

## Hospitality Education In Jammu And Kashmir: An Assessment From Quality Perspective

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### Abstract

*Over the last few decades the Hospitality and Tourism industry has been recognised as a significant economic contributor to the economy of Jammu and Kashmir. Therefore this growth of tourism industry globally and spreading out of tourism employment necessitated for involvement of quality education and training of personnel in the hospitality and tourism sector. The aim of this paper is to assess the quality of hospitality education in Jammu and Kashmir. The objectives were to establish factors that have contributed to the quality of hospitality education in Jammu and Kashmir, determine factors that have led to the rapid growth of hospitality institutions, examine the student- instructor ratio in hospitality educational institutions, assess the curriculum content of hospitality programs, and to determine the factors that motivate students to pursue hospitality education. The research employed a survey design using a questionnaire and data was collected from 126 students and 4 heads of departments of four institutions offering degree, diploma and certificate courses in hospitality. Three public Universities were selected purposively while four colleges offering diploma, certificate and craft based skills were selected by complex random sampling .The study established that though facilities exist in the institutions of learning for the delivery of hospitality education, many of them were not adequate for the student population and others were unsuitable in the current competitive hospitality market. The research therefore concluded that for quality education to be achieved in hospitality there is an urgent need to integrate all the aspects of resources like personnel & learning for effective and quality delivery.*

**Key words:** education, hospitality, quality, resource

### Introduction

Hospitality can be traced back to the days of very first inns and taverns of 17<sup>th</sup> century. In those days hospitality industry was limited to small food business outlets and later on as industry grew, there was need for formal training (apprenticeship). The early apprenticeship programs developed were geared towards effectively preparing students for successful careers in the industry. The culinary schools were an outgrowth of early apprenticeship programs and were the earliest established formal programs for careers in hospitality, but their interest was at the back of the house (those departments that are not involved with direct reception of guests). The introduction of hospitality management programs however was tailored to produce graduates for all departments in hospitality establishments. It combined both classroom training with practical experience. Hospitality management higher education's historic origins have resulted in a strong vocational ethos permeating the curriculum. Knowledge about hospitality has been drawn from the industry and the world of work rather than from the many disciplines or other fields of enquiry, which can

help to explain the industry. By the late 1990s there was a strengthening international movement, driven by higher education hospitality academics towards the liberation of hospitality management higher education from its vocational base and to explore the inclusion in the curriculum of a broader and more reflective orientation.

### **Growth Of Hospitality Education In Jammu & Kashmir**

Tourist attractions existed in Jammu and Kashmir may since the earth came into being. Jammu and Kashmir is known as paradise on earth because of its breath taking beauty but hospitality industry in Jammu and Kashmir could not be commercialized due to lack of knowledge on commercialized hospitality and people were content with their traditional way of welcoming guests. It was not until late 1890's and early 1900's when Jammu and Kashmir received a long trend of overseas visitors mainly business men from Asia and Europe. It is for this reason that catering and accommodation facilities were set up by foreigners, and local people were hired for menial jobs as they did not have training in hospitality. Tremendous growth was registered after the Second World War, with the peak in the late sixties and early seventies, the time saw the establishment of international chain hotels like the Hilton. With this growth the government saw the need to train its' citizens for not only operational jobs, but also managerial positions in these hotels which considered employees with interest and not necessarily qualification. The fact that unqualified staff was employed resulted in low productivity, failing standards of catering, and high labour turnover. Major hotel chains also sent their employees abroad for further training. Further after India's independence the government decided to broad base hospitality education. With this aim four central hotel management institutes were set in 1964 at Madras, New Delhi, Mumbai and Calcutta. Later the network of central institutes was extended to whole country and currently we have 52 central hotel management institutes and 12 food craft institutes imparting hospitality education to students. Jammu and Kashmir got its first hospitality training institute in 1983 when Central Institute of hotel management was inaugurated by the then president of India.

Currently Jammu and Kashmir has One central Institute of Hotel Management, four Government universities, two Food craft institutes offering various degree, diploma and certificate courses in Hospitality education.

