

HOTELS & RESTAURANTS INDIA fhrai magazine

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Dear FHRAI Members,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the latest edition of our monthly magazine. The hospitality industry has been one of the hardest hit by COVID, and the road to recovery has been long and arduous. However, I am confident that with our collective efforts, we can put the industry back on the path of growth and prosperity. We have a lot of ground to cover, but I am confident that we can achieve our goals with hard work, dedication, and a shared vision.

One of our main priorities in the coming months will be to promote the hospitality industry in India in a big way. G20 Presidency will provide this perfect platform to showcase our industry's expertise to the world. India is a land of diverse cultures, traditions, and cuisines, and our hotels have a lot to offer to tourists and travellers. We are home to some of the most iconic landmarks and tourist destinations in the world, and we need to leverage this to attract more tourists to our country.

As FHRAI President, I believe that we need to work very closely with the government to ensure that all problems faced by the industry are resolved. We need to work towards creating a conducive environment for the hospitality industry to thrive in. This includes, addressing issues such as taxes, complex regulations, and industry status. The hospitality industry is a vital contributor to the Indian economy, and it is imperative that we do everything in our power to support its growth and development.

Looking ahead, we have some big G20 events lined up in the coming months that will provide us with an excellent platform to showcase the hospitality industry in India.

These events will provide us with a unique opportunity to network with international delegates, showcase our products and services, and share best practices.

Next month, we also have the first Global Tourism Investors Summit. The main objective of this Investors' Tourism Summit is to promote our industry as an investment destination and provide a common platform for the Central and state governments and the investors to discuss investment possibilities in the sector. The Summit will allow both domestic as well as foreign potential investors to identify state-specific investment possibilities in the segment unique to that state.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my commitment to the growth and development of the hospitality industry in India. As a Federation, we have a lot of work to do, but I am confident that we have the collective knowledge, expertise, and determination to achieve our goals. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for your continued support and dedication to our Federation. Let us move forward with a clear vision and a shared commitment to make Indian hospitality industry one of the best in the world.

With best regards,
Sudesh Poddar
President, FHRAI



Sudesh Poddar
President
FHRAI

“As FHRAI President, I believe that we need to work very closely with government to ensure that all problems faced by hospitality industry are resolved”



Stone Coated Tiles

Artificial Thatch Tiles

Aspha



**HOTEL
AMENITIES**

New Launch



Star Gazing Dome

HOTEL
FURNITURE

ROOFING
SOLUTIONS





THIS MONTH

- 03 **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**
- 08 **FHRAI DESK**
- 70 **MOVEMENTS**

FEATURES

8 **SUDESH PODDAR ELECTED PRESIDENT OF FHRAI**

Federation in its 66th AGM also appoints new Executive Committee consisting of six functionaries each from North, East, South and West of India.

16 **SETTING AGENDA**

FHRAI suggests steps for framing strong regulatory roadmap to deal with issues emanating from digital economy to Committee on Digital Competition Law.

SECRETARY GENERAL

Jaison Chacko - sg@fhrai.com

PUBLISHER

Devika Jeet - devika@ddppl.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Lipla Negi - lipla.negi@ddppl.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Anil Kharbanda

DESIGNERS ADVERTISEMENT

Nitin Kumar
Adtiya Pratap Singh

MARKETING & SALES DELHI

Nikhil Jeet - Nikhil.jeet@ddppl.com
Director Advertising (+91 9910031313)

Meetu Malhotra - meetu.malhotra@ddppl.com
Manager Marketing (+919650911399)

Jaspreet Kaur - jaspreet.kaur@ddppl.com
Marketing Manager (+919650196532)

MUMBAI

Harshal Ashar - harshal@ddppl.com
General Manager (+919619499167)

Samantha Pereira -
Samantha.pereira@ddppl.com
(+919987550769)

36

EYES ON FUTURE 36

Largest hospitality show AAHAR 2023 lived up to expectations of industry professionals with stellar showcase of future-forward products & solutions.

**REWRITING LESSONS OF HOSPITALITY EDUCATION** 42

From infusing research into hospitality curriculum to introducing new age advanced courses, Heads of IHMs across country reflect upon need to reposition curriculum with changing times.

42

**CRITICAL DEMAND** 50

Hospitality industry witnesses shortage of quality talent as demand for hotels & restaurants surges after easing of COVID restrictions.

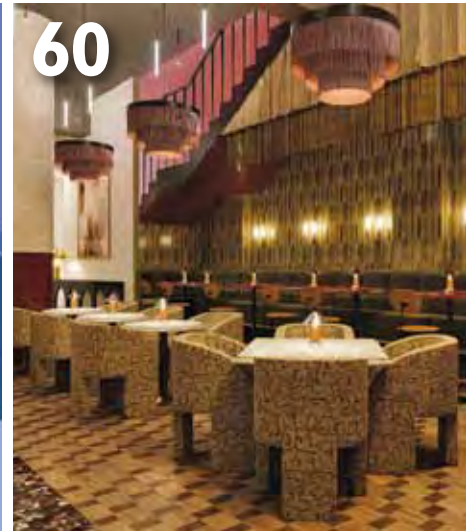
AUGMENTING EXPANSION 60

Tapping business from domestic market & Tier II & III cities will be focus areas for Accor India in 2023, underlines Pratima Badhwar.

50



60

**THE FEDERATION OF HOTEL & RESTAURANT ASSOCIATIONS OF INDIA**

B-82, 8th Floor, Himalaya House
Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi 110001
Tel: 91-11-40780780, Fax: +91-11-40780777
Email: fhrai@fhrai.com

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Sudesh Poddar elected President of FHRAI

Federation in its 66th AGM also appoints new Executive Committee consisting of six functionaries each from North, East, South and West of India.

The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), held its 66th Annual General Meeting on 16 March 2023 in New Delhi. During the AGM, FHRAI members

elected the new Executive Committee—a twenty-four member team comprising of six representatives each from East, North, South and West of India to manage the affairs of the apex industry body.

SK Jaiswal, K Nagaraju and Pradeep Shetty were elected as VPs from HRANI, SIHRA & HRAWI, respectively

The AGM was followed by the first meeting of the new Executive Committee of the Federation which elected Sudesh Poddar as the new President of FHRAI. He has previously served in the position of Hon. Treasurer in the Federation. Poddar is a veteran of the hospitality industry and has been in the industry since 1977. He owns multiple restaurants in Kolkata including the 70-year-old Chinese restaurant—Songhai and a 4-star hotel in Assam under the banner Satya Hotels.

The Executive Committee also elected the new Office Bearers of FHRAI, who supervise the advocacy and routine affairs of the Federation on behalf of the Executive Committee. Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, K Nagaraju and Pradeep Shetty were elected as the Vice Presidents from Hotel & Restaurant Association of Northern India (HRANI), The South India Hotels & Restaurants Association (SIHRA) and Hotel & Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI), respectively. D V S Somaraju has been elected as Hony. Treasurer and T S Walia as Hony. Secretary, while Gurbaxish Singh Kohli and Amarvir Singh will serve as Jt. Hony. Secretaries of the Federation.

“The industry has seen its most challenging times over the last couple of years and it will be my endeavour

to work towards creating a conducive environment for the hospitality sector and to make as much progress as possible in the shortest timeframe. We will continue to engage with the gov-

ernment and policymakers to align our goals to make India's tourism and hospitality sector as one of the best in the world,” said **Sudesh Poddar**, President, FHRAI. □







HRAWI conducts GST seminars in Mumbai & Bhopal

Seminars deliberate multiple complexities of GST related to hotels & restaurants & dealt with lesser-known facts about new taxation regime.

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) recently hosted two special seminars focused on Goods and Services Tax (GST) and its effects on the hospitality industry. Titled, Bird's Eye View - 5 Years of GST in Hotel & Restaurant Industry, the seminars were held at The Mirador Hotel in Mumbai on 20 March 2023 and later at the Fern Residency in Bhopal on 23 March 2023. The sessions were conducted by CA Jinit R Shah, who has over 15 years of practice in Chartered Accountancy.

Rishi Mehra, Owner, The Mirador Hotel; Gurbir Bedi, Chairman, Seminar & Business Matters Liaison Sub-Committee, HRAWI and CA Jinit Shah inaugurated the seminar held in Mumbai.

In Bhopal, the seminar was inaugurated by Navneet Goel, Chief Commissioner, Customs and GST (Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh); Prabhat Dandotiya, Additional Commissioner Preventive, Bhopal Commissionerate; Sumit Suri, Executive Committee Member, HRAWI and State Coordinator of Madhya Pradesh and Paramjit Singh Ghai, Office Bearer and Honorary Treasurer, HRAWI.

The seminars discussed several aspects of GST applicable to hotels and restaurants and addressed quite a few lesser-known facts about the new taxation regime. 87 hospitality professionals from both Mumbai and Bhopal participated in the seminars in their respective cities.

"The GST was introduced as a comprehensive tax reform that aimed to simplify the indirect tax structure. Hotel and restaurant industry was one of the sectors that were affected by the implementation of GST. The industry was previously subjected to multiple taxes, including service tax, VAT and luxury tax but the introduction of GST—simplified taxes with a single tax. However, taxes inherently are a compli-

cated subject, especially, for the hospitality industry and so, we thought that after five years under the new tax regime it was a good time to reflect on how it has worked out so far. I thank CA Jinit Shah for imparting his knowledge on the subject from the industry's perspective and for addressing participants' queries," said **Pradeep Shetty**, President, HRAWI. □



87 hospitality professionals from both Mumbai & Bhopal participated in seminars in their respective cities

IHM Pusa celebrates 58th Annual Day

Commemorating its 58th Annual Day, IHM Pusa witnesses impressive attendance of dignitaries, alumni & students along with stellar performances.



Janice Alyosius

IHM Pusa observed its 58th Annual Day with great enthusiasm and fervour. The theme for this event was Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam which means one earth, one family, one future.

The event was attended by dignitaries from the hospitality industry as well as alumni and students. IHM Pusa's Director, K K Pant in his welcome address, spoke about the significance of the theme, high-

lighting how the hospitality industry brings people together, regardless of their background, culture, or nationality.

Annual day began with a cultural program that showcased the diversity and richness of India's cultural heritage. The perfor-

mances included traditional dances, songs, and skits from different parts of the country.

The highlight of the event was the keynote address by the Chief Guest, Shripad Yesso Naik, Minister of State for Tourism and Ports, Shipping and Waterways of India.

Annual day began with cultural program that showcased diversity and richness of India's cultural heritage





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of India through Photos


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SHAHJAHANABAD-NEW DELHI


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THE LAND OF GOD


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No revision of membership fee for 2023: SIHRA

SIHRA witnesses impressive range of events, including Google Hotelier Summit, IHM Chennai garnering rank of No. 13 on list of best hotel management schools, among others.

The Executive Committee of SIHRA has decided not to revise the fees for renewal of membership and new membership for 2023-24 will entail same fee which was applicable for the last two years since the hotels have not fully recovered from COVID and its after effects.



GOOGLE HOTELIER SUMMIT

Google organized an event for hoteliers in India at Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel. Google Hotel team met with the hoteliers in India and shared the latest tools to ride on the wave of travel recovery, how to enhance brand visibility on Google, drive free direct hotel bookings and derive maximum value from Google products and features. Sundar Singaram, Director, Operations, SIHRA was part of the panel discussions along with industry professionals from the travel and hospitality sector.



K Syama Raju
President, SIHRA

IHM CHENNAI EARNS KUDOS

A proud moment for the IHM Chennai, which has been ranked No. 13 on the list of best hospitality and hotel management schools in the world for 2023 by the *CEOWORLD* magazine. The rankings are based on: perceived global brands influence, recruiters' responses, employers feedback, job placement rate, admission eligibility, specialisation and academic reputation.

IHM Chennai celebrated its 60th Annual Day-60 years of Excellence in Hospitality and Hotel Administration Education on 3 April 2023 and Sundar Singaram, Director, Operations, SIHRA participated as a Guest of Honour. *Arusuvai – Millet Foods*, *Spash* magazine and *Prakriti Aur Swachhta* were



released on this occasion. The Annual Day celebrations had Dr. B Chandra Mohan, Principal Secretary, Department of Tourism, Culture and Religious Endowments, Government of Tamil Nadu as the Chief Guest. Other guests who participated in the Annual Day celebrations were Dr. M Thirulogachander, Academic in-charge, Indian Culinary Institute, Tirupati, Chef K Damodaran, Zubin Songadwala, Area Manager, South, ITC Hotels and General Manager, ITC Grand Chola, Chennai, B Gopinath, COO, The Residency Group, Vikaram Cotah, CEO, GRT Hotels & Resorts and Chef Sheetharam Prasad, Corporate Chef, GRT Hotels & Resorts.

REGIONAL DIRECTOR, SOUTH

SIHRA's request to Ministry of Tourism has been considered favourably and the Ministry has appointed Venkatesan Dhattareyan as Regional Director, South. Sundar Singaram, Director, Operations, representing SIHRA greeted him at his office in Chennai and requested him to clear all the pending classifications at the earliest. The Regional Director had assured that he would prioritize and clear pending classifications. □

SIHRA's request to MoT has been considered & Ministry has appointed Venkatesan Dhattareyan as Regional Director, South



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Setting agenda

FHRAI suggests steps for framing strong regulatory roadmap to deal with issues emanating from digital economy to Committee on Digital Competition Law.

FHRAI has recommended various measures regarding the competition in digital markets and the need for Digital Competition Law in India to the Committee on Digital Competition Law, Ministry of Corporate Affairs on 24 March 2023.

Federation suggested, “The abuse of the dominant position in the digital market is becoming more widespread than in traditional marketplaces. One of the numerous variables contributing to the rise in abuse of the dominant position in the digital market is the lack of entry restrictions. Over a period, the Online Travel Aggregators (OTAs) and Food

Service Aggregators (FSAs) have become very big and dominant in the market and have virtually captured the entire market. They are causing great damage to the hotels and restaurants and also to the customers as they capture the entire market. Some of the anti-competitive practices undertaken by these OTAs and FSAs are:

- Cartelization
- Distortion of market pricing/predatory pricing

- Exorbitant commissions charged from hotels and restaurants
- Non-transparent bookings
- Refusing to de-list hotels from their platform
- Hosting of illegal and unlicensed Bed & Breakfast, Motels or Accommodation Units
- Large scale breach of agreements and default of payment
- Deep discounting

One of numerous variables contributing to rise in abuse of dominant position in digital market is lack of entry restrictions

- Arbitrary rule changes in lopsided/oppressive contracts
- Delayed payments and unreasonable penalties
- Unethical practices
- Forced use of delivery services
- Lack of transparency and inconsistency of search algorithms: This in turn leads to the hotels and restaurants facing problems
- Denial of a level playing field
- Problems arising due to the inability of FSAs/OTAs to service the customers
- Problems due to guest reviews controlled by OTAs and FSAs
- Problem of hidden charges.”

EX-ANTE REGULATIONS

There is a need for marketplace platforms to adopt self-regulation to ensure transparency concerning search ranking; collection, use and sharing of data; user review and rating mechanisms; revisions in contract terms and discount policy. Ex-ante regulations will aid in identifying market issues in advance and shaping stakeholder behavior and responses through regulatory intervention. These regimes tell business precisely how to behave, or what to do. There is a need to ensure that the markets serve consumers with the best products and prices and meet evolving demand.

The new ex-ante regulations can broadly adopt two different models:

Under the first model, companies need to self-assess whether they meet the qualitative and, if any, quantitative criteria laid down in the law, the cabinet order, or the guidelines. If they meet such criteria, they must notify the competent authority and provide all relevant information. This is the model proposed in the EU and is also the model adopted under the Japanese Act on Improving Transparency and Fairness.

Under the second model, the competent authority must designate the firms subject to the ex-ante regulations, and address a decision to them or include them on a list of firms to which the new rules will apply. This model is adopted in Germany, and proposed in France, Italy, the UK, and in four of the bills presented in the US.

PROPOSALS

Although the Competition Commission of India (CCI) has taken action against

the big-tech corporations and has opened multiple inquiries, issued harsh fines, and ordered punitive actions in a variety of cases in accordance with the existing competition principles. However, the existing laws are not sufficient to actually lead to effective regulation, prompt market correction, and improved consumer welfare.

