



# Transition or Paradigm Shift in Hospitality Sector of India: Innovations, Challenges and Opportunities Ahead

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## ABSTRACT

The hospitality industry is witnessing the paradigm shift and has developed a lot since the industry has started. The industry is going through a rapid growth and is improving the scope of employment opportunities for the skilled and trained hospitality professionals. The major developing countries have elevated their economy through the invaluable contribution of hospitality and tourism industry. Innovations are critically essential for viability and competitiveness of hotel enterprises. As the environment is getting highly competitive, the industry stalwarts and stakeholders have to find the new ways of development and to remain relevant in the competition. The paper aims to study and identify the paradigm shift in the hospitality industry. The paper also aims to study the innovations in the hospitality sector after or during the Covid-19 pandemic which the hoteliers are bringing so as to be the best service provider. Further the research paper discusses the challenges faced by the hospitality in bringing the innovations in the industry during this period of pandemic.

**Keywords:** Hospitality, Innovations, Trends, Challenges, Development.

## INTRODUCTION

The travel and tourism are emerging as one of the fastest growing industry in the world as it is evident that despite volatile economic conditions the international tourism grew by 6% in 2018 as per report of UNWTO. As the growth continues the hospitality industry have to come-up the changes and work in strategic manner to be ahead of the competitors. The strong nature of the hospitality industry has gained the attention of Government, cooperate organizations, budding entrepreneurs towards the hospitality industry. This led to major change in industry from the first motel in California to elite and luxury hotels. The hospitality industry is going through the paradigm shift and has grown a lot since the industry has started. The industry is going through a rapid growth and is creating the scope of employment opportunities for the skilled and trained hospitality professionals. The major developing countries have elevated their economy through the invaluable contribution of hospitality and tourism industry.

Tourism and hospitality have gone through the significant changes in past decade, Go and Pine (1995) and Guerrier et al. (1998) claims that the reason for the change is because of the globalization. Apart from globalization the more and more hoteliers emerged in later part of 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century and also strong brands emerged in the market which effected the hospitality sector to greater extent. The industry is one of the largest service sectors in contributing the Indian Economy, it is an essential source of foreign exchange earnings. According to Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion report (2011) the total market size composed by tourism and hospitality is US\$ 117.7 and this is expected to US\$ 418.9 by the year 2022. The hospitality sector in India is growing exponentially at an annual growth of 15%, the Government of India has been instrumental in extending the support for infrastructural development and the promotion of the industry at international level. The tourism policy in the country is not only to develop the hospitality industry but also nourish the skilled and professional labor for the industry, the ministry has framed various courses and schemes in collaboration with National Council of Hotel Management to produce the professional service providers to cater the guests. The Government also aims to implement various tourism and hospitality projects, develop tourism circuits, organize various capacity building programs and continuously frame new marketing strategies. The industry has potential of high employment with approximately 90 jobs for per 10 lakh rupees.

The hospitality industrialists are in continuous effort for creating a positive image by providing best of the services to the guests as quality of services is the key to success for this industry. As per Jonsson and Devonish (2009) the hotels that put more emphasis on quality and guest-satisfaction are the leaders in this industry. There has been new philosophy emerging in the field of hospitality that the managers give the authorities and resources to their associates that “Do whatever it takes” is an important factor for success, Walker (2010).

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The concept of innovation in terms of economics was first developed by Schumpeter in 1934 and explains the process of innovation as emergence of new products, new process, enhanced form of raw materials so that a products or services of an industry get a new shape. The theories of economics used to neglect the innovations in service industry as theories of innovations in this industry are adopted observations. The main aim of innovation is visible by the modification in an existing product or service to make it better. The improvements may include use of new techniques, technologies or enhancing the existing characteristics. As per Nelson (1982) the importance of innovation in economic upliftment attracted the attention of various authors in the present era. European Commission (2004) stated their arguments on innovation as recycling of variety of products and services in the industry; new methods of production; change in management setup, workplace and skills of worker.

Hospitality industry emerged as one of the most employment generation industry , as there is significant increase in travel and tourism activities which creates employment opportunities in hotels, restaurants, airlines etc. According to the analysis by the retail consultancy Techmopak the worth of Indian Hospitality industry was around 17 billion US dollars of the total revenue. The hospitality industry is predicted to grow at the CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of 15% in next 5 years. The average annual growth in hotel and restaurant sector has been 8.8% during 2005-2010, but then the period of 2011-2013 has not been that pleasant as the growth faded.

