cases	100		
a. 40 cells (88.9%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected			

In the Above give table the  $\chi^2(32) = 31.322$  ( $p > .05$ ) suggests that the Taste of Sugar Free Non-Alcoholic beverages does make an impact to the customer satisfaction rating for sugar free food products being served in 5 star hotels of New- Delhi.

**Table no 13 :** Cross tabular calculation of Taste of Sugar Free Desserts and customer satisfaction rating

Taste Desserts * Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels											
Crosstab											
Count											
		Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels									Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Taste Desserts	Extremely Satisfied	2	0	1	1	7	5	3	2	0	21
	Satisfied	1	0	1	7	6	15	10	3	0	43
	Neither Satisfied Nor Unsatisfied	0	2	0	2	3	8	2	0	1	18
	Unsatisfied	0	0	1	4	2	3	2	0	1	13
	Extremely Unsatisfied	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	5
Total		3	2	4	16	19	32	17	5	2	100

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	38.331 <sup>a</sup>	32	.204
Likelihood Ratio	37.078	32	.246
Linear-by-Linear Association	.711	1	.399
N of Valid Cases	100		
a. 39 cells (86.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is			

In the Above give table the  $\chi^2(32) = 38.331$  ( $p > .05$ ) suggests that the Taste of Sugar Free Desserts does make an impact to the customer satisfaction rating for sugar free food products being served in 5 star hotels of New- Delhi.

**Table no 14 :** Cross tabular calculation of Taste of Sugar Free Bakery& Confectionary and customer satisfaction rating

Taste Bakery & Confectionary * Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels											
Crosstab											
Count											
		Satisfaction Rating of customer related to SFFP being offered in 5 Star Hotels									Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Taste Bakery & Confectionary	Extremely Satisfied	3	0	1	1	4	6	4	3	0	22
	Satisfied	0	0	1	7	9	13	9	2	0	41
	Neither Satisfied Nor Unsatisfied	0	2	2	3	4	8	2	0	1	22
	Unsatisfied	0	0	0	4	1	4	1	0	1	11
	Extremely Unsatisfied	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	4
Total		3	2	4	16	19	32	17	5	2	100

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	38.168 <sup>a</sup>	32	.209
Likelihood Ratio	36.717	32	.259
Linear-by-Linear Association	.031	1	.860
N of Valid Cases	100		
a. 39 cells (86.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected			

In the Above give table the  $\chi^2(32) = 38.168$  ( $p > .05$ ) suggests that the Taste of Sugar Free Bakery&Confectionary does make an impact to the customer satisfaction rating for sugar free food products being served in 5 star hotels of New- Delhi.

### Findings and Discussions

With the suggested chi square test the study being concluded with the acceptance of the null hypothesis that : There is an impact on the customer satisfaction rating because of quality, price and taste of sugar free food products in 5 star hotel of New Delhi. In conclusion, to the above results of the study we can summarize as follows:

- Customers are highly sensitive towards the all three parameters of Quality, Price and taste for Sugar Free Desserts, Bakery& Confectionary products on offer in 5 star hotels of New-Delhi.(table 1,2,3)
- Customers are willing to pay higher prices for good quality of Sugar Free Desserts, bakery and Sugar Substitutes.(table 2)
- Customers expect good taste of Sugar Free Beverages alcoholic and non- alcoholic being served in 5 star hotels of the capital.( table-3)
- Last but not the least should the Quality, Price and taste of Sugar Free variety of bakery & confectionary, cereals, sugar substitutes, alcoholic and non – alcoholic beverages change

shall reflect in the overall customer satisfaction rating of sugar free foods being offered in the hotels of the capital.(table 4 – table 13)

To substantiate the findings it has been observed that now days to improve the taste of sugar free foods, sugar alcohols find its place as sugar replacers in such foods. These sugar alcohols gives a product a taste which is nearly very close to sugar with half the calories and relative little rise in blood sugar when consumed. Also substituting and replacing added sugar with natural occurring sugar foods in the sugar free products is on a high as it turns to be more cost effective and also can help in enhancement of quality of the end product.

### **Conclusion**

The above research has resulted in the development of reliable and valid factors of quality, price and taste in measuring the customer satisfaction related to sugar free food products being served in the 5 star hotels of the capital. The factors of the study to measure the customer satisfaction have emerged after a review of literature and exploratory probing which was followed by a series of acceptable validation procedures.

On the basis of exploratory investigations in the study, factors of primarily taste, quality and price were added to conduct the study. These factors were later confirmed by a detailed analysis and validating tests to be the major factors driving the satisfaction of customer when he/she opts to choose a sugar free food product. Therefore this study can be seen as a research which incorporated both functional and financial attributes of the sugar free foods for measuring of customer behavior in consumption of such products.

Further this research also reconfirms to the fact that customers are sensitive towards the taste of sugar free food products but are willing to pay higher price if their expectations are met on the scale of quality and taste of such products. Thus in case of sugar free food products which the 5 star hotels of the capital serve they need to give special emphasis on the taste and quality of sugar free desserts and bakery goods to which a customer relates to the most. The research also summarized the importance of understanding what all products the customers relates to regarding sugar free foods, and showed that taste and quality are the most important factors followed by pricing which influence the customer's perceived satisfaction regarding sugar free food products. This can help the hotel professionals to focus their resources in the factors of importance when offering sugar free food products in their food and beverage outlets.

### **Recommendations and Suggestions**

With data collected for the study and the analyzed information of the same the following factors can be a guiding line for the food and beverage department of the hotels:

- As evident from the study that the customers of 5 star hotels are highly sensitive towards the quality of products when it comes to Desserts and Bakery & Confectionary products offered in the hotels, so utmost care should be taken in terms of quality being offered of the same.
- As we see from the study, that the guests are willing to pay higher prices for good quality of Sugar Free Desserts and Bakery& Confectionary items so only the best quality of raw ingredients and standardized recipes should be followed to attain a good quality product.
- Customers who opt for Sugar Free Desserts and Bakery & Confectionary demand for a good taste of the product, so the recipe followed should be tried and tested for the same and highly skilled professional chefs should make the same.

With the findings of the study it shall not be unfair to summarize that by developing a better understanding of the factors like price, quality and taste which influence the satisfaction of customer dining requirements of sugar free foods, food- service administrators of the hotels can

position for more effective, proactive strategic planning of the foods and menus being on offer in their food and beverage department.

### Scope of Further Research Work

The study paves the way for further research that would include chef's awareness and ease of usage of sugar free alternatives to create sugar free recipes, ease of procurement of sugar free foods by the hotels and thus the study on the effect on the revenue of a food and beverage department of a 5 star hotel in the capital by sale of sugar free food products.

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## Impact of Destination Logo and Taglines on the Brand Awareness- A Case of Indian Silk Route

Parikshat Singh Manhas<sup>1</sup> & Parvinder Kour<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

Formation of image of a destination is one of the critical concepts in tourism industry as there is an involvement of intangibility proportion. The emergence of creating the logo and taglines for the brands in business concerns has given new dimensions to tourism business or industry to grab the tourists' attention towards the destination. Considering the Silk Route destinations in such perspective needs a contemporary approach as there involves a complete array of induced destination that could not only serve to the tourists interested in trade or culture but also to the others that are concerned for the special interests like adventure tourism, heritage tourism and nature tourism. The need for the tourism development along Silk Route makes it essential for creating the awareness level among tourists as well as stakeholders about its significance to the tourism world. This research paper aims to study the impact of destination logo and taglines on creating the awareness of Indian Silk Route and its induced destinations as a tourism destination brand. The study is based on both upon data collected through secondary sources as well as primary sources. Secondary data has been extracted from varied articles, journals, magazines and websites and primary data would be evaluated through the usage of structured questionnaire for the purpose of research.

**Keywords:** *Silk Route, Destinations, Logos, Taglines, Brand awareness.*

### Introduction

Destination choice has always been influenced by the “7<sup>th</sup> P” of Tourism Marketing mix i.e. Physical evidence. That could help in perceiving the image of the destination and related services and point of sale. And in such terminology brand awareness is one of the important practices that could be proved effective in getting tourists to recognize and remember the destination brand. Taglines, slogans, and logos are low-cost and are generally easy to implement (Akers & Hafer, 2007). Logo and taglines are the two primary determinants of creating the brand awareness and identities among the tourists as it possess the intangibility factor in it. Visual brand identities are said to guide and aim the consumer in making their brand choice (Gaillard et al, 2005). This factor plays a paramount role in grabbing the attention of tourists about the destination. Considering this factor in terms of the Indian Silk Route (a major source of connectivity to the other countries) the cultural as well as trade transformations can be enhanced, because it is almost an unknown part to the today's tourist arrivals. Brand awareness refers to how aware tourists or potential tourists are of destination and about available products and services.

Archaeology Survey of India has quantified ten Silk Route sites in northern India i.e. Nubura/Valley of Flowers (Ladakh), Khardung La passes (Ladakh), Harwan (Srinagar, Kashmir), Safa Kadal Sarai (Srinagar, Kashmir), Indraprastha (Delhi), Kushinagar (U.P), Sravasti (U.P), Kaushambi (U.P), Vaishali (Bihar), Zuluk (Sikkim). Somehow they show the historical background in terms of the Buddhist circuit but their relations to Silk Route are still unknown to the tourist world. An identity is usually publicized via a logo and is normally consistent in the brand's communication (Van de Laar and Van de Pas, 2002). So recommending the destination logo and tagline for the Silk Route as a complete destination in order to create a level of awareness among the tourists' as a potential tourist circuit would prove to be a significant in the history of tourism development of Indian Silk Route. Moreover if Silk Route is divided now sub destinations on the basis of geographical features of countries there arises a question to the promotion and awareness policy of destinations with distinct attributes and as a solution developing a logo may reflect special or historical events or it may

1. Director, School of Hospitality & Tourism Management & Professor, The Business School, Associate Dean, University of Jammu. **Email:** *pmanhas@hotmail.com*

2. Research Scholar, School Of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University Of Jammu. **Email:** *kourparvinder@ymail.com*

present the ethos of its citizens (Rafaeli et al. 2008). Relevance of the destination brand awareness relies on achieving maximum recognitions by the tourists through brand name/tagline or logo. In other words, logos are a prominent feature of a diverse array of direct and indirect communication vehicles ranging from packaging, promotional materials, and advertising to uniforms, business cards, and letterheads (Bottomly and Doyle, 2006; Henderson and Cote, 1998; Janiszewski and Meyvis, 2001). Non availability of logo or tagline has led to the tourists' unaware about the concept of Silk Route in India as for a decision for a particular brand in the retail environment, only recognition is necessary because the various alternatives are alongside one another on the shelf (P.M. Valkenburg and M. Buijzen, 2005). Hence the importance of logo and taglines is relied with the fact that brand that has some level of brand awareness is far more likely to be considered, and therefore chosen, than brands which the consumer is unaware of (Emma Macdonald and Byron Sharp, 1996). The present study aims at studying awareness level of the tourists towards Silk Route destinations. Moreover it is also aligned to understand the relevance of logo and taglines in creating awareness and image of the Silk Route in India.

### **Literature Review**

Destination and its related assets in terms of tourism business terminology have been considered as a product that is offered to the tourists. Thus in such aspect significance of creating of an image is seen as a mental picture formed by a set of attributes that defines the destination in its various dimension, influences destination selection process (Beerli & Martin, 2004). Also brand image is seen as the sum of the emotional and aesthetic impressions that occur in the consumers about the product (Sahbaz R. Pars & Ciftci Gulsel, 2011). The essence of intangibility has made it difficult for the Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) for creating the awareness among tourists about the destination especially emerging and unknown destinations. While the brand symbol may encompass a distinguishing name, logo, trademark, or package design, logos often become a central brand image representation of products, services, or destinations (Carmen Blain, Stuart E. Levy, & J. R. Brent Ritchie, 2005), a logo influences its brand since people tend to think of that particular organization when they see the logo (Arthur W. Hafner & Susan G. Akers, 2011) and a slogan is "a short phrase that communicates descriptive or persuasive information about a brand" (Pike, 2004). While a destination logo is only one component of a brand, it functions as a "visual ambassador" (Rodriguez et. al 2013). So they are "one of the main vehicles for communicating image, cutting through clutter to gain attention, and speeding recognition of the product or company" (Henderson and Cote 1998). A due recognition for the silk route is required to be accepted in the tourism market. In addition, the slogans and visual cues should be meaningful to the destination in order to effectively be used to differentiate the place in the minds of consumers (Gras, M. K, 2008) as visual stimuli play a critical role in building brands by differentiating products, cutting through clutter, creating loyalty and protecting against competition (Henderson et al., 2003). In other words, this may accordingly reduce search costs and influence visitor choice behavior, particularly if the logo bonds with the target markets that the DMO is endeavored to attract by positively symbolizing the anticipated visitor experience (Kapferer, 1997; Blain et al, 2005; Hem and Iversen, 2004) as consumers can choose among thousands of destinations to visit, logos can effectively stimulate awareness and communicate desired attributes (van Riel and van den Ban 2001). By using carefully chosen words and crafting succinct phrases, a tagline is able to convey the personality of a brand and its unique position in the marketplace" (Olsen, 2005). Rafaeli et al (2008) analyzed that symbols and corporate logos can lead people to do things they otherwise would not do, suggesting the logos' utility whenever trust and spontaneous compliance are needed. Brand slogan or tagline symbolizes a picture that DMO – or another business player – wants to present to the targeted tourists. Its basic functionality relies on psychological perception about the attractions of the



destinations, more prominently the related values and beliefs related to the place being offered. Although Silk Route comprises an international concept due to the involvement of various nations, logos help transcend international boundaries and language barriers because they communicate visually (Kohli et al., 2002).

### **Understanding India's Linkage to Silk Route**

Being acclaimed as a greatest route in the history of civilization development, Silk Route formed a bridge between East and West and was an important source for trade among ancient empires of China, India, Persia and Rome. A well-known Chinese Buddhist scholar and translator, Hieun Tsiang (c. 602 – 664), was in Lumbini in 637, before he was heading to Kushinagar, the place where Buddha passed away, and to Sarnath in present India, where he had given his first sermon (Bernstein 2001, Wriggins 2004). This way was linking Varanasi and Bodhgaya in India with Kapilavastu, Lumbini, Bhutwal and Ridi in Central Nepal, leading further through the Mustang region in Nepal to West Tibet and the Brahmaputra valley, continuing from there to Khotan as well to Kashgar, partly via Ladakh (Heide, 2012). Recently more evidences have been found that in ancient times three passages through Nepal presumably have linked the Silk Roads with the Gangetic plains, especially with the Buddhist holy places and great Buddhist Universities of India particularly in the area of Magadha, today being part of the present State of Bihar with its capital Patna, formerly Pataliputra (Heide, 2012). Considering significance of Mathura (India), which was a major trade and commerce centre, located on the junction of Uttarapatha and Dakshinapatha, was connected with Central Asia and China through a route which passed through Indraprastha (modern Delhi). This route, in fact connected Indraprastha with Taxila, Puskalavati, Purusapura, Kapisa, and Bactria to the Tarim basin where they joined both the branches of the 'Silk-Route' traversing along its southern rim through Kashgar (Sailadesa), Yarkand (Chokkuka) and Khotan (Kustana/Godana, Khotamna) and northern edges through A-k'o-su (Wen-su/Pol-luchia, Skt. Bharuka), Ku-chih (Kuchi), Karashahr (Agnidesa) (Archaeology Survey of India, 2010). Further it extends to meet at Yu-men-kuan or the Jade Gate near Tun-hueng before entering the Chinese mainland. Moreover from early times, the Indian sub-continent was connected to the Grand Silk Route through a network of sub-routes criss-crossing "Greater Kashmir" or what presently constitutes Jammu and Kashmir in India and Azad Jammu Kashmir in Pakistan (Kaw, 2009) thus, forming an elongated and interwoven network. Many of these sites like Bodhgaya, Sarnath, Lumbini and Kushinagar has been developed by the ministry of Tourism in India as a major Buddhist pilgrimage circuit. But its ultimate connectivity to the early history of Silk Route needs a due evaluation and recognition.

United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in 2009 presented a report on Silk Route and analyzed that throughout much of the Silk Road, there is insufficient transport infrastructure, tourist and business class hotels, communications systems, resorts, camping and other facilities, and these shortages largely explain why the Silk Road tourism potential remains untapped. Since records and much more information on the Silk Road represents abundant support prospects as a tourism destination brand, but the requirement is to give a definition of a vision and proper methodology pertinent to channelize its demand among tourists, with a re-packaging of existing information and proposition for a framework to facilitate the preparation of an incremental serial nomination: a phased nomination of a series of clusters linked by and representing the Silk Road (Feng, 2005).

## Objectives

On the basis of available given literature this study aims:

1. To know the impact of logo and taglines on the image of destination
2. To find out the awareness level of tourists about the Silk Route and their willingness to visit the same.
3. To suggest the branding strategies for the destination image recovery.

## Hypothesis

**H:** Demographic profile of stakeholders at a destination towards logo and taglines is having a significant impact on destination awareness.

## Scope of the Study

This study is conducted at Jammu & Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh (India) majorly at the destinations that have been claimed as a part of Silk Route depicting the connectivity of India to rest of the world. In order to carve out the impact of logo and taglines on the brand awareness of the destination like induced sub destinations of silk route and role of DMO's towards enhancing awareness about the Silk Route. This study also intends to study the awareness level of tourists who visit the various sites related to Silk route but are not actually aware about their linkage to silk route concepts as Buddhist Sites of U.P (India). This paper is helpful tool for industry practitioners, researchers and academics as it does involve the factors like taglines and logo and their effect on the awareness level in order to provide a frame work towards brand creation.

## Research Methodology

### Sampling

The sampling of this research paper took place in Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh in which DMO's operating, are taken into consideration their responses are taken with the help of structured questionnaire. The sample size of 216 samples was taken from travel agents, state tourism development authorities and the tourists, in the month November 2013. This sample size was calculated with the help of formula given by Krejcie & Morgan, 1970.

### Research Instrument

The structured questionnaire on the basis of aspects like taglines, logo's & branding is formulated after applying the 5-Point Likert's Scale instrument ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Secondary data was collected from published journals, books and articles.

### Research tools

In order to go for the descriptive analysis, the mean, standard deviation was applied. In addition to this the factor analysis is implemented to find out the factors there loading, Eigen value and to carve out the factors on the basis of variable correlation matrix.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

**Table 1. KMO & Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser Meyer Olkin Measure of Sample Adequacy		.573
Bartlett's Test of Approx. Chi Square		2.6883
Sphericity		
	Df	120
	Sig.	.000

**Table 2. Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
V1	.715	.318	-.519	-.067	.014
V2	.155	.550	-.102	.037	.725
V3	.867	.240	-.236	-.059	-.126
V4	.717	.132	-.458	-.276	.017
V5	.619	-.030	-.473	-.086	-.320
V6	.488	-.106	.195	-.055	-.211
V7	.472	.477	.109	.548	-.356
V8	.520	.676	.365	.157	.022
V9	.388	-.201	.503	-.506	-.229
V10	.681	.304	.468	.020	.103
V11	.578	-.085	.478	-.315	.233
V12	.713	-.151	-.101	-.359	.125
V13	.763	-.313	.242	.287	.003
V14	.704	-.371	.020	.355	.136
V15	.554	-.701	.048	.216	.085
V16	.306	-.672	-.221	.210	.268

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 5 components extracted.

**Table 3. Component Transformation Matrix**

Component	1	2	3	4	5
1	.643	.471	.447	.395	.093
2	.180	-.695	-.099	.549	.418
3	-.666	-.005	.659	.348	-.022
4	-.291	.475	-.596	.578	.015
5	-.161	.265	.026	-.295	.903

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

A preliminary analysis of the data reveals that the sample is composed of about 216 DMOs from Jammu and Kashmir regions of J&K state and U.P. In this sample it was found that 76.38 % were males and 23.61 were females. In the age group of 20-35 were 42 in number, between 35-40 were 55 in number, between 40-65 years were 109, and 10 respondents were above 65 years. Also the respondents were classified on the basis of Education status: Matric (21), Under Graduate (65 in Number), Post Graduate (135), PhD (14).

Logo awareness (F1), Logo Difference (F2), logo credibility (F3), logo theme (F4) and logo color (F5) that leads to gain destination awareness. Descriptive analysis is applied i.e. mean value and standard deviation which signifies the variance of the data and helps to understand the effect of logo and taglines in gaining awareness about the destinations like silk routes logo awareness (F1), Logo Difference (F2), logo credibility (F3), logo theme (F4) and logo color (F5) which in turn helps to gain destination awareness. The mean value and standard deviation itself clears the above statement, as the mean value and standard deviation for the logo awareness (F1), Logo Difference (F2), logo credibility (F3), logo theme (F4) and logo color (F5) in Table II.

**Table 4:** Variables and their mean & standard deviation

S. No.	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	Designing a logo and tagline for any place helps to make people aware about the place	3.70	1.18
2.	Logo color helps to memorize the people about the destination/place	2.88	1.13
3.	A taglines gives the vision statement of the destination of the place to the tourists	3.59	1.13
4.	Logo helps to brand the place	3.77	0.95
5.	Logo gives awareness about the destination	3.48	0.87
6.	Good logo helps you to choose the destination for a visit	2.96	1.00
7.	Logo portrays the basic theme of the destination	3.59	1.13
8.	Different logos for different places helps to define places differently	3.88	1.06
9.	Logo gains credibility among the tourists	3.62	1.02
10.	Logo helps us to create public relations with the market	3.44	1.10
11.	Promoting a logo in media helps to gain awareness	3.77	1.06
12.	Logo helps us to advertize the features of destination	3.74	1.00
13.	Putting silk route into tourism acumen makes it a trade line for stock holders	3.74	1.07
14.	Silk Route tourism like any other tourism sector/circuit can contribute to the economy and revenue generation	4.03	1.14
15.	Putting silk route into tourism acumen makes it a trade line for stock holders	4.07	0.81
16.	Please specify the your level of agreement with the given statement: “developing and promoting the tourism to Indian Silk Route and induced destinations could give a competitive benefits to Silk Route Image among tourists”	4.33	0.72

**Table 5:** Factors

No.	Factor	Mean	Standard Deviation
F1	Logo Awareness	3.71	0.34
F2	Logo Difference	3.88	1.06
F3	Logo Credibility	3.62	1.02
F4	Logo Theme	3.59	1.13
F5	Logo Color	2.88	1.13

### **Factor Analysis of Data**

**Factor analysis:** Factor analysis which is one type of multivariate analysis is used to define the underlying structure called factors among the variables in the analysis. For the purpose of this study, factor analysis was used on 16 variables of present study. The result of initial (first run of) factor analysis on eleven independent variables showed KMO was 0.573 and significance level of Bartlett’s test of sphericity was 0.00. In addition to this, the rotated factor matrix showed that all the 16 statement/Variables about Destination Logo and Taglines, and their role in logo awareness, Logo Difference, logo credibility, logo theme and logo color were adequate. This was considered satisfactory as it fulfilled the criteria of KMO >0.5 (mean factor analysis was suitable

to be used for this data analysis) and significance  $<0.05$  (which indicated sufficient correlations existed among the variables to proceed for factor analysis. (Hair et al 2007).