Accordingly, following changes are suggested:

- Constitute a regulator such as an ombudsman or a regulatory mechanism such as RERA to ensure that there is no foul play by any entity.
- Enact ex-ante regulations.
- Enact a statute that mandates the registration of such OTAs, FSAs and other tech companies and provides for model contracts, prohibited terms, dispute resolution, ensuring that there are not multiple entities with similar names amongst other provisions.
- Further, to ensure that these big-tech corporations including the OTAs/FSAs do not indulge in malpractices, the following practices may be introduced as duties and responsibilities:
 - Online aggregators shall not create unfair conditions for business users listed on their platforms.
 - Online aggregators must disclose listing and rating algorithms to public on their respective websites.
 - Discounting by online aggregators should be restricted only up to cost of acquisition.
 - Prices displayed should be based on “What you see is what you get”.
- Adopt the Digital Markets Act or enact a statute on similar lines, which imposes a number of restrictions and requirements about the competitiveness and fairness of the digital economy.
- Identify Systemically Important Digital Intermediaries’ (SIDIs) based on their revenue, market capitalization and number of active users and they should be made subject to the ex-ante regulations.
- Establish a digital markets unit, a body that works with a wide range of industries and other stakeholders to establish clear, stable, trusted rules. This unit can then develop technical standards for

data mobility and open services, rolled out in digital markets where they will be effective and proportionate, creating space for new entrants to find market niches.

- Digital market unit should establish a digital platform code of conduct, based on a set of core principles.
- Digital market unit should use data openness as a tool to promote competition.
- Digital market unit should ensure collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders in fulfilling its role, but with new powers available to impose solutions and to monitor, investigate and penalise non-compliance.
- Digital market unit should ensure that digital market entities desist from anti-steering, deep discounting, self-preferencing, search and ranking preferencing and other market-impacting practices.

Lastly, to achieve a digital market free of anti-competitive practices, FHRAI suggested the following measures:

- **Learning from other countries:** India must be guided by learnings from other countries which may be marginally ahead of us in implementing digital intermediary regulation rules.
- **State intervention is needed to protect smaller players:** State intervention may be reasonable to ensure fair competition and the successful co-existence of mavericks and smaller players.
- **Striking a balance between regulation and freedom to innovate:** A fine balance must be struck between the need to regulate and the freedom to innovate. □



Digital market unit should establish digital platform code of conduct based on set of core principles



Google Hotelier Summit 2023 concludes successfully

Summit witnesses presentations & panel discussions by industry experts on enhancing brand visibility of hotel units on Google.

To disseminate the detailed information amongst members and fraternity, HRANI partnered for the first Google Hotelier Summit 2023 in India which was held on 29 Mar 2023 at The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences, Gurugram.

The Summit witnessed the presence of Google experts and industry professionals from the travel and hospitality sector. The members of the Managing Committee from all 10 states and UTs of northern region attended the event.

During the event, the welcome address was delivered by Chaitanya Chunduri, Head, Shopping Partnerships, Google.

Garish Oberoi, President, HRANI in his keynote address welcomed Google for recognizing the potential of India and investing in the hotel industry. He stated that HRANI has been a vibrant interface between Google and the members of Association and looking forward to more such collaborations to help the industry in the future.

Addressing the gathering, Oberoi further stated that Google is a friend of hoteliers who want to establish and build their

online presence, grow direct bookings and guests for a personal and positive experience. "Take advantage of Google's free tools and products to grow your direct bookings," Oberoi emphasized.

The Summit included presentations and panel discussions by industry experts on Deep-dive for Hotels: How to establish presence on Google; Taking ownership of

your Google Business Profile; Getting the Best Out of Your Connectivity to Google and Extranet Connectivity. Activating hotel Free Booking Links to drive direct bookings.

The speakers from the hospitality industry, included Devanshu Bhatia, VP Marketing, Oberoi Hotels and Sundar Singaram, Secretary General, SIHRA. ■



Summit witnessed presence of Google experts & industry professionals from travel & hospitality sector

Plating Picturesque Precision

Executive Pastry Chef **Mohammad Sameer** is popularly known as pre-opening expert & connoisseur of Indian sweets & desserts.



Lipla Negi

Executive Pastry Chef Mohammad Sameer started his professional journey in the culinary world with The Taj Palace Hotel, New Delhi. Passionate about aromas and indigenous ingredients, his talent was soon recognized with the 'Best Trainee Award' in F&B production at the hotel. Soon he began his career formally as a commi at the Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi, and in no time became 'one of the youngest pastry chefs' in the fraternity.

While working in the kitchen, first as a trainee and then as commi, he realized that he enjoyed working with spoons and spatula more than any other kitchen chores. The fascinatingly sweet world of desserts ignited his imagination and satiated his curiosity. "As a child, I always felt captivated by chocolates—not just the taste but how it is made and how it is given different shapes. That curiosity found its playing ground in the world of bakery and pastry art. I was amazed by the limitless possibilities that baking and pastry making offers. You create new items every day," he remembered. In no time, he started experimenting and curating carefully planned dessert-menu, which became an instant hit among guests wherever he worked. Pastry-art is where he saw his future as well as happiness.

Besides pastry-art, the other area where he excels is developing and curating pre-opening menus. "It is a whole different

ball game altogether. It is full of varied challenges and highly satisfying at the same time," he shared. He was the pre-opening Chef for Hyatt Regency Lucknow and Andaz by Hyatt. "In the pre-opening phase, you must work from ground zero and build the entire kitchen from scratch. From wall dimensions, picking the latest equipment to hiring the whole team, you need to work with a vision so that you can immaculately plan it all for the future," he divulged. How is he able to put it all together so effortlessly? The learning years spent at the American Hotel Lodging & Educational Institute, USA for Hotel & Diploma in Tourism Management and at HTMI, Switzerland for Higher Diploma in Tourism & Hotel Management along with upskilling courses in Kitchen Engineering & Designing and Menu Development helped him hone his skills as pre-opening expert.

Taking his art to the foreign shores, he moved to Saudi Arabia to showcase his talent on an international platform. In a short span of four years, he built-up nine restaurants in the region. Currently, he is working as Executive Pastry Chef and R&D Manager for Vanguard company, managing



seven restaurants and three more in the pipeline. He wishes to recreate the age-old Indian sweets with a modern twist. "I am an expert in chocolate-based desserts, and my gelatos have their own fan base," he shares. The list of his signature desserts is endless. His aim is to give forgotten Indian flavours and ingredients a new lease of life with his creativity and expertise in pastry-making. Whether it's pre-opening or pastry art, he looks at both as the job of a creator as he feels, "It involves tremendous amounts of learning. Building something from scratch is an art and I always look forward to imagining, creating and innovating – it has got limitless possibilities." □



Besides pastry-art, the other area where Chef Mohammad Sameer excels is developing & curating pre-opening menus



2nd Tourism Working Group meeting discusses promotion of adventure tourism & highlights best practices, prospects in field of adventure tourism, among others.



FHRAI Bureau

The meeting of 2nd Tourism Working Group under India's G20 Presidency, which was held at Siliguri, West Bengal from 1 to 3 April concluded on a strong note. The meeting included two side events, an inaugural session, working group meetings, a series of bilateral meetings, visit to Batasia loop, Governor's house Darjeeling and a ride on DHR.

Inaugural session was graced by G K Reddy, Minister of Tourism, Culture and DoNER and Minister of State for Minority Affairs, John Barla. In the session, Reddy announced that the vision is to make India—a one trillion-dollar tourism economy by 2047. He also informed that the Ministry of Tourism has also formulated a Draft National Tourism Policy.

"The new policy is a holistic framework for sustainable and responsible growth of the tourism sector in the country and aims at improving framework conditions for tourism development in the country, supporting tourism industries and strengthening tourism to highlight India's commitment to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030," said Reddy.

All the G20 member states (including Troika—Indonesia and Brazil) shared their comments and suggestions on the 1st draft outcome and the five priorities introduced by India.

The second session of the tourism working group meeting was planned in Presentation & Open Discussion format. The session discussed all five priorities one by one. A presentation on each priority was made by Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Australia, Indonesia and Italy on green tourism, digitalization, skills, tourism MSMEs and destination management, respectively. Each presentation was followed by detailed discussion among member countries, invitee countries and international organizations.

In another side event, on Tourism in Mission Mode: Advantage of Adventure Tourism, presentations by the participants highlighted the benefits, issues and challenges in the promotion of adventure tourism. Ideas were discussed with respect to making India—a globally competitive adventure tourism hub. The model law on adventure safety and way of developing vibrant villages as adventure destinations were discussed.

Reddy opined that by the very nature of adventure tourism locations, this niche product will benefit India's tribal communities, disadvantaged communities, women and youth by providing jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities. He announced that India holds great potential to become a global marketplace for adventure activities and sports. The Minister said that the National Adventure Tourism strategy has been framed and the aim is

G20 member states shared their comments & suggestions on the 1st draft outcome & five priorities introduced by India



to place India among the top adventure tourism destinations of the world by developing infrastructure and setting up high safety standards.

“India offers many avenues for adventure tourism across the four elements of land, water, sky and air. India has in its possession 70 per cent of the mighty Himalayas, more than 7,000 kilometres of coastline, 70,000 square miles of sand desert apart from white salt desert in Kutch and cold desert in Ladakh, 700 sanctuaries and national parks including tiger reserves. Adventure tourism in India is gaining immense popularity among both domestic and international tourists. People of different age groups are actively participating in various adventure-based tourist activities. The topography of India is conducive for a variety of adventure activities such as trekking, camping, water rafting, mountaineering, bungee jumping, skiing, scuba diving, snorkeling, wildlife safaris, among others. to take advantage of the full potential of adventure tourism in the country, the Government is making concerted efforts at the policy and strategy levels,” Reddy emphasized.

The minister said that India is determined to achieve the goals of Mission-LIFE, a sustainable lifestyle for environment. He informed that to create focused awareness among the youth in the country, youth tourism clubs have been estab-

lished in all educational institutions across the country. These clubs will create interest, awareness and a sense of responsibility towards our country’s natural, cultural and spiritual heritage among youth and children. As youth have a natural affinity for adventure tourism, these clubs will be used to promote adventure tourism. Reddy informed that the areas that would be focussed upon includes development of adventure tourism infrastructure, financial assistance to adventure tourism destinations, developing skilled personnel, threat assessment, defining safety standards, research & development activities, branding, among others.

“National adventure tourism strategy has also been framed which focuses on initiatives such as State Ranking Criteria for the adventure tourism sites, model adventure tourism law, development of mega trails, development of adventure activity guidelines, adventure tourism rescue centres and development of dedicated website

and social media pages for adventure tourism,” Reddy pointed out.

The minister said that the focus is now in placing India among the top adventure tourism destinations of the world by developing infrastructure and setting up high safety standards.

In his concluding remarks, Arvind Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism said that side event of Adventure Tourism as a vehicle for achieving SDGs is a great occasion to discuss, ideate possibilities to achieve the SDGs. He said that the deliberations reiterate the notion that adventure tourism can be a positive cause for achieving the 2030 SDGs. ■



Tourism minister said that focus is now in placing India among top adventure tourism destinations of world

Brainstorming session

Ministry of Tourism organizes an interaction with Heads of Missions in run up to first Global Tourism Investors' Summit from 17-19 May 2023.



Janice Alyosius

India has become a prime destination for tourism and is now gearing up for investment to further boost its growth in the sector. The Union Ministry of Tourism (MoT) is celebrating Visit India 2023, highlighting the diverse experiences that India has to offer. The government, taking a mission mode approach to promote tourism and attract private sector investments, will organize the first Global Tourism Investors' Summit from 17-19 May 2023. The summit will provide a platform for collaboration between the public and private sectors, leading to increased investments in the sector. In a precursor to the summit, the MoT recently organized a roundtable interaction with Heads of Missions, which was chaired by G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister for Tourism, Culture and DoNER. Addressing the meet, Reddy said that guided by the Prime Minister's vision, tourism development in the country is being undertaken by the government in a mission mode. "Our Prime Minister has stated that India is entering a robust phase of tourism and has been gaining global attention in recent years. Our aim is to make the most of the opportunities available and promote tourism through a mission mode approach that involves active participation from state governments, as well as the convergence of government programmes and public private partnerships. This Summit will significantly aid us in achieving these goals," he said.

The Minister said that after a significant growth in tourist arrivals, which jumped to 6.9 million in 2022 after two years of negative growth, India is working hard to achieve a resilient growth in the sector. He added that the first Global Tourism Investors' Summit is aligned with India's new national tourism policy, which is designed to improve the competitiveness of the tourism sector and attract private sector investments. "International



investors will be able to explore India's tourism and hospitality sectors at the Summit, which will also facilitate collaboration between the public and private sectors to promote growth in the country's tourism industry," he said.

He also stated that the current investment landscape of the country makes it an appropriate destination for investment in various sub-sectors of the Indian tourism industry such as hospitality & lodging, wellness tourism, adventure tourism, eco-tourism, rural tourism and others. The Minister thanked all the participating Missions for attending the roundtable interaction and invited them to actively participate in the forthcoming Investors Summit and be a part of India's growth and development in the tourism sector.

HYDERABAD WORKSHOP

Earlier, the MoT, aiming to develop sustainable and responsible tourism in the country, organized the third regional workshop on Development of Sustainable and Responsible Tourist Destinations in Hyderabad. Senior government offi-

cials and tourism industry stakeholders from the States/Union Territory of the Southern region namely Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and Telangana took part in the workshop. The event started with an inaugural speech by Mohamed Farouk, Regional Director, India Tourism, Bengaluru, who highlighted the need to target the tourism sector growth while keeping in mind the limitation of resources and protecting the ecosystem.

Alok Sharma, Director, Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management, said that the aim behind the regional workshop was to give shape to the concept of sustainable tourism.

Representatives from tourism departments of various states and UTs made presentations and highlighted their best sustainable tourism practices. They talked about the positive economic, environmental, social and cultural impacts of their interventions such as getting Blue Flag Certifications to many beaches and economic growth. ■

G K Reddy stated that current investment landscape of country makes it appropriate destination for investment



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CONVERGENCE

Key enabler in tourism



If tourism in country is to move ahead, unification of many spheres & departments is instrumental, says **Rakesh Verma**.



Nisha Verma

Tourism cannot move forward without convergence because it is a cross-sectoral thing, as it has many more domains and support of many other departments is necessary, said Rakesh Verma, Additional Secretary, Tourism. He moderated the second break-out session—Convergence – The Power of Collaboration of the post-Budget webinar on Developing Tourism in Mission Mode, organized by Union Ministry of Tourism recently.

Speaking about the session on convergence in the tourism sector, Verma shared, “In this session, all departments of Central Ministries, whose initiatives impact the tourism sector were present. Apart from that, at state government level, we had inputs from Principal Secretaries of Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. We also invited two district collectors to see at the implementation stage how this convergence and synergy is there. Apart from that, to represent the industry, office-bearers of our industry associations and leaders



Rakesh Verma
Additional Secretary,
Ministry of Tourism

“Communities are very important for the projects and plans that we make. Every ministry needs to keep community event

were there. It was visible that tourism cannot move forward without convergence because it is a cross-sectoral thing, as it has many more domains and support of many other departments is necessary. If this support is taken properly, then a multiplier effect can be created and the challenges in the tourism sector can be removed well.”

Verma highlighted a few suggestions given during the session. “There is a group that has been made, called the Project Monitoring Group, which monitors important infra projects and same way since tourism is complex and needs support from different departments. Thus, a portal should be developed where project related information and from which agency they need clearance and we should align it with the PM Gatishakti Portal,” he said.