### **Objectives Of The Study**

1. To establish factors that have contributed to the quality of hospitality education in J&K
2. To determine factors have led to the rapid growth of hospitality institutions and their implication to the future of the hospitality industry
3. To examine the student- instructor ratio in hospitality educational institutions
4. To assess the curriculum content of hospitality programs
5. To determine the factors that motivate students to pursue Hospitality education

### **Significance Of The Study**

The tourism industry in J&K currently receives million of visitors every year, there is therefore a need for the Hospitality education sector to produce personnel that are adequately prepared to handle this important market. The findings from this study are important to scholars, entrepreneurs of hospitality education institutions and practitioners as it will provide a basis for future research and basis for evaluation of hospitality education.

### **Literature Review**

Brendon and Jhosi (2008) established that the representatives of Jammu and Kashmir main hospitality and Tourism training institutions have expressed the view that there is a wide gap between industry and Educator expectations and this certainly has been one main reason for dismal performance of tourism sector in Jammu and Kashmir. Although there is dearth of Specific research on hospitality education, but in recent

years specific articles on the development of hospitality education have been developed in United Kingdom, Australia, and

Italy. A pilot study by WTO (2008) discovered that most hospitality education and training systems currently in existence were characterized by a high degree of inertia and rigidity which respond to the static principles inherent from the past. The result is that reactions to questions of strategic importance are slow. The WTO (2008) stated that an analysis of hospitality education and needs constitute the first step for any education system aiming to offer quality. Singh, (1996) observed that in order to improve the quality of tourism and hospitality services, the key may be continuing vocational training and education. The stake holders in the industry must also be educated on the advantages of continuing education and the impact on the quality of employee productivity. As the needs for skilled labour continue in line with industry growth, the key areas in the education system need to be clearly examined such as; students selection procedure in order to minimize attrition from courses and later from the industry, staff development opportunities for tutors in educational institutions particularly in terms of updating industry knowledge and experience and the balance of training provided between operatives, supervisory and management levels. Apart from training individuals to meet the operational needs of tourism and hospitality, there's a parallel need to educate industry leaders and managers which traditionally has been provided through on job training. However the size, complexity and sophistication of the hospitality industry call for more Strategic thinking-quality hospitality education. Challenges facing tourism and hospitality education in Jammu and Kashmir include:

- A) Identification of training needs of the various sectors of the industry,
- B) The formulation of an appropriate human resources development policy in the context of broader strategy, harmonization of education standards and the development of consultation mechanism linking industry and education providers and for cooperation in curriculum development and training initiatives.

There is also need for institutions of higher learning to show a gradual move from teaching craft skills to more managerial skills and for recognition on the part of the education sector concerned with vocational training of the complementary nature of their services. Formal education system should be designed to cooperate and build on the training systems run and needed by hospitality industries (Gamble, 1992).

## **Quality Of Education**

Two principles characterize most attempts to define quality in education; the first identifies learners 'cognitive development as the major explicit objective of all education systems while the second emphasizes education's role in promoting values and attitudes of responsible citizenship and in nurturing creative and emotional development (EFA and GMR, 2005). Quality determines how much and how well children learn and the extent to which their education translates into a range of personal, social and developmental benefits. It is the teaching and learning process that brings the curriculum to life, determines what happens in the classroom and subsequently the quality of the learning outcomes.

## **Enabling Inputs for Quality Education**

Other things being equal, the success of teaching and learning is likely to be strongly influenced by the resources made available to support the process and the direct ways in which these resources are managed. It is obvious that schools without teachers, textbooks or learning materials will not be able to do an effective

job. In this sense, resources are important for education quality – although how and to what extent this is so has not yet been fully determined. Inputs are enabling in that they underpin and are intrinsically interrelated to teaching and learning processes, which in turn affects the range and type of inputs used and how effectively they are employed. The main input variables are material and human resources with the governance of these resources as an important additional dimension. Material resources provided both by governments and households include textbooks and other learning materials, availability of classrooms, libraries, school facilities and other infrastructure. Human resource inputs include managers, administrators, support staff, supervisors, inspectors and most importantly lecturers who are vital to the education process (EFA and GMR, 2005). Other important factors having an indirect impact on teaching and learning are strong leadership, a safe and welcoming school environment, good community involvement and incentives for achieving good results (EFA and GMR, 2005).

### Research Methodology

A survey research design was used. Students from four institutions offering degree, diploma and certificate courses in hospitality were sampled. Purposive sampling was used to select three public universities while complex random sampling was used to select four diploma, certificate and craft colleges. The sample comprised 126 students and 4 Heads of departments from these institutions. Data was collected using questionnaires. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze data with the aid of SPSS.

