



ENGAGE

March–April 2022 | Volume 2 | Issue 2

Shift, Update: **HOSPITALITY EDUCATION LOOKS AT REVAMP**





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From the President's Desk

One of the fastest-growing sectors, Hospitality has grown at a rapid pace over the last few decades. While pre-Covid, the sector contributed over 7% to the country's GDP and employed nearly 9% of the total workforce, it has always struggled with a shortage of trained manpower. Posing a significant threat to the sector's recovery post-pandemic, it is staring at a deficit of 1.1 million by 2025.

India's travel and tourism industry has huge growth potential. It is at the cusp of transformation, and this combined with the advent of technology and evolving consumer trends, will chart the new age of travel. It is, therefore, imperative that the industry not only meets the ongoing requirements, but also anticipates its talent requirements for the future. By 2029, it is expected to account for about 53 million jobs.

The fast-changing world is going to reshape the workforce too and this will lead to an impending skills gap. The need of the hour is to align with the changing needs of the industry. Due to the fast pace of innovation, diffusion of technology and globalisation of markets, new occupations have emerged to replace the old. The skills and competencies required for the new occupations are rising too. The challenge going forward is to simultaneously enhance the responsiveness of education and training systems to these changes in skill requirements and to improve access to training and skills development. Equipping the workforce with the skills required for the jobs of today and those of tomorrow is a strategic concern globally. The industry and the institutes need to work towards reskilling and upskilling through specialized training programs geared toward developing the talent pipeline.

In this Issue, in our Lead Story, we hear from heads of leading academic institutions, from the National Council of Hotel Management, from IHM, Pusa, Oberoi, Welcomgroup, and many others, that are training young Hospitality graduates to get into the industry to ensure that we have a constant and dynamic talent pool.

The government too has announced a series of investments in infrastructure, to improve road and rail networks, along with plans to privatize airports in Tier 2 & 3 cities, which will help in improving connectivity to several new and emerging tourist hotspots. All that will encourage hoteliers to tap further into the new segments. With emphasis on Dekho Apna Desh, Hospitality should be ready for resurgence. We look with hope at the cup that's still half full. There are yet miles to go before we come back fully to pre-Covid levels, but let's be prepared for this new and exciting journey. **HAI**



PUNEET CHHATWAL
President, Hotel Association of India
MD & CEO, The Indian Hotels Company Limited

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Flexibility is the prime requirement of a future vision

The vision for India's Hospitality@2047 should be dynamic and not just a static statement of future targets. It should have inbuilt capacity to adjust to evolving future changes and challenges.



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HAI writes to FM to reverse insurance premium hike

The Hotel Association of India (HAI) has written to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman regarding the steep rise in the insurance premium for hotel properties in India in the last few years. General Insurance Corporation of India along with other insurers have substantially increased the premiums since 2019-20. The insurance premium rates for property insurance of hotels comprise the following broad parameters:

- Fire, Lightning, Explosion, and Aircraft Damage (FLEXA)
- Natural Catastrophe losses (Earthquake (EQ) & Storm Tempest, Flood Inundation (STFI))
- Loss of Profit/Business Interruption (LOP)
- Terrorism Damage Cover.

In FY2019-20 and FY2020-21, the premium rates increased by 100% for FLEXA and by 45% in LOP. Thus, the overall rate increase is more

than two-and-a-half times from the pre-FY2018-19 levels. In addition, till FY2018-19, insurance companies were permitted to offer discounts for FLEXA based on their respective underwriting parameters. However, the better managed hotel properties, incurring considerable investments towards safety and preventive measures, are being charged the same premium rate as others.

Since the economy is on the path to recovery, it is projected that tourism would generate 53 million jobs or 9.5% of total employment by 2029. To achieve a faster comeback, support of the government is crucial. Tourism has been recognized by the Prime Minister as one of the five key pillars of economic growth and development alongside Talent, Tradition, Trade and Technology. "At a time when the industry is showing signs of recovery and trying to get back on its feet, the increase in the insurance cost for hotels is a setback to the sector," the letter mentions. **HAI**

In The News

HAI re-elects Chhatwal, other office-bearers also elected

In the 25th Annual General Meet (AGM) held on March 16, 2022, at New Delhi, Mr Puneet Chhatwal, MD and CEO, IHCL, retained his position as president of HAI. Mr Rupak Gupta, managing director, UP Hotels Ltd, and Mr Surinder Singh, area director, IHC Ltd, were the two newly-elected committee members. In addition to this, the AGM adopted and approved the financial results for the year 2020-2021, and appointed auditors for FY 21-22.



Hotel & Restaurant Association of Odisha elects its lifetime Chairman

JK Mohanty, CMD, Swosti Group & Hony. Secretary, HAI was elected Chairman (Lifetime) of Hotel &

Restaurant Association of Odisha at the 33rd AGM - cum- Election of "Office Bearers".



Ahead of the summer holiday season, airfares in the domestic sector are set to shoot up again



After the sharp rise in the price of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) coupled with the hike in user development fees (UDF) — a component of the airfare and aeronautical fees that airlines pay to airports

— operators are set to push up airfares. But that is unlikely to dampen the spirits of holidayers, who plan to travel this summer after being holed up at home for the past two years.

Tourist dept, FHTR ink pact to attract desi visitors to Rajasthan

The Department of Tourism and Federation of Hospitality and Tourism of Rajasthan (FHTR) signed an MoU to organize Rajasthan Domestic Tourism Mart (RDTM). The business-to-business exhibition, bringing together buyers and sellers of tourism services will add heft to the government's efforts to attract domestic



tourists, said officials of the department and representatives of the federation.

Tourists throng Valley: 50 flights a day and night

FROM MILLENNIALS and young professionals to honeymooners and multigenerational families,

the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir is witnessing record levels of tourism. The increased



number of direct flights to Srinagar, in addition to the UT's tourism department initiatives, is drawing travelers there, travel agencies said, adding that the demand for tourism in J&K in the ongoing summer travel season is four times what was witnessed pre-pandemic.

Promoting caravan tourism

The 11th Kerala Travel Mart (KTM) will be held in Kochi (Kerala) from May and the agenda is to project the state as a caravan tourism hotspot. "Travel is changing, and caravan tourism has immense domestic and international tourism potential.



Asia's biggest international food and hospitality fair – AAHAR 2022 begins in New Delhi

Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) in association with the India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO) is organizing Asia's biggest international food and hospitality fair AAHAR-2022 at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. Commerce and Industry Ministry said more than 80 exporters from different segments of agricultural products, which include geographical indication products, processed food, organic, and frozen food products will participate in the fair. APEDA has created dedicated stalls for exporters from North East Region and Himalayan states like Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh, women entrepreneurs, Farmer Producers Organizations, Start-Ups, and exporters of millets.