DESTINATION MASTERPLAN

Verma also shared that a masterplan for destinations should be created, “whereby doing SWOT analysis, we should know in

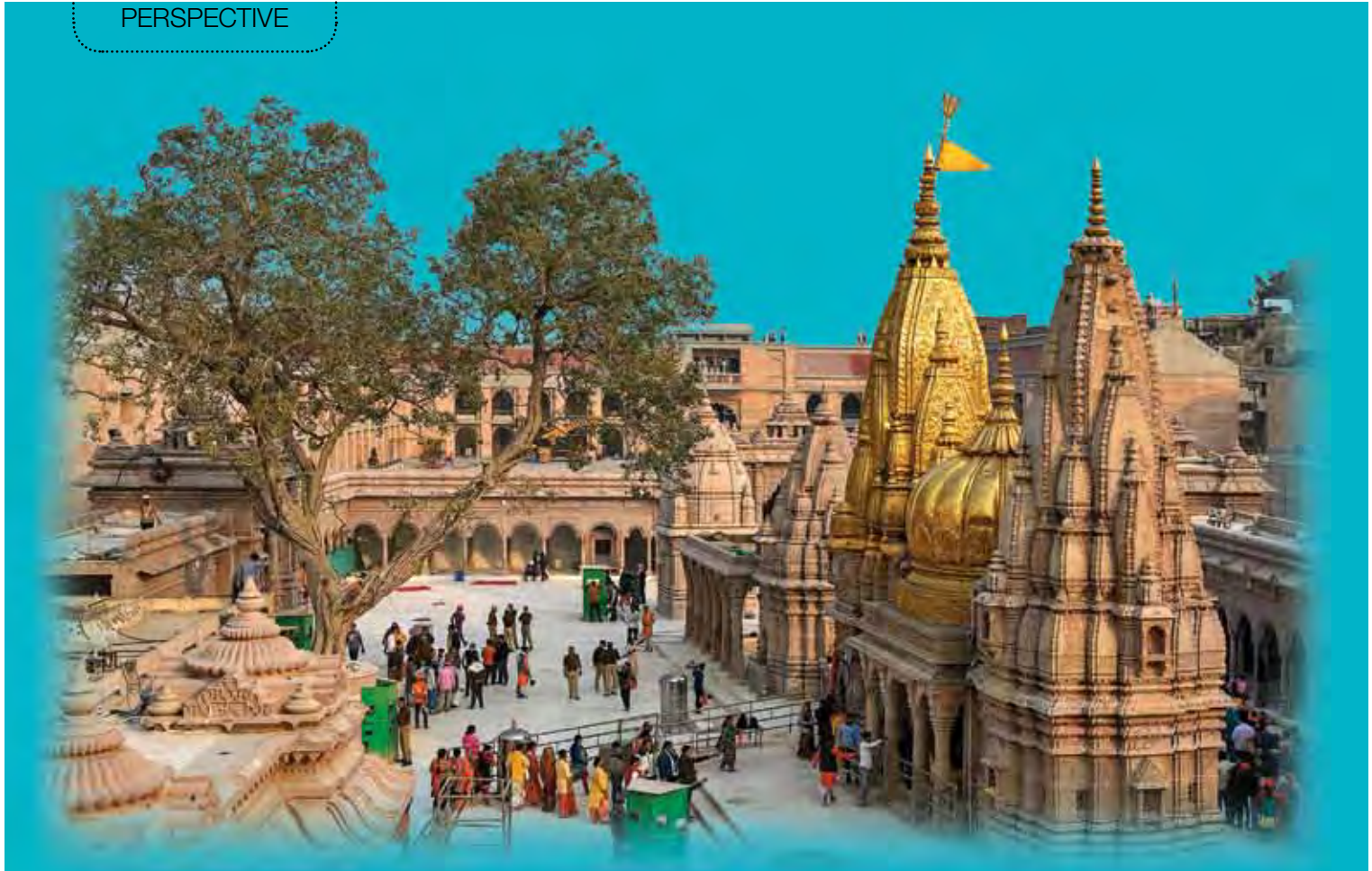
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advance, which are the areas where support is needed and then the programmes of that ministry and department should be plugged into it. Then the convergence and synergy will come out in a much better way.”

He added, “Same way infrastructure gap is there, which has been mapped via masterplan or otherwise, so that the involved ministries are updated that these are our priority destinations and where is the missing link, like in road, railway or airport. Thus, if infrastructure mapping is done, convergence can be done in a better way.”

QUALITY OF SERVICES

He informed that the Bureau of Indian Standards and Ministry of Commerce is working on National Standard of Quality of Services. “They have also suggested that if we take the standards forward in a good way, the ministries can also contribute very well in the same by getting those standards in different segments such as skills, marketing and promotion. For everything we should have standards and practices.” In the same way, said Verma, “funding, convergence, programme objectives were highlighted. At many places, the funds of schemes can be dovetailed, if we can pool funds at district level and achieve a common objective.”

ENVIRONMENT & WILDLIFE

He also said that environment and wildlife is a sensitive segment. “On this, Ministry of Environment and Forests have a lot of plans to develop wetlands, ecotourism and the vision is to develop them for high-end tourists. In that there is involvement of many departments—not just infrastructure, but even departments related with skills and livelihoods. In this way, they are taking all the ministries who want to do development in wetlands and ecotourism,” he shared. Another suggestion, Verma said, was of joint participation in events. “It was mentioned that there can be a taskforce at the state level to fast-track the issues. Another suggestion was to sensitise every department about the importance and value of tourism and the peculiar issues that tourism has. There is a need to create awareness on all this, and based on that we should design a programme where all stakeholders can be sensitised because this convergence is very important aspect, but achieving it is not easy. The suggestion was for continuous education and sensitisation.”

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

He said that the objective was that if we can document with clarity what the destinations need, and which ministry can offer what, everyone will have their role

clear. “Communities are very important for the projects and plans that we make. Every ministry needs to keep community event,” he said.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Another issue that was highlighted was capacity development for guides. “In Arth Ganga, they have used the ashrams at Ganga to develop spiritual tourism. In Artha Ganga, there are many components that are tourism relevant. They are making intangible and tangible heritage directories. Hence, MoT can use it and make good tourism products and experiences around it. We can use their support to promote the same,” suggested Verma.

INDUSTRY VIEW

“From industry, it was suggested that we need to have convergence from the regulatory side as well, whether it is from our hotels, restaurants and other tourism related businesses. What are the touch-points of those businesses, will also have to be raised with different departments and different regulatory authorities. We need to give them ease of doing business and how the compliance burden can be reduced. Compliances should be there, but the process should be efficient, so that businesses do not have any problem,” he said. ■

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INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS 2023

Pearl Millets Muthia



Ingredients

Bottle Gourd	200 grams	Lemon	12 grams
Onion	60 grams	Sugar	01 tsp
Garlic	10 grams	Cumin Powder	01 tsp
Green Chilli	05 grams	Curry Leaves	04 stems
Coriander	05 grams	Mustard seeds	01 tsp
Gram flour	½ Cup	Sesame seeds	02 tsp
Wheat Rawa	½ Cup	Asafoetida	01 tsp
Pearl Millets flour	1 ½ Cup	Refined oil	01 tsp
Salt	TT	Turmeric Powder	01 tsp
Black Salt	1 tsp	Red Chilli Powder	02 tsp

Method

- Grate Bottle Gourd, fine chop Onions, Garlic, Green Chilli and Coriander.
- Add Gram flour, Rawa, Millets flour to grated raw ingredients.
- Add Turmeric powder, Red Chilli powder, 1 tsp of refined oil for softness, sugar, lemon, salt, black salt, cumin powder and mix well to make the dough.
- Dough will be sticky so not to worry and take help of oil for giving cylindrical shape.
- After giving shape steam it in steamer for 15–20 minutes.
- For tempering, add oil to wok and add sesame seeds, mustard seeds, curry leaves and allow it to crackle and then add prepared Muthia to it and toss it well.
- Serve with Mint Coriander chutney.

Mix Millets Carrot Idli



Ingredients

Little Millets	100 grams
Barnyard Millets	100 grams
Urad dhuli dal	35 grams
Fenugreek Seeds	01 tsp
Salt	To taste
Carrot	20 grams

Method

- Take three parts of both the above Millets, wash and soak properly.
- Take one part of Urad dhuli dal, wash it well and soak along with Millets overnight and 1 tsp of fenugreek seeds.
- After soaking of Millets and dal overnight, grind it into smooth batter consistency and allow it to ferment for the whole day.
- After fermentation, add salt and mix properly.
- Put steamer on stove, add water and allow it to create steam.
- Grate Carrot in medium size.
- Grease Idli mould with oil properly, add carrot to it and pour batter. Allow it to steam for 10–12 minutes.
- Serve hot with Tomato chutney or Sambhar.

Recipes Credit:

Rishabh Misra, Lecturer,

FHRAI IHM

Rohit Singla, Teaching Associate,

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Hospitality education is reinventing itself to keep pace with changing times post-COVID to emerge stronger & bigger, feel industry experts.

HOSPITALITY EDUCATION IS GAINING GROUND



Pradeep Shetty
President, HRAWI

COVID has had a significant impact on the hospitality industry, including hospitality education in India. Even before COVID, the industry was witnessing a slowdown in the number of enrolments in hospitality management courses and COVID completely put it in a tight spot.

COVID has brought to light the vulnerabilities of the hospitality industry and has led many people to consider alternative career paths. One of the key challenges that the industry faces in addressing the talent crunch is the need to attract new talent to the sector. We also realised that many students do not think of a career in hospitality as being glamorous enough. As professionals representing the industry, we would like to fix this incorrect perception and instil faith in students about the advantages of pursuing a career in this field. The industry needs to focus on creating a more positive image of hospitality careers by showcasing the variety of career options, the benefits of working in the industry

and providing hands-on experience, students may begin to see the industry in a different light and consider it as a viable and attractive career option.

HRAWI has created a special task-force of thinktanks to address and try to bridge the shortfall in talent, manpower and declining enrolment of students in hospitality courses. The task force will focus on three key areas:

- A scheme/strategy for the development of a story or initiative to make a career in hospitality attractive and glamorous.
- To revisit the present-day hospitality education systems and curriculum by involving academicians and industry as part of a consultation exercise for suitable recommendations to be made to the National Council/Ministry of Tourism.
- Measures to help members tide over the talent shortfall i.e. training tools, informative videos, among others. We are also creating a white paper to identify and assess the several aspects of education in hospitality today and offer solutions to better the quality and effectiveness of curriculums. The phenomenal uptick in revenues post-COVID will also hopefully help in this task.

The hospitality industry was one of the hardest hit sectors during COVID and as a result, hospitality education has had to adapt and evolve to meet the changing needs of the industry. Alongside, COVID propelled the adoption of specific industry practices which were incorporated almost immediately and with greater efficiency. The COVID also accelerated digital transformation of the hospitality industry and hospitality education is following suit. Many hospi-

COVID has accelerated digital transformation of hospitality industry and hospitality education is following suit

pitality management institutions are now offering courses on digital marketing, online booking systems and e-commerce.

Soft skills are a must in today's scenario for those pursuing a career in the hospitality industry. Every professional working in the industry whether in the customer dealing role or otherwise is expected to be well versed in communication, empathy and problem-solving. Many hospitality education institutions in India are now offering courses that focus on developing these skills in students. Certain hospitality education institutions are offering courses on sustainable practices such as waste reduction, energy conservation and eco-friendly practices. The importance of collaboration between hospitality education institutions and industry partners became more pronounced in the post-COVID era. Hospitality management institutions are now partnering with hotels, restaurants and other hospitality businesses to provide students with practical experience and industry insights.

COVID has brought about significant changes in the Indian hospitality education landscape. Institutions are now placing a greater emphasis on health and safety, technology, sustainability, flexibility and entrepreneurship in order to prepare students for the post-COVID era.



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS SHOULD BE INTRODUCED



The Indian hospitality sector was one of the worst hit by COVID. Although there is no definitive estimate of impact, the Reserve Bank of India, United Nations WTO, McKinsey and reports by EXIM Bank show a dismal situation.

However, as always, there are silver linings in the dark clouds because disruptive experiences lead to innovations. So, the hospitality education system will have to adapt, adjust and innovate to be in tune with new demands.

Building a career in the hospitality industry and maintaining a customer-centric mindset are the keys to changes. To prepare the next generation leaders, the hospitality management curriculum must offer classes that teach students a range of soft, hard and digital skills, including those involving analysis, robotics, technology, organization, management and cross-cultural communication.

Hospitality management programs can help tomorrow's leaders learn problem-solving strategies that also help them determine how and when to implement innovations and technology in the customer journey.

Hospitality education system will have to adapt, adjust and innovate to be in tune with new demands

Classes focused on impactful disruption and navigating dynamic challenges inherent to the sector will give students the foundation they need for a successful career in hospitality.

But despite all the technological brouhaha as always, when entering the field of hospitality, the personal touch makes the difference.

The call for contactless technology in all walks of hospitality business, a warm smile, greetings and empathy for customers can take a budding hospitality staff a long way.



HOSPITALITY EDUCATION IS SHIFTING TO DISTANCE-LEARNING FORMAT



Garish Oberoi
President, HRANI

CCOVID has caused the hospitality education sector to move away from its traditional approaches and embrace change in its administration and curriculum design and delivery. We are still dealing with its consequences on various levels in the private and professional spheres. From an educational perspective, COVID has allowed us to revise certain administrative and bureaucratic

processes within our educational programs. Multiple institutions have shifted their educational programs from the physical space format into a distance-learning format in record time—proof of how the educational system can evolve. COVID has acted as a trigger for change in educational model mandating individualization, flexibility and global reach. Actually, COVID and its consequences have not created a new trend of online education, but rather accelerated its implementation.

The hotel industry's post-COVID phase will be a balancing act between coping with unknown revenues and maintaining an adequate cost structure. The management of operating expenses, in particular, will become increasingly important for the hotel's performance, emphasising the significance of flexibility, creativity and innovation. To cope with these new requirements, it is essential for hospitality education institutions, to increase the industry professionals' participation in post-graduate programs.

COVID has triggered change in educational model mandating individualization, flexibility and global reach

This can be seen as a symbiotic relationship as industry professionals can benefit from the extensive research background work while the academia benefits from active industry engagement to tweak and develop programs to adapt to current service trends and innovations.



IMPORTANCE IS BEING ACCORDED TO FLEXIBLE LEARNING OPTIONS



K Syama Raju
President, SIHRA

CCOVID has significantly impacted the hospitality industry, including hospitality education. Here are some of the changing trends in hospitality education post-COVID:

In India, a minority choose to do what they are passionate about; the rest all get into some profession and look for their career. While doing so, many do not take risks, do not try to venture into new avenues but play safe. That is why most employees are sticking to the industry where they are employed, including hospitality. When the unprecedented COVID hit the globe, most lost their jobs and were forced to look for alternatives. This situation created an opportunity for many to explore their optimum potential in other avenues and be able to perform and earn better. So many do not want to return to the hospitality industry, where you work more and earn less. Because of this, today's hospitality industry in India faces acute human resource challenges.

Every other industry in the country was collectively working towards producing manpower to meet the growing needs over many decades. Unfortunately, the hospitality industry collectively never made any efforts to create manpower or inspire the youth. We were expecting government owned, a few IHM, and private institutions will have the manpower for the hospitality industry. Today, most IHMs, including the government ones, do not get students, and most private institutes are closed due to lack of students. We are only responsible for this situation because we failed to create confidence and awareness of career opportunities available in the hospitality industry to the youth of this country.

We believe the solution to this issue is to get new footfalls in human resources in the hospitality industry. Industry veterans had the opportunity to interact with fellow hoteliers on this subject at the recent SIHRA Convention in Bengaluru. We proposed a short and long-term solutions to overcome this issue. SIHRA has been appointed to the High-Level Advisory Committee of the Tamil Nadu Skill Development Department. SIHRA has partnered with TNSDC to set up skill centres in rural areas to motivate the youth to train for 350 hours and get them a placement in hospitality with reasonable wages. Suppose we create more such centres in rural clusters, we can get additional footfalls into the hotel industry, including all skills such as house-keeping, service, production, plumbing, electrical, gardening, security, painting and many more. SIHRA has also tied up with TNSDC to reach out to students in all government institutions, create awareness about the career opportunities available in the hospitality industry, and guide them to a better career in the hotel industry. Here are some areas which should be focussed upon:

- **Emphasis on health and safety:** COVID has made health and safety—a top priority for the hospitality industry. Hospitality education programs are now focusing on teaching students how to implement and maintain health and safety protocols.
- **Digital transformation:** COVID has accelerated the digital transformation of the hospitality industry. Hospitality

COVID has forced many hospitality education programs to shift to online learning

education programs now teach students how to use technology to improve guest experiences and operations.