**Factor analysis on logo awareness, Logo Difference, logo credibility, logo theme and logo color:**

The factor analysis on 16 items measuring effect of logo and taglines on Destination Brand Awareness was carried out using Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization and principal component analysis. These 16 items were initially grouped under five different components. The value of KMO's test is 0.573. Barlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $p < 0.00$ ). Accordingly two items were omitted. Factor loading 1,2,3,4, and 5 were renamed by researchers as specific Logo awareness, Logo Difference, logo credibility, logo theme and logo color representatively. The factor analysis on sixteen items measuring effect of taglines and logo on Destination image were grouped under five different components i.e. logo awareness, Logo Difference, logo credibility, logo theme and logo color.

However when asked about the awareness regarding Silk Route destinations 64% of the tourists were unaware or have not heard about the Silk Route and only 36% were estimated to be aware about Silk Route. Also the results are supported by their willingness to visit the Silk Route as a complete package if offered.

**Results**

It was revealed from the study that 165 of the sample are males and 51 are females. The maximum respondents were from the age group of 40-65 years while 42 were below 20-35 years.

**Hypothesis:** Demographic profile (Gender and Age) of stakeholders at a destination towards logo and taglines is having a significant impact on destination awareness.

**Table 6:** T-test for Hypothesis

	Logo and Taglines		
	Male	Female	t-test
<b>Destination Awareness</b>	3.65	3.71	0.63

Table 6 represents the t-test for Demographic profile (gender) of the respondents. Since the calculated value of t (0.6393) for gender is less than the table value (1.96), the hypothesis that there is a significant impact on destination awareness due to demographic profile of stakeholders towards logo and taglines on the basis of their gender this hypothesis is accepted.

**Table 7:** ANOVA represents significant difference in Age.

Source of Variation	Sum of Square	Degree of Freedom	Mean sequence	F- Value
Between Rows (Destination Image)	0.0837	2	0.0418	4.7434
Between Column (Age)	0.217	1	0.2170	24.599
Residual	0.0176	2	0.0088	
Total	0.3184	5		

According to two way ANOVA analysis there is a difference in the destination awareness according to age ( $p=0.3449 > 0.05$ ). Hence on the basis of above discussions we can say that our first hypothesis (H1) stands accepted.

## Conclusion and Suggestions

Being studied as an initial step towards the destination brand awareness logos and tagline, their significance should also be studied in branding the Silk Route. This study discusses the impact of logos on Silk Route recognition and how they may help to promote it as a complete brand. Even researchers have supported the criteria of marketing the destinations through the usage of logos and taglines that reveals the essence of destination to the tourists. In terms of Silk route that needs a significant approach towards the marketing strategy, designing the logos and taglines may help to reveal its identity and image in the tourism market as distinctiveness makes it easier for the consumer to remember the details of a brand as it is more noticeable (Gaillard et al, 2005). Also the result is supported by the data with the awareness level of the tourists as well as the Stakeholders available at these destinations. Tourists who visit the destinations like Buddhist sites in (U.P), Harwan (Kashmir, J&K) are not aware about the linkage of these destinations with Silk Route. Defining the managerial implications of the study, results have depicted the differences in demographic profiles also has a significant impact on destination awareness. Hence the authorities should give a due consideration to the demography of the tourists and DMOs while designing and creating a logo and taglines for the Silk Route. In additions to this, destination authorities are focusing to adopt market perspectives towards the promotion of induced destinations of Silk Route but the need to communicate effectively, so as to increase its credibility in tourism business.

Promoting Silk route not only help to create awareness of the destination but also may help to review the trade and tourism concept in a contemporary form offering tourists a variety of choices from religious tourism to adventure tourism. Thus, promoting the Silk Route as a complete brand by the initiating or creating logos and taglines stands to an “initiative to bring together a variety of activities and attractions under a unified theme and thus stimulate entrepreneurial opportunity through the development of ancillary products and services” (Greffé, 1994).

## Limitations of the Study

The present study is based on the impact of logos and taglines in creating awareness of Silk route as a destination. The data collection was collected in the month of November 2013. Hence the primary limitation is time frame. Then the DMOs available at Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh, India have been approached as respondents, so geographical constraint also exists. The future researcher can take further step in this study by eradicating the above mentioned constraints and other dimensions which could help in promoting the Indian Silk Route.

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## Corporate Growth Strategies of Successful Indian Hotel Companies

Saurabh Kumar Dixit

### Abstract

Indian hospitality sector falls within the spectrum of travel and tourism which is estimated to contribute between 8-9% towards India's GDP. According to the estimates of World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the direct and indirect contribution of travel and tourism to GDP is expected to grow consistently in the next decade. According to a report by HVS and The World Travel and Tourism Council, the travel industry in India is expected to reach 1,747 million travelers by 2021, which will require 1,88,500 additional hotel rooms. Growth opportunities in travel & tourism cannot be realized without the development of the hospitality sector.

Every hotel group wants to improve its corporate performance for its development, yet it appears that few strategic moves results in balanced, sustainable growth. Therefore, the present paper explores the study of corporate growth strategies adopted by the top three Indian hotel companies i.e. Indian Hotels (TATA group), ITC and EIH Limited (Oberoi). Through the website and other secondary sources, the author found the essential elements of their strategies were innovative positioning, keeping cost low, rapid expansion, continuous innovation, focus on quality consistency, extensive training. Implications for future for research and practices are also discussed.

Therefore, the present paper is an effort to analyze the corporate growth strategies followed in the identified hotel chains and which differentiates them from their other counterparts.

**Keywords:** *Corporate strategy, Hotel Growth, Sustainable Growth, Indian Hospitality Industry.*

### Introduction

In order to sustain itself in the fiercely competitive global environment, any organization has to achieve certain level of growth. Companies, which do not quickly adapt to the changing market conditions, may end up losing market share and their competitive advantages to competitors. Growth opportunities in travel & tourism cannot be realized without the development of the hospitality sector. India presently has an estimated 114,000 hotel rooms spread across various hotel categories. This is around 150,000 rooms short from what is required. While the opportunities are immense, there are also challenges associated with it. This is leading towards a growing need for quality hotel rooms.

According to a report by HVS and The World Travel and Tourism Council, the travel industry in India is expected to reach 1,747 million travellers by 2021, which will require 1,88,500 additional hotel rooms. Mid-market hotels will be the driving force because they usually have more rooms per hotel than a five star or luxury hotel and can be built faster and more cost-effectively in multiple micro-markets as well as in most tier I, II and III cities, the report said.

The traditional form of hotel industry consisting of small hotels individually owned is changing every day and is starting to resemble the form of other industries where large companies increase their share on the market. These companies in the accommodation industry are most often called hotel chains. "A hotel chain implies establishing a business system from a number of objects under the same name, which function in the narrower and wider business environment' (Kosar L, 2002).

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Associate Professor and Head, Department of Tourism & Hotel Management, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong (Meghalaya), India, **Email:** saurabh5sk@yahoo.com, saurabhdixit@nehu.ac.in



Present study investigated the growth strategies of hotel companies that want to expand themselves. Hotel Companies operating on a national level only, have found many new market entrants arriving in their competitive environment. Due to the growing importance of services in economic development, there is an impressive body of knowledge on the process of internationalization and service industries. Due to the major changes impacting upon the industry due to the effects of technology and globalization, it would be useful to establish the important key factors and processes involved during internationalization. Growth and Development for a hotel group signifies a number of challenges that must be focused on at the same time.

This all adds pressure on the local demand and supply system. Oversupply is becoming a reality in certain areas of the country. Geography no longer stands in the way of a growing hotel company's aspirations but at the same time it also no longer serves as a barrier to protect the local market share. Travelers have also become more educated and are continuously scanning the environment for the best value proposition. Hotel Companies are thus becoming increasingly vulnerable to losing market share to competitors. One solution to enable the increase in size and turnover of the hotel organization is to expand aggressively, not only locally, but also into international markets. Growth and Development for businesses has become crucial to assist in the expansion of hotel companies. The global context to business has created a borderless and boundary free world. Services are not easily reproducible across national borders, and therefore not easy to internationalize (Segal-Horn, 1990). Various hotel groups have ventured into the foreign landscape with various degrees of success and failures. This study is an effort to evaluate the various growth strategies adopted by the players of hotel industry.

Overlooking the corporate strategies within the hospitality industry over the past decade, it is clearly noticeable that major hotel companies (e.g. Accor, Marriott, InterContinental, Hilton) have transformed from an 'asset-heavy' towards an 'asset-light' approach to remain competitive. The split between hotel real estate ownership and hotel operation has been an efficient way to lighten the balance sheet and to unlock capital to finance corporate growth. Hotel companies have been aware that higher returns on their capital can be achieved by expanding their core business activities. At the same time investors recognize hotels as an interesting asset class and they are developing an increasing understanding of the hotel operation including the selection of operators and brands.

### **Hospitality Industry in India: An Overview**

The Indian hospitality industry has emerged as one of the key service industries driving growth in India. It has recorded healthy growth fuelled by robust inflow of international tourists as well as increased domestic tourists. The total tourist visits in India have been growing at a steady rate of about 16 per cent over the past five years. According to the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2013, India ranks 11th in the Asia Pacific region and 65th globally out of 140 economies ranked on Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (WWTC, 2014). Foreign exchange earnings (FEE) during January–December 2013 stood at US\$ 18.133 billion as compared to FEEs of US\$ 17.737 billion during 2012, registering a growth of 2.2 per cent. Further, with a share of 1.65% in the world's tourism receipts, India holds the 16th rank. Within Asia & Pacific Region, India's rank stands at the 7th position.

The Hotel industry universally is sensitive to economic cycles and does face its troughs as well as highs based on the supply and demand of rooms at any point. Specific India issues like poor

infrastructure, high cost of land procurement and multiple licenses as well as levies accentuates the challenge of development. India, presently coming from a period of high growth, has hit a low point with persistent high inflation, high interest rates and policy paralysis in the government leading to reduced growth prospects. In addition, major developed economies like US, UK and Euro zone which have been our major inbound customers in the past, have either decelerated or have had no growth which could lead to reduced travel. On the positive side though, domestic tourism in India has come of age with better connectivity and is likely to counter any downfall in the international tourist arrivals. However, the increased domestic demand rides on the back of different consumer choices and the future investment plans by the global and domestic players will have to take into account these evolving choices.

**Characteristics of Indian Hospitality Industry are:**

- (a) **High Seasonality:** a high demand during October–April, followed with the monsoon months entail low demand. Usually the December and March quarters bring in 60% of the year’s turnover for India’s hoteliers. However, this trend seems to be changed over the last years.
- (b) **Labor Intensive:** In India, the average employee-to-room ratio at 1.6 is much higher than that for hotels across the world. The ratio stands at 1.7 for five-star hotels and at 1.9 and 1.6 for the four-star and three-star categories respectively.
- (c) **Fragmentation:** it is highly fragmented with a large number of small and unorganized units. These are guest houses and B&B, particularly in budget segment, which are primarily operated by Indians. There are about 16 listed hotel groups in the mid-segment and in luxury segment there are about 11 long-standing companies such as ITC Hotels, Asian Hotels, The Oberoi Group of Hotels, Hotel Leela Ventures, ITDC, Indian Hotels, The Park Hotels and international players like Hilton Hotels, Marriott International, Le Méridien, and Radisson.

Hotels in India can be classified, according to a voluntary scheme, into two categories:

- (i) **Classified Hotels:** Hotels are classified based on their facilities and services, Star hotels, Heritage hotels (grand, classic and basic), and Licensed units (service apartments, timesharing resorts, and bed & breakfast);
- (ii) **Unclassified hotels:** branded budget hotels and other smaller units (small hotels, motels and lodges that are spread across the country).

**Table 1:** Number of Approved Hotels (Units and Rooms, 2012)

Category of Hotels	Hotel Units	Hotel Rooms
One Star	122	3,057
Two Star	177	4,926
Three Star	694	29,697
Four Star	110	8,229
Five Star	76	8,563
Five Star Deluxe	92	18,509
Apartment Hotels	4	302
Time Share Resorts	1	31
Heritage Hotels	60	1,807
Bed & Breakfast (B&B)	22	87
Unclassified	18	1,359
Total	1,376	76,567

Source: *Tourism Statistics 2012, Ministry of Tourism, India*

### Growth and Development of Hotel Companies in India

The Indian hospitality industry has been growing at a cumulative annual growth rate of 14 percent every year. A major trend in recent times is the development of the hotel industry in cities other than major metros, such as Hyderabad, Pune, and Jaipur. This has led to increase in hotel development activity and expansion of hotel brands within the country. With 740 million domestic travellers (in 2011) and over 6.3 million FTAs, India, after China, is considered one of the most lucrative hotel markets in the world and has the second largest construction pipeline in Asia. Growing affluence and the increasing role India is expected to play in the global economy are likely to drive both leisure and business travel in the coming years. For most global hotel companies a significant part of their hotel pipeline is centred on faster growing developing markets like India. India has an estimated 1, 70,000 hotel rooms of which around 60,000 are branded. Even with the expected addition of another 60,000 hotel rooms (across segments) over the next three to five years, the industry is expected to fall short of meeting the long term demands of an economy growing at 7-9% p.a. India has often been cited as one of the most lucrative albeit difficult markets. India houses all the big global hotel groups (top ten hotel companies listed in the table 2 below). Of the top twenty global brands (in terms of number of hotels), around 18 brands are already present in India.

From the perspective of the Indian property owner/developer, particularly with a number of first time hotel developers entering the market, the association with a strong management partner from the planning stages is imperative. A brand tie up in the early planning stages provides clear cut plans for infrastructural requirements. Further, for an inexperienced developer, the presence of a partnering hotel operator provides experience and a global distribution reach and customer base. Some of the recent announcements by global hotel companies for their planned expansion plans in India are presented in the table below (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Expansion plans for global hotel companies in India

Hotel Group	Brands in India	Hotels	Planned Hotels	Partners for India
Intercontinental Hotels	Holiday Inn, Crowne Plaza, Intercontinental	12	~150 by 2020	Deut Hotels (with equity infusion), Nama Hotels
Wyndham Hotels	Ramada, Days Inn, Dream	14	~70 by 2017	Chatwal group, non-exclusive development agreement with Unique Mercantile India Ltd.
Marriott International	Courtyard, Renaissance, JW Marriott, Marriott	18	~100 by 2015	SAMHI Hotels Private Ltd
Hilton Worldwide	Hilton Hotels & Resorts, Hilton Garden Inn, Double Tree, Hampton	8	~50 by 2016	Eros Resorts & Hotels
Accor Group	Pullman, Ibis, Mercure and Novotel	13	~100 by 2015	Exclusive agreement with Interglobe Enterprises Ltd for Ibis properties. Formule 1 properties to be equity owned
Choice Hotels International	Quality, Comfort, Clarion	27	~100 by 2020	Royal Indian Raj International Corporation

Best Western international	Best Western, Best Western Plus	34	~66 by 2017	Consortium
Starwood Hotels	ITC luxury Collections, Le Meridian, Westin, Four Points by Sheraton, Sheraton Hotels & Resorts, Aloft	33	~50-60 by 2015	Non-Exclusive Master Agreement with DIH (Cyprus) Ltd (an affiliate of Duet India Hotels Ltd.) and JHM Interstate Hotels India Ltd, Jaguar Buildcon Ltd
Carlson group	Radisson Blu, Country Inn & Suites, Park Inn, Park Plaza	46	100 hotels by 2015	Country Development and Management Services (CDMS), a joint venture between Carlson and Chanakya Hotels; Real estate firm Pioneer Urban Land and Infrastructure
Hyatt Hotels Corporation	Hyatt Regency, Grand Hyatt, Park Hyatt	8	~50	N/A

Source: Industry and ICRA Estimates

Form the above it seems that the main trends are:

- (i) Over 50% of the incremental supply (around 60,000 rooms) is coming under midmarket brands (Aloft, Holiday Inns, Quality Inns, Ramada); and
- (ii) The super luxury segment is emerging (e.g. St. Regis by Starwood, Mandarin Oriental, Lebuva, MGM and Jumeriah).

Marketing strategies in the hospitality industry have changed drastically over the past decade. A decade back, the hotel brand was a major driver. However, with the advent of well-educated and experienced tourists, hotel companies have had to change/realign their marketing strategies. Today, hotel companies marketing strategies are differentiation, consistency, customer satisfaction and retention. Technological developments have also changed the way hotel companies operate, resulting in a need for digital marketing. Blogs, social media networking sites, and travel sites are increasingly used in travel and holiday planning, online information and reviews tend to influence opinions and choices.

### **Strategic Considerations for Growth among Hotel Companies**

There are several objectives, which entail a hotel company to adopt different strategies for the growth of their business. Some of these objectives include increase in sales revenue, increase in market share and other financial and non-financial benefits. To achieve that certain level of growth, companies adopt several strategies. Some of the broad categories of growth strategies include diversification, vertical integration, horizontal integration, concentration and international growth strategies.

In order to implement proper growth strategy in hotel companies markets need to be identified, political stability needs to be scanned and cultural differences must be taken into consideration. Logistics and supply chain have to be developed together with operational issues from financial reporting, marketing and human resources. Organizational structures must be adapted to take into account the new levels of responsibility.

In order to implement strategy successfully it is important to co-ordinate with all the functional departments according to growth strategies. One of the more important conditions for the implementation to succeed is that sufficient managers are committed to the hotel company's business development and that they are prepared to work to ensure the success of the strategy. This emphasizes the need for senior management to move the organization forward and still ensuring a sufficient match with their internal context. Hamel and Prahalad (1994) suggest that senior hospitality managers will need to balance the tensions between change and continuity.

Regardless of the selected strategy, the detail and co-ordination of each function will vary and must be carefully configured and managed. It is important to understand that the existing knowledge and procedures of executing tasks might vary considerably in the new market. A third party such as a joint venture partner can offer local insights and accelerate the expansion process with fewer complications. Ellis and Williams (1995) elaborated in short on the functional areas and suggests the following strategies for the growth of hotel chain:

### ***Marketing Strategies***

The company's product must be carefully matched to the customers' needs and the following key elements form part of an appropriate marketing strategy:

- Determining the promotion and communication strategy – recognizing and balancing the effectiveness of alternative media within the budgeted resources available.
- The developing of pricing strategy and structures, reflecting local demand, costs, competition and product positioning.
- The extent to which new or existing brands can be promoted.
- The initial target market to be focused on.
- Successful branding strategies (Thomas, 1986).

### ***Human Resources Strategies***

This functional department is central to the success of any strategy and must ensure that staff at all levels are committed to the entry strategy and are prepared to commit fully to its success. The following can assist in ensuring an effective human resources strategy:

- The recruitment of skilled personnel and development of the existing management and workforce;
- Appropriate training such as language training, international selling skills and cultural awareness programmes;
- The adjustment of personnel policies and procedures to accommodate local employment laws.

Human resources are central to achieving global competitive advantage so they must be managed strategically by ensuring that an organization has a human resources management strategy which is fully integrated with its expansion strategy (Stonehouse et al, 2000).

### ***Operations Strategies:***

Focus needs to be placed on the extent of the product adaptation for the chosen market. More specifically the company must manage its operations to ensure that:

- International development must meet local specification, legal or otherwise:
- Focus on the international operations and continue to ensure the local demands are met;
- The setting of standards;

- The development and implementation of policies and standards;
- The comparison of actual performance measures to planned performance measures.

A company that expands internationally must not only support the company's strategy; it must produce behavior and flexibility by subsidiary managers to manage within various host country environments (Chan and Mauborge, 1993).

### ***Logistics Strategies***

For the hotel industry the decisions on logistics in its initial phases of development is important until such time as local markets can assist with the following:

- Procurement, distribution and supply chain management;
- Development of support systems and management information system. With the internet these functions have been simplified through technology (Stonehouse et al, 2000).

### ***Finance Strategies***

The finance function will need to manage any initial and ongoing investment costs associated with establishing the international operation; determine the basis on which income from cross border sales is remitted back to the company. Ensure appropriate arrangement is in place for all banking and financial transfer and capital needs. Some key components to the financial strategy include:

- How the international operation is going to be funded;
- Establishing budgets for the international operation bearing in mind fluctuations of currencies and pricing parity;
- An arrangement for translating sales of the foreign currency into the organization's reporting currency;
- Terms and contracts for debtors;
- Management of bad debts and credit control according to the company's financial policies (Stonehouse et al, 2000).

The functional areas and guidelines are not exhaustive but rather highlight a few of the complexities that need to be planned and structured before the international development and entry strategies are entered into. This is one of the reasons that so many company's find cross border expansion difficult and very demanding. By aligning the functional departments the chances of success becomes a reality.

### ***Holistic Global Strategies***

A global mindset and a holistic global strategy should create conditions to build the worldwide organization, characterized by specialization, interdependency, and coordination. A global outlook is a process of moving an organization's structure, process, people, and culture from a set of highly autonomous business units to one that becomes an integrated and effective global network (Gupta, et al. 2008).

Why are some companies highly successful in spotting and exploiting global opportunities, while others mismanage them or miss them entirely? "For companies operating on a global scale, developing a global corporate mindset presents a formidable managerial challenge. The corporate mindset determines to what extent management encourages and values cultural diversity, while simultaneously maintaining a certain degree of strategic cohesion. Developing a

global corporate mindset and a group of global managers as its main flag bearers has become a key prerequisite for successfully competing and growing in worldwide markets” (Kedia and Mukherji, 1999).

### **Case Studies of Indian Hotel Groups**

The key players in the Indian luxury hotel industry include ITC Hotels, Asian Hotels, The Oberoi Group of Hotels, Hotel Leela Ventures, ITDC, Indian Hotels, The Park Hotels, Hilton Hotels, Marriott International, Le Meridian, and Radisson.

#### ***Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL)***

The Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) and its subsidiaries are collectively known as Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces and are recognized as one of Asia's largest and finest hotel companies. Incorporated by the founder of the Tata Group, Mr. Jamsedji N. Tata, the company opened its first property, The Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, Bombay in 1903. The Taj, a symbol of Indian hospitality, completed its centenary year in 2003. Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces comprise 93 hotels in 55 locations across India with an additional 16 international hotels in the Maldives, Malaysia, Australia, UK, USA, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Africa and the Middle East. The Indian Hotels Company Ltd is a subsidiary of Tata Sons Ltd. It is mostly promoter driven with promoters contributing the largest part of the shareholding. Mr. Raymond Bickson is the Managing Director & CEO of the company.

