Research Paper

Volume : 3 | Issue : 1 | January 2014 • ISSN No 2277 - 8179

In-Room Dining Practices in Hotels: an Analysis of Literature Review

Hospitality

KEYWORDS : In-room dining, Practice, Services, Hotel

Mr. Abhishek Ghai — Assistant Professor, University Institute of Hotel Management & Tourism, Panjab University Chandigarh

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the analysis of review from the past several studies in the context of room service, its practices and allied to aware about the need of such type of research in the Indian Hospitality Industry. Hotel may also be called as home multiplied by commercial activities (Bhatnagar, 2006). The growth in the Indian tourism industry has fuelled the growth of Indian hotel industry. The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP in 2011 was INR 1,689.8bn (1.9% of GDP). The hotels provide a number of services to the visitors. In-room dining plays the pivotal role in the hotel especially in the food and beverage service department. The review of literature also reveals that a number of studies have been carried out in context to the In-Room Dining (IRD) practices in general, but less work has been carried forward in regard to the hospitality industry in general and in specific to Indian context. Moreover, Indian hospitality management literature revealed that there is a dire need to add exploratory data in the less researched area i.e. In Room dining.

INTRODUCTION

According to Chakravarti, (1999) hotel is a place which provides food, shelter and other amenities for comfort and convenience of the visitors with a view to make profit. In fact, it is an establishment where primary business is to provide lodging & boarding facilities along with other facilities such as laundry, uniformed services etc. Hence, hotel may also be called as home multiplied by commercial activities (Bhatnagar, 2006). The history of the hotel industry is as old as tourism and tourism is old as civilization. Hotel Industry is inextricably linked to the tourism industry; in fact, both are two sides of the same coin. The growth in the Indian tourism industry has fuelled the growth of Indian hotel industry. Both are complementary to each other. The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP in 2011 was INR 1,689.8bn (1.9% of GDP). This is forecast to rise by 7.6% to INR 1,818.5bn in 2012. The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP is expected to grow by 7.7% pa to INR 3,805.2bn (1.9% of GDP) by 2022 (WTTC, 2012). With 740 million domestic travelers (in 2011) and over 6.3 million FTAs, India, after China, is considered one of the most lucrative hotel markets in the world and has the second largest construction pipeline in Asia (ICRA Estimates, 2012).

The hotels provide a number of services to the visitors. The present day modern concept of the hotel is not just a place to provide accommodation and food and beverage but offering to its guest every possible facility, service and convenience. From the number of facilities and services, the study focuses on the IRD services. In-room dining plays the pivotal role in the hotel especially in the food and beverage service department. The department is responsible for serving food and beverages in the room ordered by the guests. According to Brand, J. (2013); the best service any hotel can offer is to serve guests high quality food in their hotel room in a timely way with brilliant service. Further he opined that a simple glass of fresh lemonade upon check in can make the all the difference for a customer and a customer for life. In room dining or private dining has not moved that far from the original Room Service as it once was called, or 'room circus' as not- so- affectionately termed by the kitchen. In today's time every hotel in India and internationally, classified and unclassified offers round the clock room service facility to satisfy their customer needs. However the level of service and the ambience is much better in restaurants, though some guest prefer to have their meal in the room for different reasons such as busy work schedule, privacy, illness, etc. To run the operation efficiently there are number of practices adopted by the hotel or a particular room service department. The present study focuses on the analysis of review from the past several studies in the context of room service, its practices and allied areas such as service quality, customer satisfaction, revenue management, pricing, etc. too aware about the need of such type of research in the Indian Hospitality Industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

From the last few decades, hospitality industry has attracted scholars and offered a venue for different types of research. India is just emerging in this direction and focusing on conceptual and empirical researches, however, to achieve desired results there is a need of hour to add valuable exploratory information to hospitality management literature. Several studies by the scholars in the past have focused in this less researched area such as Norton, 2008; Mann, 1993; Babajide, 2011; Christie, 2002; Hersh, 2010; Ladhari, 2009; Oliver, 1999; Lynn & Withiam 2008.

According to Norton (2008), the room service system helps in over production of food and reduces the wastage, in-floor stock, inventories and also improves the guest satisfaction. Mann (1993), in the hospitality industry every hotel managers agree that service is the utmost priority. That's why to improve the level of service the several practices is used in the hospitality industry. The guest return back to the hotel if he finds the good service. Further Babajide, 2011; Christie, 2002; Hersh, 2010; Ladhari, 2009; Oliver, 1999; stated that service quality plays a pivotal role in satisfying the customers which leads to customer loyalty and encourage them to revisit. According to Siguaw & Enz, (1999); stated that to know the guest requirement and to make feel who our guests are will make the process easier and the quality of service and products leads to decide the customer retention rates. Hinkin & Tracey, 2000; Taylor et. al., 2001; Wildes, 2005; profound that hospitality industry is facing the challenges in terms of recruitment and retention of employees however tipping practices appears to be more popular alternative among restaurateurs to overcome from this challenge. Further Lynn & Withiam (2008); stated that tipping create a competitive edge for employers in attracting talented servers. He also revealed that the major advantages from the tipping practice to the organization is to increase profits through price discrimination, lowers tax payments, acts as an incentive for up-selling and to attract competent workers as well. Wessels (1997) stated that pooling of tip practices vary from country to country and from property to property. However United States have laws that prohibit tip pooling. Non-tipped staff usually argue regarding the tips that they also deserve a share of the tip because they make an equally contribution to the final preparation, packaging and service of the product.

According to Kamakura (2008), upselling plays an important role and has become one of the useful tools for a salesperson to increase the sales volume per customer. Ebster et. al., (2005); demonstrated that without new customer acquisition upselling provides an alternative mechanism to reach revenue goals by increasing the revenue per transaction from the existing customers. Draganska & Klapper (2007); opined that firms establishes pricing in order to achieve profitability and may take care of demand and supply, cost of the product, competition in the market and the consumer preferences. Further Martin-Herran

et. al., 2006; stated that 55% of the buying decision depends on the location of an item. Lohmeyer (2003); supports that Pre Fixe menu is a menu of set items at a set price basically implemented for large parties to ensure service is proper as opposed to getting weeds. It is also implemented on high volume or holiday periods.

Noone, et.al. (2007) revealed that the guest feeling of their visit to a specific place contributes to a guest's experience which leads to word of mouth, the most effective and cheapest form of marketing. He also stated that ambience plays a vital role during the visit of the guest and contributes to how a guest feels. If the experience is good then the guest stay for a longer period and spend more money otherwise vice-versa. Live entertainment is one way to increase guest perception of value. Revenue management is the mathematical way to maximize capacity and revenue of an operation. Harris & Emrich, (2007); demonstrated that revenue management is the ability to tailor prices in real time to demand. Firstly it started from the airlines industry and day by day it evolved into implementation in hotel room sales and these days it can used in the food & beverage operations as well.

CONCLUSION

The review of literature emanates that In Room Dining practices is a widely used concept in the hospitality industry and has profound impact on the revenue management and quality of service. It is also revealed from the review of literature that, revenue management is the mathematical way to maximize capacity and revenue of an operation. Finally, the review of literature also reveals that a number of studies have been carried out in context to the In Room Dining practices in general, but less work has been carried forward in regard to the hospitality industry in general and in specific to Indian context. Moreover, Indian hospitality management literature revealed that there is a dire need to add exploratory data in the less researched area i.e. In Room dining.

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