- **Sustainability:** There is a growing focus on sustainability in the hospitality industry, with more and more hotels and restaurants adopting eco-friendly practices. Hospitality education programs now teach students how to implement sustainable practices and reduce their environmental footprint.
- **Flexible learning:** COVID has forced many hospitality education programs to shift to online learning. As a result, there is a greater emphasis on flexible learning options, such as online and hybrid programs.
- **Resilience and adaptability:** COVID has highlighted the importance of resilience and adaptability in the hospitality industry. Hospitality education programs now teach students to be flexible and adaptable in the face of unexpected challenges.
- **Cultural awareness:** COVID has also highlighted the importance of cultural awareness and sensitivity. Hospitality education programs now teach students about different cultures and how to cater to guests from diverse backgrounds. □





Drawing attention

Hospitality education continues to upgrade & modernize with regard to growing demand for well-trained professionals in hospitality sector.



FHRAI Bureau

HOSPITALITY EDUCATION IS FORGING AHEAD

Education is the pillar on which the future of humanity stands and getting the right one at the right time is the key. Though hospitality education has been evolving over the past two decades now with respect to the ever-changing hotel businesses, overall operations and guest expectations, there was a time when there were not many options available for quality education, hence leading to less trained and quality manpower. Also, the colleges offered only Diplomas and not Degrees since they were not recognised by any university.

It was in the early 90s when the private colleges recognised by universities started providing better curriculum, revamping teaching standards and methodology and offering Degrees instead of Diplomas to their students.



Vineet Taing
President,
Vatika Hotels

Most recently, the hospitality education sector saw another progression with an MoU being signed between the National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT)

with Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). The CEO, NCHMCT and Vice-Chancellor, JNU signed the MoU on behalf of their respective organizations and exchanged them in the presence of hon'ble Minister of Tourism, Culture and DoNER, G K Reddy and Arvind Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism.

The signed MoU is a step towards recognising NCHMCT's flagship UG and PG Degree programmes in the hospitality sector by the JNU which would lead to awarding of Degrees to the students of NCHMCT-run courses by JNU from the academic year 2023-24.

The recognition of the UG and PG Degree Programmes will immensely benefit the students with better employment opportunities, enrolment into higher studies in foreign universities and better recognition. The job prospects would certainly get a drastic boost for these students both in India and overseas and finally the due recognition that was much awaited.

Recognition of UG & PG Degree Programmes will immensely benefit students with better employment opportunities



HOSPITALITY EDUCATION: NEED BETTER RECOGNITION

The history of hospitality education dates back to 1954 when a course in hospitality was started at Bhavan's College, Andheri. There were only six students who enrolled for that course. Later a three-year diploma course in Hotel Administration and Culinary Technology got recognition by the Maharashtra State Directorate of Technical Education in 1958.

There has been a considerable progress which has happened in the field of hospitality education during the last six decades. Today, the hospitality education in the country is helping the booming hospitality and travel industry a great deal, as it is providing vital manpower resources required to run the industry.

Earlier, the students who were not able to secure admissions in engineering or medicine would opt for hospitality courses as the profession was not considered as lucrative as engineering and other courses.

However, the scenario has changed completely. The best thing according to me, which has happened during the last two decades is that hospitality education has



Param Kannampilly
Chairman & MD,
The Fern Hotels & Resorts

started attracting the best students. It is no more the second or the third option for students. Now students prepare seri-

ously for the entrance test conducted every year by National Council of Hotel Management & Catering Technology as they are aware about the career prospects which hospitality education offers.

This has been possible due to great advancement and progress in the economy. As the economy boomed more and more people started coming to India. Sensing the opportunity, almost all the big hospitality brands opened hotels across the country. Today, there is hardly any brand which is not present in India. It is but natural for an aspiring student to take a job in the hospitality industry as it gives him opportunity to work in various multi-national brands.

The big hospitality companies of India such as Taj and Oberoi Group have also contributed in popularizing education as they have opened educational institutes primarily to cater to their demand for trained personnel. These institutes provide good education along with various IHMs. There have also been a lot of private institutes which are also rendering quality education in the field of hospitality. Some of them have tie-ups with international institutes as well. □

During the last two decades, hospitality education has started attracting best students



EYES ON FUTURE

Largest hospitality show AAHAR 2023 lived up to expectations of industry professionals with stellar showcase of future-forward products & solutions.



Lipla Negi

The mecca for food and hospitality professionals and brands, AAHAR 2023 successfully exhibited a wide array of future-forward products this year. Revered as one of India's largest shows, the platform brings domestic and international

buyers and exhibitors face-to-face for an invigorating exchange of ideas. Every year, the show was religiously attended by scores of hoteliers, restaurateurs, caterers and distributors from across the globe. For many brands, this is the platform to showcase

their innovation and expand their market size, while others visit to get the pulse of the industry. *FHRAI Magazine* caught up with some leading exhibitors at the show to know about how their innovations are shaping the future of the industry.



Ashish Agarwal
CEO & Founder, Laxree Amenities

The response has been fantastic this year. People are looking for more innovative products in the amenity segment. People are also moving towards more technology-based and sustainable products, which actually take care of their pain points. They are now willing to spend money as compared to budget cuts last year. In the current scenario, they wish to buy products that are sustainable and come at a good price. This year, we have launched an exceptionally fascinating product called Dome meant for stargazing, exclusive dining and guest room purposes. It is attracting a lot of queries from the visitors. It offers

We have launched Dome which is meant for stargazing, exclusive dining and guest room purposes

a truly enchanting experience to the guests. In the past three years, there has been a significant shift in guest expectations and preferences when it comes to in-room amenities. Guests are looking for more personalized and immersive experiences that go beyond basic comfort and convenience. They seek products that are sustainable and eco-friendly.

To cater to these changing guest preferences, our company has also evolved its product offerings by incorporating sustainable and eco-friendly materials into our products.



Razi Haider
Country Manager,
ITW India

It was a fantastic show and we have received great response. It is a great platform to showcase our innovative concept and goes well with our long-term vision. An increasing number of hospitality professionals are looking for solution-oriented products. Large institutions in particular, such as colleges and MNCs are fuelling the demand for automation in order to reduce labour cost.

At AAHAR 2023, we showcased the world's first two-level washer, the first of Hobart's exclusive reusable wash ware washing concepts, and a display of dishwashroom concepts. The food waste treatment systems and the two-level washer and reusable wash ware washing concept represent Hobart's

AAHAR 2023 is great platform to showcase our innovative concept & goes well with our long-term vision

commitment to developing innovative and sustainable solutions for commercial kitchens and food service environments. The two-level washer increases capacity and efficiency, while the reusable wash ware washing concept eliminates the need for disposable products and reduces the amount of water needed for washing. Processing food waste on-site using a food waste system can help reduce the amount of waste. The system utilizes state-of-the-art technology that reduces the food waste volume by 80 per cent, converting it to easily transportable for further processing such as compost/biogas, thereby reducing the amount of waste that goes into landfills.

We have an experience centre in Noida. We have got good number of products that cater to the demand of domestic as well as international hotel chains. Our products are being lapped up by not just big hotels but also restaurant chains, coffee shops and bakery counters. Quick service restaurant segment is also expanding like never before. We have been in this business for 42 years. We are the first ones to bring many imported products to hotels here. The Cimballi

We have number of products that cater to demand of domestic & international hotel chains



coffee machine is one of our iconic products. The hotel industry has bounced back phenomenally. Room occupancy has gone up and it has encouraged the industry for further expansion. Domestic and international hotels are aiming to strengthen their footprints across the country and to achieve this, they are looking for suppliers that offer them the best technologically advanced solutions. AAHAR is a well-recognized platform to meet professionals from all over the country and world.



Rajendra Mittal
Partner,
Mittal International



Rajendu Mitra
CEO,
Cogmac Technologies

This year, we unveiled the latest version of Brewmac, which is now equipped with an attached soda machine that enhances its versatility and convenience. Visitors loved exploring the latest advancements in robotics and AI through our world-class technology and equipment. They were delighted to discover how our product is changing the game in the F&B industry. They also indulged in our handcrafted selection of complimentary mocktails, providing them the chance to witness the latest in robotics and AI technology and gain insights into our world-class equip-

We are confident that our products will set new standards in world of modern bartending

ments and accessories first-hand. As pioneers in the F&B industry, we are confident that our products will set new standards in the world of modern bartending. They like the precision and speed of our machine and anyone can operate it. Our product's distinctive features garnered a considerable amount of interest, resulting in many fruitful partnerships and collaborations. The audience's enthusiasm and positive feedback have been a driving force, inspiring us to continue pushing the boundaries of innovation and exceeding customer expectations.





Budget is no more a constraint for clients. They are eagerly looking for products and services that can help them create the best hotel stay experience for their clients. Travel trends such as staycations, work from anywhere and long weekends are driving the hotel occupancy across the country. Our hotel quality mattress solutions are designed to enhance the sleeping experience for hotel guests and place us above the competition. We offer feather feel mattress beds for hotels that bring a whole range of advantages for hotels, including premium aesthetics, unmatched

Our hotel quality mattress solutions are designed to enhance sleeping experience for hotel guests

comfort and competitive pricing.

Our 20 plus product range for hotels is specifically designed keeping in hotels of all sizes, from luxury to budget. For premium and business class clientele, you can opt for the ultra-plush mattress from King Koil, the Guest Rest Eurosoft. It is equipped with body sink technology along with a combination of high-density super surfer foam and Pocket or Bonnell springs. No one makes the hotel spring mattress like we do. Our research-based technology allows you to find the right mattresses for your body type.



Sunil Dutta

Country Head, Hotel & Institutional Sales, India & SAARC Nations, King Koil



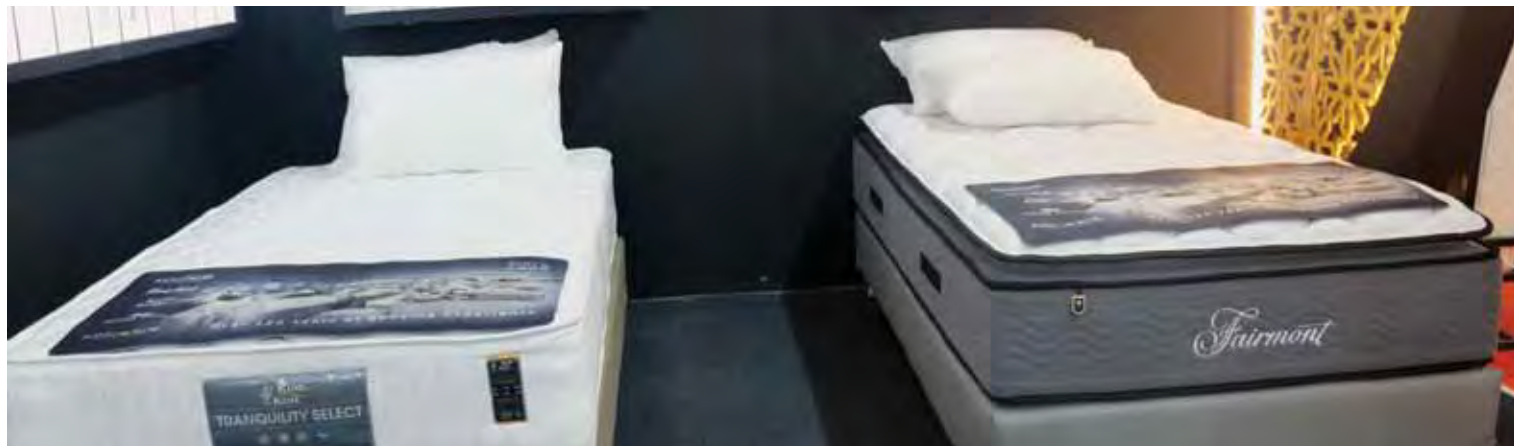
Chakradhar Rao
CEO, Nestin Ventures

This year, everybody is thinking about how to stand out of the crowd and offer better experiences to the guests. The client today demands more hygienic products. Guests want to be treated uniquely and standards must be high. A good majority of hospitality leaders are trying to give the best sustainable solutions to the guests and thus, working on establishing an environment-friendly system. While it is not possible to ensure 100 per cent environment-friendly, we should continue to

Nestin Ventures' aim is to provide sustainable solutions from across world to HORECA segment


look at areas where it is possible such as disposables, packaging, table-top products, takeaways, among others. Nestin Ventures' aim is to provide sustainable solutions from across the world to HORECA segment. Our main product is Duni, a premium napkin and tabletop solutions brand which focuses on sustainability by providing FSC certified and eco-friendly products. We are environmentally friendly and provide biodegradable solutions to the hospitality segment.





2023 has proven to be a very positive year for Romio Technologies so far! We are expecting great expansions going ahead. Our vision is to serve the hospitality industry pan India. With this vision and strategies working in place, we have already established 36 service centres across the country and are still expanding. Romio Technologies is committed to bring innovation in technology so that our customers feel the next level of experience. We are dealing with Touch POS, Printers, Scanners, Kiosks, LED Display Standee and 2023 has many

Romio Technologies is dedicated to providing automation in services

other products in line to be launched for the hospitality industry. In today's era, technology has become an integral part of any business. Romio Technologies is dedicated to providing automation in services. Our assortment of products, includes Touch POS, Printers, Scanners, Cash Drawers, Kiosks, LED Display Standees which are all upgradable to suit customer needs. All our products are curated with passion to provide elegant looks and to provide a great experience to customers. We were delighted to receive such an overwhelming response from AAHAR 2023 visitors. 



Ekta Sharma
Director,
Romio Technologies



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Expanding horizons with reskilling

Hospitality sector needs to push reskilling as development of additional skills & capabilities will enable professionals to adapt & stay relevant, writes **A K Singh**.

Reskilling is the process of reworking on the skills learned and practiced. It is relevant along with the acquiring of new skills by the employee to remain pertinent in the changing work environment.

Technological advancement and stiff competition in the market are the main reasons for reskilling. Latest trends in learning and development need to be incorporated with live examples of the industry in the training module to make reskilling most effective.

Management should always be vigilant to know when reskilling process must be conducted keeping in mind high moral values of the staff for creating guest delight and readiness to face stiff competition of the market.

Reskilling is an excellent process to keep the staff thinking about their future and putting efforts to make them confident to face new operational challenges



A K Singh
Director, FHRAI Institute of Hospitality Management

Employees should be vigilant about their work and self-assess the need of reskilling

of the business and remain competitive. It is a continuous process for the organization to take care of all its cadres to make them confident and comfortable while performing their tasks. It is also a tool to retain the existing employees in their organization.

In my opinion, reskilling should be modular in nature after assessing the areas to be included in the reskilling program. Each module must be explained with the needs, steps, and outcome along with the knowledge and attitude. Once the reskilling process is completed, the trainer should closely observe the concerned employee as to whether he or she has learned the steps completely and correctly and most importantly, that he or she is applying the knowledge and skill properly.

Employees should be vigilant about their work and self-assess the need of reskilling with the trainer engaged by

management. Thereafter, reskilling programs can be designed and executed. Since the employees are involved in the reskilling process therefore their involvement in reskilling will be greater and its application is guaranteed in the tasks performed by them to carry out their job effectively and efficiently.

Reskilling brings out the interest and confidence of the employees in their duties and it will help them to learn new aspects of knowledge such as human psychology, technological advancement, upgrade themselves, systems, and procedure. This will open doors for career advancement in the same field or any other organization.

Once the employee is reskilled, he or she should give due importance to it in his or her resume. In the job interview or promotion interview, he or she should draw the attention of the recruiters to those points so that recruiters understand and be confident that candidate will be an asset in the existing or new organization.

Every organization in the hospitality sector, either big or small, must give due emphasis to the process of reskilling by employing internal experts with wide experience in training and development or by hiring external experts. In my opinion, inclusion of external experts always adds new dimensions to reskilling. ❑



Once the employee is reskilled, he or she should give due importance to it in his or her resume



Rewriting lessons of hospitality education

From infusing research into hospitality curriculum to introducing new-age advanced courses, Heads of IHMs across country reflect upon need to reposition curriculum with changing times.



