

Hospitourism League – An Introduction and need of nonformal hospitality education in India

Kiran Hanmant Chavan

M.Phil Hospitality Management, MTM, B.Sc Psychology, DHMCT.,
HOD - Raval Vocational Training Centre

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ABSTRACT

Indian culture prescribes an age-old philosophy of "Atithi Devo Bhava", which portrays a dynamic of host-guest relationship. This ancient maxim means that a guest is a manifestation of God, but the Indian global Tourism ranking at 40th position contradicts this philosophy. There are many challenges before the hospitality and tourism sector in India and one of the major challenges are to bridge the gap of demand-supply of the skilled and unskilled workforce. According to a market Pulse Report published by Ministry of Tourism, currently, there are more than 1,20,000 hotel rooms in India, both in the organized and unorganized sectors. Industry will require an additional one million professionals by the year 2023. Hospitality is much more than just cooking, cleaning, and entertaining. There is a need to focus at this concern from psychosocial point of view and to find a constructive & lasting solution. Lack of nonformal hospitality education at school level and a poor perceived image of hospitality and tourism sector is also disturbing and adding to the challenge of attracting skilled manpower who can serve the industry efficiently. This paper introduces a unique concept of Hospitourism, which works at the root level of this issue and supplements the objectives of Skill India Mission.

1. Objectives of the Study

- To explore the need of nonformal hospitality education at secondary and higher Secondary school level India.
- To take this research as a Mission and to play a crucial role in developing Human Capital for the service sector.
- To create a platform for a further research in this area of study.

2. Literature Review

Overwhelming (Shalini Singh, 1997) success of international and domestic tourism has given rise to a pressing demand for quality professional acumen. Requirements for skilled and efficient human capital pose a serious threat to the future competitiveness of this service industry. Research (Addison Semisi, Taumoepeau, 2016) recognises the need to engage Tongan high school students who are not performing in other traditional academic subjects, and offer them an alternative subject that could provide an entry-level industry qualification, and help retain Tongan students at a secondary school level. The key workforce issues (Vinnie and Kamal, 2009) that need to be addressed in the hospitality industry are: perceptions about the industry; levels of manpower attrition; education; competencies and skill development. The Ministry of Education has encouraged the establishment of Tourism Club as part of co-curricular activities in secondary school throughout the Malaysia. A

Tourism Club is (Ahmad and Alhilal, 2009) aimed at enhancing their knowledge in tourism industry as well as exposing them to tourist destinations in the country.

Considering the above, this paper highlights the benefit of skilling kids from the school level, so that the service skills are flourished before they enter formal hospitality education.

3. Introduction

Hospitality and tourism sector in India continues to grow at a significant rate. It is a fundamental contributor to India's economy and employment generation. The key discussions (Ashish Dahiya, 2013) in the conferences involved considerations, that current hospitality & tourism education system in India emphasis on the supply of a labour force tend to meet industry needs, but less attention is given on adequate development of quality human resources. It is strongly felt that there is a dire need of innovative programmes in hospitality & tourism education in India. However, it is apparent from a review of the literature that the majority of research focuses on tourism in higher education and that limited research exists on the secondary school sector, where students are first introduced to the study of tourism (Ritchie et al., 2003). With reference to above researches, Many countries like Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia has taken initiative to include Tourism Topics in the secondary school.

As per the Basic Education Minister of South Africa, the #eHospitality hospitality and tourism programme will provide ongoing support for both teachers and students, creating awareness at secondary school level about potential careers in the fast-growing hospitality industry. We (Megan, Helan and others, 2018) conclude by suggesting the implications of this study for the development of tourism education in the secondary school sector, for the New Zealand tourism industry as a whole and for tourism destinations globally.

Development of service attitude and emotional intelligence is initiated at the early stage of life. It's high time that Hospitality and Tourism topics need to be included at secondary school level in India. The findings of (Kumar A., 2018) practitioner perceptions of desired knowledge, skills, and attitudes demonstrate collaborative initiatives aimed at improving the

preparation of individuals from secondary institutions for successful entry into hospitality and tourism industry employment. Numerous studies have shown that service attitude is a cornerstone of perception of hospitality services.