Spanning the length and breadth of the country, gracing important industrial towns and cities, beaches, hill stations, historical and pilgrim centres and wildlife destinations, each Taj hotel offers the luxury of service, the apogee of Indian hospitality, vantage locations, modern amenities and business facilities. IHCL operate in the luxury, premium, mid-market and value segments of the market through the following:

**Taj hotels, resorts and palaces** are flagship brand for the world's most discerning travelers seeking authentic experiences given that luxury is a way of life to which they are accustomed. Spanning world-renowned landmarks, modern business hotels, idyllic beach resorts, authentic Rajput palaces and rustic safari lodges, each Taj hotel reinterprets the tradition of hospitality in a refreshingly modern way to create unique experiences and lifelong memories.

Taj also encompasses a unique set of iconic properties rooted in history and tradition that deliver truly unforgettable experiences. A collection of outstanding properties with strong heritage as hotels or palaces which offer something more than great physical product and exceptional service. This group is defined by the emotional and unique equity of its iconic properties that are authentic, non- replicable with great potential to create memories and stories.

**Taj Exotica** are resort and spa brand found in the most exotic and relaxing locales of the world. The properties are defined by the privacy and intimacy they provide. The hotels are clearly differentiated by their product philosophy and service design. They are high end accommodation, intimacy and an environment that allows its guest unrivalled comfort and privacy. They are defined by a sensibility of intimate design and by their varied and eclectic culinary experiences, impeccable service and authentic Indian Spa sanctuaries.

**Taj Safaris** are wildlife lodges that allow travelers to experience the unparalleled beauty of the Indian jungle amidst luxurious surroundings. They offer India's first and only wildlife luxury

lodge circuit. Taj Safaris provide guests with the ultimate, interpretive, wild life experience based on a proven sustainable ecotourism model.

**Vivanta by Taj Hotels & Resorts** - Hailed by Wallpaper UK as a "stroke of genius" and rated by Conde Nast Traveler US as the 3rd best global hotel brand Vivanta by Taj offers an imaginative, vivacious and stylish take on 'cool luxury'. Work hard and play hard. Relax and energize. Ideate and confer. Evolve and transform. Revel in a spirit that presents the normal with an unexpected twist. Stylish and sophisticated, Vivanta by Taj delivers experiences with imagination, energy and efficiency. Currently comprised of 29 hotels and resorts in India and the Indian Ocean region, Vivanta by Taj is represented across key metropolitan capitals as well as popular vacation destinations like Goa, Kerala, Rajasthan, Coorg, Langkawi, Bentota and the Maldives. With innovative cuisine, energetic spaces, unique motifs, distinct avatars, the smart use of technology and experiences that seek to constantly engage, invigorate and relax, it appeals to the cosmopolitan world-traveler immersed in a sensory lifestyle. Stay connected to Vivanta by Taj Hotels & Resorts

**The Gateway Hotel** is a full service upscale hospitality brand in the South Asia region. Designed for the modern nomad, Gateway provides consistent, courteous and crisp service for business and leisure travelers seeking contemporary and refreshing experiences. Keeping in mind those looking for comfort, familiarity and flexibility, the hotels & resorts are divided into 8 zones – Enter, Stay, Hangout, Meet, Work, Workout, Unwind and Explore. 24/7 services such as 24/7 breakfast, 24/7 'active studio' and 24/7 laundry are all designed to cater to guests round-the-clock. Gateway provides welcome perfection through an unrivalled network and innovative cuisine offerings like 'active food' – super foods and low glycemic index foods for the health conscious; regional home-style cuisine; 'eat-in' – refreshed in-room dining menus and 'wake up' - buffet breakfasts with a range of healthy and indulgent options. Flexible, dynamic and warm service, 'in-room yoga' amenities and 'explore' packages all make The Gateway Hotels & Resorts sanctuaries that refresh, refuel and renew. Stay connected to The Gateway Hotels & Resorts

**Ginger (economy hotels)** is IHCL's revolutionary concept in hospitality for the value segment. Intelligently designed facilities, consistency and affordability are hallmarks of this brand targeted at travelers who value simplicity and self-service.

Throughout the Company's expansion, its mandate has been twofold: to infuse a sense of Indian heritage and culture within each diverse property, while also anticipating the needs and desires of the sophisticated traveler. Over the years, the Taj has won international acclaim for its quality hotels and its excellence in business facilities, services, cuisine and interiors. Taj Hotels further expanded its global footprint by securing management contracts at Palm Island, Jumeirah in Dubai, Saraya Islands in Ras Al Khaimah, Aldar Group in Abu Dhabi, UAE Langkawi in Malaysia and Thimpu in Bhutan. The most significant additions to the portfolio have been The Pierre, the iconic landmark hotel on New York's Fifth Avenue, Taj Boston and Blue, Sydney. The presence of Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces internationally has been developed through a network of Taj regional sales and PR offices in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Dubai, Singapore, Australia, Japan, Russia and the United States of America.

IHCL operates Taj Air, a luxury private jet operation with state-of-the-art Falcon 2000 aircrafts designed by Dassault Aviation, France; and Taj Yachts, two 3-bedroom luxury yachts which can be used by guests in Mumbai and Kochi, in Kerala. IHCL also operates Taj SATS Air Catering



Ltd., the largest airline catering service in South Asia, as a joint venture with SATS (formerly known as Singapore Airport Terminal Services). Additionally, it operates the **Indian Institute of Hotel Management, Aurangabad** since 1993. The institute offers a Four-year diploma, designed with the help of international faculty and has affiliations with several American and European programmes.

### ***EIH Ltd. (The Oberoi Group of Hotels)***

The Oberoi Group, founded in 1934, operates 30 hotels, a Nile Cruiser and a Motor Vessel in the backwaters of Kerala. The Group has presence in six countries under the luxury 'Oberoi' and five-star 'Trident' brand. The Group is also engaged in flight catering, airport restaurants, travel and tour services, car rentals, project management and corporate air charters. A distinctive feature of The Group's hotels is their highly motivated and well trained staffs who provide exceptionally attentive, personalized and warm service. The Group's luxury hotels have established a reputation for redefining the paradigm of luxury and excellence in service amongst leisure hotels around the world.

Trident hotels are five-star hotels that have established a reputation for excellence and are acknowledged for offering quality and value. These hotels combine state of the art facilities with dependable service in a caring environment, presenting the ideal choice for business and leisure travelers. At present there are nine Trident hotels in India. These are located in Mumbai at Bandra Kurla and Nariman Point, Gurgaon (Delhi NCR), Chennai, Bhubaneswar, Cochin, Agra, Jaipur and Udaipur. The Oberoi Group also operates a Trident hotel in the Jeddah, Saudi Arab.

The last decade has witnessed the debut of new luxury Oberoi leisure hotels in India and abroad. In India, these hotels include The Oberoi Rajvilas, Jaipur; The Oberoi Amarvilas, Agra; Wildflower Hall, Shimla in the Himalayas; The Oberoi Vanyavilas, Ranthambhore; The Oberoi Cecil, Shimla and The Oberoi Udaivilas, Udaipur. Overseas, the new hotels include The Oberoi, Lombok in Indonesia, The Oberoi, Mauritius and The Oberoi, Sahl Hasheesh in Egypt. The Oberoi Zahra, Luxury Nile Cruiser, Egypt was launched in 2007. The Group's commitment to excellence, attention to detail and personalized service has ensured a loyal list of guests and accolades in the worldwide hospitality industry.

Recognizing the importance of quality training in hospitality management, The Oberoi Group established the **Oberoi Centre of Learning and Development** in New Delhi in 1966. Today, this institution is considered amongst the best in Asia with approximately 100 students graduating each year. The Oberoi Group is committed to employing the best environmental and ecological practices in technology, equipment and operational processes. The Group also supports philanthropic activities that range from education to assistance for the mentally and physically challenged. The Group is also a keen contributor to the conservation of nature and of cultural heritage.

### ***ITC Group of Hotels***

ITC Forayed into the Hotels business to support the national priority of developing new avenues of foreign exchange earnings and boosting tourism. Beginning with the Sheraton Chola, Chennai in 1975, ITC's journey in this business has redefined the face of Indian hospitality. Today, ITC Hotels is one of largest hotel chains in the Country with over 90 hotels in more than 70 destinations. Symbolized by its distinctive 'Namaste' logo, ITC Hotels integrated India's fine

tradition of hospitality with globally benchmarked services. With a string of firsts to its credit, ITC Hotels pioneered the concepts of branded accommodation, branded cuisine, environment and guest safety. ITC Hotels is an exemplar in sustainable hospitality with all its premium hotels being LEED® Platinum certified. As one of India's premier corporations, ITC Hotels' seeks to fulfill a larger role by enlarging its contribution to the society of which it is a part. The trusteeship role related to social and environmental resources, aligned to the pursuit of economic objectives, is the cornerstone of its Environment, Health & Safety philosophy for which it has won many awards and accolades. At any ITC Hotel you will find a true reflection of culture and ethos of each destination and One Common Legacy – Warmth.

As one of India's most dynamic hospitality chains, ITC Hotels has set standards for excellence in the hotel industry by pioneering the concept of branded accommodation. The chain has developed brands of accommodation and offers differentiated service designs based on the needs of various customer segments. It has strategically customized its hotels and appropriately categorized them to fulfill the service and budgetary needs of travelers. Also, it has a long standing tie-up with Starwood Hotels for its top of the line premium brand, the 'Luxury Collection' for ten of its hotels as also with the "Sheraton" brand for 2 of its hotels.

**The Luxury Collection** are super deluxe and premium hotels located at strategic business and leisure locations. The association of ITC Hotels & the Luxury Collection presents a unique set of hotels in a bouquet of enriching experiences that celebrate the spirit & distinctive character of each destination. Ten exceptional hotels bring you the architectural grandeur of ancient dynasties and the cultural ethos of different regions of the Indian peninsula.

**WelcomHotel**, Sheraton Synonymous with customer centricity and efficiency, 2 exquisite ITC Hotels have been aligned under the renowned Sheraton brand, offering warm, comforting services to the global traveler. Designed to cater to the discerning business and leisure traveler offering five-star hospitality, WelcomHotels are a haven for personalized services that make every visit memorable.

**Fortune Hotels**, located across India including smaller towns and cities, Fortune Hotels is one of the leading first-class, full service business hotel chains in India catering to the mid-market to upscale segment in business and leisure destinations. In keeping with the demand for hotels providing quality at affordable rates, these hotels offer multiple brand extensions to cater to various segments.

**WelcomHeritage Hotels** brings together a chain of palaces, forts, havelis and resorts that offer a unique experience. Born out of a deep commitment to preserve tradition and heritage, it brings to life the opulence and historical grandeur of ancient havelis and palaces. ITC Hotels has pioneered the concept of "**Branded Accommodation**" in the hospitality industry. Branding led to the creation of separate categories of rooms, each with a different service design, aimed at different target segments. The different room categories were branded **Executive Club**, **The Towers** and lately, **ITC One**. The Towers and ITC One introduced the winning concept of a '**hotel within a hotel**'. The Indian corporate world gave its unqualified approval to this segmentation

## Conclusion

Economic globalization, readily available markets, traffic development and advancements in information and other technologies have all caused an increase in the number of tourist, business and other kinds of trips, thus deeply influencing the transformation of hotel business. One of the most important transformations and one of the most important characteristics of business dealings in hotel enterprises is included in business integrations and connections as well as territorial expansion. According to the ICRA Indian Tourism Industry Analysis report – India's tourism and hospitality sector market shows the most potential in the world. The Indian hospitality sector is expected to grow at the rate of 8% between 2007 and 2017. The hotel companies should fully utilize established infrastructure by increasing their Occupancy Percentage. Their brand image as well as presence abroad marketing should be leveraged. The expansion plans of the hotel companies should be centered on upcoming tourist spots as well as commercial hotspots. Reduce Operating expenses by borrowing other firms more efficient strategies. The Companies should analyze its' competitors practices in an attempt to reduce its' overall operating expense margin. Hotels should speed up the implementation of the use of the Balance score card, as done by The Leela which records its performance along the parameters of financial growth, guest satisfaction, strong internal processes, employee satisfaction and training. The operational efficiency of the company is driven by the implementation of the Balance Score Card.

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## Hospitality Crisis Management and Recovery: Comparison of India and USA

Bhupesh Kumar<sup>1</sup> & Manohar Sajnani<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

This study compares and examines hospitality crisis management practices and recovery within the context of Luxury hotels in India and USA. This study is based on previously conducted studies post terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 in WTC, New York and Washington DC, USA and November 26, 2008 in Mumbai, India. The study compares the crisis management in four different areas: Marketing, Human Resources and Government assistance. The study also examines how hospitality managers in both the places responded to the crisis i.e. 9/11 and 11/26 and conducted recovery efforts. The findings illustrate which practices and actions differentiated both the cases in Crisis recovery. The paper concludes with recommendations that can be emulated by other hospitality sectors (in various tourism destinations) when facing unpredictable crisis.

**Keyword:** *hospitality, crisis management, crisis recovery, multi-attribute decision making*

### Introduction

Countries throughout the world derive a large part of the Gross National Product from tourism and hospitality industries. Unfortunately, current times impose some threats on these industries. One of the most significant of these threats is terror, which was experienced at diverse levels and intensity by different countries. For example, the Israeli hospitality and tourism industry historically has been subjected to cycles of various war and terror related crisis. The crisis provides an opportunity to study crisis through a case example. The Indian tourism and hotel industry had been enjoying a period of rapid growth, until the terror attacks in Mumbai involving two luxury hotels on November 26, 2008. The attacks brought down hotel occupancy to 30% for several weeks. Round-the-clock media coverage of the attacks added to the negative publicity worldwide. The incident proved that Indian Hotels were not prepared to handle such a crisis. This study employs the findings of previous studies: For the U.S. Hospitality industry (Stafford et.al, 2002), and for the Indian hospitality industry (Israeli, Mohsin and Kumar, 2011), (Mukherjee & Gonela, 2010), (Balakrishnan, 2011), (Nayak & Krepon, 2012).

Crisis, like terrorism, are one-off events with five characteristics (1) the onset of the event is sudden; (2) it is not easily predictable; (3) there is a high potential for loss and threat to survival; (4) the decision time for actions is short; and (5) it has a ripple effect on the brand, organization, industry, customer, community and place (Keown-McMullan, 1997; Mendonça et al., 2009). The impact of a crisis is magnified through – traditional, social media and citizen journalism (Smallman and Weir, 1999). The impact of a terrorist risk leads to a drop in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of up to 5% of GDP (Abadie and Gardeazabal, 2007) affecting the competitive advantage of the industry and place (Day et al., 2004).

“On November 26, 2008, several men armed with hand grenades, automatic weapons, and satellite phones landed in a rubber raft on the shores of Mumbai. They scattered to soft targets across the city, launched simultaneous attacks that held India’s financial capital under siege for days, and killed more than 170 individuals, including six American citizens.” James W. McJunkin, Deputy Assistant Director, Counterterrorism Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2009. (Nayak & Krepon, 2012)

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1. Assistant Professor, Banarsidas Chandiwala Institute of Hotel Management & Catering Technology, GGSIP University, New Delhi, *Email:professor7@rediffmail.com*

2. Dean, Faculty of Hospitality & Tourism; Director, Amity Institute of Travel & Tourism, Amity University, India

These events in Mumbai are referred to in India as “26/11”—an Indian analog to the 9/11 attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. This case study is the first detailed account of US crisis management after the 2001 Washington D.C. attack and Indian crisis management after 2008 Mumbai attacks. The crisis is both unresolved and unfinished, and that further attacks in India by militants trained in Pakistan are likely. Although, the circumstances, targets, and venues of attacks may differ significantly in future. (Nayak & Krepon, 2012) The analysis and conclusions of this research might help inform Indian planning for and management of resultant crisis in future. The following discussions in the paper examines how hospitality managers in Washington, D.C. and Mumbai responded to the crisis 9/11 and 26/11 respectively and conducted recovery efforts.

### **Types of Business Crisis**

Managers of business operations may encounter various types of crisis. Broadly speaking, crisis may be divided into two overall types, namely, those that arise externally (external factor) and those that are self-inflicted (internal factor). Crisis can be divided into the three broad categories, namely, Physical environment, Social environment and management failure and seven specific categories. (Lerbinger, 1997) The seven specific categories are natural disaster, technology failure, confrontation, malevolence, skewed values, deception and misconduct.

#### ***External Factors***

***Physical environment:*** Natural disasters like earthquake damage a hotel property and volcano eruption scares away tourists etc. Technology failure, for example, is crisis of oil spill contaminating a beach resort and prevents tourists from visiting the resort.

***Social environment:*** Confrontation and malevolence are crisis of the human and social environment. Labor-union strikes and boycotts of products and services are some commonly used confrontation tactics that may cause a business crisis. Crisis of malevolence refer to the criminal acts or extreme tactics used by individuals or groups against a business organization or an entire industry like introducing a virus into computer reservation systems. Malevolent acts include product tampering, extortion, corporate espionage, and terrorism. These extreme measures aim to destroy a company's business or a country's economic system. (Stafford et. al., 2002)

#### ***Internal factors***

***Management failures:*** Crisis generated by management failures arise as a result of skewed values, deception, and misconduct. For example, Cruise ships dump waste oil into the ocean for short term cost saving over concern for environment can be treated as skewed values, Restaurant knowingly serving contaminated dishes over the concern for food poisoning is a deception and Misconduct can be best illustrated by the General Manager embezzling funds and receiving kickbacks. Unreasonable financial expectations and failures of corporate governance are often at the root of these unethical or sometimes criminal actions of corporate leaders.

All these crisis share three distinct characteristics: suddenness, uncertainty, and time compression. (Lerbinger, 1997) A crisis normally occurs suddenly even when some early warning signs are detectable. A crisis that is unpredictable and erupts suddenly, as in the case of terrorist attacks, is always the most shocking crisis. (Mindszenty et.al. 1988) This element of

surprise can be referred as "shadowy, mobile, and unpredictable." (Lippman, 1999) Indeed, the element of surprise helps terrorists to achieve their aim.

That element of surprise creates uncertainty regarding the kind of crisis an organization may face or for which one should prepare. Moreover, managers probably gave little attention to preparing a response to low-probability, high-impact events, such as a terrorist attacks. Therefore, managers are generally poorly equipped for a terrorism-related crisis. To make matters worse, when dealing with a crisis, managers face great pressure to make decisions rapidly and with incomplete information. Time compression adds to the enormous stress and anxiety that a crisis causes, not only for managers, but also for employees.

Normal management procedure would be to examine aberrant events and determine their cause. Then one determines what is likely to happen next and how to best mobilize resources to deal with that next set of events. This process was compromised in the 26/11 terrorist attacks, in part because of time compression, but also because the targets were symbolic, the specific victims were irrelevant to the perpetrators, and the perpetrators were unknown and apparently unconcerned about their own safety. In an unexpected situation of this kind, management teams with previously established, well-defined crisis plans can most expediently and effectively limit damage and regain control over their operations. (Stafford, et. al. 2002)

### **Terrorism and Crisis Management**

Terrorist attacks as a malevolent form of crisis are not new, although the scope of the 9/11 and 26/11 attacks were unprecedented. Specific terrorist attacks on tourists have included hijackings of commercial airplanes and cruise ships and the murder of tourists. (Pizam & Mansfeld, 1996). Though terrorism is a kind of crisis which cannot be predicted until warned, especially in hospitality and tourism industry terrorists can be contained only to a specific level. These type of attacks has a major setback both psychologically and monetary on the victims. The major question raises is the level of security within the whole nation and how easily it can be breached. The hospitality industry over years has been neglecting the stringent security as they feel it may discomfort the guest.

### **The Indian Crisis**

India has been a victim to the negative events from over a decade before the attacks on Mumbai. These events had a severe impact on the Indian tourism and hospitality industry and ultimately on the occupancy rates of the hotels. On 26<sup>th</sup> November 2008, a bunch of terrorists sailed across the coast of Mumbai and started ruthless firing on public places like CST railway station, Taj Mahal Palace hotel, The Oberoi hotel and Nariman House (a residential building). Over 165 people lost their lives and over 350 were severely injured (Nair, 2008). The attack was a human induced crisis. All the ways of life were affected but travel and tourism was a major casualty. The safety and security of the entire country was at stake.

Four of the terrorist entered The Taj Mahal Palace and Tower hotel, starting to fire at the swimming pool first and then the restaurants killing over 30 people. There were 450 guests staying in the hotel that night. The NSG commandoes took over the hotel on 27<sup>th</sup> November morning and started a battle with the terrorists. It was 29<sup>th</sup> November, morning when it finally ended as the commandoes walked out of the hotel killing all of them. But till then the terrorists had not only destroyed a major part of the hotel but also had embarked a deep grief and fear in

the minds of millions across the globe. In spite of the security measures such scanner, CCTV cameras, sniffer dogs, security checks implemented by Taj; still the terrorists manage to enter the hotel in such type of terrorism very few measures can be taken (FEMA, 2003). In the hospitality and tourism industries, the proactive measures in minimizing such crisis are a strong display of society which can demoralize the potential guests (Balakrishnan.et.al, 2011).

The terrorists were gleaning targeted information from media reports on the unfolding situation. A television interview by the home minister of Maharashtra state, for example, “divulged that there were hostages holed up and hiding in a certain place [in the Taj Mahal Hotel]—potentially useful information to the terrorists and their handlers if they were also watching TV.” It later became clear that the attackers and their handlers in Pakistan were indeed using such media revelations to guide their operations. (Nayak & Krepon, 2012)

This crisis was caused at the beginning of India’s best tourism season in the entire decade. India was expected to cross 5 million travelers in the year 2008. 26/11 became a hurdle in the growth of tourism industry in India. Inflow of foreign tourist was reduced and even the local people avoided travelling. The crisis affected the “Brand India” with majority of the hotels all over India facing 60% cancellation of their bookings and the Indian economy suffering a loss of US\$100 billion after the crisis (Knowledgeindia@wharton.com, 2008). The attacks created a sense of doubt among travelers regarding their safety and security in whole country.

