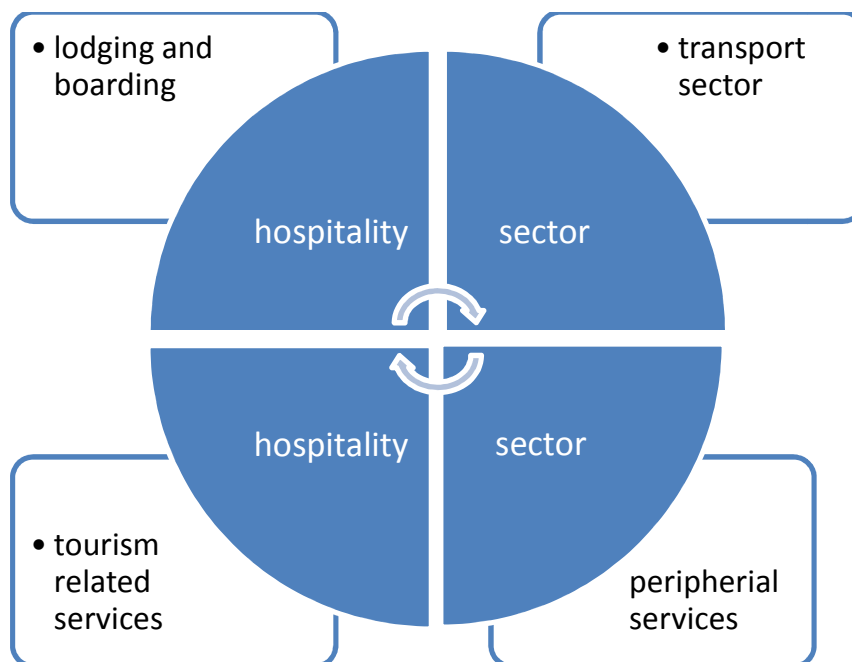


Challenges and Opportunities in the field of Higher Education in Hospitality Studies in India

Dr. Suvarna Sathe
Principal
TMV's IHMCT

Introduction

Hospitality industry encompasses various sectors which are interlinked to each other. It includes hotels, restaurants, fast food chains, service apartments, transport sector including air, sea and road transport; it also covers tourism related services like tour operators, travel agents, escorts. Peripheral services like insurance, banking, shopping centers, money exchange are also the part of hospitality industry



The uniqueness about hospitality industry is the number of cross linkages it has with various other sectors. It makes the hospitality industry a complex sector with various dimensions attached to it.

Another feature distinguishing this industry is it's a service industry. Uniformity of services unlike goods is difficult to achieve. The aspect of inseparability, intangibility makes hospitality industry different from other industry.

The higher education in the fields of other professional courses is easy to define and could be more or less uniform throughout. But the very nature of hospitality industry changes the nature of education in this field.

The purpose of higher education in any field is to achieve proficiency and excel in the skills. It is true for most of professional courses like engineering, medical and architecture. The post graduate, doctoral programmes in these domains are prevailing for a long time. Even there are specialties and super specialties in certain professional courses.

Unfortunately in India the hospitality higher education in hospitality sector has lagged behind seriously. There could be numerous reasons enumerated for this:

- Negligence from government: (tourism and hospitality industry came on government agenda in the year 2000). In the year 2000 first time government of India gave recognition to this sector as an industry. No funds allocation was separately done for this sector till then.
- Industry mostly private, setting their own norms and standards individually. So what qualification stands true for one organization may not apply for the other organization. E.g. Oberoi group will train their own employees with Oberoi Management Programmes IATA courses for tour operators and travel agents who wish enter into ticketing. IHMs follow their own syllabus separately. AICTE approved institutes have other curriculum to follow.
- Lack of will power from academicians as well as industry: The need of trained manpower is tremendous but quantity is always preferred over quality. Cheap manpower is easily available at entry level. So industry is least bothered about quality of manpower. Low wages are still prevailing. Academicians in turn are ignorant in taking efforts to train quality manpower as quantity is always absorbed by the industry.
- Mindset of students opting for hospitality education: Most of them would want to train for year or two in the industry and then try abroad for better paid jobs. They would also want to take up higher education abroad as the qualification acquired abroad would stand a chance to

establish in the industry abroad. It also helps them in settling abroad. As it is better than the low paid jobs in India.