By engaging students in the activities at school level, it is expected that they are more adaptable, more independent in their thinking, more aware of their home country and culture, better able to communicate with others, and more sensitive to other cultures. To enhance the effectiveness co-curricular activities, it should be prioritised and evaluated in a similar manner to academic subjects (Ahmad and Alhilar 2009).

4. Hospitourism League in Schools

Hospitourism League is a combined concept of Hospitality and Tourism related activities arranged at the school level. If we look at previous research literature, mainly tourism related activities are focused in school curriculum. There is a need to add Hospitality related activities also so that student will get diverse learning experience. It is specifically aimed at influencing students to explore Indian tourist destinations, cuisine, lifestyle and regional & foreign languages. Students are given opportunity to plan a Banquet menu with cooperation of chef and banquet manager. Involving student in a planning of tour itinerary in coordination with travel agents. Students are motivated to take active part in family function & events and to analyse the service attitude of the waiter, housekeeper or other service provider. Students are trained and guided to do systematic observations, when they visit hotel, restaurant, and airport or tourist destination.

Hospitourism League conducts hospitality and tourism related workshop, seminar, debate, group discussion, quizzes, career counselling and logo designing in school. Members can be provided with experience of alternative tourism products in sustainable manner. These activities help students to polish their service attitude and emotional intelligence and prepare them to get into formal hospitality education. Kids trained through Hospitourism League will be Passionate, knowledgeable, focused and ready to take challenges of Service Industry.

5. Research Methodology

This paper is a type of exploratory research. 'Tourism Club' in Malaysia and #eHospitality programme in South Africa at secondary school level is also studied. Research publication appeared in different journals, and major conference proceedings in the field of Hospitality Skill development has been analysed. Tourism Training offered in the New Zealand and Australian secondary school was also considered. Topic of research is discussed with school principals, teachers, and parents to get the primary information. Secondary data from other sources like books, internet are also collected and referred.

6. Scope of Research

This paper is going to offer valuable insights to the policymakers in Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development and other stake holders.

7. Limitation of Research

Meetings need to be conducted with hospitality and tourism stakeholders and senior staff at the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Skill development on the feasibility of introducing this research. Following this exploratory study, it would be useful to do qualitative and quantitative surveys with a larger population to gain an overall understanding and assess other areas such as teacher capacity and availability, resources and other areas that may be included in co-curricular activities of the secondary school. India is a diverse country, and every state has its own culture. All states have their board for Secondary Education and other boards like CBSE, ICSE, and IG. It is a challenge to initiate a new educational initiative on pan India level. This research is conducted to find a win-win solution to these challenges.

8. Findings

Hospitourism League as a nonformal education activity could be a part of higher secondary education in India along with the regular streams like Arts, Commerce, and Science etc. This has a potential to add value to the other regular subject in school like Geography, History etc; because, in hospitality and tourism activities students get opportunity to explore different destinations, culture and societies. Real-life education and co-curricular activities conducted in school will help to lay a strong foundation for character development of the students, which is a most required attribute for sustainable development of Hospitality and Tourism sector.

9. Recommendations

Some schools would need to be selected for the trial delivery and these would need to be audited on an ongoing basis in terms of standards and quality. Modern tools and technique must be used to find out the inclination of the student's characteristics toward suitable co-curricular activity. The school management, teachers, parents, and students must also be

guided to take responsible part in this League. Teachers play a very crucial role in formal counselling of the students, so that relative training should be provided to school teachers. Corporate sector in service industries can also support this initiative through corporate social responsibility program. University students studying in this sector can also be motivated to be trainer. Monitoring responsibility of this activity should be given to dedicated department in the ministry of India.

10. Conclusion

The Indian Hospitality and tourism industry would benefit more from the introduction of Hospitourism League to the co-curricular activities in secondary school. India needed a revolution in field of Hospitality and Tourism. Leadership with a vision and mission is a prerequisite for optimistic change. It has a tremendous potential to develop leaders, as it focuses on a faith and belief system of a human capital. This paper will not only benefit the hospitality sector but other service sectors as well. This study will boost the capacity of research skills of students in secondary school. Sustainable Development is the USP of this initiative. The Government organizations, CSR

activist and school managements must study this paper and suggest correction and improvement to make Hospitourism

League a huge success.

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