### ***Crisis Response***

Hotel management reacted proactively in managing information. A crisis management cell was put in place. Some key activities undertaken by sales and marketing involved managing and communicating with customers, information dissemination, managing the environment and ensuring business continuity. To put all this into effect, a communication centre was set up which was manned on a 24/7 basis during this period. Additionally, the Taj micro site was set up within hours of the crisis taking place to give regular updates and to provide necessary information to customers during and post the crisis. (IHCL, 2009) All the managers were present to minimize the collateral damage, save lives, and help the Indian Intelligence department in guiding them through directions of the hotel. The staff showed great courage, and exhibited a new standard of bravery by staying back and saving the lives of the guests. The telephone operators of the hotel called each room and asked them to lock their doors and not stand besides the window. Staffs trapped within the hotel were securing the guest first and were constantly in touch with the management outside, informing them about the situation. The hotel was proactive in keeping the flow of information despite being criticised by some stakeholders of lack of preparedness (Perumal, 2010). The guests’ reports of the staff willing to give up their own lives to ensure the safety of their guests were told and retold in all media. Even after the crisis was over, the staff did not leave the premises of the hotel. Instead, they took the guests to the nearby facility where they could be given first aid and counseling. (The Hindu Burea, 2008)

There was a major brand linkage during the crisis. The management refused the media to show the burning images of the hotel in their respective broadcast. At this stage rebuilding was taking place. Chairman and Director were the key spokesperson of the hotel, continuously communicating to the people of the country and of the world through media regarding empathy messaging. There were continuous broadcast of the heroic activities of the staff and filled the media with positive stories. Mr. Ratan Tata (chairman of Taj group of hotels) stated in one of his

media interview that “It was an attack on the whole nation”, thus shifting the attention of the stakeholders (regarding security of the hotel) to the nation. The perceptions of the people are mostly influenced by what they see on the media. People forget about the negative information about these companies would decay within a week or more, therefore these potential bad situations can be avoided if contained with positive articles (Payne, 2006). The management came up with emotional advertisements like “I will prevail”, “...we can be knocked down but can't be knocked out” and “Welcome home again” were released through media. (TATA, 2008) The luggage of all the staff staying at the hotel during the crisis were securely delivered to their specific destinations (IHCL, 2009). Taj also came up with The Taj public welfare trust which aided the people (not only from the hotel but from the victims of the attacks in the city) who were affected by the crisis, which cemented the bond of the brand “Taj” with the people. The only thing the management of the hotel neglected was interacting with social media and citizen journalism (Balakrishnan, 2011). Apart from this all the steps taken by the hotel management was able to contain their brand burn and building up of reputation through media, positive word of mouth publicity and a common message as it is said that positive word of mouth helps in building brand image. (Grace and O’Cass, 2002)

Some establishments also had taken segment specific steps notably provision of incentives and promotional activities (highest being around 12% of establishment) (IITTM, 2010). Major incentives were in the form of special deal offers to regular/ repeat clients and also communicating incentive schemes to the regular clients. Promotional prices were also encouraged. Notably, only few establishments took decisions to waive off cancellation charges. Launch of specific campaigns aimed at target markets, especially inbound and outbound, was among the major promotional initiatives. Promotional activities and events were primarily targeted to address domestic and then outbound tourists. Specific to outbound tourism, measure like tie up with airlines came next to specific campaigns aimed at target markets. (IITTM, 2010)

### ***Assessing the Industry’s recovery***

Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FICCI) titled “Survey of Hotel Industry: Putting the Tourism Downward Behind” stated that:

- Business travel has come to rescue the hotels which were facing the heat of economic slump.
- The top luxury hotels reported occupancy of 50-75% and an improvement in their revenue position to the tune of 85% in the last 06 months.
- Foreign tourist arrivals, particularly those travelling for business purpose is on the growth track, probably due to improvement in the global economic situation.
- The business category hotels performed better in comparison to those in the leisure category with over 50-75% occupancy during study period.
- Over 85 % hotels in the 5\* Deluxe segment recorded improvement in revenue position, whereas, corresponding figure for 5\* hotels is 40%.
- The budget hotels (two and three stars) fared comparatively less in terms of overall performance.

*(Source: Times of India, 29-09-2009, Hotel Sector Recovers on Business Travel)*

The hotel industry was now on a recovery path. This optimism was shared by about three-fourth of the hotel units under study. (IITTM, 2010)



### **The Washington D.C. Crisis**

The September 11 attacks (also referred to as September 11, September 11th, or 9/11) were a series of four coordinated terrorist attacks launched by the Islamic terrorist group al-Qaeda upon the United States in New York City and the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area on Tuesday, September 11, 2001. The attacks killed 2,996 people and caused at least \$10 billion in property and infrastructure damage. (Lerbinger, 1997)

Four passenger airliners were hijacked by 19 al-Qaeda terrorists so they could be flown into buildings in suicide attacks. Two of those planes, American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175, were crashed into the North and South towers, respectively, of the World Trade Center complex in New York City. Within two hours, both towers collapsed with debris and the resulting fires causing partial or complete collapse of all other buildings in the WTC complex, as well as significant damage to ten other large surrounding structures. A third plane, American Airlines Flight 77, was crashed into the Pentagon (the headquarters of the United States Department of Defense), leading to a partial collapse in its western side. The fourth plane, United Airlines Flight 93, was targeted at Washington, D.C., (Lerbinger, 1997) but crashed into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, after its passengers tried to overcome the hijackers. In total, 2,996 people died in the attacks, including the 227 civilians and 19 hijackers aboard the four planes. It also was the deadliest incident for firefighters and for law enforcement officers in the history of the United States, with 343 and 72 killed respectively. (Lerbinger, 1997) (Mindszenty, Watson, & Koch, 1988)

The destruction of the Twin Towers and other properties caused serious damage to the economy of Lower Manhattan and had a significant effect on global markets, closing Wall Street until September 17 and the civilian airspace in the U.S. and Canada until September 13. Many closings, evacuations, and cancellations followed the attack, either out of fear of further attacks or respect for the tragedy. The attacks and their outfall particularly stunned the hotel industry. Hotel managers in New York and Washington, as well as those at major U.S. airports, were immediately under great stress to manage the crisis and thereby regain control of their operations. (Stafford et.al. 2002)

### ***Crisis Response***

During the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the moments immediately following, hotel managers were mostly concerned with maintaining safe conditions inside their hotels and gathering facts about the attacks. They sent staff members into public areas to calm and inform guests. Operating-department managers focused on reassuring staff members and preparing them to react to further events. Emergency action plans and crisis plans were activated, although few hotels' plans addressed a situation like the one that hotel managers feared could transpire that day. Emergency equipment was mobilized to prepare for the possibility of additional safety or security incidents related to potential additional terrorist acts. Guests and staff members who feared for the safety of family members or friends were provided special attention. Televisions were placed in public areas, food-service outlets, and meeting rooms, so that guests could monitor events. Command posts were set up to coordinate activities via radio communication, to take stock of conditions, and to communicate in a centralized manner with the outside world. (Stafford et.al. 2002)

After assessing internal conditions, hotel managers communicated, consulted, and coordinated with external agencies. Formally, conditions at the Pentagon and throughout the area were

compiled by the Hotel Association of Washington, D.C. (HAWDC), through contact with liaisons at the fire department, the police department, and the D.C. Emergency Management Agency, and then information was communicated to hotel general managers. The needs of victims and of relief personnel assisting at the site of the attacks were identified and communicated through the same channels. Hotel general managers likewise relayed requests for additional information and offers of assistance through the hotel association. In most cases, managers consulted with brand, management-company, and owner representatives for advice on handling a variety of service, safety, and financial issues. Additionally, managers offered assistance to each other wherever possible. Finally, media requests for information were coordinated with hotel general managers, brands, management companies, and owners via the HAWDC and the Washington Convention and Tourism Corporation (WCTC). In this manner, the focus of media reports was consistently directed toward the caring and responsible manner in which hotels in the city were addressing the crisis. (Stafford et.al. 2002)

Tourism agencies worked together with the government to promote tourism in the District of Columbia. For this effort, the HAWDC coordinated with the WCTC, the Washington, D.C., Convention Center Authority (WCCA), the Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington (RAMW), and the District of Columbia government. This group's early recovery initiatives included (1) ensuring a coordinated response by the Washington, D.C., hospitality industry; (2) campaigning to reopen Reagan National Airport and other major tourist attractions; (3) promoting business and particularly government-related travel to D.C.; and (4) building a marketing fund and developing a marketing plan to re-establish Washington, D.C., as a must-visit destination. (Stafford et.al. 2002)

### ***Assessing the Industry's Recovery***

Due to fall in business and hence revenue, Hotel managers were forced to conserve cash by severely reducing operating costs and deferring capital improvements. As room sales remained dismal for several more weeks, hotel managers then had to reduce the work schedules or lay off most of the 75,000 hotel employees.(Hedgpeth & Irwin, 2001) (Twomey, 2001) (Sheridan, 2001). Steep discounts on room rates and other sales promotions were offered by hotel operators to entice visitors to return to hotels. (Lonnig & McCaffrey, 2001)) Clearly, the Washington, D.C., hotel industry desperately needed to find a better way to address the market than the cut throat, zero-sum rate war that appeared inevitable.

Despite its many challenges, the D.C. market has seen a year-over-year occupancy increase in 16 out of the first 28 weeks of 2002, versus an average of only three weeks of increased occupancy nationally, according to Bill Hanbury, President and CEO of Washington, D.C., Convention and Tourism Corporation. More important, occupancies and RevPARs were close to stabilizing at prior-year levels by spring 2002. With a congressional recess scheduled for early autumn and a weak convention calendar, those figures will be difficult to sustain in the second half of 2002. That would have been true regardless of the terrorist attacks. However, the fact remains that Washington, D.C., returned to near-normal business levels by late spring 2002. (Stafford et.al. 2002)

### **Interpretations, Conclusion and Suggestions**

The comparison of Indian and US hotels managers' crisis management practice was conducted in order to gain insights about the manner in which managers cope with crisis. It is important to

note that the recent crisis, in India and in US originated from terror acts and the impact of these events was magnified further by media coverage.

The difference between the crisis management in India and US is mainly in the fact that Media management and support of Government agencies in the case of US particularly Washington D.C. case is more systematic, caring and responsible in addressing the crisis than the Indian counterpart. The terrorist got a great help by media coverage during the 26/11 India crisis and hotels faced a negative marketing type of situation due to Media coverage which was immature and irresponsible.

Hotels must have a plan for dealing with malevolence-based crisis. (Stafford et. al., 2002) Such plans should be built on a solid knowledge of crisis-management skills and refined through workplace practice. When it becomes apparent that a crisis is occurring, the plan should be activated immediately, given the time-compressing nature of these events. Hotel managers must first assess conditions internally and then work with external authorities. The internal-assessment process involves reassuring guests and staff, determining additional dangers, mobilizing emergency plans, protecting the safety of people and property, and establishing information outposts. Once internal conditions have been established, these should be quickly relayed to external authorities through pre-established, efficient channels. An orderly response in the early stages of a crisis will minimize disruption of emergency officials' primary focus of rendering assistance. A centralized response will also reduce misinformation.

In the event of unlikely events such as terrorism, areas not affected by the crisis in the country and the steps taken to mitigate the effects of crisis and experiences of the guest who travelled to the affected place immediately after the crisis may be highlighted in the promotion campaigns.

All stakeholders of tourism including the Government agency should be encouraged to evolve crisis management plan and training programmes (IITTM, 2010) specifically to manage such situations. Media should behave in caring and responsible manner.

A macro plan should be set in place. This case study may support this argument. In this (9/11) massive crisis, the US government endorsed a comprehensive crisis management plan for different industries including tourism and hospitality. Therefore, when crisis become frequent and intense, managers may find themselves requiring government crisis management plan.

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## Reinventing the Traditional Guest Satisfaction Survey: An Exploratory Study

Sarah Hussain<sup>1</sup> & Kavita Khanna<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

The attractiveness of online evaluation and the significance of social media are altering the way that hotels are moving towards guest feedback management. Traditionally, hotels have depended upon extensive post-stay surveys and mystery shoppers to determine service standards, customer satisfaction, and improvement areas. In today's time, online reviews provide hoteliers with extensive data on guest satisfaction to help them satisfy customers. Other than this, online reviews make available a social currency that compels new bookings and confidence in hotels. This study explores the possibilities of making use of online reviews to determine better ways to administer and use survey data. The study also lists the names of some popular interactive websites used by hotels for guest interaction and feedback.

**Key Words:** *Online Reviews, Guest Satisfaction, Interactive Websites, Feedback*

### Introduction

Persistent quality standards in a hotel result in loyal guests who not only use the services consistently but also share this experience with acquaintances. Today the hotels have realized the importance of regular guests and retaining these guests is one of the prime focuses of every hotel. For the same purpose it becomes necessary for the hotel to understand the needs and expectations of the guest and utilize their valuable feedback for the continual development of their services and products. For a hotel to maintain their commitment to the quality of their products, the opinion of the guest is necessary.

Hotel Industry pays a lot of attention to guest satisfaction and to procure the same the industry has progressed to better ways. Though the traditional ways of measuring guest satisfaction like mystery guests, internal audit, guest history, guest comment cards are not discarded completely, the hotels prefer online reviews providing them with extensive data on guest satisfaction which helps them satisfy customers in more substantial manner. The guest feedbacks are posted either directly to hotel's website or social media pages which are studied by the hotels to fine tune their service standards.

In the view of researchers, considering the features and services that guest value most highly is the "crucial point" in achieving guest satisfaction in the hotel industry. They define guest satisfaction as "levels of service exceeding expectations", and note that it is most often evaluated through hotel guest surveys. Still surveys have evident limits in this context. They cannot offer a complete picture because the vital features that might influence guest satisfaction need to be determined in advance, so that they can be included for evaluation. Next problem, argued by the researchers, is that inquiring guests how content they are with certain features does not specify which features those customers actually pay most attention to when assessing a hotel.

In this scenario, an alternate method of determining hotel guest satisfaction is the need of the hour. The online review seems to be a promising, even though it has not gained the required research attention to date. The topic is of importance due to ubiquity of measuring guest satisfaction in hotel industry.

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1. Research Scholar, Amity University & Assistant Professor, BCIHMCT, New Delhi. Email:sarah@bcihmct.ac.in

2. Assistant Professor, Amity School of Hospitality, Noida, Uttar Pradesh

This paper is concerned with benefits of online reviews to determine better ways to administer and use survey data. The characteristics and dynamics of the traditional guest satisfaction measurement methods have also been discussed along with their set of advantages and disadvantages to compare the benefits and drawbacks of online review sites better. The study also lists the names of some popular interactive websites used by hotels for guest interaction and feedback.

### **Objective**

- To find how hotels benefit from use of online reviews to assess their services
- To identify the interactive websites used by hotel chains for guest interaction and feedback

### **Methodology**

Personal interview and telephonic interview methods containing open questions were employed to investigate perceptions of hotel employees and management on online reviews and interactive websites used by hotels for the purpose of measuring guest satisfaction. The open question format was chosen in order not to influence the respondents by providing readymade answers. Judgment sample of senior & middle level managers and front line employees of ten of the upscale and luxury hotels in Delhi was used for collecting data. These hotels have been coded as H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8, H9 & H10 for this study. The qualitative data has been analysed using content analysis.

### **Literature Review**

Customer satisfaction is the emotional reaction following a disconfirmation experience (Oliver, 1981). Satisfaction is a summary of emotional state felt by the consumer/ customer when confirmed or disconfirmed expectations are present with respect to a particular service transaction or experience (Getty and Thompson, 1994). Guest Satisfaction is the extent of satisfaction provided by the products or services of a company as measured by the quantity of repeat customers (customer-satisfaction.html). Customer satisfaction is typically defined as a post consumption evaluative judgment concerning a specific product or service (Gundersen, Heide and Olsson, 1996).

To be a successful hotel today, it is not enough to provide great service with regard to room maintenance and meals; one needs to cater to the customer expectations in terms of technology and communication as well (Tewari, 2009).

The organizations which able to understand satisfy customer requirements in timely manner are more profit making as compared to those who fail to do so (Barksy and Nash, 2003).

The explosion of online customer feedback is transforming how businesses will use social intelligence to deliver a quality customer experience (Hospitality Technology: Social Intelligence Trends 2013, 2013).

Hotels are fast becoming mobile-rich environments with travelers making use of smart phones and tablets for making hotel reservations, remote check-in/-out, mobile room keys, etc. It is being noted that there is a dramatic shift from Personal Computers to smart phones/tablets, which not only provides travelers with unprecedented conveniences, but also poses fresh challenges to owners and operators for reputation management (Online Guest Reviews Replacing Need for Star Ratings, Surveys, 2013).

Identifying opportunities to increase sales or guest counts by measuring guest feedback on service quality is the primary function of any hospitality enterprise (Knutson, 2008). Neill, 2008 says, it is an integral part of manager's responsibilities to measure the quality of service which has always been an interest generating discussion for the service industry.

### **Traditional Guest Satisfaction Measurement Techniques**

Neill, 2008 identified management observation, employee feedback, comment cards, mail surveys, on-site personal interview, telephone interviews, critical incident techniques, disconfirmation models, focus groups and mystery shoppers as some popular methods of collecting data on guest satisfaction feedback.

**Non-obstructive Observation Measures:** Non-obstructive Observation Measures have been popular within the broad range of tourism sector and to evaluate visitor satisfaction levels with festival and events (Seaton, 1997). Ford and Bach (1997) found this technique to be the simplest and least expensive technique to assess service quality in hotel operations. Managers were required to take a step back from operational duty so that they could observe, map and analyze the many interactions that took place daily during guest interaction (Neill, 2008). Neill points out the disadvantage with this method that it required specialized training which is time consuming, it raised ethical issue of invading privacy of guests and employees felt intimidated and underperformed.

**Employee Feedback:** According to Neill, 2008 it is much simpler for guests to report a service failure verbally to the frontline employees, which presented a great opportunity for hoteliers to gain first hand and up to date feedback. This would guest satisfaction and employee motivation. On the other hand, the problem of employee biasness existed as complete information was not shared as they were selective of truth.

**Guest Comment Cards:** Several tools are available for measuring customer satisfaction. In hotels, one of the most popular is a guest comment card (GCC). GCCs have the advantages of small size, easy distribution and simplicity. When analyzing data gathered in such a way, managers can get information about the attributes that have an impact on guests' satisfaction. According to Gilbert and Horsnell (1998), and Su (2004), guest comment cards (GCCs) are most commonly used for determining hotel guest satisfaction. GCCs are usually distributed in hotel rooms, at the reception desk or in some other visible place.

**Critical Incident Technique:** According to Lovelock, Petterson and Walker (1998) Critical Incident Technique is designed to extract elements about services that dissatisfy or delight customers. This information could be collected by one to one interview or by the means of in house comment cards.

**Customer Surveys:** Neill (2008) points out that surveys are most common and most abused data collection technique by the hotel industry. These could be employed frequently as in case of Guest Comment Cards, or less frequently as in case of exhaustive ascription techniques. Most important in these cases is the reliability, validity and practicability of the particular survey instrument.

Carroll and Wohl (2013), consider Traditional Guest Satisfaction Surveys to be uniform, their answers could be reviewed and are private & safe, in the sense the competition will not get to read them; but at these have a great opportunity to come of age. Their disadvantage according to Carroll and Wohl (2013) are that traditional guest satisfaction surveys have closed ended questions not providing rich data; do not allow to distinguish what is important to the guest; there are limited number of questions asked which are formulated by the hotels for the areas they want to measure; the surveys are private and cannot be used to generate business as happy guest experience must be shared.

### **Use of Online Review Sites for Guest Satisfaction Monitoring**

A review site is a website on which reviews can be posted about people, businesses, products, or services. These sites may use Web 2.0 techniques to gather reviews from site users or may employ professional writers to author reviews on the topic of concern for the site (Thawakar, 2014).

One of the many enormous advantages about the Internet is the opportunity for people to express their views or feedback on anything. For a hotel, it's a way for guests to comment on your service or products. These comments are posted on the web as online reviews, either directly to hotel's website or social media pages, or to other sites which aggregate online reviews. These days online review sites have not only become popular amongst hotels, but are slowly building better quality standards (Wohl, 2014).

According to the study conducted by Gretzel and Yoo (2008), travel review readers are highly educated, have high incomes, travel rather frequently, use the Internet extensively and plan in advance. Thus, travel review readers, and specifically TripAdvisor users, appear to be a very important target market for travel marketers. The study results also confirms that travel review readers perceive reviews posted by other consumers as superior to marketer information, especially as far as being up-to date, reliability and enjoyability are concerned. The study also indicated that partnerships with virtual community and travel content providers are important for destination marketers.

Popularity of online review and social media are changing how hotels gather feedback. Online reviews help hotels compare themselves against their competitors, give rich and detailed data, allow guests to write about what is really important to them, there are no set questions so guests insights are very helpful, these are open to public therefore generate business. (Carroll and Wohl, 2013).

### **Findings**

#### ***Popular Online Review Sites to measure Guest Satisfaction in Hotels:***

The data analysis revealed that popular review sites to measure Guest Satisfaction in India are tripadvisor.com, makemytrip.com, yatra.com, travelguru, orbitz.com, booking.com, venere.com, expedia.co.in, agoda.com, wego.co.in and ixigo.com.



***Benefits from use of online reviews for measuring Guest Satisfaction:***

The insights gained from data collected from Delhi hotels revealed the following benefits of online reviews in measuring Guest Satisfaction:

1. Online reviews are valuable to both hotels and their guests because of their free-form structure that allows the guests to speak about the services and amenities offered during their stays. The traditional surveys have usually closed-ended which do not yield rich data about what a customer liked or disliked. (Source: H1, H2 and H10)
2. More often than not, traditional surveys are put together by hotels to focus on areas that they feel need to be measured, rather than what is most important and is of priority to guests. (Source: H7)
3. The highly structured character of conventional surveys used to be critical for precise measurement and reporting of guest satisfaction but now new sentiment analysis technology not only allows easy analysis and reporting on unstructured data in a reliable a way but also with a much richer data-set. (Source: H3 & H4)
4. Through reports that show which topics, from ontology specific to hospitality, are trending positively or negatively, hotels do not have to identify what to ask in advance to find hot-button issues or get detailed feedback about any service or amenity on property. (Source: H5 & H7)
5. These help to bring consumer's perspective into your discussions around principal improvements, training agendas and operational transformations. (Source: H8 & H9)
6. The other reason why many hoteliers are rethinking conventional guest satisfaction survey methods is because they are aware of the influence that public guest feedback has on new bookings. (Source: H6)
7. The guests, because of the web can seek out online reviews of products and services offered by various companies all around the world including people who have frequented a particular hotel in the past. (Source: H3)
8. Publicly responding to reviews creates trust and influences future potential guests. (Source: H3)
9. Negative reviews provide an opportunity to turn a critic into a supporter. (Source: H1 and H2)

**Interactive websites used by hotel chains for guest interaction and feedback*****The InterContinental Hotel Group's Heartbeat***

IHG researches into guest needs and the guest occasions. Their consumer insight research helps them gain a deeper understanding of what travellers around the world want from their relationships with hotel and together assist IHG in defining their various brands.