Lipla Negi





Dr. Amitabh Dey
Principal, IHM Guwahati

BRING RESEARCH INTO CURRICULUM

Post-COVID, the hotel industry has started gaining back in terms of the tourist arrivals, occupancy level, among others, and consequently the employability has also gained momentum. There has been a paradigm shift towards ecotourism and digitalization. Profound research is being carried out on consumer behaviour and preferences as well as destination development and management. Accordingly, the hospitality curriculum of ours is looking to segregate entry level skill with management skill and intro-

duce research into the curriculum with the value addition of Life Skill Management, Digital Skill Development, Yoga for health and sustainability, among others. With the degree in Hotel Management, the students are being offered a wide variety of career choices in different sectors of hospitality. The institute is trying to arrange for placements and higher education with exciting global opportunities. Much emphasis is now on culinary arts training which attracts students from all backgrounds as well as places to hone their skills to become celebrity chefs, culinary experts, food artists, among others.

Much emphasis is now on culinary arts training which attracts students from all backgrounds

FUTURE-SHAPING TRENDS

The trends which will dominate the future of hospitality education are technology-based self-learning (Heutagogy) with the help of open-source software and project-based group learning, rather than the traditional chalk and talk method.



Kamal Kant Pant
Principal, IHM Pusa Road, New Delhi

tions for the industry in a few years' time, rest of the career is spent in the industry. I am happy to note that the hospitality industry is responding to the educators' suggestions about the remuneration, working hours and time off positively. I feel that the drop in enrolment during COVID was a transitory trend and talent is going to come back from large cities to respond to the explosive growth in the hospitality industry.

Drop in enrolment during COVID was transitory trend & talent is going to come back from large cities

FUTURE-SHAPING TRENDS

Short duration modular education

courses from diverse institutions across geographies is the ultra-skill in culinary and beverage service areas.

Popularity of capsule courses for continuing education of working professionals.

NEW EDUCATION POLICY

The curriculum for hospitality education is being restructured to respond to the demands of the New Education Policy, which makes environment studies and other management courses integral part of the curriculum enabling the graduates to think proactively and respond to any unforeseen situation such as COVID.

REVISE REMUNERATION

Hospitality education institutions are only the vestibules grooming the aspira-





Nisheeth Srivastava
Principal, IHM Mumbai

ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET

When we talk about repositioning, we must focus on the target audience, category. After COVID, target audience changed as well as the profile of guests changed drastically, which is reflected as revenge tourism. Category of tourists also changed from business to leisure. Now we have more leisure clients who are working from home basically working from home away from home. People are going out just for fun calling it staycation, drivecation, among others. This

transformation in the category of business changed the dynamics of hospitality completely. This change in guests' profile is also reflecting in job prospects for students.

Due to change in demand of industry requirements, we had to strengthen our core competencies. It is not only food production now, but the entire food business is also in focus. So, we are concentrating more on entrepreneurship and start-ups. Accordingly, students are being given opportunities to participate in business-related activities along with a skill-centred curriculum.

INVEST IN YOUNG TALENT

It is not right to say that youths from Tier I & II cities are not joining hospitality education. Basically, I feel the hotel industry is not investing in young talent. This investment in young talent by the hotel industry is important not only for the growth and sustainability of the hotel industry but also for young people and the society in which they are residing. In the absence of this investment, the productive potential of a generation will remain untapped.

A combination of business aspects such as viability studies and entrepreneurial mindset in curriculum is need of hour

FUTURE-SHAPING TRENDS

One segment of students is concentrating on skill and the other segment is focusing on management aspects of hotel operations. Now, we have to cater to both the segments. Hence hospitality vocational programmes (diploma and certificate) should focus on skills while undergraduate programmes should be management oriented and integrate the technology to enhance guest experience.

Degrees and Masters of Hospitality Management must focus on developing soft skills such as consumer behaviour, presentation techniques along with operational skills. A combination of business aspects such as viability studies and entrepreneurial mindset in the curriculum is the need of the hour.



Sanjay Thakur
Principal, IHM Hyderabad

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

There are no two thoughts that COVID has put the entire education sector in quandary. IHM Hyderabad left no stone unturned in taking a holistic approach to technology integration to meet the evolving needs of modern education without compromising on the dissemination of content for both practical and theory classes.

Owing to the optimum usage of technology, IHM Hyderabad was able to give a fillip to its social media handles and made

its presence felt. Discussion topics posted on the Facebook and LinkedIn groups help the students and faculty to stay connected with one another and strengthen their professional network across various sectors. This strengthens their effective collaboration with others for their success in college and in careers. WhatsApp and Telegram groups for each class help the faculty and students stay connected and discuss various topics about curriculum resources and other relevant topics.

REIMAGINE & RECREATE

We believe that in order to attract the younger generation we need to add fun to education and it has also been observed that students from Tier I & II cities are looking to develop their entrepreneur skills. Keeping all above in mind, we involve Hotel Managers to conduct theory and practical and also organize events such as food fest, fashion show, among others. Besides this, having a Rotaract Club to promote the concept of social responsibilities and signing memorandum of understanding (MoU) with different companies is helping our students to remain attracted towards IHM Hyderabad.

Multiple skills are developed which helps students to grab ever-changing opportunities and face challenges

Multiple skills are developed which helps students to grab ever-changing opportunities and face challenges. A few concepts such as start-up IHM, traditional Hyderabad Biryani and Millets Dosas to be prepared by the residents of the hostel for themselves on a regular basis is boosting their skills and confidence. Over 40 companies visited IHM Hyderabad to recruit students, which itself is a big attraction for students and their parents.

FUTURE-SHAPING TRENDS

Interest shown by the retail sector, event management, quick service restaurants and corporate hospitals are changing the trend and the thought process of hospitality students. Hospital management, retail management and restaurant management are the trends, which are to be incorporated and given importance in hospitality education.



Donna D'souza
Principal, IHM Goa

FOCUS ON SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

COVID has disrupted travel, limited gathering sizes and changed consumer behaviour. As a result, the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in this industry have also changed. There is more focus on sanitation, hygiene, risk management, public health and safety regulations, crisis management and emergency preparedness. There is also emphasis on digital marketing, social media management and online booking systems. In fact, new technologies such as contactless check-in and keyless

room entry are now in vogue. Training on adaptability and flexibility in the face of change has become the need of the hour.

DIVERSE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Ranging from hotel management to event planning to food and beverage management, career paths available within hospitality management can help younger generations see the field as a gateway to a wide range of exciting and fulfilling careers. Here are a few ways to add more elements to make the curriculum more vivid and exciting:

- Emphasize the social and cultural aspects of hospitality, which includes interacting with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures. This can help attract younger generations who value diversity and want to make a positive impact on the world.
- Highlighting the potential for entrepreneurship can help younger generations see hospitality management as a field that offers both stability and the potential for creative and entrepreneurial endeavours.
- Offer hands-on learning opportunities to students such as internships, apprenticeships, or co-op programmes, which can give them a taste of what it is like to

Training on adaptability & flexibility in face of change has become need of hour

work in the field and help them develop the skills they need to succeed.

FUTURE SHAPING TRENDS

Technology integration: The rapid advancement of technology is changing the way businesses operate. The integration of technology into hospitality education can provide students with hands-on experience using various software and tools to enhance guest experiences, streamline operations and manage resources. This will prepare students to be competitive in the job market and better equipped to meet the industry's evolving needs.

Sustainable and ethical practices: The hospitality industry is under pressure to become more sustainable and socially responsible: waste management, energy conservation and sustainable tourism can help students become future leaders who can address these global issues.



Sitesh Srivastav
Principal, Dr. Ambedkar Institute of Hotel Management Chandigarh

BLEND LEARNING PEDAGOGIES

Post-COVID, one significant transformation hospitality education has witnessed is increased use of technology and virtual platforms. A blended learning pedagogies mixing both face to face and e-learning has been incorporated in the teaching and curriculum. Hospitality curriculum is undergoing an overhaul in line with National Education Policy 2020 to make it contemporary, industry driven with greater emphasis on experiential learning.

MoU SIGNED BETWEEN NCHMCT & JNU

Most of the hotel chains are expanding and positioning themselves in Tier II & III cities and this will create a strong academic industry interface and provide better opportunities for students. One more step towards value creation for younger generation is the latest MoU signed between NCHMCT and JNU wherein degree to the students of IHMs affiliated to NCHMCT will be conferred by JNU with academic session 2023. This is going to make our hospitality programmes more attractive.

FUTURE SHAPING TRENDS

More value driven courses will find a place in the curriculum which may spread across different service industries such as retail, aviation, QSR, customer relationship management, entrepreneurship, consumer behaviour, among others.

As we all are witnessing that AI open platforms are going to be soon with the students which will shift the education system towards more self-learning and will help students in saving time and collecting a lot of real time information. The challenge will be that IHMs need to bring

Hospitality curriculum is undergoing overhaul in line with NEP 2020 to make it industry driven

learning outcomes in their curriculum based on research, project and designs based on creativity and innovation.





Sharada Ghosh
Principal, IHM Bhubaneswar

FLEXIBILITY & ADAPTABILITY

Hospitality education post-COVID is being redesigned to meet the challenges faced during COVID. The present syllabi should include modules which shall facilitate critical digital and cognitive capabilities as well as develop attitude reflecting adaptability and resilience. For this various online courses would be offered to the student who can opt for them and complete at choice and pace.

The industry's resilience towards challenges and overcoming them much faster

than any other industry will surely have the students responding well to this sector. With many institutions and colleges adopting the National Education Policy, 2020, which is focusing on all round development and being administered in small capsules, there will be a rise in demand. The combination of modules being offered and the hybrid mode of taking them will be the most motivating factor, followed by the ability of the institutes to offer relevant and value added courses.

FUTURE SHAPING TRENDS

More focus on life skills and managerial

With many institutions adopting NEP 2020, which is focusing on all round development, there will be a rise in demand

capabilities. Though the courses offered could be a combination of online and offline learning, more hands-on expertise at the industry level will be the need of the hour and most hotel schools will be facilitating the same.



Pulak Mandal
Principal, IHM Hazipur, Bihar

DIGITAL SKILLS

In order to stay relevant in the post-COVID era, the hospitality education must be revamped and more focus must be on developing digital skills which would ultimately differentiate our graduates from other job candidates in the global job market. Hospitality education must now not only ensure safer and more hygienic guest stays but also ensure a better overall digital customer experience as two-thirds of the world is now connected via smartphones.

STAY RELEVANT

Rampant layoffs during COVID, coupled with increased work burden, long hours and low wages, has seen prospective hospitality students from Tier II & III cities shift to other career options such as e-commerce, retail, real estate, consulting and healthcare. To ensure that Hospitality Management stays relevant, it is now being promoted as a course offering multiple job opportunities in sectors other than hotels, including government sector. Plus, they are also encouraged that post completion of their course, they may also go for their own start-up with support from the institute's incubation centres.

Hospitality education must be revamped and more focus must be on developing digital skills

FUTURE SHAPING TRENDS

Firstly, more focus on digital education alongside the regular hospitality education to make the future workforce more competent, and secondly making it more viable to pursue Hotel Management as a career choice by trying to offer it in a hybrid mode i.e. a combination of online/offline or any such similar method.





Pulkit Bhambi
Principal, CIHM Gwalior

DEVELOP SOFT SKILLS

Hospitality management degree programmes nowadays need to concentrate more on developing soft skills. The curriculum will focus on the combination of both online and offline classes as per the needs of the hospitality sector. The need of the hour is to bridge the gap between academia and the hospitality industry. Students feel lost when they go for industrial training, as we fail to inculcate in them the practical aspects towards the current trends and practices being followed in the hospital-

ity industry. The need of the hour is to revamp the curriculum with consultations and recommendations from the hospitality industry experts.

FUTURE SHAPING TRENDS

Self-learning, e-learning and various tools that adapt to the capability of each student. The focus will be more on student involvement such as case studies, event management, website marketing, entre-

Need of hour is to revamp curriculum with recommendations from hospitality industry experts

preneurship, among others as the students have tremendous access to information through the internet.



Argha Chakravorty
Principal, IHM Gurdaspur

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES

Peter Drucker once said, "The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence; it is to act with yesterday's logic". It is learnt that NCHMCT, the central regulatory academic body of the institute has already initiated an overhauling exercise of the existing curriculum in sync with the current industry requirements and for implementation of National Education Policy at large. At the institute level, we already harmonised the need based hybrid/blended model of

offline and online instructional methodology since the onset of COVID.

From academic session 2023-24 onwards, the degree will be awarded by the renowned JNU due to the recent MoU between NCHMCT, Noida and JNU, New Delhi. Hence, it is generally felt that it will generate considerable interest amongst prospective applicants pan India overcoming the earlier inhibition of degree being awarded through an open university. The trend of increasing the horizon of employment opportunities in various cross sectoral hospitality functions shall remain a key attractive aspect for the younger generation.

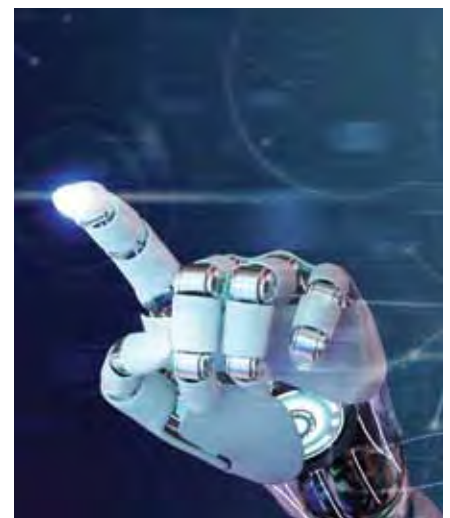
FUTURE SHAPING TRENDS

Hospitality education like any other education shall be more student-centric with a pronounced movement from the traditional pedagogy techniques to the andragogy or adult learning orientation coupled with all pervasive use of emerging new technology, artificial intelligence and increasing automation.

While we embrace the National Education Policy model, it will bring back many working professionals from

We already harmonised need based hybrid/blended model of offline & online instructional methodology

industry back to the educational institutes and truly universalize education for all by breaking the conventional barriers.





Dr J K Mangaraj
Principal, IHM Gandhinagar

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

I felt that the hospitality curriculum was obsolete before the COVID started. The COVID only expedited the transformation in technology upgradation in the hospitality business. The hospitality electives in the CBSE school curriculum should be more practical based and technology oriented. The school-level hospitality skill education should have industry exposure. Relevant live projects should be included in the hospitality curriculum for students' active participation.

The age limit for admission and rigid attendance criteria should also be relaxed in college. Allow inter IHM students to attend practicals in other IHMs. Make the faculty exchange programme among IHMs mandatory. Students should be allowed to work in relevant industries on weekends.

FUTURE SHAPING TRENDS

- Technology driven live hospitality skill projects in curriculum.

Make the faculty exchange programme among IHMs mandatory. Students should be allowed to work in relevant industries on weekends

- Revenue management.
- Social media marketing.
- Sustainable environment awareness.



Mukul Dimri
Principal, IHM Shimla

BRING NEW TOPICS

There have been various changes in basic habits of guests such as contactless services, cleaner and more hygienic public and guest areas and nutritious and healthy diet plans. These topics should be incorporated in the curriculum by NCHMCT with consultation with industry experts, Heads of Institutions and faculty members. After the launch of National Education Policy 2020, NCHMCT is focusing essentially to develop a curriculum which is at par with National

Education Policy 2020 guidelines and incorporates recent trends in hospitality post-COVID.

FUTURE SHAPING TRENDS

The first one is the scope and need of research in hospitality education has been increasing over the past few years. Hotel Management as a course is moving from a mere skill providing course to a research-oriented course, an area which was ignored earlier.

The second trend is advancement in Teaching-aided tools which have helped

Hotel Management as course is moving from mere skill providing course to a research-oriented course

students to interact with industry mentors over the internet. E-learning has become a trending norm wherein students can learn virtually as per their convenience and aptitude by revisiting lectures and resource materials.