All together the situation does not seem to be encouraging for higher education in hospitality. Few courses run by old and renowned institutes in India do provide quality manpower but the proportion is negligible. Moreover it would be interesting to find out which of the industry professionals would want to upgrade their educational qualification and for what reasons.

Hypothesis of the study

1. The situation for higher studies in hospitality in India is in its nascent stage
2. There are opportunities for growth and expansion of higher education in hospitality studies in India.
3. The hospitality industry requires the trained manpower with higher education, providing which is a great challenge for the academics.

Primary Data

The Primary data analysis is qualitative and not quantitative hence it has been analyzed in a subjective format and not in a tabular or graphical format.

There were 2 questionnaires made / designed – one for industry professionals asking their views on Hospitality Higher Education and the other one was made for academicians which asked for their inputs regarding the same.

One Interviewee was representing a chain of hotels in India whose views would stand as collective views for all such types of hotels.

The other was representing standalone properties whose view should be considered for standalone hotels.

The Questionnaire for academicians which was circulated to Principals of Hotel Management Institutes and also to the teaching faculties.

Analysis of Questionnaire Aimed at Professionals

A. Views of representatives from Chain Hotels

- (i) **Credibility or relevance of Higher Education in Hospitality:** Not significant. Relevance of higher education does not matter if the person to be appointed does not have necessary experience and personality traits
- (ii) **Promotion Prospects:** No preferential treatment given to person having higher educational qualifications. Experience and skills count more in relation to the higher education.
- (iii) **Benefits of Higher Education to working Industry Professionals:** Most of chain hotels have their own management training programmes to promote employees and the industry does not encourage concessions on work-front for pursuing higher education.
- (iv) **Career prospects abroad with higher education degree procured in India:** Currently graduate students are going abroad to enroll in higher education studies in hospitality. With higher education in hospitality being offered in India, chances of a student getting recognition for employment abroad broadly looks bleak.
- (v) **Target Market for Enrolling for Higher Education in Hospitality Studies:** People working in departments / areas in a hotel will not pursue higher education.

B. Views of representatives from Standalone Hotels

- (i) **Credibility / Relevance:** Require qualified manpower at managerial levels in all department
- (ii) **Promotion prospects:** No preferential treatment given. Could consider on case to case basis with weight age given to experience and skills.
- (iii) **Benefits of Higher Education to working Industry professionals:** No concession is made and if given would differ from person to person.
- (iv) **Career prospect abroad:** Generally looks bleak.
- (v) **Target Market for Enrolling for Higher Education in Hospitality Studies:** No specific idea

Analysis of Questionnaire Aimed at Academicians

Sr. No.	Questionnaire contents	1	2	3	4	5
(i)	Scope of Higher Education	Insignificant	No Scope	Yes, some scope	Insignificant	Yes. In limited field of research
(ii)	Promotion prospects	Not Many	Negative	Yes 100%	Negative	Difficult to say as of now
(iii)	Benefits of Higher Education to Industry Working Professionals	Not relevant, no special benefits	No	Research oriented opportunities	No special benefits. Not relevant	Not much for industry experience counts more
(iv)	Career opportunities with Indian Higher Education Degree	Not currently	No	Indecisive	Not in near future	yes
(v)	Target Market Enrolling for Higher Education in Hospitality Studies.	Only teaching avenues	No	International hotels, flight catering	Teaching fraternity	Teaching job seekers.