They use guest satisfaction measurement tool - Guest HeartBeat, to measure brand preference and guest satisfaction. The company is always looking to find ways to improve Guest HeartBeat scores and meet guest expectations. Heartbeat was launched in the IHG chain in April 2011, which has a 10 point scale for guests to rate the service quality. This has been very successful as 85% of guests that click into the email invitation complete the survey. (IHG Owners Association, 2014).

***Indian Hotels Company Limited/ IHCL's GSTS (Guest Satisfaction Tracking system)***

The Taj Group has implemented a foolproof Guest Service Tracking System (GSTS) to keep the auditing process clean. This was developed indigenously with the help of IMRB-CSMM market research agency. Post departure an automated mail from the central server is sent to the guest

requesting to fill up a feedback form. There are various heads covering the various stations of experiences which are scored on a Likert Scale. This information is quantified to highlight the areas of concern. This score is also used as a measure of performance of a hotel unit (Nagpal, 2011).

#### ***Accor uses Medallia for managing guest satisfaction measurement***

Medallia is the world's leading provider of on-demand enterprise feedback solutions that manages customer satisfaction measurement solutions internationally for Accor Hotels, a global leader in hotels and tourism. Medallia sends a follow-up email to guests immediately after a stay, inviting them to take an online survey. The questionnaire asks guests to rate various aspects of their stay, including dining, check-in, check-out, room service, hotel staff effectiveness, and, where appropriate, quality of conference and meeting facilities. Medallia provides Accor with reports of all responses in real time, enabling hotel management not only to respond to feedback quickly and effectively, but also to drive continuous improvement of the customer experience (Medallia Broadens Relationship With Accor Hotels, Implements Service Outside US, 2007).

#### ***Hilton's OnQ along with Medallia***

Hilton's OnQ supports the Hilton Hotels Corporation 'Customer Really Matters' (CRM) strategy and represents information that is available to team members on demand, prompting them to act on guest 'cues', preferences and service-recovery alerts that would delight customers and create a bond of loyalty to the Hilton Family of Hotels. Through its partnership with Medallia, Hilton Hotels Corporation began a to obtain guest feedback online from a large proportion of its customers staying at its Hilton, Hilton Garden Inn, Doubletree, Embassy Suites Hotels, Hampton Inn, Hampton Inn & Suites, and Homewood Suites by Hilton brand hotels. Survey response time was reduced from what formerly took weeks, and in some cases months, to just several days after a guest's stay. This proved to be cost effective and allows communication with all levels of management, who are able to evaluate guest feedback in real time, pinpoint any difficulties in service delivery, and take appropriate action much sooner (Barghelame, 2014).

#### ***Carlson Hotels Worldwide use Medallia***

Carlson Hotels Worldwide chose Medallia as its customer satisfaction vendor in 2005, using a rigorous Six Sigma methodology. The response rate was only a two percent at Carlson Hotels with the traditional comment card program after using online method of feedback, the response rates went up to the 35–40 percent range (Medallia Named Carlson's "Global Supplier of the Year", 2007).

#### ***The Oberoi Group***

Under the aegis of The Oberoi Group, EIH, operates hotels and cruisers in five countries under the Oberoi and Trident brands. True to its promise of providing quality service, the Group was looking for a non-intrusive online guest feedback system—one that doesn't interfere with a guest's privacy and removes the possibility of any solicitation during check-in. A cloud-based system which collects data from the hotel reservation system through a daily batch process and sends the online link to guests requesting their feedback during their stay at the hotel has been put into practice. This allows the hotel to ensure high guest satisfaction levels by exceeding their expectations during their stay. It also provides an opportunity for the hotel to do a service recovery. The guest responses are integrated with Outlook through a workflow and the

dashboards are generated based on real-time information flow in the system. At the end of each month, guest satisfaction scores are reviewed by top management (Chopra, 2012).

### Drawbacks of Online Hotel Reviews and Interactive Hotel Websites

- Online hotel reviews may not be completely foolproof since they have a tendency to catch the attention of responses from those who are either most satisfied or dissatisfied with a hotel, or even those who are most vocal or have the enough free time (Rivera, 2013).
- In case hotels do not get many reviews giving them a good pool of data from which to pull sentiment of the consumers, then the possible solution could be an invitation to complete a review in combination with a small survey. Since late 2012, Wyndham Hotels have used a new review invitation system to ask for post stay feedback. Instead of mailing a traditional survey, they would send invitation to review the hotel and publish that review directly to TripAdvisor (Wohl, 2014).
- It was found that there was always a possibility of wrong representation of guests sending feedback as it was the front office employees who sent the link for feedback to guests on checkout. The guests who voiced their displeasure would sometimes not be sent the link for feedback.

### Conclusion

Hotel Industry is amidst technologically changing times, where the challenge lies not only to keep guests happy but also to anticipate their needs and provide timely service. Web based guest feedback ensures the hotels to feel the pulse of the customer and diagnose the problem towards better recovery. With all the advantages like prioritizing immediate problems, providing sentiment analysis technology, identifying trends, realization of guest perspective around principal improvements, training agendas and operational transformations, publicity, and turning problems into opportunities, a couple of disadvantages have also been identified. These disadvantages if kept under control, the true picture of performance will emerge benefiting the hotel industry greatly.

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## Contribution of Role modelling and Education Institutes in Promoting Tourism Entrepreneurship among students – a case study of J&K

*Suvidha Khanna<sup>1</sup> & Sandeva Khajuria<sup>2</sup>*

### Abstract

In developing countries where jobs are limited and potential youth is left unemployed, setting up a business, getting self employed and generation employments for others too provides a great support to the society as well as to the economy. In India, business has long remained a hierarchal affair. Very few people take the risk of an entrepreneurial venture and create resources and opportunities for self and others. Compared to other economies like China, the number of entrepreneurs in India is quite less but in the last few decades, youth is coming up with new ideas of entrepreneurship and is being supported by government through various schemes and initiatives. Are these initiatives enough to support entrepreneurship in India, or there is anything else required? Education and society is an important factor for success of any person. Thus, the present study is a research to know if a good and high education, more precisely educational institutes, their curriculum, their faculty, their teaching techniques, their training programs etc. could be helpful in boosting the spirit of entrepreneurship among students. Also what the society thinks about entrepreneurship, more precisely, the perception and beliefs of friends, teachers, peers etc about entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship may make an impact upon the entrepreneurial inclination of the students, which has been investigated in the study. The research has been done upon the tourism students of Jammu and Kashmir, as the state is a blend of natural, cultural and religious tourism products, but yet not able to retain the tourists for long leisure. The state could serve as a platform of opportunities to grow if the youth take up tourism, start their own ventures, bring in innovative ideas to re produce and sell the tourism products available here. Tourism students of five major tourism institutes of the state have been targeted.

**Key words:** *Entrepreneurship, Educational Institutes, Role Model, Students*

### Introduction

The problem of unemployment in India has remained a matter of serious concern since decades. Various schemes and initiatives have been taken by the government and have helped to some extent in providing employment to the unemployed, but the problem still pertains. Though, the number of jobs and employment opportunities in various sectors and industries have increased, the enrolment rate, education rate and the professional skill training have also gained a comparative hike, and thus there yet exists a gap between the available skilled human resource and available compatible jobs in India. In such situation, where the qualified human resources are not able to find the best of the jobs for themselves, getting into entrepreneurship serves as a mean to attain their professional goals and create employment for others as well. It may not eradicate unemployment completely but is definitely a measure to overcome the problem to a certain extent. Though Entrepreneurship is not a new concept in Indian society, yet a general observation concludes that very few of the Indians are willing to actually take up entrepreneurship as their lifelong career. Indian Entrepreneurs encounter various challenges in starting and running their businesses but on the other hand are very positive about the prospects ahead. With respect to the population the percentage of new entrepreneurial registrations in India might be low, but the nation is known for some of the world's most innovative and victorious entrepreneurial endeavours.

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1. Assistant Professor, School of Hospitality & Tourism Management, University of Jammu, India. *Email: urs\_suvidha@rediffmail.com*

2. Research Scholar, School of Hospitality & Tourism Management, University of Jammu, India *Email: Sandeva\_Khajuria@yahoo.co.in*

A good thing coming up these days is that the image of entrepreneurs is improving in India. The Government of India has come up with many programs boosting the overall status and role of Entrepreneurs in Indian society. Growing and accessible technology also works as a support in setting up and working upon a business. Entrepreneurship is now rather being taught in colleges and universities as an individual subject and the students are provided with industrial training of certain time period so as to understand the concept practically and thoroughly. Conferences, Seminars and Workshops accentuating the importance of entrepreneurship are organised over the globe to encourage entrepreneurship. (Bécharde & Toulouse 1998; Schaper & Volery 2004; Matlay & Westhead 2005). Courses in entrepreneurship are also becoming popular at college and institute levels (Brown, 1999). The interest in entrepreneurial studies among both undergraduate and graduate students has accelerated over the last decade (Solomon, Weaver et al. 2005).

Freedom of self expression, implementing one's own style of work and own ways of making handsome money, generating employment for others etc. are some other motivations behind the Indian youth to set up their own enterprise. Though a lot has been changed in this area, yet much needs to be improved. The standards of education must be enhanced; industrial training should be encouraged, interested parties should be supported with easy funds and provided loans from government. Obligations like unavailability of funds, misfit of skills, not adequate knowledge of the industry etc are keeping many willing youth from starting their own enterprise. The concept is yet not much adopted and is considered a high risk affair. Yet according to The World Bank, only 5,168 patents were granted in India where as 172,113 patents were granted in China (Ernst & Young, 2013)

Further, a mismatch between required skills and available skills often leads to failure of many enterprises. Sometimes uncalculated risk or wrong assessment of the risk in business results in failures, which in turn hamper the overall image of entrepreneurship. The present study is a research investigating the inclination of college students towards entrepreneurship.

The research aims to know how much willing they are to get into tourism entrepreneurship instead of undertaking a job and what part does their educational institutes and other role models play in building their willingness towards entrepreneurship. Here, while part of institution means the practices being carried out in the institutions and the standards of education being provided along with industrial training to promote entrepreneurship among the young students; role model refers to friends, teachers, peers etc. who play a key role in influencing the students towards entrepreneurship. Tourism students of Jammu city were chosen to be studied upon. Jammu and Kashmir is tourism based state of India, and has lot to offer, yet it is not as much developed as other tourist destinations of India like Rajasthan, Goa, Madya Pradesh etc. The state is divided into three regions: Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. While Kashmir and Ladakh fetch leisure and adventure tourists along with pilgrims, but Jammu region fetches pilgrims only, who stay at the destination for 2 to 3 days only and less often extend their stay for longer duration. Jammu has been tagged as but not limited to "the city of temples". In spite of possessing abundance of tourism products, the number of leisure tourists visiting Jammu and Kashmir is not up to the mark. In such circumstances, when resources are available but unorganized and are not promoted, entering into the field of tourism with innovative practices may bring huge opportunities for the entrepreneurs to re-create and sell tourism products and services. Tourism is anyway a growing industry worldwide. Thus, the industry can act as a successful platform for

those who want to grow independently yet with others by setting their enterprises and employing others by the means of entrepreneurship.

### **Review of Literature**

The concept of Entrepreneurship has become popular in last few years only and has evolved at such a rate that today it is regarded as one of the best economic development strategies for any country. It is also considered as a successful tool in sustaining the competitiveness and changing trends of globalised industries (Schaper & Volery 2004; Venkatachalam & Waqif 2005). The concept has gained importance among academicians, industrialists, policymakers and even among higher education students, but very few people understand the concept properly. Researchers have been inconsistent in their understanding of entrepreneurship (Brockhaus & Horwitz, 1986, Sexton & Smilor, 1986; Wortman, 1987; Gartner, 1988) and have developed definitions emphasizing a broad range of activities including the creation of organizations (Gartner, 1988), the carrying out of new combinations (Schumpeter, 1934), the exploration of opportunities (Kirzner, 1973), the bearing of uncertainty (Knight, 1921), the bringing together of factors of production (Say, 1803) etc. After China, India is the fastest growing tourism industry with in the coming decade. Tourism is a vibrant sector and holds a good share of the economy. Tourism is also an employment generator. As per the Economic Survey, 2011-12, Tourism sector has the potential to generate large scale employment both directly as well as indirectly. The role of tourism in generating job opportunities can be supported by the fact that in India approximately 47.5 direct jobs and around 85 - 90 indirect jobs are generated by every one million invested in tourism as compared to agriculture which generates only 44.6 jobs and manufacturing industry which creates only 12.6 jobs. But for gaining maximum profits from tourism sector, it is important to adopt it practically. For getting advantage from tourism in context of economic growth, income generations, poverty reduction, and improving livelihoods, it should be linked to the local economies and MSEs (Wanhill, 2000). According to Hollick & Braun (2005), political, social and economic condition can work as a motivational force for tourism entrepreneurship to prosper, supported by the government and the community. Nielsen (2007) has stated India to be a developing nation and in stiff competition from China and Southeast Asia has been able gain equal parity in tourism. Despite of many favourable factors the country's rankings have not increased much.

**Entrepreneurial Education:** Various programmes and training courses have been initiated and introduced at all levels of learning institutions including universities. Ulrich & Cole (1987) emphasises the importance of successful learning experiences in generating and increasing interest in entrepreneurship. McMullan & Long (1987); McMullan (1988); Plaschka & Welsh (1990) and Ivancevich (1991) discuss the emergence of entrepreneurship as an academic discipline and its role within the traditional business school structure. Staff (2006a, 2007b) noted that entrepreneurship studies had been introduced as compulsory courses for undergraduates at all levels. Universities are now playing a more significant role in the development of social and national economic growth (Cone, 2006). Many universities are focusing more on the role of promoting economic and social development than on their traditional function of research and teaching. This is helping them to become part of an important societal subsystem in which education takes place through entrepreneurial activities (Blenker et al., 2006). With regard to entrepreneurial development, universities, as a seedbed of entrepreneurship, play a functional role in promoting entrepreneurship education to develop regional economies and societies (Binks et al., 2006). Mahlberg (1996) agreed with these remarks by stating that universities have a key

role to play in fostering entrepreneurship, since educational institutions are considered the ideal place for shaping entrepreneurial cultures and aspirations among students surviving in today's robust business milieu (Autio et al., 1997). Gasse & Tremblay (2006) in a similar vein, affirm that educational institutes have an important role in developing entrepreneurship by providing supported activities such as training, business advice and even helping students to raise funds. Thus, it is suggested that the educational institutes should improve the image of entrepreneurship and promote entrepreneurship as a possible career choice among students by providing suitable entrepreneurial networks and good role models in teaching entrepreneurship (Levie, 1996). Though, most of the entrepreneurship courses and programmes were pioneered and introduced in American universities. In India, it was in the 1960s and 70s, that entrepreneurship education was almost exclusively delivered in the form of training programs, offered by institutions, (like NISIET, SISI, TCOs, EDI) under the aegis of State and Central Governments and by financial institutions (SBI, IDBI, TDICI, RCTC, etc.), receiving support from the Government.

**Demographics as an inspiring force:** Much research has been suggested the influence of demographic and family background on individual's inclination towards entrepreneurship (for example Koh 1995; Reitan 1997; Lin et al., 2000; Dunn 2004; Smith 2005; Kirkwood 2007). The common premise is that a good influence brought by family as well as personal own experiences about entrepreneurship would contribute to higher entrepreneurial inclination (Koh 1996; Mazzarol et al., 1999; Kirkwood, 2007). The following summarised the research that have been scholarly conducted on the demographic characteristics as well as the family business background on entrepreneurship. Mahajar (2012) supported the same and concluded that the role model such as friends and lecturers are the main factor which influenced students on inclination towards entrepreneurship. Kume et al. (2013) also found that the individuals' prior exposure to entrepreneurship in practice, both direct and indirect through their family background in business, is significantly linked to their attitudes, norms, and perceived behavioural control regarding entrepreneurship in students of Albania.

**Role model as an influential factor:** While studying the factors influencing students in picking up their career choices, role model emerged as one of the most effective factor. Dillard & Campbell (1981) point out that White American students seem to be influenced more by non-parental factors such as peers when deciding on their career development. It has also been noticed that having to see successful persons in business, an individual would have the aspiration to imitate in order to become a successful person in business too (Caputo & Dolinsky, 1998). Levie (1996b) said that educational institutes can raise the quality teaching by providing the students with good role models. Educators' role, in the profession stance, as knowledge disseminator have significant effects on students' minds as they tend to absorb whatever an educator delivered and taught (Bligh, 1998). The effect of role models on inclination towards entrepreneurship is widely discussed in the literature (Ghazali et al., 1995; Deakins et al., 2005; Kirkwood 2007). Keat et al. (2011) have also used role model as construct in their study upon Malaysian University students.

**Entrepreneurial Inclination:** Entrepreneurial inclination has been referred to be as the interest of starting a new business (Crant, 1996; Henderson & Robertson, 2000; Koh, 1996). It is a contemporary term and has been researched upon recently only. Recent study by Zaman (2013) stated that entrepreneurial inclination of students is based on six characters including Innovativeness, Risk taking propensity, Need for achievement, Locus of control, Self-



Confidence and Tolerance for ambiguity and concluded that entrepreneurially inclined students are comparatively more innovative, have risk taking attitudes, are motivated for achievement, more self confident, with high internal locus of control. Lee et al. (2012) said that the common way of measuring entrepreneurial intentions is one's judgment about the likelihood of starting a new business in the future. Sumra et al.(2011) undertook a research on factors which influence the inclination of taking entrepreneurship as a career choice among the business graduates in Pakistan which proposed that Entrepreneurship can be taken as means to overcome unemployment and improving social status. The study showed that the youth of Pakistan had a very low inclination towards entrepreneurship and thus slowed down the development of entrepreneurship in the country. This result is also supported by Sumra et al. (2011) who recognized just a small section of business students willing to set their own businesses rather than getting hired in organizations.

### **Hypotheses Development**

Most of the studies related to social sciences use demographics as a reliable way to make out the variation of perception, thinking, feeling, behaviour etc. of the sample. In case of students as well, different profile and back ground may project different behaviours. Factors like gender, age, qualification, experience, working status of the parents, etc. have been seen to effect the probability of a person to take up entrepreneurship in their careers like Crant (1996) found entrepreneurial intentions related with gender, education level, and whether a parent is an entrepreneur (entrepreneurial family) or not. Postigo et al. (2003) concluded that the percentage of students actually willing to set up their own firm was significantly higher for those whose parents themselves were entrepreneurs, compared with those who belonged to employee class families. Nemati & Gulzar (2010) found that family background of an entrepreneur plays an important role in pushing a person towards entrepreneurship. He idolizes the member of the family who is into the business and gets motivated to start his own venture. The study also showed that though qualification is not a precondition to begin a new business but with the expansion of business functions, education plays an important role. They further argued that capital is not the basic need to be an entrepreneur; it is just a mix of innovativeness and capabilities to be successful in business. (Nemati & Gulzar, 2010). Two aspect of demographic including qualification and programme of study were studied by Mahajar (2012) and both showed a positive significance upon inclination towards entrepreneurship. The study also supported earlier research (like Yusof et al., 2008) on demographics and entrepreneurial inclination and indicated a strong significant relationship between family background and entrepreneurial inclination. Kume et al. (2013) examined the institute students' inclination towards entrepreneurship with several related variables. The results of the analysis signified that gender, work experience and mother's occupation hold significance in entrepreneurial inclination and claimed to get more positive response from the students whose parents were involved in entrepreneurial activities compared to those whose parents had no entrepreneurial experience. Thus with this backdrop,

#### ***H1: Demographic background of the students effects their Inclination towards entrepreneurship***

H1 (a): Gender has an effect upon the entrepreneurial inclination of the students.

H1 (b): There is a significant difference in the entrepreneurial inclination of the students belonging to different age groups.

H1 (c): The working status of the student's father makes an impact upon the entrepreneurial inclination of the students.

H1 (d): The working status of the student's mother has an impact upon their entrepreneurial inclination.

H1 (e): The period of industrial work experience to the students has an effect upon their entrepreneurial inclination.

“Role models” has so far emerged as an influential construct of entrepreneurial inclination. Its role in promoting entrepreneurship especially among youngsters has also been researched upon in various researches (Ghazali et al., 1995; Deakins et al., 2005; Kirkwood 2007). According to Hisrich & Shepherd (2005), role models in this context comprise of friends, teachers, educators, relatives and peers. The educators are responsible for overall development of the student and building up his character and personality, and in guiding, inspiring and providing real life experiences to their students (Hannon, 2005). Hytti and O’Gorman (2004) endorse the contribution of educators in motivating the students towards entrepreneurship. Their contribution in spreading knowledge have significantly affected the students’ minds (Bligh, 1998). On the other side, friends are also seen to persuade an individual’s fondness towards entrepreneurship (Keat, Selvarajah & Meyer, 2011). Peterman & Kennedy (2003) and Lee & Wong (2005) also support the idea that friends could be responsible for inducing entrepreneurship intentions in the students. Thus, with this backdrop,

***H2: Role models play a significant part in influencing the entrepreneurial inclination among students.***

What profession does a student get into in his life depends quite often upon what he has learned. The credit for the education gained and the skills developed by the student goes to a considerable extent to the education institute he has got into. The overall atmosphere of the institute, its dogma, curriculum, teachers and faculty, the add on facilities for the students, skill development programs, workshops, industrial training programs etc help the student a lot in getting aligned to a profession and decide whether to pick it as a long run career or not. This has been supported by few empirical evidences as well. Kume et al. (2013) observed the role of the institute to promote entrepreneurship to be substantially important. Mahajar (2012) also examined the effect of the role of universities in promoting entrepreneurship on student’s inclination. Rehman & Elahi (2012) carried out another such research in India in which B-Schools were referred to be the breeding grounds for future entrepreneurs; creating employment for self and for others and thus their role in the growth of the country was highlighted. According to Gallant et al. (2010), higher education institutions contribute in fostering the student’s interest in entrepreneurship, thus,

***H3: Educational institutes play a significant role in building entrepreneurial inclination among the students.***

### **Research Methodology**

The study is empirical in nature and is carried upon the students studying tourism in Jammu (Capital of J&K state). A structured questionnaire consisting five sections was adapted from Keat, Selvarajah & Meyer (2011) and was used for the research. The first section was the demographic profile of the students. The second, third and fourth section comprised the Role models, Role of Institute and Entrepreneurial Inclination respectively. The scales used in the questionnaire was based on a 5-point Likert scale (with 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= no opinion, 4=agree, 5= strongly agree) for each close-ended question. The last section of

suggestions was to invite the opinion of the respondents about the ways to promote entrepreneurship in their respective institutes.