INTERNATIONAL


WTTC launches major hotel sustainability initiative at its Global Summit in Manila

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) has launched its 'Hotel Sustainability Basics', a globally recognised and coordinated set of criteria that all hotels should implement as a minimum to drive responsible Travel & Tourism.

The initiative was launched at its prestigious Global Summit being held in Manila, and will help every hotel address and improve their environmental impact. Developed by the industry for the industry, it highlights 12 actions which are fundamental to hotel sustainability and will help raise the base level of sustainability across the entire hospitality industry by providing every hotel a starting point on their sustainability journey.

Hong Kong opens for international tourists

Hong Kong has permitted non-residents to enter the financial hub from May for the first time in more than two years, a small step in unwinding stringent coronavirus restrictions which have turned the city into one of the world's most isolated places.


Marriott International Celebrates Its 1,000th Hotel in Europe, Middle East and Africa


Marriott International, Inc. celebrated the launch of The Westin London City, its 1,000th hotel in Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA). A flagship Westin Hotel that seamlessly balances London's always-on energy with the wellness promise for which the brand is known, the property also marks the debut of the Westin Hotels & Resorts brand in the UK market.

As the company celebrated this milestone, it also announced that across 2022 and 2023, it expects to add more than 200 properties, which equates to 38,000 rooms, in Europe, Middle East and Africa isolated places.


IIHM's International Food Festival brings global flavours to Kolkata

Food is a universal unifier. Whether it's chocolate choux pastry at a quaint cafe, a heaped plate of gravy chow and chilli chicken, kathi rolls on the kerb on a balmy afternoon, or a nostalgia-ridden home-cooked meal — good food has the power to bring people together from different walks of life and different corners of the world.

From April 22-24, the grounds of Biswa Bangla Mela Prangan turned into a melting pot of flavours and culture as celebrated chefs from 14 countries participated in the International Institute of Hotel Management's (IIHM) annual International Food Festival.

The Sustainable Hospitality Challenge global initiative launches its 2022 case

A global student competition launched by Hotelschool The Hague has created a bridge between today's hospitality industry leadership and the next generation of hoteliers who apply innovation in addressing the industry's evolution during a tough global competition of top tier universities.

The Sustainable Hospitality Challenge (SHC) is giving participating students from top-tier universities the opportunity to contribute to bettering the planet and their industry by establishing innovative and sustainable solutions. They are given the incredible opportunity to present on a global stage in front of the biggest industry leaders, who can turn their ideas into real projects.

As Paul Griep, founder of The Sustainable Hospitality, explains: "This is the largest hospitality student challenge focused on sustainability. Our mission is similar to the World Solar Challenge where ideas and solutions presented by the students are adapted and used in the real world. If we want to make a difference, we need to work with the next generation. So, by creating a bridge between the next generation and the current leaders of the industry we can pave the way towards a more sustainable future."



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“Skill development is the backbone of success”

Dr Jyotsna Suri, Chairperson & Managing Director, The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group, is one of the leading luminaries in the industry. Under her stewardship, The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group has become one of the top-most privately-owned domestic hotel brands in India, with a focus on the luxury segment. She delves on the changed scenario due to Covid, and how the industry is readying for the new normal. As told to Niti Singh:

In 2019, before the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic, the Travel and Tourism sector generated nearly \$ 9.2 trillion for the global economy. Recent research by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has shown that the contribution of the sector to the global economy could reach \$ 8.6 trillion this year, just 6.4 per cent short of the pre-pandemic levels. The research also states that 58 million new jobs in the sector could be created by year-end, bringing the total of jobs in the sector to 330 million, only one per cent below pre-pandemic levels, and 211.5 per cent more than 2020. However, filling up these jobs will require skilled labour; hence, the critical need to proactively address the issue of staff shortages and skill development that the Travel & Tourism sector is facing.

As the world recovers from Covid-19, the industry has changed significantly. Just like 9/11 signalled a transformation in airport security, health, hygiene and sanitisation are the new security in the post-Covid era. Consumer priorities have changed considerably, with guests preferring contactless experiences for check-in and payments. The industry is adopting technology to keep up with the



Effective policies and public-private collaborations, that can support and nurture educational programs and apprentice-based training, are crucial to bridging the skills gaps

changing dynamics. The talent and recruitment needs will have to evolve, keeping in mind the nature of work and skills requirement, accelerated by the Covid -19 pandemic. Effective policies and public-private collaboration, that can support and nurture educational programs and apprentice-based training, are crucial to bridging the skills gaps and developing a workforce that can help the sector thrive.

The Hospitality industry is a service oriented sector that comprises individuals catering to the needs and emotions of others. It is an industry driven by human touch and personalised experiences. It involves making people feel welcomed and relaxed during their visit. A lot of effort is required to fulfil customer expectations and making the guests feel contented with the services. When we talk about planned and sustainable effort, Skill Development becomes an area of importance, as in this industry many skills coexist under an umbrella. It is one of the



fastest-growing sectors in the economy and faces real challenges in matching its skills requirements to the changing labour market globally. Approximately, 10% of the global workforce is involved in the Tourism and Hospitality industry.

Training, reskilling, and upskilling are aimed at equipping the workforce with new and improved skills such as enhanced digital literacy. This is essential to strengthen the future readiness of the industry's workforce, and help overcome the issue of talent shortages. Beyond upskilling, one must also focus on attracting and retaining new talent by improving the perception of Travel & Tourism as a career choice and highlighting career growth opportunities within the sector. The key areas for skill development for Hospitality graduates

would be perseverance, multi-tasking, cultural adaptation, nimbleness, digital and contactless technology orientation, sanitation and safety, besides excellent communication and inter-personal skills.

All students and working professionals who are training for a career in the Hospitality sector need to reiterate their basic operational hard skills and soft skills for effective service. Skill in all operational areas is mastered through continuous practice and experience. Learning and Development (L&D), or the Training Department, plays a major role in supporting the reskilling and upskilling of employees by constant monitoring and evaluation of output. Many skill development programs are also helping to boost skills among young Hospitality aspirants, like the Hunar Se Rozgar



Program, which is being conducted by academic institutions and hotels so as to train individuals as per their skills.

The current workforce in Hospitality Industry is so task driven that they do not give due importance to the level of skill required to give a quality product. The manpower shortage and cost-effectiveness for the company to manage its resources have also led to the deterioration of skill levels. Lack of skill development can lead to under-confidence in doing the job, which in turn ruins the experience of the guest. Hence, some Hospitality companies and educational institutes focus on task training on a regular basis, which helps them to maintain the quality of service and learning respectively. It is also the prime responsibility of Hospitality education to train the students as per the demands of the industry. This would help freshers adapt to the operations quickly by using the right skill required for service.