Secondary data

In Maharashtra the Undergraduate courses in hospitality sector are prevailing for a long time. The first ever AICTE approved Masters programme in Hotel Management is launched by University of Pune in the year 2012. Speaking about other fields of higher education in hospitality sector there is no further higher education offered by the state University.

For the purpose of higher education for this research the recognized institutes by AICTE and UGC are taken into consideration

Region wise count of HMCT programmes approved by AICTE

(Source – www.aicte-india.org)

Sr. No.	Region	State	HMCT Programme
1.	Western	Goa	2
		Maharashtra	20
Total			22
Grand total of Western Maharashtra			1722
2.	Southern	Pondicherry	1
		Tamil Nadu	8
Total			9
Grand total of Southern Region			1799
3.	North West	Delhi	1
		Haryana	6
		Jammu & Kashmir	1
		Punjab	10
		Rajasthan	6
Total			24
Grand total of North West			2151
4.	South Central	Andhra Pradesh	2
Total			2
Grand total of South Central			2924
5.	South West	Karnataka	17
		Kerala	7
Total			24
Grand total of South West			1203
6.	Eastern	Jharkhand	1
		Meghalaya	1
		Orissa	1
		Tripura	11
Total			14
Grand total of Eastern Region			793

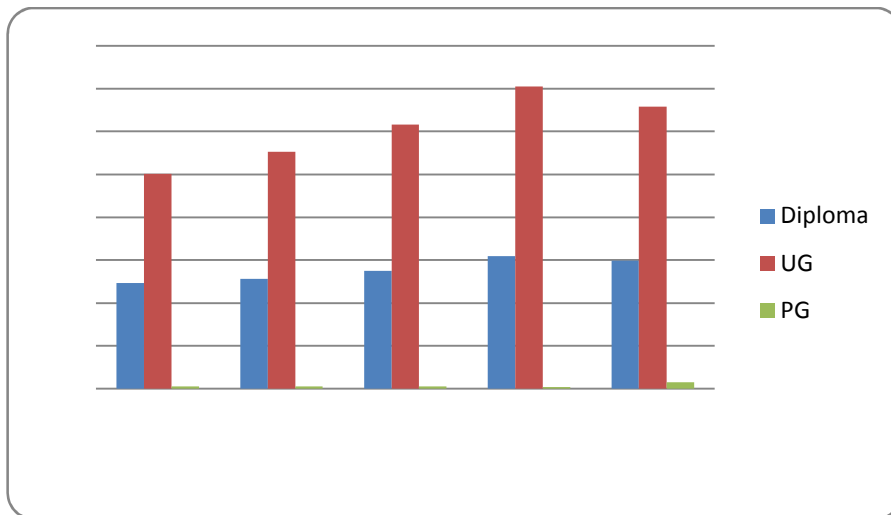
Total all AICTE institutes running all courses – 10592

Hotel Management Institutes – 95 – .89%

State of P.G. programmes under AICTE

Dip. / UG/PG	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Diploma	2465	2565	2745	3095	2985
UG	5017	5530	6160	7050	6575
PG	60	60	60	36	156

Graphical presentation -



Source: www.aicte-india.org

List of UGC approved colleges 2011-12 in BBA in Hospitality and Tourism

Sr. No.	Region	Nos.
1.	Northern Region	5
2.	Western Region	8
3.	Eastern / North Eastern Region	6
4.	Southern Region	9
Total		28