#### **Annual growth rate (in per cent)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
Hotels & Restaurants	17.5	14.4	13.1	-3.1	2.2

*Annual growth rate Source: Economic Survey 2010-11*

- **Paradigm shift to services orientation**

The thought reevaluation of social and political welfare began after the economic crisis of 1929. The government started to increase in role by implementing the more rules and regulations in the business. The process of marketing during the 1930's developed to further level and there was a visible change seen in economic and social environment. The new towns and cities were developed and importance was given to customer rights and the traditional business activities shifted to customer-oriented activities. The main objective of any such marketing activity was to get well aware of interests of customers and it also helped them to grow their market. The advent in technology and improvements in business has changes the hospitality and tourism industry to larger extent various such innovative examples are phone-as-key-cards, mobile bookings, kiosks check-in, electronic check-in etc. the innovations in the services can be visible or may be invisible which may operate in back-end.

Keeping in view the concept of competitive advantage, productivity is often related with quality production efficiency by virtue of which hospitality and tourism firms started to invest more in quality and product/service innovations to be up in the line of competition. The concept of innovation is more crucial to reduce the production cost, provide product value and strengthen the marketing channels, Weiermair, (2006).

**Table 1. Conceptual perspective for innovation in services**

<b>Theoretical Perspective</b>	<b>Assimilation</b>	<b>Demarcation</b>	<b>Integration</b>
<b>Type of innovation</b>	technological	non-technological	complex
<b>Characteristics of innovation</b>	equates or reduces innovation in services to the adoption and use of technology considers technological or visible modes of product and process innovation	leads to new typologies for innovation in services: non-technological types of innovation such as organizational innovation, ad-hoc innovation, and marketing innovation	shows convergence between manufactured goods and services in regards of innovation · includes technological and non-technological innovation
<b>Innovation framework</b>	attempts to assimilate services within the consolidated framework used for manufacturing sectors and manufactured products	· attempts to develop a specific framework for service innovation, while attempting to highlight all the specificities in service product and production processes	· attempts to develop a common conceptual framework, able to account for an enlarged view of innovation that is applicable to any tangible or intangible product · proposes a new taxonomy of innovation in services based on a new definition of product

**(Gallouj & Weinstein, 1997)**

Innovations and new forms of service developments are vital strategic features to guarantee the sustainable wealth and growth for any industry. The hospitality industry refers to a large group of hotels that are known for providing basic services in travel and tourism to the travelers, Walker (1996). The benefits of this change can be financial or increase in quality by nature. The process of bringing change and developing something new refers to innovation, it is re-generating, re-organizing, cutting costs, enhancing the existing system and etc. In business the change, shift or innovation means developing or introducing something new in the market or in the organization, Schumpeter (1934). Hotels can be directly benefited from service innovation, Reid and Sandler (1992). The innovations can be at international level and are usually implemented after thoroughly studying and analyzing the current scenario. The findings of the study by Fernandez and Suarez (1996) revealed that hospitality industry can achieve the competitive advantage by investing in trainings, education, innovation and creativity programs. Amablile (1996) explains innovation as best way of implementing the new ideas, change in trends and stresses that creativity within the individual or group of individuals is from where innovation begins. Amablile (1996) further states the implementation of new ideas and developing new innovations is vital because the lifestyle is changing globally and people are search of new trends, and also says that the innovations manage the flexibility and keep an open scope of creativity. Hjalager (2002) states that innovation determinants can be allocated outside tourism industry, which means it is necessary to develop changes by interacting with other agents who are not directly part of tourism industry.

As per karmarkar (2004) the hotel managers are required to be proactive and focus on changes more efficiently in context to wants and preferences of customers to keep their position maintained in competitive environment. As there is the paradigm shift in hospitality, now many research studies are conducted regarding what best organizational innovations can be developed but the research is still at the nascent or inception phase, Puccio et al., (2006); Huhtala and Parzefall, (2007). Hall and Williams (2008) came up with the model that distinguishes innovation on three lines (I) Incremental: which suggests that this kind of innovation doesn't require change in market or technology but aims at improvement of business