Anand Kumar Singh
Principal, IHM Bhopal

BLENDED LEARNING

The curriculum in hospitality subjects has been upgraded post-COVID based on the changing trends in hospitality operations. Necessary amendments in the existing curriculum have been made as per the New Education Policy guidelines. More weightage on project work, research and management analytics has been incorporated in the revised curriculum. Concept of blended learning has been kept on centre stage while reframing curriculum post-COVID which focuses on introduction of

basics of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Education in teaching learning process.

CULTURE, HERITAGE & HOSPITALITY

Present day hospitality management attracts younger generation by imbibing activity-based learning in the classroom sessions. The perception gap of the youth towards hospitality education has been addressed by more frequent interaction between industry and academia. At the institution level, young generation has an active representation and participation in various activity clubs and Yuva Tourism Clubs which provides them an opportunity to learn more about their culture, heritage and hospitality. Several MoUs have been signed for developing life skills and department specific skills of the youth and make them create a level playing field.

The COVID had certainly slowed down the inclination towards the hospitality sector as most of the revenue and employment generated businesses were engulfed by economic slowdown in operations. The students from Tier I & II cities have a good spread of available opportunities. The challenge posed in front of them is that the initial remuneration and

More weightage on project work, research & management analytics has been incorporated in revised curriculum

working hours are not encouraging but the charm of being a Hospitality Professional still exists. There is also an encouraging trend in terms of employment of female candidates in the hospitality jobs.

FUTURE SHAPING TRENDS

- Technological intervention in teaching learning process.
- Emergence of concept of cloud kitchens.
- Increasing entrepreneurial opportunities/start-ups in the field of hospitality. □





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Critical demand



Hospitality industry witnesses shortage of quality talent as demand for hotels & restaurants surges after easing of COVID restrictions.



Sakshi Singh

It is often said that a chain is as good as its weakest link. The hospitality industry got to know about the proverb in the worst way possible when a crunch of quality talent affected the sector amidst surging demand. Hotels and restaurants were the worst-affected establishments during COVID as contact-based services came under intense scrutiny. To mitigate the financial impact, many hotels, especially independent and small operators, had let go of several employees. The script, however, changed completely in the past year as restrictions were phased out and travel, tourism and weddings boomed.

Many hotel owners had not imagined the reversal of fortunes and were caught on the wrong foot when the demand recovered. The demand can be gauged by the fact that India's largest hospitality chain, Indian Hotels witnessed a 27 per cent growth in the Oct-Dec quarter of the current financial year when compared to pre-COVID levels. Moreover, industry experts are expecting record earnings for hotels in the fourth quarter of the current financial year. The surge in bookings has led to hotel owners seeking quality

employees for roles ranging from front-desk managers to executive chefs, however, suitable people are hard to come by.

"COVID has caused many employees to leave the hospitality business for better opportunities, which has made attracting and retaining talent more challenging," said **Sarbendra Sarkar**, Founder & MD, Cygnett Hotels & Resorts. Sarkar voiced the concern of many in the top echelons of the sector. The COVID-induced layoffs forced many to seek employment opportunities in allied sectors and even in unrelated sectors such as hospitals, retail and real estate. Additionally, a majority of employees who opted for alternate career options during COVID were relatively young and were a critical cog in the day-to-day operations of a hotel.

"Many of my colleagues started small businesses in their hometown and are doing well there," said, a Sous Chef at a hotel in Aerocity Delhi who did not want to be identified. "Their income may be a bit less but living with the family and low job stress convinced them



Sarbendra Sarkar
Founder & MD,
Cygnett Hotels & Resorts

COVID has caused many employees to leave hospitality business for better opportunities



to continue with the arrangement,” he added. The stressful nature of a hospitality job cannot be understated. The industry operates with a customer-first approach which has made long work hours, attention to detail and few holidays—a common practice. Except for the large, organized hotel chains, employees in the hospitality sector have little life outside their jobs.

“While the demanding nature of a job is one of the factors for burnout in professionals, it is not the only factor. Lack of flexible arrangements at the workplace and the lack of learning and development opportunities often result in fast mental burnout among professionals,” said **Deep Banka**, Chief Operating Officer, Zostel.

Various reports estimate that the hospitality sector is facing a shortfall of professionals in the mid-six digits. The crisis has brought long-pending issues such as relatively low pay, inflexible organizational structure and low growth opportunities to the fore and hotel owners are introducing new systems or fine-tuning existing practices to address the issue. From salary reevaluation to training programmes and flexible working hours, hospitality players are using different tactics to attract and retain skilled professionals. “As an industry, we need to address the issue of burnout and its impact on employee retention. One way to do this is to reevaluate the salary structure at the entry-level to attract and retain quality talent,” Sarkar said.

An oft-repeated grouse of hospitality employees has been the mismatch between workload and pay. Entry-level employees face the double whammy of low pay and high stress as most of the customer-facing jobs such as manning the front desk are handled by them. Many hotels frequently opt for layoffs to manage overall costs, however, facing an unprecedented crunch, hotels may not shy away from paying for suitable talent anymore.

Low compensation is not the only thing on the long list of employee complaints. The sector known for beauty and glamour has long struggled with lack of dignity for its most important people-skilled labour. A reason often cited by experts is the absence of industry categorization for the sector by the government. The industry status comes with a host of benefits such as access to low-cost capital, subsidies and focused policies, which eventually could lead to improved recognition and working conditions for hospitality employees.

While the struggle to get recognized as an industry continues, hotels are using other methods to increase the attractiveness of the job such as flexible work hours and more growth opportunities. “We focus on shift timings and give timely breaks to the employees during shifts. So, work burden is shared by all employees from top to bottom,” said **Ajay Kanojia**, General Manager,



Deep Banka

Chief Operating Officer,
Zostel

While demanding nature of job is one of factors for burnout in professionals, it is not the only factor



Sayaji Pune. Cygnett Hotels & Resorts has taken a slightly different approach. “We offer regular training programmes that help our employees develop their skills and knowledge, contributing to their career advancement,” Sarkar said.

Nimble, new-age hospitality startups with flexible organizational structures and local hiring are more in tune with the aspirations of younger hospitality employees. “We follow the Staircase Hierarchy. It provides a chance for individuals to grow in their skills and roles and move up the growth ladder according to their learning and capability,” Banka said.

With the improving financial stability of the hospitality sector and the changes underway, the shortage of quality talent may stabilize in the near future. The question about the long-term prospects of a hospitality job in the minds of potential employees may, however, linger till the industry does not take corrective steps. A bulk of hotels in India exist outside the organized, professionally-run hotel chains such as IHCL, ITC and Cygnett Hotels, and the work environment there remains the same as before. Independent and standalone properties will also have to step up and make necessary

steps for the sustainability of hospitality jobs. Till then, aspirational youngsters will keep joining the industry and then search for jobs in other sectors after a few years. As Kanojia noted, “The students who have the passion to join this ever-growing industry will always opt for a career in the same.” □



Ajay Kanojia
General Manager,
Sayaji Pune

We focus on shift timings and give timely breaks to employees during shifts



Exemplifying weddings

Fairmont Jaipur has emerged as India's most preferred destination for weddings owing to world-class hospitality, Mughal architecture, among others.



FHRAI Bureau

In 2022, the Fairmont Jaipur hosted a whopping 106 weddings, which is the highest since inception. From small to big, royal to contemporary and intimate to colossal, weddings at this iconic property have always been a grand affair. "Wedding segment has seen pent-up demand since COVID, due to the closure of the outbound sector. Hence, the wedding segment started exploring new strategies and locations for destination weddings. Depending on the wedding size and guest count, which can range from 100 to 200 guests, the average wedding cost for a two-night stay starts around ₹1-1.5 crores," said **Rajiv Kapoor**, General Manager, Fairmont Jaipur.



YEAR-ROUND VENUE

As an increasing number of young couples are not shying away from choosing non-saaya dates for their big day, the wedding segment has seen a phenomenal surge in business. Agreed Kapoor, "Considering the seasons in India, summers have more saaya dates than winters, yet during the winter, the wedding rate dramatically increased in the past year. At the Fairmont Jaipur, the glitz of weddings and shehnai serenades is indeed a constant." From guest lists to budgets, people are willing to splurge on weddings to create memories for a lifetime and the hotel perfectly caters to the needs of such clients. "By providing excellent services and a wide range of experiences, we seek to

encourage the idea of grandest of the feelings and experiences at our hotel. The weddings at the Fairmont Jaipur have not been frugal in any way as our guests believe in making historic wedding moments that they cherish forever," he shared.

WEDDING MARKET

Wedding segment has seen pent-up demand since COVID, due to the

closure of the outbound sector. Hence, the wedding segment started exploring new strategies and locations for destination weddings. "To enhance the experience at Fairmont Jaipur we have incorporated Butler service, curated special arrival and departure experiences, and designed personalized gestures from curation to detailing for our special wedding guests," he said.

In the past two years, the wedding marketing campaign has moved to the centre of every revenue growth strategy for hotels. Kapoor affirmed, "In addition to being an ideal wedding destination from the last two years, our exceptional promotional strategies and cordial relationship with all wedding and event planners has offered us an ease of doing business at the hotel which thereby helped us in penetrating the wedding segment. As we plan the weddings based on seasons of the year (winters or summers), the wedding packages are designed to suit the respective time of the year and individual choices of the couples."

CURATED TO PERFECTION

Fairmont Jaipur is the perfect destination for big fat weddings due to its palatial grandeur, multiple venue options, which include our two large ballroom spaces—Zui and



Rajiv Kapoor
General Manager,
Fairmont Jaipur

At Fairmont Jaipur, glitz of weddings & shehnai serenades is indeed constant

Grand Ballroom along with other smaller venue options for breakout events.

Over the years, Fairmont Jaipur has become the top wedding destination on everyone's wish list. The wedding specialists at the property understand the importance of details and work towards bringing visions to life. "A minimum of six months to one year is required for planning each occasion, ensuring ideal aesthetics, seamless event flow, and customized menu to suit the couple's preferences," informed Kapoor. □



Championing diversity & inclusivity

Industry experts reiterate embracing of diverse workforce in hospitality businesses & what measures be taken to create inclusive environments.



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FOSTERING DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY

Diversity and Inclusivity (D&I) are essential values in the hospitality industry. As a General Manager, I believe it is our responsibility to create a culture of inclusivity where guests and ambassadors feel valued. We take accountability for upholding our high standards of hospitality and ensuring that everyone who walks through our doors feels welcomed.

The hospitality industry is one of the most diverse industries, with guests from all over the world. It is in our DNA to embrace this diversity and create an environment where everyone feels respected and appreciated. This includes actively recruiting and hiring a diverse workforce to bring a variety of perspectives, experiences and ideas to the table.

At Sofitel Mumbai BKC, we under-



Manish Dayya
General Manager,
Sofitel Mumbai BKC

stand that diversity and inclusivity go beyond just checking boxes. It is a continual effort through our ongoing training and development to educate ourselves, our ambassadors, and our guests to ensure that

we create an inclusive environment and understand the importance of D&I. We have a wonderful initiative called RiiSE that symbolizes a woman and a man sharing the same ambition for a more inclusive workplace. RiiSE means raising yourself up; going beyond equality towards equity; being and becoming better; being fulfilled and developing as an individual, but also, and above all, collectively. These powerful concepts reflect the values dear to our Group and create a network motivated to inspire women and men within Accor, a driver to combat stereotypes and achieve gender equality, and a solidarity and mutual support network where we all RiiSE to new heights together. In summary, D&I are not just buzzwords in the hospitality industry; they are critical values that we strive to uphold every day. By embracing diversity and promoting inclusivity, we can create a better experience for all our guests and a comfortable workspace for all our ambassadors, whom we affectionately call Heartists.

At Sofitel Mumbai BKC, we understand that diversity & inclusivity go beyond just checking boxes

DIVERSITY IS BEING VALUED THAN EVER BEFORE

Diversity in the hospitality domain means not just recognizing and accepting differences but also valuing them in everyone. An increased focus on diversity is most certain to bring more benefits and opportunities to every workplace. In our field, however, the importance of diversity is especially pronounced.

In hotels, success and recognition of a brand is largely dependent upon employee-client interactions. Tourists come from all walks of life and our innate ability to connect with people of different age groups, genders, sexual orientations, disabilities, socio-economic statuses and belief systems help us make a foreign person feel welcomed to our country and our establishment. By showcasing diversity, our employees encounter diverse needs of our clientele over and over again thus ensuring a steady source of income, develop a resilient business model and further make one feel most comfortable in a home-like environment.

Essentially, diversity in the hospitality industry means not just recognizing differences but valuing them and understanding how these differences may impact individual performances. At Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center, both associates and clients come from unique background, cultural history and skillset—appreciating each of these aspects help foster efficient teamwork, collaborate and communicate effectively. At the same time, our clients are able to enjoy inclusive services, individual to every want and need.

The cultural paradigm is shifting, as travelling becomes easier and more accessible, low-cost airlines and a diverse range of hotel offerings—it is the responsibility of every hotelier to be sensitive to cultural differences when dealing with guests from unique diverse backgrounds.

BENEFITS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Different perspectives: By hosting people from diverse backgrounds, we make our hotel experience richer and more intriguing because at the end of the day—one of the prime motivations for people to travel is to experience different cultures.



Sanjay Gupta
General Manager,
Sheraton Grand Bengaluru
Whitefield Hotel

Edge over innovation: By recruiting and training our staff on diversity aspect, we have been successfully able to inspire innovation—be it offering products and services particular to a country or region or by integrating amenities confined to one culture or religion. This exercise also helps us wow our guests while their stay in our hotel and they look forward to these events in their future stays.

Enhanced market segmentation: By having a diverse workforce, we have been able to serve a more diverse population which means we have a better market segmentation since we can better understand



Upgraded customer service: Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center boasts about a culturally diverse team that is more than capable of attending different types of guests, no matter where they come from. We have always had this edge over competition, by facilitating cross-cultural communication and completely understanding each guest's needs with our unique and diverse communication skills.

their pain points and address their needs to be able to reach a wider audience by adapting our services and offerings at par with market/competition demands.

In the end, I just have to say diversity and inclusivity when handled right can be one of the greatest strengths in the hospitality industry that can create a culturally rich and healthy environment. This also unravels a golden chance to uniquely innovate, offer bespoke experiences and not to forget, it positions the brand a remarkable notch above the competition. I swear by a strong school of thought that diverse teams encourage healthier workplace cultures and better convergence of ideas.

By training our staff on diversity aspect, we have been successfully able to inspire innovation



DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY PERMEATING

Diversity and inclusivity (D&I) in hospitality can lead to a more welcoming and positive environment for both employees and customers. It also allows for a wider range of perspectives and ideas, leading to innovation and growth within the industry. This can be achieved by implementing training programmes for employees to understand and respect different cultures and backgrounds, as well as actively seeking out diverse candidates for hiring and leadership positions. Additionally, creating a welcoming environment for all guests through language accessibility, menu options and accommodations can also promote inclusivity in the hospitality industry.

Since it is founded on a complicated structure of multiple enterprises and a broad group of employees and clientele from various backgrounds, the hotel sector is a uniquely diverse pitch. While this may provide some issues, it also presents an enormous opportunity to create a more effective, creative and inventive workplace that serves all consumers. Making cultural diversity a priority and incorporating it



Mehul Sharma
Founder & CEO,
Signum Hotels & Resorts

into company culture can yield significant benefits. One can learn more about cultural diversity and how to create and manage a diverse workforce effectively.

In essence, diversity at Signum Hotels and Resorts not only identifies but also values differences and understands how these variations may affect the individual experience. Our employees and customers each have their background,

set of experiences and cultural heritage. Understanding this will help to create stronger cooperation, allowing staff to communicate and collaborate more successfully. It will also result in higher job satisfaction, which will increase our company's turnover and produce loyal and productive employees. At the same time, clients will be able to take advantage of all-inclusive services that cater to their specific wants and needs.

These are some methods for making your hospitality business more inclusive.

