

HOSPITALITY EDUCATION IN ALLAHABAD –A STUDENT’S PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Background: *This paper emphasizes on significance of hospitality education keeping in view the student’s perspective in the city of Allahabad. Hospitality education opens a wide range of career prospects related to hotel and tourism management, restaurant management, culinary art, retail and financial management. Objective:* *To assess the student’s perspective regarding Hospitality education. Method:* *The data was collected by the means of questionnaire from 100 students of class 12th of various streams studying at different coaching centres of Allahabad. Result:* *The subjects had strong awareness regarding hospitality industry, out of which 84% believed it as an excellent career option. All the Commerce students believed that Hospitality management is a viable career option for them whereas only 75% of the Science and Arts students believed so. All the Science and Commerce students believed that there is no favourable atmosphere and career prospects for Hospitality Management graduates in the city of Allahabad whereas only 67% of the Art students share the same opinion. Conclusion:* *There is a need for state and central governments to focus on the tourism development of the city which has a lot of potential.*

Key Words: *Hospitality Education, Science, Commerce, Arts, Allahabad.*

INTRODUCTION

Hospitality education in India is transforming itself by leaps and bounds through a phase of evolution driven by the needs of the industry. The central mission of hospitality management education programmes is to prepare students for careers in the hospitality industry (Sneed and Heinman, 1995), while the hospitality industry, like every organisation, is concerned with the quality of its managers (Jones and Lockwood, 1989).

The Indian hospitality industry is experiencing an exponential growth. The industry has recorded a double digit growth of 11% in revenue. One can move to any country to find a job and make a career.

A career in hotel management will offer endless job opportunities and a good growth. The industry has a growth rate of 200% per year (Sen, 2013). New international chains are entering the booming Indian hospitality sector and existing major national and international players are expanding their footprints to Tier II and Tier III cities. Many a global hospitality major such as Marriott, Accor, Best Western and Carlson have announced significant additions to their existing portfolio of hotels by 2015-2016. (Simon, 2010). Hence, in the international scene, tourism-related programs are as diverse as the industry they serve and the types of academic units they belong to, while most of them are not relevant to the needs of the real world (Fayos-Sola, 1995).

Even though a lot of tourism development initiatives are taking place in Tier II and Tier III cities, there is still lack of infrastructure development necessary for tourism as well as for hospitality industry. One such city is the city of Allahabad. Known as 'Prayag' in ancient times, Allahabad is famous for the Mahakumbh Mela held once in every twelve years and also for Sangam, the meeting point of the rivers Ganga and Yamuna. Apart from religious tourism, it is also the city of education where students from all over the country come to prepare for various competitive exams such as Civil Services and Law because of the presence of U.P. High Court.

Having such a high potential for tourism, the city still lags behind in establishment of luxurious five star hotels. The only four star hotel in the city is 'Kanha Shyam' situated in the downtown Civil Lines.

Also it has been reported that there is a huge gap between the demand and supply of manpower for Hospitality and Tourism Industry. There also exists a problem of quality output as per the actual requirement and expectations of the industry. It is believed that for the Indian hospitality industry to achieve its true potential just market growth is not enough, the industry needs high potential human resources for achieving its targeted success. But in spite of these realizations, the industry still holds the student's perspective as a subject of minimal importance, even though realizing that present-day student is the future human resource.

Nelson and Dopson (2001) compared hotel managers, human resource specialists, and hospitality alumni's perceptions of competencies necessary for success in the hospitality field. Generic skills, also referred to as 'core skills', 'key competencies', and 'employability skills', are described as 'those transferable skills which are essential for employability at some level'. Raybould and Wilkins (2005) integrated a generic skill framework to rank important skill areas of hospitality graduates. Their study adopted a model with nine generic skill groups similar to the employability skills framework proposed in a study by Australian industry representative groups, these are Oral Communication, Written Communication, Problem-Solving, Conceptual and Analytical skills, Information Management, Using numerical ideas and techniques, Using technology

Aspiring Mind's National Employability Report for Hotel Management graduates (2012) analyzed the employability variances across various groups to gain an understanding of the needs and the gaps. Some key findings of the report are: The percentage of Hotel Management candidates those

are directly hireable for a hospitality job after college is quite low which 6% to 18% is. Only 6–18% of students passing out from Hotel Management institutes are fit to work in the hospitality sector. Candidates scored low on fundamental skills like English language skill, Logical Ability and soft skills like Self-Management, Quality Orientation, and Managerial Skills etc. This indicates that Hotel Management institutes are unable to either attract or train the right kind of talent. The current boom in hospitality companies means that the need for trained manpower far exceeds the current supply. On top of that only a small percentage of those candidates are actually ready to hire for a jobs. This points toward a scenario where there are unfilled vacancies on one hand and unemployable youth on the other. However, there are also a good number of candidates (20–28%) who can become employable after some orientation and training by Hospitality companies. A sizeable number of candidates are unemployable because of their lack in English Language skills. Employability of Institute Hotel Management (IHM's) is significantly higher than non- IHM's and yet almost 50% of the employable pool of Hotel Management candidates is invisible to recruiters.

In this study, efforts have been made to analyze hospitality education scenario in the current perspective of students and industry expectations in the city of Allahabad. It also covers the problems associated with it and the role being played by the institutions, industry and regulatory authorities. The findings of the study have been put to understand the current situation in true perspective. The results of the study will provide an opportunity to identify the issues and challenges before hospitality education in current scenario.