growth, e.g. acquisition of more sophisticated cars for rent; (ii) distinctive: it's the change that organization is terms of demand and getting the following changes done, e.g. improvements in online booking of air tickets; (iii) breakthrough: it includes implementation of new technologies, making an effort in easing the work for customers e.g. self-check-in at airport. The significant initiatives for innovations in hospitality industry are being constructed in relation to technology; organizational and human capital development, Repnik (2008). However, Iivenkove&Kuznetsov (2009) writes if a hotel or whole of hospitality in not active in process of innovation, the performance of hotel will diminish and it won't be competitive anymore. According to Prester (2010:14) innovations means the change existing product or service for the improvement of service or product. It was also found that the innovations have helped in raising the revenue management, Paco and Perez (2013). In hospitality industry changing trends are exhibited through potential to bring different innovations, that will bring a positive development in the hotel, Zaitseva (2013). The changes in hospitality industry follow a track of service innovation modes, which usually differs from product innovation, Gremyr et al. (2014). This type of innovations has advanced operational efficiency and at the same time has created more value for customers. Since innovation is a continues process and it has led to improvement in the service quality, Sorescu et al. (2011). The service quality improvement is experienced by forecasting needs and wants of customers, reduction in used capacities and a gradual increase in efficiency and productivity. The innovation in service is the way of creating more value and offering new services to the customers. Incase of tourism and travel examples are like introduction of luxury suites of aircraft A380, new augmented tours, new forms of tourism, newly introduced distribution channels and etc. The scenario of hospitality and tourism industry nowadays is totally different and better from decades ago.

As per the report of Industry News, (2015) the present millennial is search of new innovations, trends and creativity to utilize the technology available in the best possible way so as make experience better. The present generation travelers are prefer online reservation systems and the online booking system is growing quickly as there are huge technological advancements, Gehrels (2015). At present customers are becoming more self driven and prefer using mobile technology, be more engaged with social networking and other media thus creating a need for adapting new models and approaches to develop experience of the customers, McGuire (2015). These innovations are important as these develop incremental change in the hotels. According to c most of the guests prefer hotels that provide special offers because of their budgetary constraints, similarly findings of some more studies concluded the creativity, development or innovations help in reducing the costs, provides enhanced services and gives a better value of money to the guests.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper attempts to theoretically review studies conducted by researchers and practices followed by organizations. Secondary data was the main source for data collection. The secondary data was collected from reports, journals and magazines. Data was also collected by surfing the net and the relevant websites.

### *Objectives of the study*

The study has been conducted to achieve the following objectives:

- To study the paradigm shift in hospitality industry.
- To examine the current scenario of Indian Hospitality industry.
- To find the innovations and changing trends in the hospitality.
- To study the challenges faced by the hospitality in bringing the innovations in the industry.

## INNOVATIONS AND RECENT TRENDS

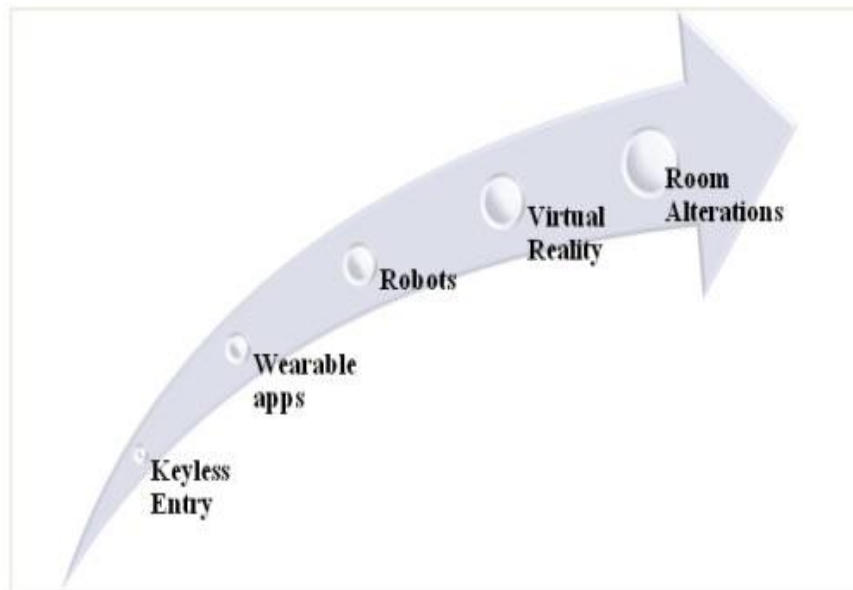
**Safety and security:** One of the major concerns of the hospitality industry is the safety and security of the guests and the industry is to a large extent is overcoming the challenges with the latest and innovative security systems. The personal safety of the guests must be the priority of hotel management, Waker (2010). International hotel chains, airport authorities and airline companies have enhanced their security systems by adopting to latest security techniques and are investing huge amounts in advancing their security. The property security programs must certainly include the ways and procedures to tackle, discourage and prevent the incidents, Ellis and Stipanuk (1999).