Inferences drawn from Primary data

- Need for higher education in Hospitality Studies is a much debatable issue between the industry and academicians.
 - Hospitality Industry is often mistaken solely as hotels and it is a mindset of most students that the only requirement to join industry is to complete a graduate programme which helps them get a foothold in the industry.
1. The hospitality industry is skill oriented and values work experience more than higher education.
 2. The industry's feedback on whether need of higher education in hospitality is required was that there was some scope but not very significant. Relevance of higher education does not matter if the person to be appointed does not have necessary experience and personality traits.
 3. The industry view is that no preferential treatment will be given to higher education qualifications. Experience and skills count more in relation to the high education and no concessions will be given.
 4. The academicians view on further higher studies is that till now there was no need for such a step to be taken as industry as a whole is unorganized and doesn't give priority to hospitality education seriously.
 5. Academicians feel that such an introduction of higher level hospitality studies may improve the image of our industry as a whole but we need the industry to be actively involved in the formation of a complete course structure which will give the academicians an idea what the industry really expects.
 6. Academicians also feel that our higher studies in hospitality would not have any recognition abroad and our higher education in hospitality is much to be desired.
 7. Academicians also feel that higher studies would result in further scope of studies (M.Phil., Ph.D.) but the number pursuing such studies would be negligible.
 8. There is also a divided view on whether this higher education is going to help industry employees to further their careers in hospitality industry but it would help students who want to pursue teaching as a career.

Inferences drawn from secondary data

1. Under Graduate programmes are prevailing in the field of education for more than 25 years in India.
2. There are total 10592 officially AICTE approved institutes in India offering various AICTE approved courses.
3. Out of 10592, 95 are hotel management institutes i.e. .89%.
4. In this .89% there are diplomas, Under Graduate and Post Graduate institutes included.
5. Over the year 2010-11 in the year 2011-12 the number of diploma and under graduate intake has reduced.

Diploma intake reduced by 110 seats.

Under Graduate intake is reduced by 475 seats.

6. But situation for Higher Education Post Graduate programme looks better. Over the 36 seats of 2010-11, there has been a growth of 120 seats in the year 2011-12.
7. Compared to other streams of education the total number of students enrolling in the field is hospitality education is less.
8. There has been decrease in the level of Under Graduate students' enrollment, where as the number of Post Graduate seats is increased by about 4 times in the year 2011-12.
9. In the years 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 there has been increase in the seats of Under Graduate programmes but in that period the intake of Post Graduate has been steady. In the year 2010-11 there was a quantum leap of 1000 seats of Under Graduate programme. In that year Post Graduate seats are reduced by 50%. In the year 2011-12 there is decrease in seats by about 5% for Under Graduate programme. In the same year the Post Graduate programme have shown growth over four times in 2010-11.

In all there is a very strange trend in the intake variance of Post Graduate and Under Graduate course. Inverse relation between the Under Graduate and post graduate intake is observed.

Challenges in Higher Education in Hospitality Studies

1. Industry and Education currently are thoroughly unorganized. Both are going in opposite directions. Industry wants more quantity manpower than quality manpower.
2. Industry doesn't not necessarily employ qualified graduates of hotel management at entry level so for employees having higher education degrees, the chances to get jobs at higher positions is negligible.
3. The correlation between Under Graduate seats availability and Post Graduate seats availability is inversely proportional according to last four years statistics (AICTE).
4. There are two parallel courses being conducted under one State University offering one Council approved course and one unapproved course which are treated at par by the hospitality industry.

Opportunities in Higher Education in Hospitality Studies

1. To develop a complete industry competent higher education product which is accepted wholeheartedly by the industry.
2. To develop higher education hospitality studies in India which would be accepted at an international level.

Conclusion

1. Pertaining to Hypothesis number 1, the higher studies in Hospitality in India are indeed in its nascent stage this is in reference to point number 6 in inferences drawn from secondary which states that there were only 36 seats for Post Graduate courses in hospitality in 2010-11 and gradually those increased to 120 seats in the year 2011-12 which is encouraging. A new course MHMCT – Masters in Hotel Management and Catering Technology has been recently launched in 2012-13 for higher studies in Hotel Management and Catering Technology under the Department of Management, University of Pune. It took 25 long years to start a Masters course as a Diploma / Degree was equally acceptable to the industry. In early 2000-01, due to industry demand a Bachelors degree was initiated.
2. Pertaining to Hypothesis no. 2 the opportunities in higher education are specific to industry and industry should give required weight age while employing these students and should

employ them at higher positions. Currently the opportunities existing for higher education is limited to field of education for students who have completed their bachelors programme and want to further find employment in teaching .