In this regard, hospitality lags far behind other businesses. Our boardrooms, in particular, are predominantly male oriented. We can start by making changes in our workplaces. One cannot claim to be diverse and inclusive if their hiring practices do not reflect this. After we have policies in place to encourage D&I in the workplace, we may present this to our guests.

Businesses frequently employ for cultural fit, or persons who will fit in with the current team. This becomes a problem when our team consists of people who all appear and act the same way. Our guests are diverse, and so should our workforce. It is time to reconsider hiring for fit and look for people that have new and different experiences than us and the rest of our team.

Making cultural diversity priority & incorporating it into company culture can yield significant benefits



DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVITY: IMPERATIVE FOR HOSPITALITY SECTOR

I strongly believe that diversity and inclusivity are essential values for any successful hospitality business. In a world that is increasingly interconnected, hospitality businesses need to recognize and embrace the diversity of their guests and employees to provide exceptional service and create a welcoming environment.

Diversity and inclusivity go beyond simply acknowledging and accepting differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and ability. It also means actively seeking out and celebrating these differences, creating a culture of inclusivity, and providing opportunities for all individuals to succeed and thrive.

At Fazlani Nature's Nest, we have made a commitment to diversity and inclusivity in all aspects of our business. We believe that our diverse team of employees, with different backgrounds and experiences, helps us to better understand and meet the needs of our guests.

We also recognize that our guests come from different backgrounds and cultures, and we strive to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone.



Asif Fazlani
Managing Director,
Fazlani Nature's Nest

From offering vegetarian and vegan meal options to ensuring that our facilities are accessible to individuals with disabilities, we are constantly looking for ways to better serve all our guests.

But our commitment to diversity and inclusivity goes beyond just providing excellent service. We also believe that it is our responsibility as a business to actively promote these values in our community.

That is why we partner with local organizations and NGOs to support initiatives that promote diversity and inclusivity.

In a world that can often be divisive, I believe that hospitality businesses have a unique opportunity to bring people together and promote understanding and empathy. By embracing diversity and inclusivity, we can create a more welcoming and accepting world.

So, I encourage all hospitality businesses to join us in our commitment to diversity and inclusivity. Let us work together to create a world where everyone feels valued and respected, and where hospitality is truly a universal language.



At Fazlani Nature's Nest, we have made commitment to diversity & inclusivity in all aspects of our business



HOSPITALITY BUSINESSES NEED TO LEVERAGE DIVERSITY

The hospitality industry is one of the most vibrant and dynamic sectors in the world, providing countless opportunities for individuals from all walks of life. In India, the industry is known for its warm and welcoming hospitality, rich cultural heritage and delicious cuisine. However, despite its diversity and inclusivity, the industry still faces challenges in ensuring that everyone feels welcome and valued. Encouraging diversity and inclusivity in hospitality is not just a matter of social responsibility, but also a business imperative that can lead to increased creativity, improved performance and enhanced customer satisfaction.

To promote diversity and inclusivity, hospitality organizations must first understand their importance and implement strategies to achieve them. One of the most effective ways to promote diversity and inclusivity is by creating a culture of respect, tolerance and acceptance. This requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders, actively seeking out and embracing differences, irrespective of cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic grounds.



Rishi Neoge
General Manager,
Howard Johnson by Wyndham Bengaluru Hebbal

One way to foster diversity and inclusivity in hospitality is by promoting cultural awareness and sensitivity. This can be achieved through training programmes that teach staff about different cultures, customs, traditions, and how to interact with guests from diverse backgrounds. For instance, they can introduce Halal food options for Muslim guests, gender-neutral restrooms for non-binary individuals and wheelchair ramps for disabled guests. By

learning about and respecting the values and beliefs of others, staff can provide a more welcoming and inclusive environment for all guests.

Another way to encourage diversity and inclusivity in hospitality is by creating opportunities for underrepresented groups. This can involve actively recruiting and hiring individuals from diverse backgrounds, providing training and development programmes and offering mentorship and networking opportunities. In addition, it is important for hospitality businesses to be proactive in addressing issues of discrimination and bias. This can involve implementing policies and procedures that promote fairness and equity, as well as providing channels for reporting and addressing incidents of discrimination or harassment.

The hospitality organizations can partner with local communities and organizations that promote diversity and inclusivity. By partnering with LGBTQ organizations, disability groups, or other relevant groups, hotels can show their commitment to diversity and inclusivity and thereby build a positive brand image.

When differences are embraced and celebrated, the hospitality sector can appeal to a broader spectrum of customers and employees, leading to better overall service and experience for everyone involved. □

One way to foster diversity & inclusivity in hospitality is by promoting cultural awareness & sensitivity

ITC Hotels strengthens its luxury portfolio



Hospitality chain has launched Mementos by ITC Hotels Ekaaya which encompasses versatile meetings, banquets, and events space.



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ITC Hotels has announced the opening of its first property under the new brand Mementos, Mementos by ITC Hotels Ekaaya. With the Mementos brand, ITC Hotels brings bespoke experiences at immersive locations through atypical hotels and resorts that are unique by character, design or heritage and strive to co-exist with the environment and the community.

Anil Chadha, Divisional Chief Executive, ITC Hotels said, “The addition of brand Mementos to our luxury hotels segment further strengthens ITC Hotels luxury portfolio. Udaipur is rich in culture and tradition and celebrates poetry, literature, painting, sculpture and theatre. Building on the legacy of ITC Hotels properties in India, Mementos Udaipur is a befitting tribute to the rich heritage, grandeur and vibrant spirit

of Rajasthan. We are confident that this world-class property will make a meaningful contribution to the tourism landscape of Rajasthan.”

Nestled near Nathdwara and Eklingji temple, 40 minutes from Udaipur airport and just 20 kms from the city, Mementos Udaipur is spread over an area of around 50 acres. This hill side resort blends classical elegance with a distinctive regional allure that is infused in its service, cuisine, rituals. The resort has cluster villas with 117 keys; every villa opens to a beautiful view of the panoramic Aravali bringing fine modern heritage set amidst an uninterrupted landscape which provides all the ingredients for an invigorating or intimate relaxed getaway. The clusters come with an exclusive pool, a personal deck for bespoke moments.

Vijendra Singh Choudhary, Owner, Mementos by ITC Hotels Ekaaya, said, “On this momentous occasion, we are thrilled to be the first property under ITC Hotel’s Mementos brand which stands for luxury the Indian way in Udaipur. With ITC Hotels, expertise in this space, and our strength in delivering this landmark product, Mementos Udaipur, I am very confident that the property will enhance the tourism potential of Udaipur.”

The luxury property also has versatile meetings, banquets, and events space with over 1 lakh square feet of collective area. This includes a magnificent pillarless Stateroom, spacious pre-function areas and sprawling lawns. Mementos Udaipur’s event spaces offer various options to guests—making it ideal for MICE and weddings segment. The Mementos Udaipur property symbolises traditions of the region through culinary marvels that include the heritage cuisine Kebabs & Kurries, an award-winning northwest frontier cuisine that has been fine-tuned through years of research by the celebrated chefs of ITC Hotels.

Mementos Udaipur’s event spaces offer various options to guests—making it ideal for MICE and weddings segment



Augmenting expansion

Tapping business from domestic market & Tier II & III cities will be focus areas for Accor India in 2023, underlines **Pratima Badhwar**.



Hazel Jain

Accor is very excited about 2023! This is going to be a great year in terms of new openings, said **Pratima Badhwar**, Head, Commercial India & South Asia, Accor. “We opened Novotel Mumbai Andheri Airport early January. This was the first opening of the year. In March, we are going to open two more hotels—we are opening the Ibis in Thane and a Novotel in Jodhpur that will expand our footprint in Rajasthan. In terms of luxury, our Raffles Udaipur is in a ramp-up stage right now. We have a couple of good luxury hotels in the pipeline. We signed up Fairmont Udaipur last year, which we will open sometime in 2024, and have earlier this year signed up Fairmont in Shimla, which we are looking to open by early 2026. Our focus now is to expand and diversify across brands, get a lot of luxury and lifestyle brands, along with our premium brands in the country. We are focused on our entire growth pipeline. We will be about 10,700-odd keys in total for the entire portfolio with the new openings,” she emphasized.



Pratima Badhwar
Head, Commercial India & South Asia, Accor

We are focusing on keeping the domestic share of our business intact

BUSINESS FROM TIERED CITIES

Accor is also going to explore Tier-II & III cities. “There is a strong demand coming from these markets, especially when it comes to the SME segment. The domestic business that we have seen emerge during COVID has come from this segment from cities such as Raipur, Bhopal and Indore. These are some new trending markets for us. We also see a lot of wedding business come from these pockets, a lot of business from manufacturing companies from these cities. So tiered cities are where we are heading to. In fact, last year we signed up two hotels here—one in Bhopal and one in Indore—both Novotels. With these hotels, we will initiate our footprint into these markets and help us grow business from these cities,” she added.

ACTION PLAN FOR 2023

One of the biggest outcomes of COVID was the much-needed ADR corrections after a slump in 2020. Badhwar



says Accor will continue to grow its ADRs. “That is going to be our biggest focus—to drive business via the ADR route. Occupancies are building strongly and demand is coming in strongly as well. So, we are going to maximise that demand across all channels and ensure that we are putting the right price to our business. We are also focusing on keeping the domestic share of our business intact. We are diversifying the segments of business that we are going into. While the corporate business comes back and that demand builds back to the 2019 potentials, there is a huge focus that we have put on the SME segment, the sports segment and the wedding segment. This has given us additional forays to drive additional demand. We are not putting all our eggs in one basket,” she explained.

MANPOWER & TRAINING

Talent is the hottest topic right now across verticals and industries and the hospitality sector was one of the many to take a severe beating during COVID with regard to talent. To tackle this issue, Badhwar said, “We are now working on an entirely different strategy of not only hiring but also what we do with regards to retaining them. We saw that the new joiners were often leaving within the first six months. So, we changed the pattern of engaging them. We are ensuring that we are

doing regular catch-ups with them, taking their feedback, ensuring that they feel included in the Accor family.”

WEDDINGS & ENTERTAINMENT

Weddings will continue to be one of the focus segments for Accor hotels. “It is becoming a bigger and bigger industry and there is a huge focus as we at Accor are also focusing on this segment. Moreover, G20 Presidency is a huge demand genera-

tor in the country right now, which is giving us the right platform on a global front to drive business into the country. Visit India Year 2023 will also give us an impetus from an inbound perspective. These will be interesting addition to the overall mix. Now, with the corporate business coming back, we are seeing good growth from there. SMEs will continue to grow, entertainment and sports are also big segments for us—a trend which is coming up, all thanks to the OTT platform,” said Badhwar.

SUSTAINABILITY IS IMPORTANT

Accor has always been a huge advocate for sustainability. “This is a big initiative for us, and it will become an integral part of our delivery. Last year, we decided to get rid of all our single-use plastic across our hotels. We have done that. We are now working on going into deeper sustainable measures—what are we doing with our purchasing and where are we buying our raw materials and food supplies from. Are those vendors also sustainable? So, this is a continuous effort, and we are fully committed to driving sustainability across all our hotels,” she said. ■

Hospitality sector was one of many to take severe beating during COVID with regard to talent



COEXISTENCE holds key



Industry leaders reckon that business hotels should not feel vulnerable vis-a-vis huge influx of state-of-the-art convention centres across country.



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Sudesh Poddar

President,
FHRAI

There is no rivalry between hotels and convention centres, as both co-exist. Depending on the scale, events are organized at hotels or convention cen-

tres. Typically, smaller events are held at the banquet halls in hotels, whereas the larger ones are held at convention centres. In either case, hotels are the beneficiary, since the people participating in conventions, eventually are accommodated by the hotels in the city or the region where the event takes place. When large conventions are organized, the delegates and visitors stay at hotels. The two formats actually complement each other. So, whether conventions or MICE activities take place at hotels or at convention centres, ultimately the hospitality industry benefits.



Naveen Kundu

Managing Director,
Ebixcash Travel Services

It depends on the requirement of the client. It is always an ideal situation for a corporate to do the event at the same place where people are staying. Unfortunately,

in India, we do not have access to many ballrooms which are bigger. Thus, we must use convention centres. However, in India they are also very few. When MICE goes out of India, first preference is given to hotel ballroom. Otherwise, there are convention centres, but depending on the magnitude of the conference, it is very subjective. If the conference is where you need to do exhibitions, showcase products, have a huge pre-function area, you need meeting rooms and breakaway rooms, then convention centre is preferred. However, because of the cost, we do it in hotel ballroom.



Meera Charnalia

Executive Vice President & Head,
MICE, Thomas Cook (India)

Our MICE corporates are open to hosting their events at hotels as well as convention centres. Corporates have several requirements while hosting their events

such as accommodation of a small/large group of invitees, location of the hotel/convention centre, standardized facilities and additional services. The decision also depends on the available options in the selected location and the budget for the event. Our country is in the process of accelerated infrastructural development and building more hotels and convention/exhibition centres to meet the requirement of this lucrative MICE segment. As a relatively new concept for Indians, convention centres have not gained much popularity among large scale corporates yet this is expected to change.



Vikas Sood

GM, The Leela Gandhinagar and Mahatma Mandir Convention & Exhibition Centre

India is a vast and developing market for conducting large MICE and events with extensive set-ups. Also, with the

increased air connectivity with India, many international conferences and events are choosing Indian cities as destinations for their annual events. The Leela Gandhinagar and Mahatma Mandir Convention & Exhibition Centre, managed by The Leela, is a hotel, convention, and exhibition centre that has a diverse venue offering, which can cater to 15 to 15,000 guests. Venues of this nature are conceptualized and executed as purpose-driven greenfield projects, futuristic design and technology are enabled in the project, thus creating settings ideal for comfortably organizing events.



Abhay Kanwar

Director, Sales & Marketing,
Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel
at Brigade Gateway

Organizing conventions in India can be difficult, and selecting the right venue is critical. Two popu-

lar options for hosting conventions in India are 5-star hotels and convention centres. Each option has advantages and disadvantages that must be considered before making a decision. The decision between a hotel and a convention centre for holding conventions in India is influenced by several factors. Hotels are frequently chosen for smaller events requiring luxurious amenities and personalized service. Convention centres can be found on the outskirts of cities or in industrial areas. While this may be less convenient for attendees, it often means lower event space rates and easier parking access.



Ashley James

GM,
Angsana Oasis Spa & Resort

A hotel offers greater value in comparison to a standalone convention centre. A hotel with its army of staff and a larger set

up can be a one-stop solution. From accommodation, catering to various food preferences, security features, pickups and drops of important guests, spas and other lifestyle related amenities, hotels are well-equipped to handle multiple requests at any given point in time. Not to mention that hotels also add a little bit extra with their brand association as a venue. A convention centre on the other hand might offer a quieter place to organise smaller gatherings. However, it might be challenging to organize mega events in standalone convention centres.



René D Egle

Area General Manager,
Shangri-La Muscat

What makes a hotel better is multiple venues equipped, customised packages for organizers, and varied dining options. At Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah, we work closely with organizers to ensure they



achieve more with engaging, polished, and productive events. With a grand pillar-less ballroom, seven meeting rooms with state-of-the-art technology, and six outdoor beachfront venues totalling 12,100 sq.mt. of space, our hotel is ideal for hosting corporate gatherings, meetings, and conferences. The hotel has 460 rooms and suites spread across two wings that can accommodate a large group of delegates and VIP guests.



Jean-François Chong

General Manager,
The Residence Mauritius

Hotels that go beyond cookie-cutter concepts and offer an inspiring ambience are preferred these days. The Residence Mauritius with its island setting and tailor-made

itineraries is perfect for meetings and events. Our conference room offers a choice of seating arrangements to host up to 90 delegates. The dining room can seat up to 240 guests and is ideal for larger groups and gala dinners. The Plantation restaurant by the ocean offers an inspiring environment for corporate gatherings and team-building sessions, accommodating 120 guests within its colonial-style interior and 200–500 guests for a buffet dinner on the Turquoise beach. There are extensive facilities, activities in and around the resort, and excursions such as island hopping. □



Future travel aspirations unravelled

Among Indian affluents travelling with wider group of family or friends will continue to be top travel activity in 2023, reveals YouGov survey.