Thermal imaging cameras that work through the smoke are now a days installed by the most of hotel chains, use of retina and fingerprint biometric identification, wireless-transmission of in room smoke detectors, credit-card/ electronic accesses are few latest and innovative technological developments used by the hoteliers to advance and better their security. Although the cost of implementing these devices is hampering the process but the insurance companies are providing the cover. As per the latest court verdict in Florida, Texas and Wisconsin have suggested that just the standard key-in-knob lock system is not sufficient security for a hotel room.

Innovations can be seen in adopting safety against the fire incidents, e.g. new wireless transmission system where smoke detector alarms, the detectors were officially launched by the National Fire Protection Association in January 2018 and these can help in fire safety effectively.

**Technology:** The advent of technology has played a huge role in diversifying the behaviour of tourists. At present it is very difficult to accept the lifestyle without technology and the hospitality industry is no exception, various innovations in technology have changed the scenario of operations in hotels. The innovations like hassle free check-in, I-Concierge app and other software's has eased in the guest handling procedures. There is regular research in enhancing the technology to ensure that guest stays in ease and with convenience. The innovations have utilized smart phone to replace of hotel key card. Hotels at present are widely invested in technology to reduce the costs, add to productivity and enhance service quality, Bilgihan et al. (2011). Hoteliers across the globe are very much dedicated to the sustainability of the environment and are conducting various programs in this regard. The industry is taking full use of technology in order to reduce the energy and resources. The environmental goals were launched by Starwood's in the year 2009 and focused to reduce energy by 30%, and reduction in water usage by 20% across the world by 2020. One of latest technology adopted by the hotels to save power is the motion sensor technology which helps in turning off the lights and reduction in room temperature automatically, the amount of reduction in light is depends upon the light coming from natural sources and reduction in temperature is depend upon the if the room is occupied or unoccupied.

#### Evolution of new technologies in hotels since 2014



(adapted from Euromonitor, 2015)

There has been an exponential increase in the emergence of travel sites and these platforms are giving a convenient experience and with the advent of technology the role of traditional travel and tour operators is getting less as online booking of tickets or reservation of hotels is providing customers with a bundle of opportunities with a click. In a process of innovation through technology the hotels are exploring different options like automated check-in/check-out. Now the concept of wearable technology is being adopted by the top hotels where guests have more access to the technology to enhance their experience. It is a sort of room automation to make the guest more comfortable so as to avoid unnecessary human interaction. The various types of wearable technology used in the hotels is smart watches, robots, smart TVs, and etc.

**Boutique Hotels:** The innovation is very famous in the hospitality industry, it's a unique with featured hotel having 50-100 rooms with customized decoration and beautification. The growth and emergence of lifestyle and boutique hotels is one of the most trending and new developments in the hospitality industry. The world famous hotel chains like Marriott, Holiday Inn, Hilton and etc. are regularly providing guests with innovative lodging products and services across the globe. It has been seen that more people are showing interest in these boutique/ customized or theme based hotels. According to Mintell, (2011) from Dubai to Las Vegas the boutique hotels are rising as the emerging segment of the hospitality market. Leading hotel chains such as Morgan's hotel group; Starwood; Joie de Vivre, Hyatt and etc. are in a race of developing these lifestyle

hotels. Following the trends seen in behavior of guest who were in search of properties having unique features with sophisticated and innovative environment this paradigm shift was seen in hotel development. The uniqueness or differential elements in the hotel makes the stay memorable for the guest, Forsgen& Franchetti (2004). The basic aim of this innovation was the separation of competition. There are many concepts related to boutique hotels that created bit of confusions in the market, to overcome the confusion, BBLA (Boutique & Lifestyle lodging Association) came up with a typology. ^

**Revenue Management:** The process of revenue management is the sequential and step by step actions taken by the revenue managers of a hotel in tactical, strategical and operational manner to manage the revenue. Its one of the important areas of innovative development, Sanjeev and Jauhari (2012). Hotel revenue management binds various matrices that support to reveal the options for enhancement of revenue. If the dynamics of process is well managed and is based on the sound data drawn from the internal sources of hotel, it will be supportive in decision making, Ivanov (2012). Hotel chains like Hilton, InterContinental, Starwood and Marriott Sheraton are the early adopters of the effective techniques and approaches like Revenue Management, Jiang (2014). The adaptation of best techniques like revenue management is crucial for overall management of hotel operations. However there is paradigm shift in innovative approaches and there is a room of further development in bringing innovative mechanism for leveraging optimization of revenue. The hoteliers need to put focus on optimizing per room revenue by managing the costs of guest acquisition or leveraging inventory control methods.

