CHAPTER CONTENTS

2.1. Background of the Study
2.2. Selection of Problem
2.3. Statement of the Problem
2.4. Significance of Problem
2.5. Study area
2.6. Research Hypothesis
2.7. Objectives of the Study
2.8. State of the Art (Literature Review)
   2.8.1. Guest Satisfaction
   2.8.2. Service Quality
      2.8.2.1. Service Quality and Guest Satisfactions Have Different Standards
      2.8.2.2. The Role of Disconfirmation Diffs in Guest Satisfaction and Service Quality
      2.8.2.3. Guest Satisfaction Is Transaction-Specific While Service Quality Is a Global Attitude
      2.8.2.4. Service Quality is Transaction Specific and Guest Satisfaction Is a Global Attitude
      2.8.2.5. Both Service Quality and Guest Satisfaction are Transaction-Specific
      2.8.2.6. Both Overall Service Quality and Overall Guest Satisfaction are Global Attitudes
2.8.3. Guest Loyalty
2.9. Modus Operandi
   2.9.1. Selection of Population
   2.9.2. The Survey Instrument
   2.9.3. Review of the Questionnaire
   2.9.4. Research Approach and Data Collection Methods
   2.9.5. Data Analysis
2.10. Limitations
2.11. Organization of Report
2.1 Background of The Study:

The buyers' decision process starts when he/she recognizes a need for a specific service, in this case services offered by a hotel (Pedraja & Yagüe, 2001:316). This need for a hotel services can be motivated by various reasons including family celebrations, business entertainment or leisure. However, no matter what motivates the reason for this need, the individual or group will have to search for information on the offer that exists for the desired service in order to be able to compare the alternatives and to make the most appropriate purchasing decision. Pedraja and Yagüe (2001:316) state that the characteristics of hotel services, as with other services, such as intangibility, the simultaneous production and consumption, greater direct contact between the supplier and consumer, and non-standardization, influence the purchase behavior of the potential customers. Services are "experiences", and as such are more difficult to evaluate before their purchase.

Research by Boulding and Kirmani (1993:111-123) indicate that if service expectations are met or exceeded, satisfaction with the service results. However, outcomes below expectations lead to dissatisfaction. According to Iglesias and Guillén (2004:378) achieving guest satisfaction allows increasing levels of purchase repetition and loyalty.

Guest satisfaction measurements serve two purposes. Firstly, they provide information to the hotel management regarding what the guests indicate should be done differently or to assess how well an organization is currently meeting its guests' needs and expectations. Secondly, by surveying guests, a hotel is demonstrating its interest in communicating with its guests regarding their needs, pleasures, displeasures and overall well-being (Pizam & Ellis, 1999).

Achieving a sustainable competitive advantage based on providing outstanding service quality is a strategy that is often utilised by restaurateurs and hotel
marketers (Headley and Choi, 1992:510). Unfortunately, according to Tse (2001:11), maximizing consumers’ perception of service quality whilst simultaneously minimizing costs is often very difficult.

The chapter provides details of research methodology that underpinned the research process. The research approaches used with in the present research work includes both qualitative and quantitative methods.

2.2. Selection of Problem:

Conducting research in hospitality & Tourism, is quite a difficult proposition on account of the obvious difference in the motivation, preferences, priorities, expectations and satisfaction perspectives of the guests according to their age, sex, income level, occupation and socio-cultural background vis-à-vis individual aptitude, attitude and perception etc. Putting it the other way round, no two individual have identical views, observations and likings with regard to identical appeal, or services rendered to them. What makes research all the more complicated in case of hospitality industry is that the guest response with regard to preference, expectation or satisfaction depends on the inter-play of various perspectives including those intrinsic to the specific hotel, and others exogenous to it, viz., location of hotel, provision of room services, interior decor, meal -plan, taste, brand of drinks, inputs like currency exchange, in-house shopping facilities, communication channels, indoor recreation, privacy, and safety and security, beside various other support services to the quality of socio-economic, cultural, technological and ecological environment of the place/region/country the concerned property is located.