Employees who are conscious of skill development, work more efficiently, and they remain self-motivated even in tough situations. A continuous process of skill development not only increases the knowledge of the professional, but also his effectiveness on the shop floor. Skill development is the backbone of success in the Hospitality Industry and is also being actively promoted by the government through National Skill Development Council, which is extending support to individuals to showcase and

Just like 9/11 signalled a transformation in airport security, health, hygiene and sanitisation are the new security in the post-Covid era

nurture their skills to perfection. The more we focus on skill development, the more the Hospitality sector will flourish and attain higher peaks. Hospitality is intrinsic to Indian culture. Over the years, we have propagated the age-old tradition of 'Atithi Devo Bhava'. As India continues to lead the battle against the pandemic, Hospitality will play a defining role in reviving the economy.

The LaLiT Suri Hospitality School (TLSHS) is the maiden venture of The LaLiT Group in the field of Hospitality education and training. The institute provides a theoretical and practical learning experience, to mould professionals with life-skills. TLSHS adopts a holistic approach towards education and believes in imparting hands-on learning to the future professionals aspiring to make a foray into Hospitality. The world-class 5-acre campus of The LaLiT Suri Hospitality School is in accordance with international standards in terms of infrastructure. The institute is well equipped to provide state-of-the-art facilities to students. The campus is spacious with optimum sizes of classrooms and practical training areas

reinforcing our commitment to assure each student makes the most out of every minute of study time. The institute also offers the Aditya Nanda Scholarship worth Rs 2,50,000/- each to five deserving and qualified Trans* students who want to pursue Diploma in Food Production and Bakery through Keshav Suri Foundation.

The caring environment offered is key to our students excelling in academics and co-curricular activities alike. The inclusive learning environment promotes integrity, honesty, respect, and devotion to work.

Besides in-depth classroom sessions, we also regularly invite eminent personalities from allied areas of the Hospitality sector for live talks and online interactions with the students especially the graduating batches along with leading professionals from the Hospitality industry. This is to provide an industry overview and insight to the students into diverse career options available to them. This creates a higher level of awareness for the students, and students may opt for newer segments viz. facilities management, hospital operations, malls and retail operations, telecom etc., other than the reputed Hospitality brands.

The LaLiT Suri Hospitality Group is the first hotel chain among more than 300 organisations in the world to adhere to UN standards for LGBTQIA+ at work. Leading the way forward, the group is redefining set society norms to contribute to an inclusive and diverse society. The LaLiT endorses #PureLove and welcomes everyone without any discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, caste, colour, religion or physical abilities. We respect individual choices and celebrate diversity. In the last five years, through the #PureLove campaign, we have skilled over 2000 folks from marginalized groups through the Skill Enhancement Training Program, provided opportunities to over 200 professionals at The LaLiT, and given opportunities to more than 500 queer artists at Kitty Su and The LaLiT. **HAI**

THE EXTRAORDINARY CAN BE WITNESSED BUT SELDOM DESCRIBED.

Be it the Northern Lights or The Louvre, there are some experiences that are so enriching that their grandeur can only be witnessed by one and can never be truly described in all their essence. Then again, there are some experiences that are above and beyond the wonders of the world, that even those used to the finest luxuries will feel privileged to experience.

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ROYAL SALUTE

SHIFT, UPDATE: *Hospitality Education Looks at Revamp*



The pandemic has changed all sectors. Technology is seeping into everything. Hospitality graduates will need to prep up for the changed environment, take advantage of social media platforms, new tech like geo-targeting and contactless services, while also being even stronger on soft skills and guest relations—the lead differentiator in Hospitality today. Academia has to prepare students for the shift, as the traditional curriculum of Housekeeping, Front Office Management and Food Production might not suffice. We spoke to leading experts to find out how Hospitality institutes are changing with the times
BY NITI SINGH

T

o say that the world has changed after the pandemic would be an understatement. So much of change has happened in the last two years that were one to put a historic record, one may actually be talking of pre-Covid and post-Covid times. The Indian hotel industry has taken a hit of over Rs 1.30 lakh crore in revenue for the fiscal year 2020-21. The biggest changes, in all sectors, and not just exclusively to Hospitality, have been brought about by technology and customer behaviour. Technology is changing the way we learn, interact, work and socialise. The education system is shifting towards self-learning, and e-learning. In Hospitality, with so much talk of contactless transactions, there is demand for new age capabilities, and soft skills matter more than ever before. It is the level and quality of interactions that will set apart Hospitality leaders. Leading educators have taken cognisance of the new challenges and are tweaking their curriculums to make students industry-ready.

Among the large-scale changes made by the National Council for Hotel Management & Catering Technology (NCHMCT) due to the pandemic were inclusion of virtual teaching, conducting of theory and practicals online; internal assessments and evaluations done online; developing of online study material/content; online training programs/webinars/e-conferences organized by various IHMs; and, efforts were made to increase the use of social media for wider reach. All institutes are now available on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Says **Gyan Bhushan, CEO, National Council for Hotel Management & Catering Technology**: “Many new steps have been taken and we are in touch with the industry, and constantly updating students regarding the latest in the industry through webinars, workshops, and trainings.” Among the changes instituted, he mentions a shift from Hotel to Hospitality, and introduction of Indian heritage/culture in the curriculum. He says the placement cell is in constant touch with the industry to plug the gap in the demand and supply. Various platforms, like virtual job fairs, are used to connect the institutes and the industry. Among the top skills needed now, he lists out building adaptability, cognitive skills, multi-tasking, problem-solving and innovation. “Many initiatives have been taken such as improving the digital infrastructure of the institutes, reimagining and ramping up the working models, introduction of new subjects and revising curriculums,” he says.

He says that students need to take interest in their growth. They should take the lead in connecting with industry experts through LinkedIn and other platforms,



“Various platforms, including virtual job fairs, are used to connect the institutes and the industry. There is a shift from Hotel to Hospitality. We are introducing Indian heritage/culture in the curriculum. Among the top skills needed now are building adaptability, cognitive skills, multi-tasking, problem-solving and innovation”

GYAN BHUSHAN,

CEO, National Council for Hotel Management & Catering Technology



“A student needs to be able to think off her/his feet, gauge problems, devise solutions and articulate responses. The service industry is pivoted around people. Soft skills have been at the heart of the business, and post-Covid, these have gained importance. If a guest can't gauge the sincerity of a smile through the mask, the employee must be able to engage differently to create a holistic impression of sincere concern”

KAMAL KANT PANT

Principal, Institute of Hotel Management, Catering & Nutrition, PUSA, New Delhi

improve networking, study changes in the industry, focus on employability and entrepreneurship, update themselves, opt for regular industry exposures and vocational training. “In addition, government initiatives like Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsava, Swathchta Abhiyan etc. are critical for the changing tourism sector,” he says.