### ***Sampling and Data collection***

As the study is related to tourism students, all the institutes of Jammu providing higher education in tourism providing tourism studies were approached. There are two universities providing Masters program in tourism and two polytechnic colleges providing diploma program in tourism. The final year students of these four institutes were selected as research population. The reason behind choosing the final year students is that they are closer to making a career choice. Reaching the last year of the course, they gain ample knowledge about the industry. Their respective industrial training programs also to some extent have sharpened their minds and thoughts about the good and bad of the industry. Thus the final year students are in a better position to make career choices for themselves. The total number of students studying tourism in these institutes is 64. Since the population is small thus the census was taken as a sample with 1% confidence interval, leading to sample size of 64. Thus all the 64 students were considered as respondents of the study, out of which 58 usable responses were found, leading to a response rate of 87.5%.

### ***Data Analysis and Interpretation***

**Table1.** Demographic profile of respondents

S.No.	Demographic Variables		N	Percentage %
1	Gender	a) Male	32	55.2%
		b) Female	26	44.8%
2	Age	a) upto 20	19	32.76%
		b) 21 to 25	34	58.62%
		c) 26 to 30	5	8.62%
		d) Above	0	0
3	Father's working status:	a) Government Employee	14	24.13%
		b) Self employed	25	43.10%
		c) In private job	3	5.2%
		d) Unemployed	4	6.9%
		e) Retired	5	8.60%
		f) Others	4	6.90%
		g) Passed away	3	5.17%
4	Mother's working status:	a) Government Employee	6	10.35
		b) Self employed	12	20.70
		c) In private job	1	1.72
		d) Unemployed	24	41.38
		e) Retired	1	1.72
		f) Others	14	24.13
		g) Passed away	0	0
5	Industrial work experience:	a) Less than 3 months	35	60.34
		b) 3 to 6 months	15	25.87
		c) 6 to 9 months	4	6.90
		d) 9 to 12 months	3	5.17
		e) Over 12 months	1	1.72

Table 1. represents the demographic Profile of the respondents. Out of 58 respondents 32 were males and 26 were females. Majority of the respondents with 58.6% belonged to the age group of 21 to 25 years while 32.7 % were upto the age of 20 years and 8.6% belonged o the age group 26 to 30 years. Most (43%) of the students' fathers were self employed and 24 % students were having their fathers working with government sector. Only 5 % of the students were having their fathers working with private sector, where as fathers of about 7 % of the students were unemployed. Another 6.9 % section of the students had their fathers working in other services and sectors while fathers of 8.6% of the students were retired approximately 5 % students had lost their fathers. In case of working status of the mothers, the majority section of 41.3 % had their mothers unemployed followed by 20.7% students having their mothers self employed. Mothers of 10. 3% of the students were working with government sector while that of only 1.72% were working with private sector. Again 1.72% students 'mothers were retired from service. The mothers of 24% of the students were working in other unmentioned professions. As far as industrial work experience is concerned, a huge section of the students with 60. 34 % had an industrial experience of less than 3 month, followed by the section of 25.8% having an experience of 3 to 6 months. About 7 % students had worked for 6 to 9 months in the tourism industry, where as 5.17% worked for 9 to 12 months. Only 1.72 % of the students had an industrial experience of more than 12 months.

**Table 2.** t-test for gender

Entrepreneurial Inclination	Gender		t- test
	Male	Female	
	3.0976	3.4807	1.546

Table 2 shows t test for gender. In the t test analysis, the value of Df is 56 and t stat value is 1.546. The table value for same at 5% significance is 1.96. Now since t stat value is less than the table value, thus the hypothesis which says that gender has an effect upon the entrepreneurial inclination of the students is *accepted*.

**Table 3.** ANOVA for age

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	1.96344	2	0.98172	0.845429	0.434876	3.164993
Within Groups	63.86654	55	1.16121			
Total	65.82998	57				

Table 3 shows the ANOVA for age of the students. The Analysis of variance reveals that the calculated value of F i.e. 0.84 for  $v_1 = 2$  and  $v_2 = 55$  at 5 % significance is less than the table value which is 3.17 Thus the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the entrepreneurial inclination of the students belonging to different age groups is accepted.

**Table 4.** ANOVA for Father's working status

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	3.946527	6	0.657755	0.672754	0.672048	2.282603
Within Groups	49.86295	51	0.977705			
Total	53.80948	57				

Table 4 is the Analysis of Variance for the students' Father's working status. Here the calculated value of F is 0.672. The table value of F for  $v_1 = 6$  and  $v_2 = 51$  at 5 % significance is 2.28, which is greater than the calculated value. Thus, the hypothesis that the working status of the student's father makes an impact upon the entrepreneurial inclination of the students is accepted.

**Table 5.** ANOVA for Mother's working status

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	3.952792	5	0.790558	0.974282	0.442245	2.392953
Within Groups	42.19418	52	0.811427			
Total	46.14697	57				

According to table 5, which is the ANOVA for the Mother's working status shows the calculated value of F at 5 % significance for  $v_1 = 5$  and  $v_2 = 52$  is 0.97. This value is less than the table value of 2.39. Thus the hypothesis that the working status of the student's mother has an impact upon their entrepreneurial inclination turns out to be true.

**Table 6.** ANOVA for Industrial work experience

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	3.857367	4	0.964342	1.030782	0.400035	2.546273
Within Groups	49.58384	53	0.935544			
Total	53.4412	57				

Table 6. is the ANOVA for industrial work experience to the students. Here, the calculated value of F at 5% significance for  $v_1 = 4$  and  $v_2 = 53$  is 1.030. The table value for the same comes out to be 4.02. Now as the calculated value is less than the table value, the hypothesis which states that the industrial work experience to the students has an effect upon their entrepreneurial inclination holds true.

**Table 7.** Regression between Role Model and Entrepreneurial Inclination

Regression Statistics			
Multiple R	0.61673		
R Square	0.380355		
Adjusted R Square	0.36929		
Standard Error	0.754152		
Observations	58		
	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat
Intercept	1.261665	0.356473	3.539297
XVariable 1	0.60232	0.102733	5.862968

$$\text{Entrepreneurial inclination} = 0.356 + 0.102 (\text{Role model})$$

Table 7 shows regression between role model and Entrepreneurial inclination. Here the Coefficient of determination  $R^2 = 0.380355$ . This implies that 38% of the variation in Entrepreneurial Inclination is due to the role model, while the rest is due to other unknown factors. Also this coefficient of correlation is 0.61673 which indicates a positive relationship between the two.

**Table 8.** Regression between Educational Institute's role and Entrepreneurial Inclination

<i>Regression Statistics</i>			
Multiple R	0.836478		
R Square	0.699695		
Adjusted R Square	0.694333		
Standard Error	0.525012		
Observations	58		
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>
Intercept	0.340703	0.265499	1.283253
X Variable 1	0.878176	0.07688	11.42266

$$\text{Entrepreneurial Inclination} = 0.340 + 0.878 (\text{Educational Institute's Role})$$

According to table 8, which is a linear regression indicator between Educational Institutes role and Entrepreneurial inclination, 69.9 % of the Entrepreneurial inclination is explained by regression, and thus depend upon the role of the educational Institute. The regression also suggests a positive relationship between the two variables as the coefficient of correlation is 0.836478

**Table 9.** Hypotheses Acceptance / Rejection

H1: Demographic background of the students effects their Inclination towards entrepreneurship	Accepted
H1 (a): Gender has an effect upon the entrepreneurial inclination of the students.	Accepted
H1 (b): There is a significant difference in the entrepreneurial inclination of the students belonging to different age groups.	Accepted
H1 (c): The working status of the student's father makes an impact upon the entrepreneurial inclination of the students.	Accepted
H1 (d): The working status of the student's mother has an impact upon their entrepreneurial inclination.	Accepted
H1 (e): The industrial work experience to the students has an effect upon their entrepreneurial inclination	Accepted
H2: Role models play a significant part in influencing the entrepreneurial inclination among students.	Accepted
H3: Educational institutes play a significant role in building entrepreneurial inclination among the students.	Accepted

## Conclusion

The undertaken study is a research carried upon young students studying diploma and masters program in Tourism. The study intends to investigate effects of dimensions like demographic background, Role model, role of educational institutes on the entrepreneurial inclination of the students. The literature has supported the hypothesis framed those suggest a direct and positive relationship between the dependent variable, Entrepreneurial Inclination and the independent variables. The research finds that the entrepreneurial inclination of the students is influenced by the demographic background of the students, including gender, age, working status of the parents and industrial experience of the students. It also reveals a positive relationship between the role models and the entrepreneurial inclination which implies that the student's role models like their friends, teachers, peers etc influence their willingness to adopt entrepreneurship as their career. What the role models think about entrepreneurship as a career option makes an impact upon their decision. The study also acknowledges and supported the role of tourism educational institutes in building up student's inclination towards entrepreneurship. Course papers, Infrastructure,

policies, students' clubs and associations and other educational programs in the institute are proved to boost the interests of the students in entrepreneurship and also facilitate them to take it up as a career. Also it has been noticed that not all the seats available in the tourism institutes of Jammu have been enrolled against. This may be due to less awareness among locals about tourism or their underestimation about the potential of tourism studies as a career choice.

### Limitations of the study and research scope

The research has been carried upon the Tourism students of Jammu. The city has only four institutes that provide higher education in tourism. This is a limitation for the research as it leads to a smaller population and a smaller sample. The research is confined to a Jammu region only. In future regions of Kashmir and Ladakh can also be taken under research which may vary the results. Similar research can be carried upon the tourism students of other such destinations that have enough potential, have less private players in tourism industry and are not attracting a desired number of tourists. The study is majorly an analysis of three separate dimensions viz. demographic background, Role models and Role of educational institutes. Other related dimensions like learning approach of the students (Keat, Selvarajah & Meyer, 2011), their attitude towards entrepreneurship (Majumdar & Varadarajan 2013) etc could be studied in future.

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## Perception of Service Quality of Budget Hotels in Delhi-NCR

Radhe Shyam Rai,<sup>1</sup> Bandana Chadha<sup>2</sup> & Varuna Punjabi<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

The meaning of budget hotels has been redefined on account of new concepts, innovations and strategies. With the changing mind-set of consumers and operators, contemporary hotels of this category have taken a full U- turn with resolute contrast. Positioned as business-class, mini full-service hotels, compact with basic facilities for discerning business travellers, they target a specific market segment of mid-rank business executives and price sensitive corporate travellers. As competitive hospitality units, reasonably priced with good service, style and ambience, they demonstrate professionalism and are projected to have very high growth.

Budget hotels are the next big thing in Indian hospitality. The quality of service is an important factor which will determine their success. This study was undertaken in order to establish the relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality of existing budget hotels in Delhi and surrounding National Capital Region (NCR) and to find out where improvement in service quality is required.

The independent variables of the research were the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model while the dependent variables were service quality and customer satisfaction. Using a sample of 120 budget hotel guests of varied age, occupation and income levels surveyed over a period of 6 months in 2014, gap score and correlation was calculated to statistically determine the level of customer satisfaction.

Empirical evidence of the SERVQUAL gap score for all the dimension of service quality being negative, the study concluded that “perceived value” was lower than the “expected value” and recommends how budget Hotels can improve their overall image and customer satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Budget hotels, Economy hotels, Service quality, SERVQUAL, Gap, Budget hotels in Delhi.

### Introduction

#### *Changing Perception of Budget hotels*

The negative connotation, which existed in the minds of costumers of small sized commercial/budget hotels, is being replaced by a perception of affordability, efficiency and good experience. The fast changing market dynamics has a positive impact on the budget hotel segment. This can be seen from the euphoria among domestic and international hospitality operators in this segment. There is a clear influence of “the evolving Indian traveler” over the direction this industry is taking. Budget hotels are being redefined with new concepts, innovations and strategies. Being compact, with basic facilities for discerning business travellers, targeting a specific market segment of mid-rank business executives and price sensitive corporate, these competitive hospitality units which are reasonably priced with good service, style, ambience and demonstrate professionalism, are projected to have a very high growth. Present budget hotels follow the ‘no frills’ principle, offer the ambience and comfort of star hotels but at much lesser rates. They typically maintain a tariff range of INR 1,000 to 2,500 and total number of rooms may vary from 60 – 100 per hotel.

There is an upward movement of domestic travelers searching for decent priced accommodation facilities. Clean and moderately priced hotels are also preferred by foreign travelers. This upsurge in demand for budget hotels has evoked interest among major hotels chains too, who in addition to having luxury hotels, have now chalked out ambitious plans to build or manage budget hotels.

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1. Associate Professor, Amity International Business School, Amity University, Uttar Pradesh

2. Assistant Professor, Amity International Business School, Amity University(UP). E-mail: [bandanachadha@hotmail.com](mailto:bandanachadha@hotmail.com)

3. Assistant Manager, State Bank of India, Bangalore

### ***Significance of the Study***

The quality of service in hotel industry is a very important factor of success. The purpose of this study is to establish a relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality of the existing budget hotel in Delhi and NCR region.

Budget hotels are the next big thing in India looking at:

- The significant growth expected in foreign tourist arrivals (FTA).
- A large domestic consumer base due to more business travel and rising disposable income and
- An overall healthy economic growth.

This study helps in creating a benchmark in services for all the brands which are aiming to develop their budget hotel segment in India. It also helps in bringing out those services of Budget hotels which may require improvement in service quality.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

The SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985) has been used to identify the gap between expected service and perceived service. The data was collected via surveys of a sample of customers who have stayed as guest in budget hotels. The customer's response to a series of questions revolved around five key dimensions:

1. **Tangibles** - Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials.
2. **Reliability** - Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
3. **Responsiveness** - Willingness to help guests and provide prompt service.
4. **Assurance** - Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence.
5. **Empathy** - Care and individualized attention to its guests.

### ***Literature Review***

The quality of service in the hotel industry is an important factor of a successful business. The existing trend of complete quality management in the hotel industry ensures the achievement of competitive advantage of hotels and is therefore the subject of contemporary research into service quality in the hotel industry.

The main responsibility of hoteliers is the delivery of quality service to guests. It is a recognized fact that in order to be successful in the industry, hoteliers must provide guests with service satisfaction. The hotel industry as a service provider must create and deliver superior value.

In many developed countries, service industry dominates manufacturing industry. This is also the case in India. However, compared with research on product quality in the manufacturing sector, research on service quality lags way behind. The systematic research began from 1980's. Concept of perceived service quality was first proposed by (Gronroos, 1982) through his "Customer Perceived Service Quality Model". He postulated that service quality was a perception evaluation which depended on the comparison between service expectation and service performance. (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985) achieved significant progress by presenting a "Five Gaps Service Quality Model".

Arguing that customer preferences are more relevant to a long-term service quality than impending differences in expectations and performance (Cronin & Taylor, 1992) introduced “SERVPERF”. They suggested that the performance-based scale *SERVPERF* is more efficient than the *SERVQUAL* scale, since it reduces the number of items that must be measured from 44 to 22. Perceived service quality is said to be a reflection of the firm’s performance. On using the firm’s service, customers are said to form an attitude towards service quality performance. This satisfaction level with regard to the products / services indicates how the firm performs. The *SERVPERF* model claims that to find the performance of a firm (i.e. its service quality) all that is required is to collect data by directly asking the customer through a simple survey questionnaire.

As a result of the unique features of service, it is often difficult to measure service quality. Unlike *SERVQUAL*, *SERVPERF* does not differentiate service quality from customer satisfaction. *SERVQUAL* measures performance based on the gap between expectation and perception while *SERVPERF* measures actual performance based on customer satisfaction. This performance-based measure of service quality, called *SERVPERF* was examined by (Cronin & Taylor, 1992) in four industries (banking, pest control, dry cleaning and fast food). They found that this measure explained more of the variance in an overall measure of service quality than did *SERVQUAL*. This model is based on the hypothesis that service quality is an antecedent of customer satisfaction i.e. satisfaction is an outcome of service quality. However, despite its value and popularity, it has received important criticisms since it was developed. Practitioners drew attention to some validity problems which arise when expectations are used as a comparison standard. They indicated that expectations are dynamic in nature and may change according to customer's experiences and consumption situations. More recently, (Nadiri & Hussain, 2005) used *SERVPERF* scale to measure service quality provided by e-hotels. Results of the study support that *SERVPERF* is a better predictor of service quality, and performance-only measurement of service quality is sufficient. (Gaur & Agrawal, 2006) pointed out that the *SERVQUAL* fails to serve as a reliable and valid measure of retail service quality.

Service quality is a topic of crucial importance for the hotel industry. Service quality is a difficult concept and it is almost impossible to have one single measure to assess its level. Much literature suggests that the customer is the only real arbiter of service quality. A number of studies on customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry have focused on identifying service attributes i.e. a customer’s needs and wants. From a marketing perspective, customer satisfaction is achieved when the customer’s needs and wants are fulfilled (Lam & Zhang, 1999).

This study is hence being conducted to find out the gaps between the customer expectations and their perceptions of a particular service with a view to make budget hotels more competent in the future.

### **Research Design**

This descriptive research was intended to get first-hand knowledge about customer’s perception of service quality of budget hotels in New Delhi and surrounding National Capital Region (NCR). The scope is restricted to the study of factors which were considered most important by customers of budget hotel in New Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR) of India.

The Dependent variables for the study were:

1. Service Quality
2. Customer Satisfaction

The Independent variables for the study were:

1. Tangibles
2. Responsiveness
3. Reliability
4. Assurance
5. Empathy

### **Statement of Research Questions**

- i. To understand customer expectation from budget hotels in Delhi and NCR region.
- ii. To ascertain dimensions of service quality which are of prime importance to the customers of a budget hotel.
- iii. To establish a relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality dimensions of existing budget hotels in Delhi and NCR.
- iv. To ascertain which dimensions of budget hotels in Delhi/ NCR need improvement.
- v. To recommend improvement in areas where budget hotels fare poorly in service quality.

### **Population & Sample**

Primary data was collected over a period of six months in 2014 from guests of different budget hotels in Delhi, Noida and Gurgaon in the National Capital region (NCR) of India. The sample included respondents of different age groups, occupation, income levels, gender, and education level. Convenience Sampling was used to select the sample of budget hotel guests in Delhi and NCR region. The sample size was 120 respondents.

### **Data Collection**

To collect data, a structured questionnaire was used. Respondents were asked to assess their perception of various items of different constructs, including factors viewed as antecedents of service quality. Assessment was based on respondent answers to different questions. Out of the 120 questionnaires distributed, only 100 could qualify for further study as 20 were not completely filled. The reliability of the data collected was also checked using the Cronbach's alpha test. The study was conducted during a period of around 6 months in 2014.

Service quality was measured using the SERVQUAL model. For each dimension of service quality, SERVQUAL was used to measure both expectation and perception of the service on a scale of 1 to 5. There were 22 statements used to measure expectations and 22 statements used to measure perceptions. The five dimensions of service quality were:

1. Reliability – 4 statements
2. Responsiveness – 6 statements
3. Assurance – 3 statements
4. Empathy – 4 statements
5. Tangibles – 5 statements

The Gap score for each dimension was calculated by subtracting the expectation score from the perception score.

## Limitations

The study is confined to Delhi and its surrounding National Capital Region (NCR) of India.

## Results & Discussions

### *Data Analysis and Findings*

The study targeted customers who had completed their stay in budget hotels like Ginger Hotel, Mapple Inn, Lemon Tree, IBIS, Hotel Euro Star International, Hotel Cama, Fortune Hotels, Country Inn & Suites, Hotel Florence, Royal Park (Noida), Royal Plaza, Metro Heights, Iris Park, Hotel Sun Park, Savoy Suite, Royal Plaza, Hotel Galaxy, Four Points by Sheraton, The Corus, Parkland, Sartaj, etc situated in different locations in Delhi and NCR.

### *Demographics of the respondents*

The first part of the questionnaire captured the demographics of the respondents.

Out of the 100 completely filled questionnaires:

- 80% were male and 20% female respondents.
- 93% were in the age group of 21 to 40 years.
- 72% were from the service sector; 19% were students & 9% were businessmen.
- 60% were travelling for leisure; 40% for business.

The majority of travellers to Delhi/NCR belonged to the service sector. More people travel extensively during the year for leisure than for business. It was found travellers in the 21-40 years age group travel the most and constitute students and young employees from the service sector as well as young businessmen who take up more of leisure travel than business travel. Leisure was found to be the main reason among those who travelled once a year whereas business was the main reason among those who travelled quarterly.

The second part of the questionnaire dealt with the SERVQUAL model. Twenty-two questions on the five dimensions of Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy were asked in each of the two categories:

- Expected Statements – 22
- Perceived Statements – 22

### *Reliability Test*

The Expected set of data and the perceived set of data were checked for reliability. The data was found to be reliable with a Cronbach's alpha score as follows:

Expectation set of data = 0.939

Perception set of data = 0.960.

### *Gap Score*

The mean and standard deviation of the expected value and the perceived value was calculated for each statement for all the five dimensions. A score for each of the 22 Expectation statements and each of the 22 Perception statements was obtained. The Gap Score for each of the statements was calculated:

$$\text{Gap Score} = \text{Perceived Value} - \text{Expected Value}$$

Then an average Gap Score was obtained for each dimension of service quality as follows:

**Table 1:** Dimension-wise Gap Score

S. No.	Dimensions	Mean (Perceptions)	Mean (Expectation)	Gap Score (P-E)
	<b>TANGIBILITY:</b>			
1	Hotel having Modern looking equipment	3.91	3.72	0.19
2	Hotel's physical facilities visually appealing	3.98	3.72	0.27
3	Employee's neat appearance	3.93	4.64	-0.71
4	Hotel's material associated with services being visually appealing	3.86	4.1	-0.24
	<b>Average Gap Score for Tangibility</b>			<b>-0.12</b>
	<b>RELIABILITY:</b>			
5	Promises to guests to do something within a certain time are honored.	3.8	4.35	-0.55
6	When guest has a problem, hotel shows a sincere interest in resolving it	3.93	4.66	-0.73
7	Performs service correctly the first time	3.85	4.31	-0.46
8	Provides service at promised time	3.85	4.54	-0.69
9	Employees tell exactly when service will be performed	3.74	4.44	-0.7
10	Hotel insists on error-free records	3.79	4.16	-0.37
	<b>Average Gap Score for Reliability</b>			<b>-0.58</b>
	<b>RESPONSIVENESS:</b>			
11	Employees never too busy to respond to requests	3.76	4.17	-0.41
12	Employees promptness in service	3.85	4.3	-0.45
13	Employees willingness to help	4.3	3.94	0.36
	<b>Average Gap Score for Responsiveness</b>			<b>-0.17</b>
	<b>ASSURANCE:</b>			
14	Employees behaviour instills confidence in guests	3.72	4.46	-0.74
15	Employees consistently courteous	3.91	4.48	-0.57
16	Employees adequately knowledgeable to answer questions	3.61	4.17	-0.56
17	Operating hours convenient to all guests	4.24	3.83	0.41
	<b>Average Gap Score for Assurance</b>			<b>-0.36</b>
	<b>EMPATHY:</b>			
18	Employees able to give best suggestions when asked for	3.47	4.46	-0.99
19	Employees give personalized attention	3.8	3.71	0.09
20	Hotel always has your best interest at heart	3.6	4.13	-0.53
21	Employees understand guests specific needs	3.58	4.11	-0.53
22	Employees competence	3.67	4.23	-0.56
	<b>Average Gap Score for Empathy</b>			<b>-0.50</b>

Table 1 shows the guest satisfaction level in each of the dimensions is low (for all statements). Expectations exceed perceptions in all the cases. Hence, we can conclude that guests are not

satisfied in terms of all five dimensions i.e. tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The glaring gaps found in the five dimensions were:

- Tangibility – the appearance of the employees was not up to the mark.
- Reliability - budget hotel do not perform their promises on time, don't show interest in solving their problems and there is lethargy in services performance.
- Responsiveness - employees are always too busy to respond to guests queries, never give them prompt service and are not keen on helping them.
- Assurance - behaviour of budget hotel employees does not build any confidence in guests, the employees are not courteous, not knowledgeable enough and the operating hours are not very convenient.
- Empathy - employees of budget hotel are never able to give best suggestions. They don't feel that the hotel has their best interest at heart and often don't understand guest's specific needs. They also felt that employees were not competent.