### **CHALLENGES FACED BY THE HOSPITALITY IN BRINGING THE INNOVATIONS IN THE INDUSTRY**

The hospitality industry is showing immense contribution in socio-economic developments, the industry is doing excellent in adopting new technology, enhancing security system and etc., but then industry is confronted with various challenges that act as a barrier in development and implementing the innovations. As per the reports given by International Society of Hospitality Consultants (ISHS), the major challenges faced by the hospitality industry are as follows.

**Escalating operating cost:** The operating expenses are on rise because of the advent and sophisticated path industry is leading to. The cost for labor, construction, innovative ideas, renovation, construction, maintenance and etc. are classified as major expenses for the smooth and effective running of hospitality industry. Various international and well-established local brands are changing the standards of their brands and are lifting the bar of their hotels by providing enhanced services, amenities in order to gain the competitive edge in the market over others which results in high operating costs the hoteliers. At times it is challenging for hoteliers to bring changes and innovations due the hike in implementing costs.

**Evolving Customer Expectations:** The top most priority of any player of the hospitality industry is to satisfy and foresee the customer/guest needs. The behavior and to understand what rightly satisfy the customer is never an easy task; the customers now a days are more sophisticated users of technology and also believe in self research while buying or selling the hospitality products. The customers are no more blindly following the chain mentality and this gives rise in creating the customized and unique experiences while maintaining the bottom line. This resulted in adaptation of more sophisticated market approach in order to reach customer more effectively and efficiently. The true form of differentiation is quite challenging to achieve in hospitality as the luxury market is becoming more mainstream because of increasing competition.

**Natural disasters:** The confrontation of natural disasters are major challenges to industry across the globe and studies have that shows most of the primetourist attraction are in disaster prone areas, Be it the trending global warming or cyclones or earthquakes or floods, the cycle of natural disasters have significantly increased. The travelers are seen preferring the destinations that have less perceived level of risk. The post disaster situation and consequences put the destinations in a challenging position to come back or revive. The resources and reserves are utilized in renovation of local infrastructure drain out the funds that could have been used in enhancing the industry or that could had led to innovations and economic development.

**Covid – 19 pandemic:** Due to the pandemic, India's hospitality and tourism sector suffered three quarters of economic wipe out estimated to be up to 15 lakh crore. COVID-19 has affected most sectors across the globe, and the hospitality industry is among the hardest hit. In addition to putting in place exhaustive sanitisation & hygiene protocols for the guests to feel safe & comfortable, the hotels associated with his group have tweaked the regular processes and activities to ensure that least human contact is required. The digital check-in & check-out is already a new normal, the company has also introduced technologies such as e-newspapers or magazines for the visitors. Contactless payments and contact light dining offer additional convenience and confidence to our guests so that they can travel hassle-free. Along with that replacing tangible restaurant menus and paper in-room compendiums with scannable QR codes to contactless hotel check-in capabilities, almost every aspect of the hospitality experience can now be accessed through the push of a button on your mobile devices. Now the hotels also installed the air purifiers intended for medical purposes to kill bacteria & viruses in the air. All these



technological advancements, can put immediate assistance straight into guests' hands without the need to come face-to-face with hotel employees.

## CONCLUSION

The global hospitality and tourism are rapidly increasing which means there is a significant level of rise in expenses of both tourists and also the service providers. The tourism and hospitality industry have been the important pillars in creating the employment across the globe that create a special bond among the people from different places and backgrounds breaking the stereotypes, which helps in standing against the fear and distrust, Rifai (2016). The trends that are most impactful on the hospitality are the increased concerns regarding the safety and security of guests; the change in the technology which plays an important role in contributing towards improved and enhanced guest services; the variety in workforce composition and etc. The emerging trends in hospitality are leading to an obvious change in their delivery. The process of change maybe expressed as innovation in technology, enhancement or services or products. Innovations in hospitality target the satisfaction of customer needs and also increases in the competitiveness of hotels. Furthermore, the hospitality analysts need to look for more productive option to tackle the challenges and issues faced in adapting or implementing the innovations. The future trends in hospitality is making its way towards introduction of new technology, more focus on boutique hotels, more satisfying service to guests and etc. The future trends in the hospitality industry include more attention towards green and eco-lodgings; emphasis on mega hotels; boutique/theme hotels; intelligent hotels with advanced technology; and guests' virtual and physical social networks to be the best distribution channels. In general, it can be concluded there is a scope of improvement in all fields of innovation, mostly in organizational innovations. The innovations and emerging new trends are the most important drivers of competitiveness.

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