Says **Kamal Kant Pant, Principal, Institute of Hotel Management, Catering & Nutrition, PUSA, New Delhi**: “Efforts were made during the pandemic to connect maximum industry players with the faculty and students through webinars. Students were being updated with the changes in Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) with respect to Covid protocols. We explored technology to the extent that today we are fully capable of imparting practical skills to the students virtually at any given point of time. The teaching style and curriculum at the institute has incorporated the new changes, and real-time exposure is being provided to students to get used to device-based requests, QR Code menus etc. Students are also putting in a lot of research on tech based alternatives and trying to figure out the appropriate strategies for the industry at their level.”

The latest trend, he points out, is the overwhelming demand dictated by millennials and Gen Z, who are looking for traditional and authentic experiential/interactive or even participative and entertaining cooking/dining experiences. So, one sees a rise in teppan-yaki from Japan, or Gueridon Service, that was



common in the late 19th century. Therefore, every student needs to deliver on nuances of service that are niche but profitable and, therefore, desirable as a skill set. Students are encouraged to track changes in the F&B business through practical training in the luxury and up-scale restaurants and workshops on coffee, alcohol and other beverages. Multiple cuisines are explored and students are trained by master chefs. “There is a structural change in the curriculum in response to NEP-2020. The emphasis is on life skills, employability and start-up skills through upgradation of existing modules. IHM PUSA has always focused on staying up-to-date,” he says.

He says the most desirable skill now is the ability to think on the toes and to multi-task. “The erstwhile departmentalization is giving way to a team culture. Students are required to understand all aspects of operations. Another significant change is the consumer relationship. A student needs to be able to think off her/his feet, gauge problems, devise solutions and articulate responses. Candidates need to possess profound people skills as the service industry is pivoted around people. Soft skills have been at the heart of the business, and post-Covid, this has gained importance because a lot of the traditional guest interactions have had to be redone. So, if a guest can't gauge the sincerity of a smile through the mask, the employee must be able to engage differently in creating a holistic impression of sincere concern.”



On hospitality CEOs coming from diverse backgrounds, he says: “Many CEOs have risen through the ranks, albeit in a different industry. Nobody gets into the corporate driving seat without going through the grind at the shop floor level. Rotation from sector to sector is important at that level because that is how out-of-the-box unorthodox ideas are discovered. Today's student needs to be aware of the changing environment around them and become entrepreneurial learners and develop an attitude for lifelong learning.”

Says **Dr Anand Iyengar, Principal, Institute of Hotel Management, Aurangabad, knowledge partner Taj Group**: “There's far greater use of technology to deliver online sessions, and even greater level of interaction with industry experts through guest lectures/webinars, and collaborative learning with other International Institutes. We are leveraging alumni expertise to connect students digitally to understand industry requirements, and including real-time industry problems and solutions in the curriculum to prepare the students for the changed scenario.”

Regarding the revamp in curriculum, he says: “Education has to be future-relevant, and our syllabus is revamped every year in line with the changing hospitality trends. Subjects, modules and curriculum are reviewed every four years with relevant feedback from the industry.



“We are leveraging alumni expertise to connect students digitally to understand industry requirements, and including real-time industry problems and solutions in the curriculum, to prepare the students for the changed scenario”

DR ANAND IYENGAR,

Professor & Principal, Institute of Hotel Management, Aurangabad

Providing internship opportunities to acclimatize students and prospective employers is one way to make studies more relevant. We also hold culinary master classes by International Chefs, by building International relationships with Institutes in France and Denmark known for skill development. There are plenty of summer school options for students at these Institutes to explore current trends and enhance skills through exposure."

Post Covid, he says, students must learn to appreciate the importance of customer centricity and empathy while engaging with guests. "Soft skills are most important in the post-Covid world while dealing with customers. We are teaching digital and marketing communication in the third year to keep students abreast with current digital engagements," he adds.

Hospitality education, he says, will remain relevant given the fact that other industries including manufacturing, software, retail, and entertainment are seeking hospitality talent. "Therefore it becomes necessary to teach students 'business of hotels' and not only focus on 'hotel business,'" he says.

Prof (Chef) K Thirugnanasambantham, Principal, Welcomgroup Graduate School of Hotel Administration, Manipal, says that the new tech introduced during the pandemic is here to stay. "It is



"The traditional methods of operation are changing. Critical thinking, creative problem-solving, innovation, adaptability, communication, emotional intelligence, negotiation and relationship management are some of the most important skills that will be required now. We change our curriculum by 25 percent every year to keep pace with the industry needs"

PROF (CHEF) K THIRUGNANASAMBANTHAM
Principal, Welcomgroup Graduate School of Hotel Administration, Manipal

vital for us to invest in online teaching tools. Hospitality education is keeping pace by shifting towards a self-learning environment with e-learning tools. We are also providing practical experience. Our academic excellence is achieved by combining theoretical knowledge and real-time experience with student-run commercial restaurants, bakeshops, food festivals, simulations and our training hotel, effectively builds operational skills. We follow a continuous assessment plan to ensure that our students acquire the requisite skill-sets and knowledge to excel. We have eminent academicians, industry professionals and researchers as adjunct faculties to interact with our students, provide them with industry knowledge and apprise them of the new challenges. The biggest challenge is implementing technology in a way that doesn't overpower the natural learning experience of students, and our faculties are being constantly trained for this shift."

He adds: "Hospitality and culinary degree programs will now focus on developing soft skills more. An amalgamation of entrepreneurial skills, business acumen, and an understanding of consumer behavior need to be part of the curriculum to prepare the students with a better understanding of the customer. Digitalization, Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality are taking over a majority of hotel operations. Our curriculum is being upgraded to keep it at par with international standards, and foster innovative thinking. The industry is looking for a multifaceted work force, which is not just confined to the job description. The traditional methods of operation are changing and we are ensuring that our students fit well in the changed scenario."

The industry, he says, needs professionals with innovative skills and quick thinking to help the business transition smoothly by adapting to any unanticipated changes that might come along. "The post-Covid scenario for students is immensely demanding. They need to assess their shortcomings and overcome them to the best of their abilities. Critical thinking, creative problem-solving, innovation, flexibility, adaptability, communication and emotional intelligence, negotiation and relationship management, are some of the most important soft skills that will be required to excel."

"Being a constituent unit of Manipal Academy of Higher Education, WGSMA has a rich experience of 36 years. We were the first college in India to provide a degree in Hotel Management. So we have a lot of autonomy towards reviewing our curriculum. We change it by 25 percent every year. Covid-19 has accelerated our focus towards a more digital space."