FHRAI Bureau

COVID has fuelled the appetite for travel across the globe, and nearly three in five urban Indians (57 per cent) state that travel has become more important to them, reveals research by YouGov.

Agreement is higher among affluents in India, with three-quarters of them saying that travel has become more important to them since COVID, states the YouGov's Global Travel & Tourism Whitepaper 2023, which covered 18 international markets.

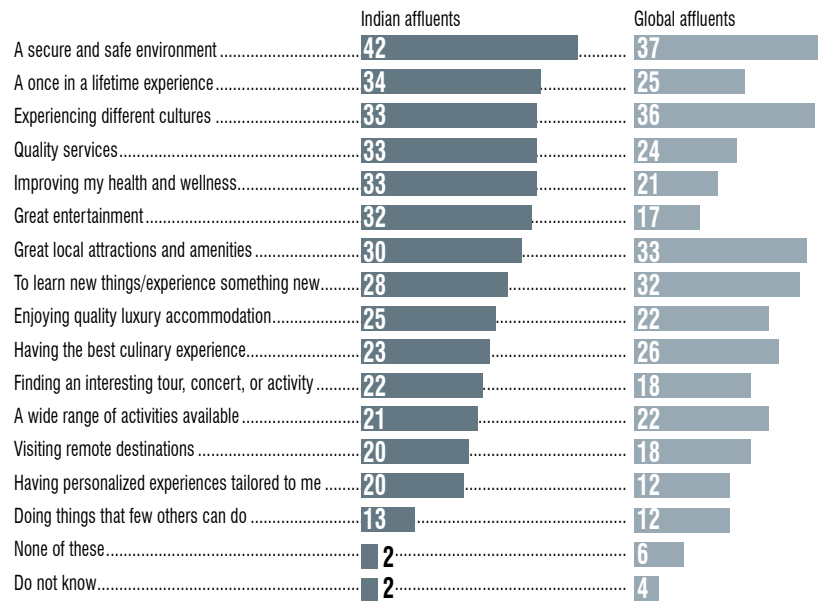
The research gets under the skin of high-end travel to understand what luxury travel looks like post-COVID. It focuses on the attitudes and behaviours of affluents, particularly the affluents under 35 years of age—the audience that will shape the luxury travel industry of the future.

“Looking specifically among the affluent travellers in India, we see that travelling with a wider group of family or friends continues to be the top travel activity year on year. Almost two in five (37 per cent)

Survey focuses on attitudes and behaviours of affluents, particularly affluents under 35 years of age



Factors affluent travellers are looking for in their next travel destinations



have travelled with a wider group in the past 12 months, and the same proportion intend to do so in the forthcoming 12 months. Even though this is the top activity, taking a luxury rail trip sees the largest increase (of plus 8 per cent points) from the previous year,” the report stated.

Moreover, the research reveals the priorities of global affluent travellers for their next travel destinations. Safety is the primary travel priority among global affluent travellers (37 per cent), followed by a desire to experience diverse cultures (36 per cent) and great local attractions (33 per cent).

Among the affluent people in India, most of the parameters rank higher, but safety is the top priority (42 per cent). For a third, having a once in a lifetime experience (34 per cent), quality services (33 per cent), improving their health and wellness (33 per cent) and experiencing different cultures (33 per cent) are important when choosing their next travel destination.

Compared to global affluents, they are more likely to prioritise a once in a



lifetime experience (34 per cent Indian affluents vs 25 per cent global affluents) and having a personalised experience (20 per cent vs 12 per cent), and less likely to focus on learning something new (32 per cent vs 28 per cent).

Enjoying luxury accommodations, having the best culinary experiences, visiting remote destinations, and doing things few others can do resonate with affluent consumers and luxury travellers who will be looking for brands, experiences and travel companies that understand their individual needs and unique requirements.

METHODOLOGY

The insights in this report are drawn from a recent global YouGov Custom survey to understand what luxury travel looks like post-COVID, explore luxury travel experiences, what affluent consumers are seeking and their future travel aspirations.

Covering 18 global markets of more than 19,000 respondents, the survey results were further bolstered by connecting respondent level data to YouGov’s proprietary syndicated data solution, Global Travel Profiles, allowing YouGov to merge their respondents and their answers to the 100,000 consumer attributes that they collect on an ongoing basis for audience segmentation and profiling. Data for India is based on a national online sample (of 18 plus) comprising of 1,007 respondents, according to YouGov’s Global Travel & Tourism Whitepaper 2023

Among affluent people in India, most of parameters rank higher, but safety is top priority (42 per cent)



Weddings go ultra luxe

Exuberant about trends that wedding industry is going to witness in '23, top wedding planners reveal that personalisation decor, off-season weddings will take precedence.



Lipla Negi

Food has always been the centerpiece of the big fat Indian wedding. It is often used as a benchmark for a memorable wedding and it continues to remain so but with an interesting twist. Explained **Rajiv Jain**, MD & Founder, Raashi Entertainment, "It is no more about a quick grab and go lunch or dinner at wedding. It is now a well-thought curated experience for the guests and family." According to him, sit-down dinners are finding more favour among clients. "A whole restaurant set-up is now being created at weddings as people are willing to spend up to five hours at the lunch or dinner table celebrating their big day. They go with a minimum five-seven course



Rajiv Jain
MD & Founder,
Raashi Entertainment

People are spending up to 5 hours at lunch or dinner table celebrating their big day

meal where food has to be unique and unforgettable," he stated. This food fetish is not just limited to weddings! The anniversary celebrations are also thinking big when it comes to food. "At my own wedding anniversary celebration recently, we had curated an exquisite avocado station for our guests among many other cuisines," he shared.

BIG IS BACK

"Small and intimate is out, big fat is in! With COVID mostly behind us now, we are seeing a surge in larger gathering sizes and demand for more elaborate wedding celebrations. This includes requests for more luxury wedding venues, elaborate food and beverage requirements, wed-

ding decor and more meticulously detailed weddings," said **Nanki Chawla**, Wedding Planner, Nanki Chawla Events. Echoing similar sentiments, Jain said, "The whole experience needs to be magnificent nowadays. From budgets to expectations, big rules the checklist for a grand wedding celebration."

PERSONALISATION

The imprint of bride and groom on every aspect of their wedding celebration is the key focus nowadays and this is achieved with the help of personalisation. "A big trend here is couple personalised theme-based stationery, which includes entire story-based invites. An element which ties the couple



Minnat Lalpuria

Founder & MD,
7Vachan

Brides are not shying away with solo dance-based entries. Flash mobs are also used for same

together, their common interest or something they both relate to. Even hangover kits are personalised,” revealed **Minnat Lalpuria**, Founder & MD, 7Vachan. Besides stationary, the décor has to be personalised. “Couples prefer personalisation of various elements at functions such as event furniture, table scapes, bar designs, among others,” agreed Chawla.

ACTIVITY BASED EVENTS

Indian weddings are known to celebrate the togetherness of bonds with family and friends. So as per the demand, wed-

ding planners are also curating activities that couples and guests can enjoy together. “Like white party is no more just décor, it will have an opa act. We did for the first-time last year and you will see it trending in most weddings this year. Tomatina festival for haldi instead of just haldi and flowers. Another activity that can be enjoyed together is dance for every entry at each event. Even brides are not shying away with solo dance-based entries. Flash mobs are also used for the same,” explained Lalpuria.

OFF-SEASON WEDDING

“Off-season weddings or non saaya weddings are catching up with the new generation. One of the key advantages of picking an off-season wedding date is attractive discounts at desired venues (resorts/hotels). The costs are more competitive on non saaya dates. Availability of hotels, photographers, planners, decorators, among others is less of a challenge and therefore allows you the flexibility of going with who you want instead of having to settle for someone or someplace due to non-availability,” stated **Arpita Gandhi**, Director & Co-founder, Weddingline. Off-season offers a better scope of negotiation, agreed Lalpuria, “We are in a demand supply game when it comes to pricing. So, the off season



TOP WEDDING DESTINATIONS

Domestic	International
Jaisalmer	Oman
Jodhpur	Qatar
Udaipur	Bahrain
Mussoorie	Vietnam
Darjeeling	Portugal
Dehradun	Turkey
Goa	Thailand
Mamallapuram	Ras Al Khaimah
Kovalam	Abu Dhabi

is beneficial, even for flight tickets. The only thing you are probably compromising is on the weather, which you can compensate for by choosing a different destination,” said Lalpuria. Moreover, a discounted rate at hotels makes it an attractive option. “City hotels tend to charge a 15 to 20 per cent premium during the wedding season. The lower spend at the hotel, gives the couple the additional monetary benefit which could be used towards their honeymoon travel or setting up their new home. 2023 has a high number of auspicious wedding dates (over 70) most of which are spread over May



Arpita Gandhi

Director & Co-founder,
Weddingline

One of key advantages of picking an off-season wedding date is attractive discounts at desired venues



Nanki Chawla

Wedding Planner,
Nanki Chawla Events

We are seeing surge in larger gathering sizes and demand for more elaborate wedding celebrations

and June where hotels would see increased wedding revenues,” stated **Nihal Kurian**, Director, Sales and Marketing, Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel.

For those looking for a domestic destination, the chances of getting the desired wedding venue go up with the off season. “Within India, weddings have become an all year-round trend, having said that due to low volume of business for certain destinations, clients are able to get more value for money as hotels are still hungry to maximise their revenues,” explained Chawla. □

FEELING DOTTY BY THE HOUSE OF THINGS

A funky boho edit unveiled by the renowned The House of Things acts as a gateway to the surreal with its fantastical alchemy of dots. It is an off-kilter décor collection that capers into the infinite enigma of orbs, vibrant hues and whimsical spirit—merging all into one with the cosmos. Mystical and playful, this collection encompasses a mélange of sofas, coffee tables, wall art, wall mirrors, tableware, lighting, rugs and décor that emanate a blitheful vibe.



ORNAMATTE BY ACTION TESA

Action TESA has launched ORNAMATTE, a series of supermatte finishes that provide a new dimension to interior design. ORNAMATTE comes equipped with unique UV Coating hybrid technology that enables the company to produce all designs in two modes, UV finish and Super Matte finish. The product provides a smooth satin finish that is pleasing to the touch, while the colors are a treat to the eyes. The super-smooth surface does not carry any fingerprints, ensuring that the product always looks clean and pristine.

IMPRINT COLLECTION BY NEETI'S LINEN LIBRARY

Neeti's Linen Library has introduced the wonderful Imprint collection to showcase the handicraft of Indian textile block printing. The Imprint collection offers a wide range of choices in design, colour, and set pieces. Ranging from the vibrant, eye-catching hues of red, cyan, marigold yellow and ultramarine blue to the more soothing shades of cornflower blue, light green and pastel pink, the pieces in Imprint have been designed to cater to all tastes.



FABRICUT BY ZYNNA

Zynna has recently launched the US-based luxury fabric brand Fabricut for their discerning clientele in India. Crafted in the USA, the entire Fabricut product range presented by Zynna in India can easily fit into the habitat giving a luxurious look to the interiors. The fabrics are elegant with generous colours and whimsical hand-drawn designs. The collection will add depth, giving a truly individual look to the interiors. Mixing originality and tradition, Fabricut's new patterns introduced by Zynna will brighten up decoration as well as textile creations.



MEDLEY OF CUSHIONS BY SARITA HANDA

Sarita Handa's newest medley of cushions flows through with simple pick stitch, applique work, intricacies of French Knots and more, to handcraft tales of enchantment in a gamut of hues to gentle monochromes. A floral abundance drenched in an exuberance of colours: shades of purple, lilac, blue, mustard, rust, red, yellow and green, with motifs drawing inferences from Indian as well as global influences, bring rhythm of nature in with their exuberance. Abstract geometric patterns rich in cerulean blue, white and red threads imbue energy, interest and balance in a room.



Enhancing in-room comfort

Celebrating nine years in service industry, Wyntronix Innovations offers complete range of electronic & electrical products for hotel rooms.

Since its inception, Wyntronix has been focusing exclusively on the hotel industry with an aim to ensure customers enjoy unfailing service during the lifecycle of its products. "We go a step further to support even in case

where the product has reached obsolete status so that the customers' capital investments can be stretched for another day. As we deal with a niche set of customers, namely star hotels, for us customer feedback and support are the force that has been

helping us build market dominance," said **Andrian Goldwyn**, Managing Director, Wyntronix Innovations.

The brand offers a wide array of electronic technology products ranging from electronic door locking systems, Bluetooth technology locks, Electronic Guestroom safes, eco-friendly ThermoElectric Minibars, including the latest to add Drawer Minibar, entire range of in-room accessories, and hotel telephones. "Today, we can proudly say Wyntronix has offices and people in all the key metros of the country, and we have installations in every city where a local or international hotel chain would have its hotel," Goldwyn added.



Andrian Goldwyn
MD,
Wyntronix Innovations



**Apart from India
our growth markets
are Maldives &
Malaysia**

MOVEMENTS



RAJ SUBBA

**General Manager
Lord Hotels, Gangtok**

★ Raj Subba brings with him more than two decades of experience in the hotel industry. In his new role as General Manager, Lords Hotels, Gangtok, Subba will introduce new strategies through innovative management, generating new business, improving profitability and managing an enthusiastic team. Subba as General Manager will be overseeing operations of three hotels—Denzong Shangri-la Lords Inn, New Orchid Lords Inn and Orchid Lords Eco Inn, Gangtok. Lords Hotels and Resorts is a hospitality chain covering 60 hotels in India, Nepal and the USA.



SANDIPAN BOSE

**General Manager,
Mementos Udaipur**

★ Bringing along over two decades of experience of working, Sandipan Bose will lead the operations as General Manager, Mementos Udaipur and develop and strengthen the brand. A result-oriented and self-driven professional, Bose holds a Diploma in Hotel Management from IHM Meerut. He joined ITC Maurya in 2000 and since has worked in different roles at various major hospitality brands across India. He excels in areas of auditing, training and development, consulting, marketing, leadership and innovation.



SHALINI SHARMA

**Director, Sales & Marketing,
Radisson Blu Plaza**

★ With 20 plus years of experience in the hospitality industry, Shalini Sharma has been appointed as Director, Sales & Marketing, Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport. Sharma started her career in 2003 as a Senior Sales Associate at Intercontinental the Grand, New Delhi. During her tenure, Sharma has worked for many hotel chains, which includes Starwood, Carlson, IHG and Marriott International. She possesses impressive skillsets and an extraordinary knack for creativity. Sharma has served Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport for almost three years back in 2005.



SANDEEP SINGH

**Vice President,
Sales, Brij Hotels**

★ Sandeep Singh has been appointed as Vice President, Sales, Brij Hotels. With over 25 years of experience in the luxury hospitality industry, Singh is a seasoned professional with extensive knowledge of the market. Prior to joining Brij Hotels, Singh served as Director, Sales and Marketing for the Gujarat region at The Leela Palace Hotels and Resorts, where he played a crucial role in strengthening the brand's presence across multiple locations. He has also held key positions at several Indian and international brands.



CHANDAN SHARMA

**Director, Sales,
JW Marriott Kolkata**

★ With over 10 years of luxury hospitality sales experience, Chandan Sharma has been appointed as Director, Sales, JW Marriott Kolkata. In this current role, Sharma oversees planning and implementing the hotel's sales strategy, maximizing revenues, exploring new business opportunities, setting annual budget and putting together strategies amongst other duties. Bringing a wealth of experience in the hospitality and sales domain, Sharma has previously worked with The Oberoi Gurgaon, The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore, Pullman Gurgaon Marriott Gurgaon & Prathaa Weddings, Bengaluru.



ZAMIR KHAN

**CEO,
Saj Hotels**

★ Saj Hotels has appointed Zamir Khan as their new CEO. In his new role, Khan will develop strategies, drive growth and foster innovation for the hotels and restaurants verticals of the Group. Khan brings over two decades of experience across sectors such as hospitality, FMCG, real estate, aviation, ITes, telecommunications, among others and worked with Taj Hotels, Resorts & Palaces, Oberoi Hotels & Resorts, among others. He has also spearheaded the communications mandate for conglomerates such as Telcordia, Emirates Airlines, among others.



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