### Results And Discussions

From the findings majority (60%) of the respondents were male while 40% were female. These results contradicts the findings by (Pavesic, 1993; Ioannis, 2008) who found out that majority of students that choose to study hospitality management education were female. Majority of the institutions (42%) were established after the year 2000, (29%) between the year 1981-2000 and (29%) between the year 1960- 1980. There was no significant difference on the dates the establishments were formed ( $\chi^2=.286$ ,  $P=.867$ ). Majority (71%) of the departments were formed to cater for increased demand for qualified staff by the industry while 29% were formed to bridge the gap between education and the industry. There was a significant difference on the reasons for the formation of the departments ( $\chi^2=1.286$ ,  $P=.257$ ).

### Education Level of Teaching Staff

From the results (Table 01) majority (36.92%) of the instructors comprised 1st degree holders in the universities and middle level college, 30.77% in the universities were master degree holders while 29.23% in the middle level colleges were diploma holders. From all the institutions only 03.08% were PhD holders and 3 institutions had a professor on board.

**Table 1 Frequency Distribution of instructors according to Education Level**

Parameters	Frequency	Percentage
Diploma	38	29.23%
Degree	48	36.92%
Masters	40	30.77%
Doctorate	04	03.08%

### Number of Students in the Institutions

The student instructor ratio in hospitality institutions was obtained by dividing the student numbers by the instructors. The institution with the highest number of student was at 325, 3 institutions had 200 students and above, and 2 had students below 100. From these findings it is evident that there was high ratios between instructors & students in majority of these institutions, this is one indicator that quality of learning is hindered.

### Status of the Lecture Rooms

From the responses, (35%) of the respondents indicated that the status of their lecture rooms was fair, 24% felt they were poor and 22% think they were good. A small percentage (14%) indicated that they were very poor while a very small percentage (5%) indicated that they had very good lecture rooms. The results on status of the classrooms were significant ( $\chi^2=41.286$ ,  $P=.000$ ). Good learning environment, comfortable seats are essential for productive learning. Though it cannot be concluded from these findings that the status of lecture rooms affect quality of hospitality education, it is evident that they could be a hindrance to excellence. Generally the condition of the class rooms was stated as poor, congestion was rampant, and since the rooms were separated by boards it was very difficult to concentrate because of noise in other lecture room, most lecture rooms were also filled with uncomfortable seats.

### Practical Laboratories

Majority (90%) of the respondents indicated that they had practical food laboratories while only (10%) didn't have at all. Of those with laboratories, 54% indicated that the laboratories were replicas of the state of the art commercial kitchen, 38% indicated that they were modern while only a paltry (8%) were new. The responses on practical were significant ( $\chi^2=20.667$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Majority of the respondents who indicated the laboratories were like commercial kitchens implied that not much was learned from these laboratories, 32% felt the quality was fair while 5% felt the quality was poor. There was a significant difference among the implication of the laboratories on the quality of education ( $\chi^2=32.667$   $p=.000$ ). It was therefore deduced that the status of laboratories was poor and their unavailability contributed to poor quality education.

### Availability of a Library and Quality of Reading Material

The Results showed that majority of the institutions (71%) had a library while only (29%) did not have. The students were asked to rate the quality of reading materials in the library which included text books and other learning materials and how current those materials were. From the findings (Table 02) , 33% rated the quality of materials as very poor and poor, (40%) rated them as fair, 22% rated them as good while only (5%) indicated that they had very good quality materials. The results indicate the need for institutions to change from having outdated materials to current ones and probably adopt e-library.

**Table 2: Quality of Hospitality Materials**

Score Percentage	(%)
<b>Very good</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Good</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Fair</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Poor</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Very Poor</b>	<b>8%</b>

## Implications of Learning Resources on Quality of Education

Majority (87%) of the students said that the quality of education was low as a result of state of hospitality materials, while only (13%) did not see any implications at all. These results of the learning resources were highly significant ( $\chi^2 = 35.063, p = .000$ ). The learning resources play a vital role in the quality of education and should not be overlooked if quality in education is to be achieved.