Currently, many CEOs of the most important hotel chains are not hoteliers. On this, he says: "We are not just grooming hoteliers, but are also educating them with finance, analytics and other relevant hard and soft skills required by the industry. It is commendable how many people at senior positions are not from hospitality backgrounds and it's something that should be appreciated. In the future, digitization and



"Communication and good listening skills will never grow old in this industry. Next is resilience, initiative, adaptation and attention to details. Soft skills form the basis of how well you can perform in the industry. Excellence in the future will be defined by the level and quality of human interactions"

RK BHANDARI,
Principal, Banarsidas Chandiwala Institute of Hotel Management & Catering Technology

technology will be a given and the only things that will matter would be the quality and extent of human interactions. Definitely, things have changed over the last couple of years with digitization playing a major role, and we need to continue changing and reinventing our education system as per the new needs of the industry."

RK Bhandari, Principal, Banarsidas Chandiwala Institute of Hotel Management & Catering Technology agrees that the last two years have been challenging. "The obvious disadvantage of e-learning has been its limitation when it comes to practical knowledge and experience. But the advantages cannot be ignored as well. We were able to organize webinars and invite national and international experts to online platforms to share their knowledge and experience. The faculty and students are now more technologically aware and interested in e-content."

In early March, he said, they had their 12th annual India International Hotel, Travel & Tourism Research Conference. The theme for this year was "Renaissance 2.0: Re-think, Re-build & Re-coup" which was aimed at discussing the ideas adopted by hospitality & tourism players in the post-pandemic recovery.

"The F&B ecosystem, being a customer-driven industry, the lockdowns have caused the worst burn," he says. "Our faculty is keeping the students informed of the changes, whether its hotels starting delivery services or the changes in policies and rules for restaurants and banquets."

He observes a difference in Hospitality education in the country and abroad. "Indian Hospitality institutes prioritize learning operational knowledge and skills, whereas international institutes are geared towards the business aspects. We focus towards our graduates

moving up in the hierarchy, giving them a better understanding of how everything works out. Students need to be good at multi-tasking. Thankfully, we noticed this early on and changed our curricula in 2018. For three years, we teach students about all the departments in a hotel. In the last year, students are given options to either choose Accommodation Management Elective (Front Office and Housekeeping) or Food & Beverage Management Elective (F&B service and Food Production)." He adds: "We have proposed a new curriculum, designed after incorporating suggestions from various stakeholders, and the industry. We believe this will help students to be multi-skilled. It will also equip the students to be fully developed for at least two major departments of hotels."

On the importance of soft skills, he says: "All companies will soon be using advanced technologies and the only way to differentiate in the market will be through the human factor. Human interaction is extremely important in the hospitality industry and this could be the motivation for other industries to hire graduates from Hospitality institutions. Excellence in the future will be defined by the level and quality of human interactions even more than today, as technology will be a given. Communication and good listening skills will never grow old in the industry. Next is resilience, initiative, adaption and attention to detail. Soft skills form the basis for how well you perform in the industry. But it's something which students have to learn on their own, instructors can only guide and correct them." Post-Covid, he says, there are new requirements, like health/safety protocols, creativity and innovation, technological literacy, no-touch experience, collaborating with virtual staff, understanding human travel psychology and Digital Marketing.

The pandemic has brought attention to behavioural competencies. In addition to physical fitness and stamina, emotional well-being and resilience are also important. Says **Sangeetha Gandhi, Vice-President, Oberoi Centre for Learning & Development, Delhi:** “The needs of luxury travellers have remained more or less the same even during the pandemic. The challenge for us was to continue to exceed guest expectations despite the stringent Covid protocols. Our teams created training modules to enable our associates to follow all the necessary protocols, without diminishing the guest experience. We followed a ‘train-the-trainer’ approach to train all team members in a short time.”



“In hotel operations, a hospitality graduate needs to engage with guests at a personal level. The quality of one-to-one interaction during service is what creates memorable guest experiences. So, though an associate needs to be aware of emerging technologies, our emphasis will always be on creating meaningful experiences”

SANGEETHA GANDHI

Vice-President, Oberoi Centre for Learning & Development, Delhi



She says that the pandemic disrupted student internships at hotels, which impacted the aspect of learning that is usually acquired through personal interactions. So though they have good theoretical knowledge, their practical skills are lower than those who graduated pre-pandemic, simply because they didn't have the opportunities of their predecessors. “So our focus has been to train them in these areas, emphasizing this much more than we have done previously. We assign them buddies they can reach out to while they are settling down at work, and have designed training content that deals with experiential learning,” she says.



“Covid has given rise to a number of customers who walk in with higher stress levels, enhanced safety concerns, and ask for healthier choices of food and beverages, thereby making it imperative to have an on-board team with genuine empathy”

VIMAL KUMAR

Principal, The LaLiT Suri Hospitality School

Regarding revamp of curricula, she says: “The need to revamp hospitality education was being spoken about even before the pandemic. The changing mindset and the aspirations of young hoteliers, coupled with the career opportunities available, requires the curriculum to address these realities. The pandemic has accelerated the need to change. We ensure our curriculum is contemporary, and continuously evolve our learning materials. The talent pool available today is highly varied. Getting the right talent and then retaining that is a challenge. We try to look at various ways to manage these complexities.”

The quality of one-to-one interactions is what creates memorable guest experiences. “So, though an associate needs to be aware of emerging technologies, our emphasis will always be on creating meaningful experiences,” she says.

Vimal Kumar, Principal, The LaLiT Suri Hospitality School, says: “The loss of jobs in the pandemic times has made students shy away from opting for a career directly in the Hospitality sector. But they need to be prepared for the changing scenarios by upskilling themselves with active support from their mentors at institutions. Peer-to-peer learning has been ensured in each class, by making students interact amongst themselves with the trainer learning to be more patient.”

The Hospitality education ecosystem, he says, is moving towards a revamp in delivery and execution of the new normal. The institutions have understood that the syllabi needs to be upgraded to suit the changing needs of the industry. “At our school, the concept of doing a small research before learning a new topic has yielded promising results. The links are posted in advance and students are encouraged to prepare a brief questionnaire to get fruitful insights. The syllabus



is divided into units, but we have taken the initiative to bring in a division based on skills connected to each sub-topic. This has led to higher involvement of students, and has boosted their confidence.”

Regarding the change in the sector, he says: “The demand for soft skills has taken a leap as the customer is now coming from a challenging social atmosphere. This has given rise to a number of customers who walk in with higher stress levels, enhanced safety concerns, and ask for healthier choices of food and beverages, thereby making it imperative to have an on-board team with genuine empathy. An understanding of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based systems that are highly interactive and logical would soon be the new normal expected by the Human Resource teams.”

Nevertheless, he says, we have to accept the magic the Hospitality industry is capable of creating. “I proudly quote Henri JM Nouwen who has beautifully elucidated Hospitality in his words ‘Hospitality means primarily the creation of free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines.”