After analysing the Gap scores of each dimension, overall non-weighted average SERVQUAL score was obtained.

**Table 2:** Unweighted SERVQUAL score

Dimensions	Average Score
Tangibility	-0.12
Reliability	-0.58
Responsiveness	-0.17
Assurance	-0.36
Empathy	-0.50
<b>Non-weighted SERVQUAL score</b>	<b>-0.35</b>

Table 2 shows that the overall satisfaction level of the respondents, from their respective budget hotels was low.

Pearson correlation was conducted to assess the relationships between the quality service dimensions and customer satisfaction. The results showed a very strong significant correlation between the two dimensions of service quality –Reliability (.942) and Assurance (.940) - and customer satisfaction. It also shows a decently strong significant positive correlation between the customer satisfaction and Responsiveness (.602) and Empathy (.684). A significant weak negative correlation was found between tangibility (-.001) and customer satisfaction.

### Summary of Findings

Majority of travellers to Delhi/NCR belong to the service sector. The study found travellers in the age group 21-40 years travel the most. This group constitute students, young employees from the service sector and young businessmen. Yearly leisure travel is more than for business. However, for those who travel quarterly, majority travel for business. Number of male travellers was found out to be more as compared to their female counterparts.

The SERVQUAL GAP showed that the perceived value for each dimension was lower than the expected value since the gap score for all the dimensions was negative. The overall un-weighted SERVQUAL score also had a negative value of negative 0.35. The correlation between Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy is strong with customer satisfaction whereas the correlation between the Tangibility and customer satisfaction is very weak.



## Conclusions

Findings conclude that the guests of budget hotels had higher expectations from their respective budget hotels before they went to stay there but were met with lesser level of service quality which led to low value of perceptions.

### 1. Tangibility dimension:

- a. Although two out of four aspects under Tangibility scored negative, the neatness in appearance of the employees received the lowest score. This means that the appearance of the employees is not appealing to the guests.
- b. The hotel's material associated with services scored negative, but was better as compared to the -0.71 scored by the 'appearance of employees'.
- c. Aspects like the hotel's modern looking equipments and physical facilities were found to be according to guests' expectation.

### 2. Reliability dimension:

- a. In this dimension all the aspects have scored negative.
- b. The least scoring aspects were (1) hotels do not fulfill their promise of doing any work within the time it had promised (2) hotels never showed sincere interest in solving guest problems (3) services providing procedures are lethargic (never on time) and (4) staff had no exact idea of the timing of services to be performed.
- c. Comparatively, the score of the hotels on providing service correctly the first time was better and hence can be improved quite quickly to bring it to the positive level.
- d. Hotels also did not insist on error free records, but the score for this aspect was better than other aspects though still negative.

### 3. Responsiveness dimension:

- a. All the three aspects in this dimension have a negative value of 0.17.
- b. Guests feel that hotel employees should respond to their queries even if the employees are a little busy. This need is not being met by the budget hotels in Delhi/NCR.
- c. The employees are not giving prompt service although they rarely have the drive or the will to help guests.

### 4. Assurance dimension:

- a. The aspect of the operating hours being convenient to the guests has scored positive.
- b. Guests believe that employees' behaviour does not install confidence in the guests about the hotel or the organization as a whole.
- c. Employees are not at courteous and do not have the adequate knowledge to answer guest questions.

### 5. Empathy dimension:

- a. Four aspects here have scored in negative.
- b. Guests marginally feel that they do not get as much personalized service which they feel they should get from the employees. This aspect has scored the best as compared to others.
- c. Guests strongly believe that the hotel employees do not have adequate knowledge to answer their queries.
- d. Guests also feel that budget hotels do not have the guest's best interest at heart and are just interested in earning revenue.
- e. Guests also feel that employees do not have the capability of understanding guest's specific needs and are not adequately competent in the work they perform.

The strong positive correlation between reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and guest satisfaction signifies that these four dimensions are an important predictor of guest satisfaction. Whereas a weak and negative (almost close to zero) Pearsons Correlation value for tangibility and customer satisfaction reflects budget hotels tangibles do not help in predicting customer satisfaction. This may be because of the fact that by the word “budget” guests pre-assume the tangibles to be of low quality and are not surprised to see the same in reality.

### **Recommendations**

Accordingly, following are recommended:

1. Since there is currently a huge demand for budget hotels across India, existing budget hotels must develop their infrastructural facilities. Although, budget hotels of respectable brands like Taj, Fortune, etc already have good infrastructure, local budget hotels must also invest in the same in order to instill confidence in their guests.
2. Physical facilities in budget hotels must be appealing to their guests. The players have no option other than investing and reinventing their facilities maintenance in order to attract and retain guest. The materials used for providing services e.g. objects in restaurants, lobby, rooms etc, should be neat and visually appealing.
3. The Hotels should make use of Information Technology (IT) and software like OPERA or FIDELIO in their day to day working to ensure efficiency and develop Customer Relationship Management (CRM) policies.
4. Employees should be provided with neat and smart uniforms at the time of joining and they should be guided on how to maintain the same. New uniforms should be provided periodically.
5. Employees should adhere to a dress code and be trained on how to dress and maintain their appearance. The Human Resources (HR) department should provide and monitor adherence to the dress code and appearance guidelines.
6. Female employees should be given proper guidelines as to what kind of make-up they should apply and the male staff should be guided on how to maintain their hair, face and hands.
7. Employees must be given thorough training in the departments where they are meant to work before being assigned on duty. They should be given cross training as well to make them aware of the working of various other departments and how other departments are interlinked.
8. Employees of the hotel must be made aware and trained in the Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) of the job assigned to them. It is imperative to have and make employees aware and adhere to Standard Operating Procedures. SOP's should exist for all regular activities of the hotel and should specify the standard time period in which the staff is expected to perform various tasks.
9. Like luxury hotels have a procedure of getting a “customer satisfaction” form filled by their guests at the end of their stay, local budget hotels must also incorporate this procedure. This will help them in knowing their shortcomings and improving up on them. Guest feedbacks must be taken passively and seriously.

10. There should be an employee reward or recognition program (like “star of the week”) to encourage employees who are efficient. This will motivate employees to work harder and excel in their respective fields.
11. Guests should be encouraged to pinpoint employees with whom they are extremely happy for the services provided to them and these employees should be suitably rewarded. This will encourage employees to give better personalized and prompt services to guests.
12. Budget hotels should try to employ qualified personnel with a hospitality education and background. This will reduce their training costs.
13. Since responsiveness, reliability, assurance and empathy are the major predictors of customer satisfaction, hence the managers must strive to keep the level of service quality up-to-the-mark all the time. Since tangibility currently is not having a major effect on the levels of satisfaction, this is an area where major improvements can be done and a make-over of the infrastructural facilities can be implemented to add a “delight factor” to the guest.

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**APPENDIX I: Pearson correlation between the Service Dimensions and Customer satisfaction.**

**Correlations**

		<b>Tangibility</b>	<b>Reliability</b>	<b>Responsiveness</b>	<b>Assurance</b>	<b>Empathy</b>	<b>Satisfaction Level</b>
Tangibility	Pearson Correlation	1	-.183	-.463	-.287	-.435	-.001
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.817	.537	.713	.565	.999
	N	4	4	4	4	4	4
Reliability	Pearson Correlation	-.183	1	.469	.886	.888	.942
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.817		.531	.114	.112	.058
	N	4	4	4	4	4	4
Responsiveness	Pearson Correlation	-.463	.469	1	.819	.231	.602
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.537	.531		.181	.769	.398
	N	4	4	4	4	4	4
Assurance	Pearson Correlation	-.287	.886	.819	1	.659	.940
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.713	.114	.181		.341	.060
	N	4	4	4	4	4	4
Empathy	Pearson Correlation	-.435	.888	.231	.659	1	.684
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.565	.112	.769	.341		.316
	N	4	4	4	4	4	4
Satisfaction Level	Pearson Correlation	-.001	.942	.602	.940	.684	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.999	.058	.398	.060	.316	
	N	4	4	4	4	4	4

## Emerging Trend of Incorporating Ancient Grains into Modern Meals

Prasenjit Sarkar

### Abstract

Ancient grains derive their name from findings of archaeological researches reporting discoveries of the remains of grains and grain stores in ancient sites perhaps dating back 4,000 years, thus giving us a history, and often an introduction, to grains that have sustained life over time.

They are considered unchanged from their original genetic form which helps them to preserve robust, distinctive flavours and textures. Besides these ancient grains offer a different range of nutrients to conventional crops such as wheat or rice and are also considered to be excellent source of nutrients like protein, vitamins, iron and dietary fibre.

Ancient grains were formerly widespread basic food cereals, but were superseded in many countries with the rise of modern cereal crops. But with the consumers' increasing awareness about eating natural, traditional and nutritious, incorporating ancient grains in modern meals such as specialist health foods and cereal products are in trend.

Ancient grains are persistently returning to modern diets, and some being gluten-free, offer extra appeal to those with allergies to common cereals.

Ancient grains ensure a promising market. According to some recent studies, launch numbers for food and drinks products containing ancient grains have been rising strongly in recent years and 44 per cent of US consumers had eaten ancient grains and indicated escalating interest.

**Keywords:** *Ancient grains, Pseudo cereals, Amaranth, Buckwheat, Chia and Quinoa.*

### Introduction

For many years archaeological researches have reported discovery of the remains of grains and grain stores in ancient sites. For example researchers in China found the remnants of well-cooked wheat and millet in Yunnan that are supposed to be almost 4,000 years old!

Nevertheless, the name ancient grain doesn't mean just a very old seed. It denotes to the kind of the grains which is assumed to be primordial and have only recently been discovered by the western hemisphere, though these heritage grains were cultivated by different communities all over the world as they began dwelling in any particular place leaving the peripatetic life.

Most of the ancient grains are termed as Pseudo cereals, which mean plants that yield fruits or seeds which are used and consumed as grains, though botanically pseudocereals are neither grasses nor true cereal grains and are characteristically high in protein and other nutrients, free of gluten and are considered whole grains. (Grains Research & Development Corporation, n.d.).

Though once upon a time, these grains were widespread and consumed by people all over the world, gradually with the increased use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides and with the hastening of urbanization, people forgot these heritage grains and substituted quality with quantity. But now the focus of consumers has changed as they are more concerned about eating healthy and natural. (New Food System, n.d.).

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Assistant Professor, Welcomgroup Graduate School of Hotel Administration, Manipal University, Manipal, Karnataka, India. **E-mail:** [prasenjit.sarkar@manipal.edu](mailto:prasenjit.sarkar@manipal.edu)

With research showing that ancient grains are richer in nutritive values and provide essential nutrients like protein, iron, calcium, copper, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, zinc, Vitamin B2 and many others, people are now incorporating these heritage grains more and more in their daily meals. In addition to the health benefits, the taste of ancient grains is unique and people find it pleasing. The reason is that many of these grains have survived prolonged eras almost untouched by contemporary plant science. Thus the fact that ancient grains are simultaneously nutritious and delicious, which is a rare combination, has intensified its acceptance. Likewise, they appear to be gaining popularity with consumers merely looking for different savours and textures. Keeping in view, ancient grains are now incorporated in breakfast cereals by brands like Kellogg's and also in baby foods, snacks and bakery products.

Moreover some of these being gluten-free offer extra appeal to those with allergies to common cereals.

### **Methodology**

A quantitative approach has been adapted to do the study as the topic is an emerging trend which is not yet very popular in India, thus making it difficult to gather primary data. Secondary data analysis has been done with care and assiduousness to deliver a better and effective way of acquisition of a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

A substantial dataset has been used whose sources are mainly: Official Statistics, Technical Reports, Market Surveys, Scholarly journals, Review articles and The World Wide Web.

### **Objective**

The main objective of this paper is to emphasize on:

- i. Some of the ancient grains that have recently gained enormous popularity,
- ii. Various methods to incorporate them into modern meals, and
- iii. Their mainstream market trend over the recent years.

### **Some ancient grains with gaining importance and popularity**

Throughout the world, cereals such as rice, wheat and corn forms vital part of the diet either in their original form or mixed in products such as breakfast cereals, bread and pasta. But with the increased awareness about eating right and healthy, more and more people are beginning to turn to alternative cereals and ancient grains have started to take important part in human diet all over. Some of these ancient grains are being liked immensely by the people and are actually nutritious and delicious at the same time. They are:

#### **a) Amaranth**

One of the world's primogenital grains from South America. It was cultivated by the Aztecs and are said to have considered as a super food. It has higher protein content than any other ancient grains, and is a good source of lysine, tryptophan and sulphur amino acids. It also has a favourable content of fibre, calcium, magnesium and all eight essential amino acids, making it a wonderful choice for vegetarians and others looking for more plant-based protein.

Being gluten free it is also a favourable choice for people with coeliac and allergies or intolerances to other common cereals. It tastes slightly like corn. Amaranth requires quite a lot of water to be cooked. For example, 1.5 litres of water is required to cook 250 ml of amaranth.

After being properly cooked, it turns out to be soupier in consistency that is why conventionally it is consumed as breakfast porridge. But it can also be prepared with onions or garlic or can be cracked like popcorn to create a healthy snack. It can also be pulverized into flour for bread making or baking. The green of this plant, being edible, can be used in salads. (L. 2008).

#### **b) Buckwheat**

Remarkably, buckwheat is not wheat. It has actually derived its name from a Dutch word meaning beech wheat and it denotes the fruit of the buckwheat which looks similar to a tiny beech nut. Exactly, it is somewhat an herb or fruit closely allied to wild rhubarb. History says Buckwheat originated in North-eastern Asia (Siberia, Manchuria) and was first cultivated around 6,000BC. It was later transported to Europe by the Crusaders in the 13th Century. It was one of the most primitive crops introduced by Europeans to America. Buckwheat provides vital nutrients, vitamins, energy and fibre among which the protein in it contains the eight essential amino acids and is high in lysine content. It is also rich in some of the B vitamins as well as copper, phosphorous, magnesium, iron, zinc, potassium, calcium and manganese. The John Hopkins Medical Institute showed that consumption of 30 grams of buckwheat daily can lower blood pressure. Since, it takes a longer time to digest; it gives a fuller stomach feeling for longer and improves glucose tolerance among the diabetics.

Buckwheat is quick-cooking grains, prepared in less than 30 minutes. These grains can be added in recipes to introduce added crunch.

Hulled, crushed seeds (called buckwheat groats) can be used in rice-like side dishes, hot cereals and soups. Kasha (roasted groats) has a nuttier flavour and is used as traditional porridge. Buckwheat flour is also used to make pancakes and famous Russian blinis. These grains, being gluten-free, are also used to make no-wheat noodles or pasta.

#### **c) Chia**

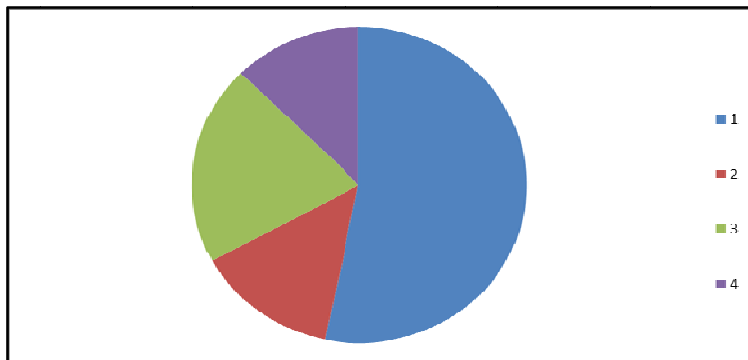
Chia is cited in an Aztec herbal manuscript of 1552 A.D and was one of four most significant crops to that ancient civilization thus originating from Latin America. It was called "Indian Running Food" as the hunters carried it with them for sustenance on lengthy hikes.

It is a yearly herb, black in colour and almost flavourless. Chia is considered to be a member of the mint family and grows wild in the Southwest United States and Mexico. It is comprised of about 20% protein and 30% fat of which mostly Omega-3 fatty acids in its oil. It is also rich in dietary fibre and antioxidants.

Chia is in huge demand in the United States. According to a study by Innova, introductions of products containing chia rose from perhaps single figures five years ago to in the hundreds now, with an upsurge of approximately 50% in the year ended Sept. 30.

According to a study by Mintel, Chia is said to be the next big super food, which was primarily used only in food products like snacks and cereals, but in the recent years, it has gained a huge popularity in beverages as well.

The following graph depicts the launching of chia seed food and drink in the year 2013:



Source: Mintel (1. USA, 2. Canada, 3. Asia Pacific and 4. Europe)

#### d) *Quinoa*

It originated thousands of years ago in the Andes Mountains of Bolivia, Chile, and Peru. It is the staple food of the Incas. Its significance can be assumed from its name which means, “mother grain” in Inca.

Though it is called a grain, Quinoa (pronounced "keen-whah") is basically a seed. It is small, round in shape with a characteristic “nutty” yet mild and delicate savour with soft, yet crispy texture. It is generally available in three foremost varieties including red, white or black quinoa. Whereas Chia is said to be a super food, Quinoa is undeniably a food star, having highest magnesium, folate and vitamin E than any other grains. It also contains all 8 essential amino acids and is considered to be a good source of: B vitamins, iron and calcium. Another reason of its popularity is the fact that it is gluten-free and can be prepared in less than 15 minutes.

Previously Quinoa was mainly used in various products like breakfast cereals, snacks and biscuits, but now it is gaining a steady popularity in other sectors like beverages, ready meals, confectionary, and baby foods. According to a market survey by Innova, launching of products containing quinoa rose nearly 50 per cent over the 12 months to the end of September 2013, and have risen more than five-fold over a five-year period. The growth is mainly due to its intensifying awareness among the consumers in the US followed by European market. (New Hope 360, n.d.).

#### *Other Popular Ancient Grains*

- a) **Farro**- this, also known as Emmer, is a wheat grain. It is one of the first cultivated crops centuries ago. It was used in Egyptian bread making.
- b) **Spelt**- The Old Testament mentions this grain and it is believed to have been first farmed in Europe some 9,000 years ago. This is one of the habitually consumed grains in medieval times. One unique character of this grain is, though it belongs to the wheat family, it is seen to be well tolerated by those with wheat intolerances or allergies. Spelt is richer than wheat in protein (though cannot compete with quinoa or amaranth), amino acids, minerals and B vitamins. It also contains high amount of fibre and complex carbohydrates.
- c) **Sorghum**- this grain, also known as milo, originates from Africa and is graded as the 5th most vital cereal crop. One of its most important characteristics is that it is Gluten free.
- d) **Wheat berries**- this grain is the perfect example of a “whole grain” as it is the entire wheat seed (bran, endosperm, and germ). It is the third most copious crop in the world after rice and corn.



- e) **Millet**- the word *millet* is used for different grass crops whose seeds are reaped for food or feed. Although this grain is the main ingredient in bird seed, it is not just "for the birds", this is whole grain is a staple in many Asian and African countries. There are mainly two varieties of millet, Proso, grown predominantly for bird and livestock feed, and Pearl which has the major domain of all the ancient grains.
- f) **Kamut**- it is also known as Khorasan wheat or Pharaoh grain, due to the fact that these grains were discovered in ancient Egyptian tombs. It's healthier than conventional wheat. Kamut has nearly 30% more protein than wheat and more fatty acids and is nearly two to three times the size of common wheat. Moreover, some people who are allergic to wheat can tolerate kamut. It has a fibrous, palatable texture and nutty, rich flavour, making it very popular among consumers.
- g) **Barley**- this is a large grain originating from Ethiopia and Southwest Asia. It is an essential component in Tibetan cuisine and was consumed usually by peasants in Medieval Europe. It is rich in many of the vital nutrients. It is mainly used in a fermented form in the making beer and certain distilled beverages, and as a constituent of several health foods.
- h) **Polenta**- the name is of Italian origin, derived from the Latin for crushed grain. It derives from the similar base as "pollen". It is commonly eaten since Roman times. As the name suggests, it is prepared from ground yellow or white corn with the germ removed.
- i) **Bulgur**- it is prepared from hard red wheat and seldom from soft white wheat. Bulgur is a cereal made from the groats of a number of different wheat species, most often from durum wheat. It is predominantly found in European, Middle Eastern, and Indian cuisine. It is also known as "Dalia" in India, which is prevalent all over the wheat-consuming regions of Northern India.
- j) **Teff**- it is the smallest grain in the world – about the size of a poppy seed. Teff is obtained from the seed of an annual grass, native to the northern Ethiopian Highlands and Eritrean Highlands of Africa. It comes in different colours, from white, red to dark brown. It is a highly nutritious grain, popular among consumers as a small grain with big health benefits.

### **Incorporating Ancient Grains in Modern Meals**

Increase in lifestyle diseases like diabetes and obesity, has shifted consumer awareness towards healthy eating, where recently consumers have started exploring the wide-ranging benefits of ancient grains which are healthy yet tasty. This rare combination of health and delicacy has escalated the market of ancient grains and now they are being incorporated in innumerable forms in our modern meals. Two main delusions prevent people from enjoying ancient grains: they take a very long time to cook and they are very rubbery.

The succeeding discussions will help us in understanding healthier and tastier ways of incorporation of these grains.

#### **A. Some Basic Approaches**

##### **i) Categorization**

Grains can be categorized into two types depending on the time taken by them to be cooked - fast and slow cooking. Fast-cooking grains, which can be made in less than 30 minutes, comprise bulgur, quinoa, polenta, millet, and buckwheat. But one important aspect to be considered before cooking is that each needs a different proportion of water-to-grain, so one should check the details of the specific grain prior to cooking.