As such, this study will add greatly to the existing hospitality education literature in Central Allahabad. Findings of this study would help hospitality administrators to know about the intermediate student's viewpoint regarding hospitality education. The comparison of the suitability of the course with the viewpoints of students under different streams. Moreover, the study serves as a good base for researchers willing to work more in the areas of development and tapping of untapped potential of tier II and tier III cities students in the field of hospitality management. The objective of the study is to assess the student's perspective under various streams regarding hospitality education as a career option.

METHODOLOGY

For the present work survey design was adopted which was conducted in Allahabad. Five coaching centres for different streams like Science, Commerce and Arts were surveyed in Allahabad. Subjects comprised of students (n=100) who were attending classes in these coaching centre. Subjects from science stream were 34 from commerce and humanities stream were 33 respectively.

The survey was conducted in February, 2015. Questionnaire was devised which consisted of the open ended questions related to students' awareness regarding the hospitality industry, their expectations from the course, their awareness regarding career prospects, their impression of five star hotels, salary expectations, parental influence in choice of career, career prospects and migration from the city.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On the basis of data collected from 100 students from varied streams studying at five different coaching centres of Allahabad the results are presented herewith:

The response of student's regarding awareness of hospitality industry on the scale of 5 was found and the findings revealed that Science students gave 4 on scale of 5(65%) and 5 on scale of 5(35%) as mark of awareness about hospitality industry. Commerce student gave 4 on scale of 5 (61%), 5 on scale of 5(36%) and 3 on scale of 5(3%) as a mark of awareness about hospitality industry. Arts students gave 4 on scale of 5(36%) and 5 on scale of 5(12%) and 3 on scale of 5 (52%) as mark of awareness about hospitality industry. This shows greater level of awareness amongst the students of Science stream followed by students of commerce stream.

Table 1: Perception of Students from various streams regarding aspects related to Hospitality Education

Parameter	Science (n=34)	Commerce (n=33)	Art (n=33)
Awareness regarding Hospitality industry on the scale of 5	65%	61%	36%
Belief that hospitality management is a viable career option	75%	100%	75%
Favourable impression of five star hotels	100%	61%	94%
Streams which find hospitality education similar to their stream	45%	50%	83%
No Favourable atmosphere and career prospects for HM graduates in Allahabad	100%	100%	67%
Migration from Allahabad	88%	85%	73%
No Friends/acquaintance associated with the hospitality industry	88%	64%	76%
Counselling for Hotel Management by different streams Coaching Centres	100%	45%	61%
Awareness regarding competency skills required to join hospitality industry.	21%	91%	52%
No social stigma attached to this course	30%	88%	70%
Parental pressure regarding choice of Career	47%	100%	97%
Lack of infrastructure and insufficient tourism reason for no 5 star hotel in Allahabad	82%	70%	88%

On being asked about Hospitality management as a career option majority (84%) of the students believed that hospitality management is an excellent choice as career option whereas 8% believed that the growth is slow in the industry and remaining 8% believed that there are not sufficient opportunities in the industry. It was found that the Commerce students hold hospitality management in higher regard and are more likely to join the course as compared to both Science and Arts. The current study result shows that if commerce students join hotel management they can use their commerce and financial studies in managing hotel. When asked about their impression regarding five star hotel majority (85%) students said that glamour, high salaries and international exposure fascinates them to five star hotels.

On comparing the results of different streams regarding hospitality education it was found that majority (60%) students think that hospitality management is a course meant only for art students. It was also observed that 30% of students have also marked hospitality management as a suitable course option for science students too. Thus the results of the study indicate that if science students opt for hospitality management as career they can evolve in the fields like Food Science and Nutrition, Molecular Gastronomy, Oenology, Ergonomics, Horticulture, Floriculture, Management Information System, Facility Designing and Planning etc which are offered by the course.

With respect to whether Allahabad offers a favorable atmosphere and career prospects for hospitality management graduates it was seen that all the Science and Commerce students disagreed. This gave clear indication to higher migration level of students to other states for better career opportunity after completion of their class 12th. It was also observed that 76% students have no friends or acquaintance associated with the hospitality industry which also shows unpopularity of hospitality education culture.

When asked about Counselling for Hotel Management by respective school/coaching centre majority (69%) students said that they have not received any counselling for hospitality management. This clearly shows the unpopularity of hospitality management course over other courses like Medical, Engineering, Chartered Accountancy. 54% students were not even aware of the basic competency skills required to join hospitality industry either. Thus it is a clear indication that the schools or the coaching centers must start training the intermediate students for skill oriented management courses like Hospitality Management.

A positive response from students was noted as majority (62%) students said that there is no social stigma attached to this course. Commerce students were ahead in analysing the course from management aspect they condemn the myth that the course produces only cooks and waiters. However, the students pursuing science stream associate the course with the social stigma. Also an overwhelming response was received as majority (81%) students also said that they were not pressurized by their parents to pursue their career in traditional fields. This marks a welcoming change in the mind set of Indian Parents where children are allowed to follow their own ambition.

In response to the question whether lack of infrastructure and tourism being prominent reason for non-existence of five star hotels in Allahabad, majority (81%) students agreed to it. This shows the need of up gradation in the city's existing infrastructure and promotion of tourism in the city.

CONCLUSION

The study showcased high level of awareness among class 12th students of Allahabad. There is a need for state and central governments to focus on the tourism development of the city which has a lot of potential. The needs of the students must be considered for course designing. Parents in the tier II cities should also understand the importance of independent career decisions for their children. There is a dire need for the expansion of industry to even the remotest part, so that it can grow at a rapid pace.

The hospitality industry of India is much more than the metropolitans and other mega cities. Hence, hospitality education should also be penetrated into Tier I and Tier II areas as it is one of the necessities for the industry to nurture.

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