“With hospitality transitioning towards digitization, ed-tech will transform how the hospitality sector operates and facilitates human interactions. Digital interfaces, artificial intelligence and machine learning are some of the tools that are leading education delivery now”

DILIP PURI

Founder and CEO, Indian School of Hospitality (ISH)

Says **Dilip Puri, Founder and CEO, Indian School of Hospitality (ISH)**: “We teach students through case studies, live projects, workshops, business simulations and other forms of experiential learning to make them ready to take on the challenges. Our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are offered in alliance with Les Roches, one of the world’s leading hospitality business schools. Hospitality saw dramatic changes during the pandemic. To keep pace with these shifts, we’ve designed our syllabus after consulting leading experts in hospitality, banking, aviation, consulting, and many other industries. As ISH understands what these industries need, we prepare students by helping them acquire diverse skill sets to move within service-driven sectors with ease.”

He adds: “Post-Covid-19 many employees were asked to step in and take on new responsibilities even if they didn’t have the skills for those jobs. Now companies are looking to hire professionals with soft skills to help build interpersonal connections, stronger

communications and for more confident decision-making. Emotional intelligence, critical thinking, flexibility and adaptability are seen as valuable traits that allow teams to handle situations and take on any challenge with ease.”

“Technology is the way forward. With hospitality transitioning towards digitisation, ed-tech will transform how the sector operates and facilitates human interactions. Digital interfaces, artificial intelligence and machine learning are some of the tools that are leading education delivery now.”

He points out that hospitality education provides universal skills: “Hospitality goes beyond hotels and restaurants. At its heart, it’s about connecting with your customer and providing a human touch to your business. It doesn’t matter whether your brand offers a product or service, as providing the ultimate customer experience is more important than ever before. The sheer diversity of the hospitality industry means students are never limited in the job search. Whether they want to take up the hotel management career path, or pursue a career in aviation, banking, consulting, real estate, financial services or run their own business, a hospitality management degree prepares them with the skills needed for a bright future in all these sectors.”

Says **Prof (Dr) Pranshu Chomplay, HOI, Amity School of Hospitality, NOIDA**: “We recently updated and revamped the core and elective courses, with the addition of artificial intelligence and digital technology.



“We recently updated and revamped the core and elective courses, with the addition of artificial intelligence and digital technology. We have also added environmental studies”

PROF (DR) PRANSHU CHOMPLAY

HOI, Amity School of Hospitality, NOIDA

We have also added environmental studies. Students are given Professional Skill Development Activities (PSDA) in every course. Digital skills, IT Skills, Negotiation Skills, Logical Skills and Life Skills are the key major skills needed today.”

He adds: “Soft skills are still the most important skills in Hospitality education.” Hospitality students, he says, must be at the forefront of the development of the tourism

sector. Students should continue to use technology-based activities and generate new ideas, think of innovations, and create diversity in the field of hospitality.”

Says **AK Singh, Director, FHRAI-IHM**: “Hospitality education needs to change as our industry is ever-changing and customer expectations are always far higher. The new education policy (NEP-2020) is putting emphasis on holistic development, knowledge of one foreign and one local language, along with the subject-specific knowledge and skills. It also emphasises environmental issues, research in the fourth year of bachelor degree, with subject specialisation, and so on. We have to keep focussing on attitude formation, development of personality, better communication, along with knowledge and skills by inculcating the habit of self-



“Hospitality education needs to adapt. Our industry is both evergreen and ever-changing. The customer expectations are far higher post-Covid. Development of soft skills or interpersonal skills are an integral part now”

AK SINGH,

Director, FHRAI-IHM

learning and development which will always be an asset for the students.”

Soft skills are an integral part now, he explains. “Students are required to think out-of-the-box, and prepare themselves in such a way that when they appear for an interview, the selection committee gets convinced about their knowledge and skills, and the efforts they have put in to gain it.”

The travel and tourism sector has been among the most impacted by the digital boom. There have been changes not only in technology and guest relations, but also increased competition from cloud kitchens, new business models of the shared economy such as Airbnb, and the new interest in experiential travel. Real and authentic experiences will win the day in the Hospitality segment. The new hospitality graduate needs to be abreast of the changes and also hone inter-personal skills that are at the heart of the Hospitality industry. The new challenges are a great opportunity for students and all skills taught at the institutes – Hospitality, guest relations, finance, luxury goods, travel technology – are in high demand. Studies in all sectors now offer holistic development, with the academia and the students both being prepared to change. **HAI**

IHCL launches Paathya

Goals for 2030 outlined with commitment to Sustainability, Social Impact and Growth.



Indian Hotels Company Ltd (IHCL), parent company of the Tata Group's Taj Hotels, announced a framework to drive its sustainability and social impact measures, under a new programme Paathya, with specific goals underlined to be achieved by 2030. Derived from the Sanskrit term paathya, meaning a path, Paathya encapsulates initiatives to lead positive change with IHCL's core values of Trust, Awareness and Joy.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister of Tourism, Culture and Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Government of India, Shri G Kishan Reddy, said: "Sustainable and responsible tourism is the way forward and the Government of India is already working in this direction. The government and the industry together are exploring ideas, solutions, and strategies to face the environmental and societal challenges. I applaud IHCL for its holistic approach of Paathya and for leading the path for the sector."

The function was graced by, among others, Ms Rupinder Brar, Additional DG, Ministry of Tourism, Government of



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The launch of Paathya is in line with IHCL's commitment to strengthen its resolve of contributing to the society with an integrated approach towards creating sustainable growth and positive impact



India. Through Paathya, IHCL is amplifying best practices, increasing the efforts to decarbonise the world, putting in clear metrics and a roadmap for equality, inclusion and environmental action. The program centres around six pillars – environmental stewardship, social responsibility, excellence in governance through inclusivity, value change transformation, scalability in business and digitisation, and preserving legacy and heritage.

Mr Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, IHCL, said: "It has become even more important to chart a new tomorrow - one that is more sustainable and inclusive. We believe this is the only way to drive India's journey to being among the top travel and tourism economies. This reaffirms our founder, Jamsetji Tata's vision of keeping community at the heart of business."

IHCL has defined several short and long-term goals

to be fulfilled by 2030 under Paathya. From 100% elimination of single-use plastic across all its hotels, to ensuring 100% of waste water is reused, all of the company's hotels will be certified to global sustainability standards. Representing best practices, 78 IHCL hotels have achieved EarthCheck certification with 47 Platinum recognitions, largest in the global tourism industry. Furthermore, all business meetings and conferences will go green with the introduction of Innergise - Green Meetings, reducing their environmental impact.