Grains whole wheat berries, kamut, spelt, and rye are slow-cooking grains. These are fibrous and are better-off in flavour. They generally take about 30 to 70 minutes to be cooked and ½ to 3 cups of water per cup of grain should be used. Soaking and then simmering the grains for about an hour, subject to the freshness of grain, can diminish the cooking time. After straining, these grains can be stowed in the fridge or frozen in separate lots, and can be cooked later.

### **ii) Coupling Ancient grains and proteins**

Even though grains like quinoa and amaranth contain higher percentage of protein, manganese, and antioxidants, there is a necessity for other grains of a harmonizing combination of ideal health and nutrients (Epicurious.com. n.d.). Coupling them with meat, fish, eggs, nuts, cheese or soy can generate both a flavoursome and nourishing meal.

### **iii) Combining different methods of cooking**

Boiling the grains to make any specific dish is not the only option of cooking them. Roasting the grains can add some extra crunch and also highlight the nuttier taste. Some of these grains are excellent for baking as well. It imparts crispy, chewy and toothsome texture to the products. But since these grains are not like flours, they are required in more quantity compared to ordinary flour which usually needs more liquid and more resting period, to allow the cellulose to absorb the extra liquid in order to get a moister product. A wide range of wonderful breads including artisan, pan breads as well as scones, crackers, pizzas and cookies can be made from these grains.

### **iv) Always use fresh grains**

Whole grains always go reeking sooner than refined, so it is very vital to store them in airtight containers in a cool storage to lengthen freshness for months (Whole Grain Recipes and Tips for Healthy Carbs: Epicurious.com. n.d.). But to acquire the best-taste, baking needs freshly grounded grains. This result in the outright freshest product, as well as it is easier to control the texture of the flour.

## ***B. Using Some of the Ancient Grains in Modern Cooking***

**Kamut:** It has a rich, sweet, almost buttery taste that is enjoyable in pilafs, soups and salads. Kamut can also be pounded in to flour, which can be used for baking. With a firm texture, Kamut makes flavoursome whole-grain pasta compared to that of white flour pastas. Since, it is larger in size than wheat, it is suggested to soak Kamut overnight which will radically decrease cooking time. Commonly to cook 1 cup Kamut, 3 cups of water is needed, and the cooking time is approximately 45-60 minutes., It is used in making Bread, pasta, hot and cold breakfast cereals, cookies, pizza, crackers, cakes, snacks, pancakes, syrup and delicious drinks. (Ancient Grains Bakery. n.d.).

**Quinoa:** The popularity of quinoa largely depends on two facts: it's gluten-free and can be cooked in less than 15 minutes. Quinoa is considered to be an excellent alternative to white rice or couscous since it has a fluffy texture and mildly nutty flavour. The preparation of quinoa is very similar to rice. Rinsing and soaking the seed, prior to cooking, helps in removal of its bitter, soapy coating. The water-grain ratio is 2:1 respectively and the cooking time is roughly 15 minutes or till the germ quadruple in size, become almost translucent and splits from the seed. The cooked germ must be al dente. When cooked, its grains. Commonly Quinoa is available in its tan or yellow colour, though it is also available in other colours like red, pink, purple, orange

and black. (Cooking Channel. n.d.). It tastes great when cooked as a pilaf or used in salads or desserts and also as stuffing for dumplings.

**Spelt:** It is available in two forms: whole grains, or "berries," and flour. Spelt flour is now being regularly used in baking. Breads, muffins and cookies, baked from this flour have a unique sweet and nutty flavour and extra crunch with a surplus quantity of protein and vitamins. Spelt berries can be tried in any recipe that demands for cooked grains. These berries, when used in side dishes, salads and soups, give them a delicious taste with boost in health. (Nourished Kitchen. n.d.).

**Amaranth:** Amaranth is a very versatile ingredient. It is now being recognized as a nutritious, high-protein food in the United States, making it popular mostly as a breakfast cereal. It has a certain sweetness, which when boiled with water (the ratio is 1 ½ cups water or milk: ½ cup amaranth) for approximately 25 minutes, looks like a porridge with a delicious taste. Simply popped amaranth seeds can be consumed as a snack or can be used to top soups, salads, and various vegetable dishes. (Copeman Healthcare Centre. n.d.). Amaranth flour is great for baking as well. Moreover it can be combined with other grains in a proportion of ¼ cup: ¾ cup respectively, to enhance the taste with its extra nutty sweetness. It also has a thickening quality which is why it can easily be used in soups. The leaves of this plant taste like spinach and are edible, so they can be used in salads.

**Buckwheat:** Buckwheat grains are used to make buckwheat flour, which is light, gluten-free but imparts a strong flavour to cookies, muffins, rolls, breads, pancakes and famous Russian blinis. This flour also has excellent thickening property and thus can be used as a thickener for soups, stews and sauces. The hulled, crushed kernels (called groats) can be served as hot cereal (the ratio of buckwheat and water or milk is 1:2 cups respectively, with a cooking time of 25 minutes approx.) or can also be used in rice-like side dishes. Roasted groats, called kasha, have a nuttier flavour and a chewy, tender texture. Kasha and buckwheat groats can also be used in filling casseroles, in salads, and in various other stuffing and side dishes.

**Bulgur:** Bulgur is a fast cooking form of whole wheat which is made by cleaning, roasting, drying and crushing whole-wheat kernels. It can easily be cooked like rice using some hot water or stock. It comes with a nutty flavour and chewy texture and is sold in coarse, medium or fine grinds. Coarse grinds are perfect for stuffing, thickening soups and preparing casseroles, medium grinds are mostly used to replace rice, and the finest grinds are great for breakfast cereals and tabbouleh salad. It is a main ingredient in kibbeh, a popular Levantine dish. It is considered to be a good substitute for rice or couscous as it is high nutritious.

**Chia:** Since Chia is renowned for its property of imparting tons of energy and helping in weight loss, it more popular than other ancient grains. It can easily act as a main ingredient in preparing various items. When a handful of dry, grounded chia seeds and water is combined in a ratio of 1 tbsp seeds with 3 tbsp water, a gel like substance is produced, which can substitute one egg in any baked recipe. (Care2 Healthy Living. N.d.). Coarsely grounded chia flour can be used in various recipes and are particularly great for baking and as thickening agent. Chia seeds can be sprouted like bean and can be used in salads and as garnishes. When chia seeds are mixed with coconut water, a hydrating, thick energy drink can be prepared. Other than these, chia seeds can be used in the preparation of tasty, homemade jam, healthy pudding and also as an excellent

breeding for baking chicken or fish, as it offers a nutty and crunchy flavour. (<http://wellnessmama.com/4981/uses-for-chia-seeds>)

**Millet:** It has a mildly sweet and nutty flavour. While cooking, the ratio is one part millet to 2 1/2 part boiling water. The texture of cooked millet can vary from fluffy to creamy conditional to the cooking style and time. General cooking time for millet is approximately 25 to 30 minutes with lid on. It can be added to soups or can be served as side dish. It tastes good when popped and served as a snack. Millet flour is also good for baking.

**Sorghum:** Sorghum is possibly the world's most multipurpose domesticated plant. Its grains can be simmered like rice. It can be cooked like oats for porridge, “malted” like barley for beer, baked to make breads, or simply cracked like popcorn for snacks. The leaves of sorghum are often used as feed or silage, and the stems for construction, fencing, broom making, firewood and weaving. The grains can also be used to extract vegetable oil, adhesives, waxes, dyes, and starches.

### **Mainstream Trend of Ancient Grains and their Promising Market**

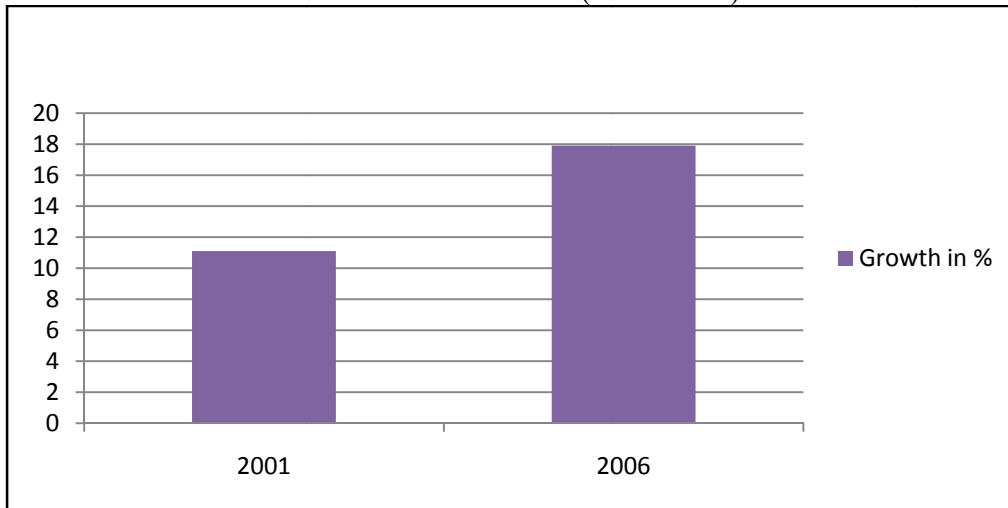
According to the Vendors, the escalating popularity of ancient grains depends on three factors: they attract exploratory cooks searching for new tastes and textures; they are excellent substitutes to people with allergies towards common grains; and they are definitely richer in nutrients than normal grains.

Perhaps most significant for “ancient grains”, however, is that top breakfast brands are choosing them as people are shifting to traditional, natural and nutritious diets. For example Kellogg’s has just launched Special K Nourish multigrain cereals and cereal bars made with quinoa in combination with oats, barley and wheat in the United States. Retailers and manufacturers report that ancient grains are gaining huge popularity in the market and are sturdily growing, particularly as these grains are being revived and are incorporated into familiar processed foods such as cereal, pasta, cookies, baby foods and health drinks. According to them, Quinoa, chia, spelt and amaranth are among the best-selling ancient grains. (Australian Food News. n.d.).

Another study by *Amber Waves, USDA Economic Research Service (ERS), March 2011* shows that in 2001, 11.1 per cent of ancient grain products out of total packaged grain products were purchased in grocery stores (excluding flours, mixes, and frozen or ready-to-cook products). But by 2006, ancient grains’ accounted for of 17.9 per cent of total grain product purchased.

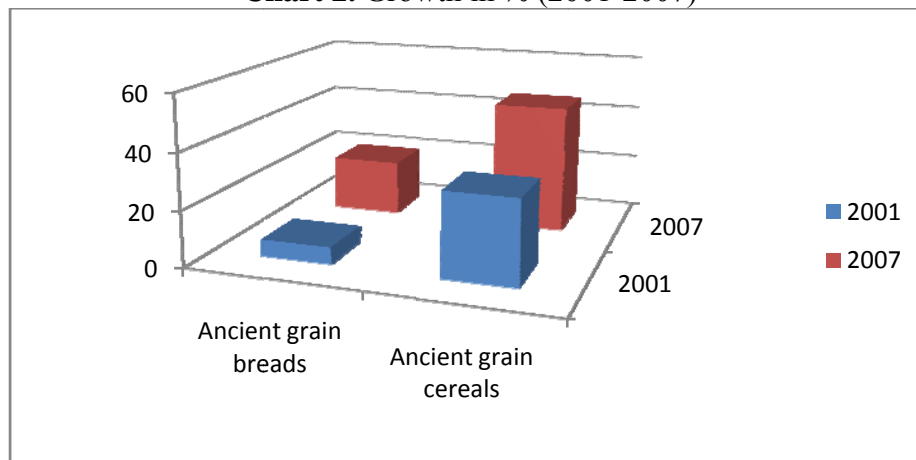
In 2001, Ancient grain breads had a share of 6 per cent of all pounds of bread purchased which increased to 20 per cent by 2007. In the same time period, ancient grain cereals hopped from 30 per cent to 46 per cent of all cereals purchased.

**Chart 1. Growth in % (2001-2006)**



Source: Amber Waves, USDA Economic Research Service (ERS).

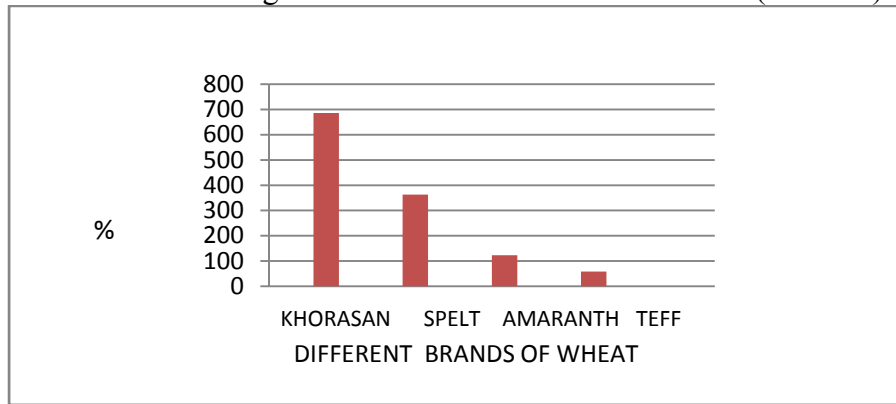
**Chart 2. Growth in % (2001-2007)**



Source: Amber Waves, USDA Economic Research Service (ERS)

According to data from **SPINS**, a leading supplier of retail consumer analytics and insights, Kamut® brand khorasan wheat saw the highest growth, at 686%, with spelt growing 363% during the same period. Gluten-free ancient grains also showed strong sales, with amaranth up 123% and teff up 58%. (SPINS,n.d.).

**Chart 3.** Percentage Growth in Different Wheat Brands (2013-14)

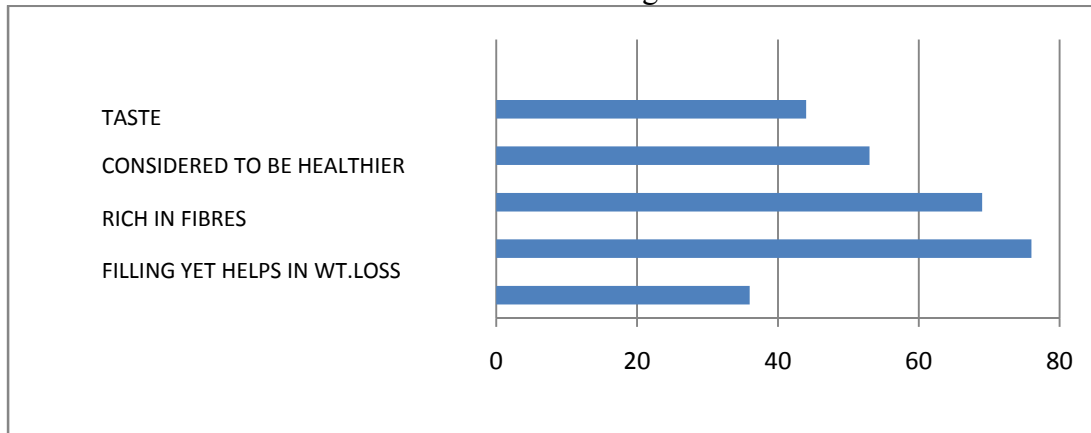


Source: SPINS

According to a survey by Kellogg Co. in March 2009, the reason for choosing ancient grains, as stated by consumers, are the following:

Taste: 36%; Considered to be healthier 76%; Rich in fibre 69%; filling yet helps in weight loss 53%; and Rich in vitamins and minerals 44%

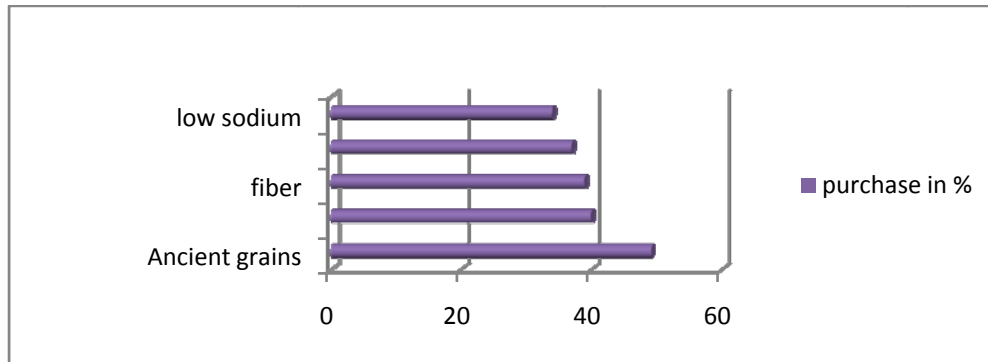
**Chart 4.** Reasons For Choosing Ancient Grains



Source: Survey by Kellogg Co.

According to the Shopping for Health survey by The Food Marketing Institute (FMI), consumers shopping for grocery are seeking more ancient grains. Their top five purchases are: Ancient grains or whole grains 49%, 40 % multigrain, 39% fibre, 37% low fat and 34% low sodium.

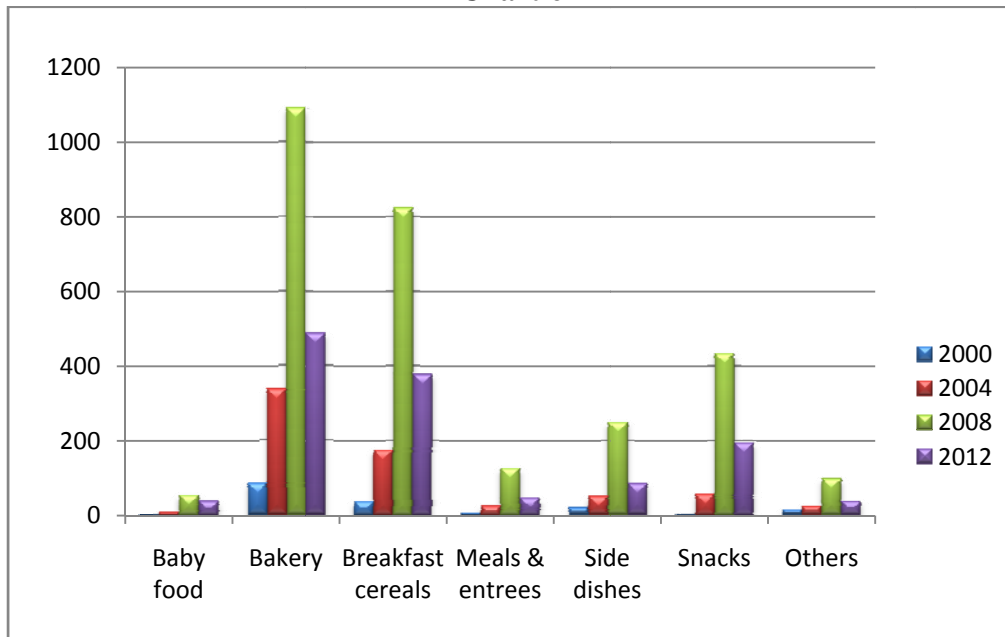
**Chart 5. Purchase in %**



Source: *Shopping for Health survey by The Food Marketing Institute (FMI)*

Moreover, two surveys from the National Restaurant Association named whole grains as a hot trend for 2009. In the NRA's annual Chef Survey, 1600 kitchen maestros named quinoa the top trend in side dishes, while ancient grains garnered third place in "other food items/ingredients." In the category of "Culinary Themes," nutrition and health took first place. (The Whole Grains Council, n.d.). According to a survey by Mintel in 2012, bakery, breakfast cereals and snacks has now the largest share of new product introduction containing ancient grains.

**Chart 6**



Source: *Mintel Global New Products Database*

**Findings**

The key findings of the study are:

- Ancient grains like Amaranth, Buckwheat, Chia, Quinoa, Farro, Spelt, Sorghum, etc. are undeniably worth exploring as they are superior in fibre and rich in nutrient content and are tasty as well. This exclusive combination of taste and health has escalated their demands.

- The intensifying popularity of ancient grains depends on three factors: they attract exploratory cooks searching for new tastes and textures; they are excellent substitutes to people with allergies towards common grains; and they are definitely richer in nutrients than normal grains.
- Being the “hottest trend” according to a survey conducted on chefs, modern approaches are being used to cook these grains rather than the traditional methods of cooking. Experimenting with ancient grains is a challenge and chefs are coming up with newer recipes in order to gain more popularity among consumers.
- These contemporary approaches of incorporating or using these grains in modern meals include categorization of grains based on their cooking time, pairing them with proteins, combining different methods of cooking and using fresh ones for better flavour and texture. Retailers and manufacturers report that ancient grains are gaining huge popularity in the market and are strongly growing, particularly as these grains are being revived and are incorporated into familiar processed foods such as cereal, pasta, cookies, baby foods and health drinks. According to them, Quinoa, chia, spelt and amaranth are among the best-selling ancient grains.
- Kamut<sup>®</sup> brand khorasan wheat witnessed the highest growth, at 686%, followed by spelt with 363% growth, amaranth coming next with 123% and lastly teff up with 58% according to data from **SPINS**, a leading supplier of retail consumer analytics and insights (SPINS - Aligning Retailers, Brands and Consumers. Naturally. n.d.).
- Ancient grains are considered to be healthier by 76% consumers according to a survey by *Kellogg Co. in March 2009, which is one of the reasons for its huge popularity.*
- Ancient grains are listed to in the top position among the top five purchases according to the Shopping for Health survey by The Food Marketing Institute (FMI).
- According to a survey by Mintel in 2012, bakery, breakfast cereals and snacks has now the largest share of new product introduction containing ancient grains.

### **Conclusion**

Ancient grains are foods venerated by ancient civilizations. The popularity of these grains are now growing at an incredible pace as now consumers have understood the importance of eating natural and healthy to combat various lifestyle diseases.

Research has shown that consumption of these grains helps to lower cholesterol levels and reduces chances of developing diabetes and certain cancers and is highly nutritious Rowan, J., n.d.). Moreover they provide us substitutes to modern hybridized grains.

Dieticians have now termed them as nutritional powerhouses - the "super foods". But people have a misconception that healthy cannot be tasty. That is why most of the ancient grains were previously consumed as only breakfast cereals.

These grains are not only popular among the consumers, but the chefs have also voted them as an upcoming “Hot” trend. Thus to break the myth of “healthy cannot be tasty” and to incorporate more ancient grains in our daily meals, new recipes and methods are now being sought. It has now become extremely important to emphasize on various methods of cooking these grains in a tasty yet healthy way.



Exploratory cooks are now enjoying the challenge of working with these ingredients which are new to modern people but are actually centuries old and are experimenting various methods to incorporate these grains in modern cooking.

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