There could be an opportunity for growth of further studies after completion of masters' programme like Ph.D. or M.Phil. or Post Doctorate Studies but currently data is not available. But such a possibility cannot be denied in future.

Research work through higher studies (Ph.D.) could benefit the industry in future.

3. Hypothesis no.3 isn't valid as the following inferences suggest.

1. Industry accepts all candidates / employees at entry level therefore industry is looking for numbers to employ and not quality candidates.
2. Students have started turning away from employment options at hotels as there is very little incentive and a low wage structure.
3. Industry has their own working style / norms to employ people and they necessary do not look for hotel management graduates to do particular jobs. (E.g. Hiring of B.A. or B.Com. graduates in Front Office as receptionists.) Hotels require people with minimum skills set who can be molded and groomed according to the culture of that organization or specific training in a particular department or work area.

There is no standardization of particular quality traits for employees as the nature of the industry is pertaining to people.

Appendix

Questionnaire for Academicians

1. Do you think there is a scope for higher education in hospitality? And how?
2. Who do you think would be the potential students for the higher education in hospitality?
3. What opportunities do you see for the students who complete this course?
4. What was the foundation for initiation for this particular course launch at MSIHMCT?
5. What were the steps taken to design the curriculum?
6. Do you think that the students passing out MHMCT would get preferential treatment by the hospitality industry during recruitment?
7. Would there be a relevance of higher education in the industry in terms of promotion?
8. Would this qualification help in improving career prospects of degree holders going abroad?
9. In your opinion is the practical aspect relevant in the higher education?
10. Would this platform in higher education lead to further studies in hospitality education?
11. Which sectors of hospitality industry do you think would opt for higher education?
12. Do you think the fresh hospitality graduates see this as a golden opportunity to enhance their careers

Questionnaire for Hospitality Industry Professionals

1. What is your opinion on Higher Education in Hospitality Studies?
2. Do you think that the students completing higher studies in Hospitality would get preferential treatment by the hospitality industry during recruitment?
3. Do you think that the practical aspect is relevant in higher education and why?
4. What job positions would the industry offer to candidates who have completed higher studies in hospitality?
5. As an industry professional what would be your inputs in designing of the curriculum for higher studies in hospitality?
6. Would you recommend or advice current hotel employees to enroll for higher education?
7. If employees are willing to pursue higher education in hospitality would the industry be willing to make concessions on work front?

8. Would this platform (New Masters course launched by University of Pune) in higher education lead to further studies in hospitality education?
9. Would this qualification help in improving career prospects of degree holders who want to work abroad?
10. Which sectors of the hospitality industry do you think would opt for higher education in hospitality?

Bibliography

Books

1. Ethics in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry – 2nd Edition
Author - Karen Lieberman & Bruce Nissen
2. Hospitality Management Education
Author - Kayesung chon, Clayton W. Barrows & Robert Bosselman
3. Tourism – Principles and Practices
Author – Sampat Kumar Swain & Jitendra Mohan Mishra.

Research Papers

1. A Development Strategy for the Hospitality Operations Management Curriculum by Peter Harris International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management Vol 7no.5 1st May 1995(Pg.29-32)
2. Attitudes of students to modular hospitality programmes by Nigel Hemmington Education and Training Volume 37, no. 4 1st April 1995 (Pg. 32 – 37)
3. Higher Education in India Based on Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) working paper 179, ‘Higher Education on India: The Need for a Change’ by Pawan Agarwal, May 2006.
4. Strengthening the Delivery Mechanism in Hospitality Management Education by Applying the Implications of Sound Pedagogical Theories by Mr. Rajiv Mishra & Mr. Kulwinder Pal Vol. 10 (Version 1.0), April 2010 Global Journal of Management and Business Research.

----xx----