Taking ahead its commitment to skill-building, and creating employability for the deserving and the marginalized, IHCL aims to impact the livelihood of over 100,000 youth. Long heralded as the custodian of Indian heritage, IHCL's collaboration with UNESCO will see adoption of heritage projects in all the geographies the Group operates in. **HAI**



ODISHA

Soulful Meanderings

With its spectacular, largely undiscovered coastline, and overwhelming heritage offerings, Odisha is poised to become India's next tourism power player.

By Riaan Jacob George

“We get a lot of inquiries from high-end travellers wanting to explore Odisha,” says Siddharth Bhatia, Director of FSR Travels. “Indian travellers are now displaying an increased interest in Odisha, as it has been largely underplayed in the past few decades. This picturesque state on the eastern coast is known for its heritage and culture, and is fast emerging as a pilgrimage destination.” Tourists to Odisha can enjoy focused itineraries and explore the local culture, art and crafts, tradition and festivals.

The dynamic tourism board of the state - Odisha Tourism - has curated tour packages like Tribal, Wildlife, Golden Triangle tours, as well as sites of Buddhist significance. The state is brimming with options for adventure

tourism and national parks too. From the local appliqué artists of Pipli to the Pattachitra artisans of Raghurajpur, from Bhitarkanika National Park to the intricate carvings of Konark, Odisha's diversity is immense. This is one of the few states in India where within the span of a day, you will find white beaches, rivers, mountains, dry lands, marshland and thick jungles crisscrossing into each other effortlessly.

Destination

ECO-TOURISM HAVEN

Odisha has emerged as an important player in the eco-tourism segment. Given its vast coastline along the Bay of Bengal and its thick forests, the state's wildlife and eco-tourism offering is outstanding. It is said that in addition to a large number of elephants, tigers, leopards, hyenas, sambar, spotted deer, crocodiles and jungle cats, there are 110 species of reptiles and 479 species of birds. The Bhitarkanika National Park is the second largest mangrove ecosystem in India, with a large number of crocodiles, in addition to jungle cats and spotted deer. Spend some time at the crocodile breeding centre or visit the different regional creeks. Across the state, there are several nature camps, like the Satkosia Nature Camp, where you can trek through the famous gorge, and enjoy a bit of birding and cruises along the waterbodies. At the Similipal National Park, you may opt for a Jeep safari, and visit the waterfalls. Closer to Bhubaneswar, Nandankanan is famous for white tigers

The dynamic tourism board of the state, Odisha Tourism, has curated packages like Tribal, Wildlife, Golden Triangle tours, as well as sites of Buddhist significance



Nandan Kanan



Bhitarkanika



Satkosia Nature Camp



Konark



Similipal



Mukteshwar

CAPITAL CITY AND KONARK

The capital of Odisha is popular among travellers. In addition to people starting or ending their state itineraries in the city, Bhubaneswar attracts business travellers. The most iconic heritage spot in Bhubaneswar is the Mukteshwar temple where you can appreciate the ornate 10th century architecture dedicated to Lord Shiva. Another famous spot is the Lingaraj Temple, whose central tower is 180 ft tall, representing Kalinga architecture. Rajamani Temple, known for its erotic carvings, is believed to have inspired the Khajuraho Temples. Follow this with a visit to the Odisha State Museum, featuring a host of precious Buddhist sculptures, curated from different Buddhist archaeological sites of the state as well as items from the Khandagiri and Udayagiri Jain caves, dating back to the 2nd century BC. Heritage buffs will also find it enriching to visit Lalitgiri, the site of a Buddhist monastery dated 4th to 8th century AD. Udayagiri is another huge Buddhist and Jain site.

If you have more time in Bhubaneswar, you may explore the city's handicrafts scene to buy clothing, jewellery, accessories and home decor. The Dhuli Peace Pagoda is definitely worth a visit and is said to be the place where Ashoka's Kalinga war was waged.

KONARK, JAGANNATH TEMPLES AND MORE

Konark, many will agree, is the unofficial, symbol of Odisha. This UNESCO World Heritage site is the very quintessence of Odisha temple architecture and is one of the most spectacular religious buildings in the world. Built in the 13th century by King Narasimhadeva, the temple is designed in the shape of a huge chariot with seven horses and 24 wheels carrying the sun god, Surya, across the skies.

The famous Konark wheel has been used in Indian aesthetic narrative over centuries and continues to be an important motif even today. In the temple town of Puri, you may visit the famous Jagannath Temple dedicated to the God of the World. This temple stands 65 metres high and dates back to the 12th century AD, enjoying pride of place in the heart of the city. Non-Hindus are not allowed to enter the

temple. Smaller temples in the vicinity of the Jagannath temple are the Asta Sambu and the Asia Chandi cluster. Odisha Tourism's itineraries recommend going beyond the cliched circuits. Suggestions include the Man Tara Tarini Temple, the Bharmeswara Temple, the Parasurameswara Temple, Vaital Deula and the Rajarani Temple, each of which date back several centuries and have great historical significance.



Jagannath Temple



Puri Sea Beach



Chandrabhaga Brach



Bhaitarkanika

The state's pristine beaches are now trending and welcoming tourists from across the country. Surfers have been flocking to the beaches of Chandrabhaga, Chandipur and Gopalpur

SUN, SAND, SURF

The state's pristine beaches are now trending and welcoming tourists from across the country. A host of luxury, budget hotels and homestays along the coast make it convenient to explore the seaside. Surfers have been flocking to the beaches of Chandrabhaga, Chandipur and Gopalpur. Chandrabhaga is one of India's most pristine sand banks, with a host of water sports activities for tourists. Puri beach is a great to unwind after a visit to the Konark temple. Water sports along the Konark beach are highly recommended. The buzzing port of Gopalpur might have a worn-out look with its pillars and port walls, but continues to attract tourists with its charm.



Gopalpur Beach



Chandipur Beach

IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES

For those inclined towards art, handicrafts and immersive cultural experiences, Odisha is brimming with options, starting with the traditional paintings of Odisha - Pattachitra. This intricate art form is based on Hindi mythology and inspired by the Jagannath and the Vaishnava sect. Interestingly, this is one of the oldest art forms in Odisha and West Bengal. Raghurajpur, a heritage arts village close to Puri, houses about 120 artisans. In Pipli too, traditional artisans continue to thrive. Given Odisha's connection with ancient temples and their carved facades, it is no surprise that stone craft continues to be a popular export from the state. Artisans of Sukuapada create beautiful masterpieces. In addition to this, you can explore different art forms in the state such as palm leaf engravings and colourful needlework. Walk through the Kala Bhoomi Crafts Museum to witness the expertise in stone and wood carvings, as well as terracotta sculptures. If you visit during Odisha's many dance festivals, you will be able to witness Odissi, one of the oldest surviving dance forms in India. The Konark, Dhauli-Kalinga Mahotsav or the Mukteshwar Dance Festivals are highly recommended.