## Review of the Curriculum

Majority (58%) of the hospitality curricula had never been reviewed, 29% had reviewed it within the last five years while only 13% had reviewed within the last two years. Hospitality education like the industry itself is constantly changing hence any institution that wants to be highly competitive in terms of providing high quality education should review its curriculum as frequently as possible to keep abreast with the industry and student's needs. The results are shown in figure 2

### Review of Curriculum

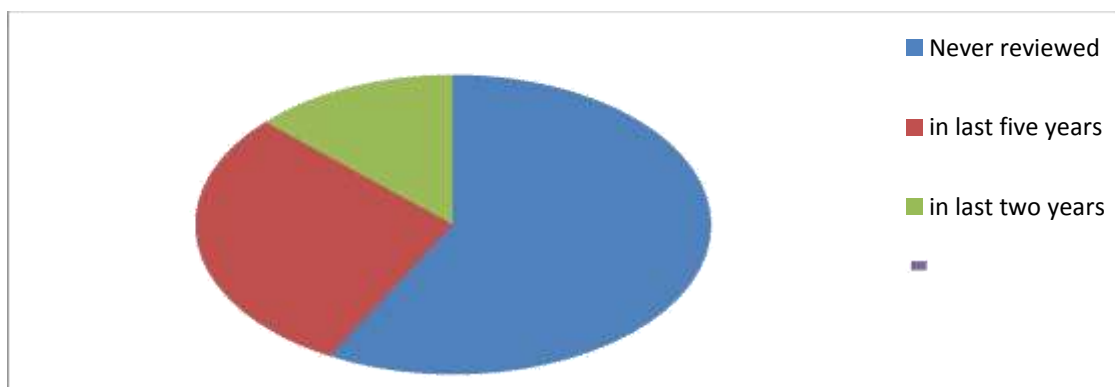


Figure 2: Period of Curriculum Review

## Reasons for Pursuing Hospitality Education

The results of Fig 03 shows that majority (42%) of students chose to pursue hospitality education as a result of ambition in terms of opportunity for employment, a desire to operate own business and desire to be independent. 30% chose the course due to lack of alternative as they did not do well in their professional exams or lack of financial resources or were forced to pursue the course. 25% chose it because of interest as they enjoy working with people, food, dining out, and travelling while only 3% pursued the course out of experience such as prior work experience, family background in the industry and contact with other students and faculty in hospitality management programs. The results were not significant ( $\chi^2 = 19.349, P = .000$ ), hence this research disputes the belief that hospitality education is pursued by academically low achiever

### Figure 3: Reasons For Pursuing Hospitality Education

## Reasons for pursuing hospitality education



- Ambition
- Interest
- Alternative
- Experience

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The author did not use inferential statistics for analysis of data, which may have otherwise changed the results. The research also utilized research questions, hence no hypothesis was tested and there was no theory that supported this research.

### Conclusion

It is evident that there are many colleges that offer hospitality related courses despite the fact that majority of them do not have adequate and current resources to cater for the students enrolled. High ratios between instructor and students were witnessed in majority of the institutions which is a hindrance to quality of learning. The status of the classrooms was found not to cause a lot of hindrance to education. Notable was the poor status of laboratories or unavailability which contributed to low quality of hospitality education. The manner in which students are screened for premier institutes is also quite dubious given the fact after selecting students during initial screening by NCHMCT. The residuals are filled on direct basis without any screening thus diluting the standards. Further despite the windfall changes brought about by modern socio-cultural process like globalisation and liberalisation and dynamic nature of hospitality industry no heed is being paid to revise curriculum which has been stagnant since 1983.

The quality of learning resources was low despite it being vital in provision of quality education. Hospitality education like the industry itself is constantly changing; as a result institutions which want to be competitive in terms of providing high quality education should review curriculums as frequently as possible to keep abreast with the changing needs of the market. This research did not support the belief that hospitality education is pursued by low achievers academically. Based on the findings it was recommended that there should be review of written material on hospitality management, review materials used by instructors including syllabuses, texts among other teaching materials and modes, conduct evaluation of instructors. Curricula's in use are very conservative and may not be sensitive to market demands and are hidden with other degrees like tourism, home science and business administration among others. Consequently,

standardization of curricula for hospitality education to meet industry needs is vital and also redesigning hospitality curriculum as established by researchers such as (Mayaka, 1999; Lewis, 1993; Umbreit, 1992). Finally, the Government should set up an accredited body to foresee the quality of hospitality programs and examinations.

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