Pipili Chandua



Dhault Light & Sound Show

ECO RETREATS

Eco Retreat Odisha is a novel concept, where the state tourism board has highlighted a few spots across the state to set up "glamps", for high-end tourists. Some of the Eco Retreat destinations include Konark, Satkosia, Bhitarkanika, Daringbadi and Hirakud. These glamping venues feature luxurious, air-conditioned tents with modern amenities, great food options and, of course, curated itineraries recommended by the local guides.



Odisha By Road



Images courtesy Odisha Tourism

Flexibility is the prime requirement of a future vision

The vision for India's Hospitality@2047 should be dynamic and not just a static statement of future targets. It should have inbuilt capacity to adjust to evolving future changes and challenges.

By MP BEZBARUAH

Secretary General, Hotel Association of India



"Would you tell me please, **which way** I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a great deal on **where you want to get to**," said the Cat.

This quote from "Alice in Wonderland" hides in its simplicity a profound philosophy for organizational behaviour, a "sine qua non" for long term vision and goal. Long-term goal, however, is a difficult concept. Things change. As is often said, change is the only constant. Way back in 1989, Charles Handy had written that we were entering an "Age of Unreason" where the world was experiencing changes at such rapid pace that no future projection or prediction holds true. The world has changed in subsequent years even much beyond what was indicated by Handy but what was described by him as the Triple I Organization of Intelligence, Information, and Ideas, involving continuous learning, skilling and up-to-date technical expertise, are still important elements of organizational vision.

The vision for HAI, or for the hospitality sector, should, therefore, be dynamic and not just a static statement of the future targets. It should have an inbuilt capacity to adjust to evolving future changes and challenges. Such flexibility is the prime requirement of a future vision.

It is essential that the hospitality sector's vision is synchronised, in a holistic approach to the future, with the vision of the national economy in general and with the tourism sector's vision, in particular.

During the turbulent days of the Covid-19 epidemic, HAI, preoccupied with concerns for survival and revival, had framed a short-term Vision for itself. It was a mixture of goals for HAI and its role in pushing the goals for the sector in general. The broader mission HAI set for itself was to make India's hospitality industry best-in-class among the world, raise the standards of hoteling and create value for India's hotel industry by adding employment and enhancing contribution

to India's GDP in a sustainable way. The vision for HAI as an organization was to create the differentiators for HAI and to position it as the "premium institution" for the hotel industry in India. Within that framework were various objectives to strengthen the voice of the industry, to create partnership with the government, and above all, strive for succor for the afflicted industry.

The government is in the process of formulating a vision India@2047 for a "future-ready India." HAI is also in the process of looking at a long-term vision for the industry in tune with the vision and goals set by the government for the tourism sector.

The draft tourism policy in circulation provides the broad contours of the government's goals and vision. The objective of all the measures outlined in the draft policy is to reimagine the future of tourism with the lessons learnt from the pandemic and transform tourist destinations to provide a world-class visitor experience, making India one of the topmost destinations for sustainable and responsible tourism. The hospitality sector is the primary agency to create such experiences for tourists. And quite naturally, the guiding principles of the draft policy are--in sync with the global experiences and understanding--sustainable, responsible and inclusive tourism. Sustainability has always been a key concern of tourism development. The experience of Covid has made it an unavoidable imperative and a grim lesson to be forgotten only at our peril.

Sustainability has always been a key concern of tourism development. The experience of Covid-19 has made it an unavoidable imperative and a grim lesson to be forgotten only at our peril



Photo Imaging: Anthony Lawrence

The philosophy of a self-reliant India offers opportunities to encourage innovation, drive new business models, explore new markets, and create strong enterprises in India

Similarly, promotion of digitalization, innovation and technology are emerging as key requirements of any future action. Various dimensions of this digital transformation should be built into the future business models and processes of the hospitality sector. Digital transformation of tourism will help enterprises to expand their market reach, increase growth, improve operational efficiencies, and sharpen their competitive edge, help to develop, generate data to track performance and so on.

Atmanirbhar Bharat is the most striking feature of the future-ready India, and this spirit permeates tourism aspirations too. The philosophy of a self-reliant India offers opportunities to encourage innovation, drive new business models, explore new markets, and create strong enterprises in India—enterprises that can become global forces. For many in Indian hospitality, the concept is not new. They have created strong Indian brands that are global leaders. And on this strength, the future has to be crafted for others to follow.

The current issue of Engage focuses, appropriately, on skilling the manpower. To remain competitive globally, to provide excellence in services and experiences, to increase productivity, the hospitality sector will not only need to strengthen comprehensive skills, but also will need to upgrade and adapt skills continuously. This is an area in which the future vision of the hospitality sector and government initiatives should match.

It is significant that the government sees the future of tourism growth as private sector led. It is

expected that if this pronouncement becomes a policy directive, new modes of collaboration will evolve. The private sector accordingly will have to, in thinking and approach, realign and redesign its role. HAI is following an approach of collaborative partnership with the government. The long-term vision that HAI formulates will greatly depend on how the government gives shape to its avowed objective of making tourism private sector led.

The industry therefore keenly looks forward to the government's Vision@2047 that is under discussion with the stakeholders. A 25-year vision will have to be futuristic, wide-ranging and comprehensive. It is equally important that it is practical and the goals are supported by firm and plausible action plan. The consultations have rightly centred around setting measurable targets and providing, among others, Infrastructure development, destination development, connectivity to tourist destinations, Human Resource Development and capacity-building, data-driven decision-making, leveraging technology, environment and sustainability, and so on. Much remains to be done and the list can only be illustrative. The journey should start with a detailed "gap analysis" of what is needed in each area to achieve the targets we set for ourselves like number of tourist arrivals and what we have on ground to sustain that target.

Much of the government's future targets are in numbers of tourist arrivals. That raises, apart from the need for a "gap study", a close look at the desirability of carrying capacity assessment. Perhaps the future policy may also require a shift from quantity to quality. In the same manner much needs to be worked out about the future directions of responsible tourism. This responsibility binds all the stakeholders—the government, the industry, the community and the tourists.

Arthur C Clarke who said, "the future is not what it used to be" also said, "the future is not to be forecast, but created". Our vision is to create the future we want. **HAI**

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Where there is a Woman, there is Magic...

The Coca-Cola Company and its partners have empowered more than 6 million women across 100 countries around the world.



At The Coca-Cola Company, we believe in '**Refreshing the World & Making a Difference**' – Our journey is deeply rooted in our purpose and entails a clear vision of adding value to the lives of our consumers, partners, and the communities we serve.

In India, the Company's ESG priorities include **World Without Waste, Water Leadership, Fruit Circular Economy and women empowerment**. To know more, kindly visit The Coca-Cola System in India Releases Sustainability Update 2020-21 (coca-colaindia.com)

Coca-Cola India