Naturally, the priority of guests in all these matters is further guided by wide range of demographic and psychographic reasons. More than often, even quantifying the generic demand become a real time challenge as the same depends on the touristic
demand of the place/destination itself which in turn is influenced by the prevailing economic, political, and law and order situation, weather condition, state of competition, changing travel preferences & hospitality related policy of the concerned government etc. apart from general weather condition and seasonality factor, etc. On the contrary, there may be a situation when sudden influx of the guests may be due to an event on card, or some problems in the competitive destination, there by leading to a win - win situation for the hoteliers. Further, the sudden change in the demand may sustain over a long period or prove to be too volatile.

However, as the problem remains for the hoteliers to specify the term service quality, which in turn, will help them to identify any quality gaps and to further help them to understand guest' attitudes towards the quality of the service provided by them, before attempting to implement any service-improvement programs. To a question to this effect, the responses of the guests may come as dissatisfactory, moderately satisfactory, satisfactory or even excellent. If such responses are carefully cross-examined taking (i) quality or type of the concerned service(s), (ii) demographic and psychographic perspective of the guests, and, (iii) quality/type of similar services offered by analogues enterprises, viable strategies can be worked out to improve upon. Therefore, any piece of research should aim at exploring the importance of customer care in the hospitality industry, and in general to pay attention to the following points:

- The guest' expectation and perceptions of the service quality,
- The gap between expectations and perceptions, and
- The impact of service quality, and the overall guest satisfaction in the loyalty formation among the hotel guests.

Thus, research becomes a complex job, however, all the same, not much hotels believe in a macro level research encompassing the complementary services or the
destination as a whole, even knowing that the performance of the latter always have
decisive bearing their own performance, instead, each of them waits to the initiation
taken by the government or one or more of the inter or intra-sectoral establishment,
perching on the logic that they too will have natural advantage of such efforts. Fact
remains that without some applied research, neither judicious use of the available
resources can be ensured nor long term success can be achieved.

In recent years, the hotels in India have encountered difficult times due to the
increasing guest demands, and due to the strong internal industry competition
development. However, the hospitality industry’s main concern around the globe is
to cater for its guest needs and their desires, which are mostly addressed through
personal services. Therefore, the hotels that are able to provide quality services to
its ever demanding guests in a warm and efficient manner, are those which will be
more likely to obtain a long term competitive advantage over their rivals. However,
since the hotels are offering intangible and perishable personal service encounters,
managing these services in terms of offering quality experience to their guests, it
must be of a paramount concern of any hotel, and the way which personalized
services are provided.

The significance of hotels is also vital as a good deal of time of the guest is spent
here and therefore guest memory about the destination is profoundly determined by
his/her hotel experience. Having taken in to consideration the significance of hotels
in the success of a destination, as also, the vitality of guest satisfaction in the
sustained prosperity of a hotel, it was found imperative to work on the problem
related to guest satisfaction with relation to leading hospitality units of popular
destinations. Having had graduated in hotel management and pursued masters in
tourism management, there was an inherent motivation, as well as, academic
background to take up such a problem for doctoral work.
2.3. Statement of the Problem:

Evidently after having had selected the key areas for research, i.e., (i) Guest Satisfaction with Relation to Leading Hospitality Units of Khajuraho and Orchha (M.P.), and (iii) selection of hotels for the study to be Hotel Grand Temple View, Jass Radisson Khajuraho and Taj Chandela at Khajuraho and Orchha Resort at Orchha the, statement of the problem has been, Guest Satisfaction With Relation To Leading Hospitality Units Of Khajuraho And Orchha (M.P).

2.4. Significance of Problem:

The problem identified for conducting the research work is quite different and very few researches have been undertaken on this otherwise complex but vital problem especially in Indian perspective. Present research work is aimed for the in depth study of resident guest behavior staying in leading hotel properties of Khajuraho & Orchha. The results obtained from the research work may also prove instrumental in mapping the promises & perils concerning to the hotel business in the study area as well as the planners and decision makers, at micro and macro levels in the country. Likewise, the strategic models projected in this study may - prove useful to the hotels in improving the quality of their products & services and effectively marketing the same. As obvious, the finding would particularly provide an insight on the performance of Hotels of Khajuraho & Orchha, highlighting the major problems faced by the hotel guests and the causes for the same, and possible viable suggestions to alleviate these problems.

2.5. Study Area:

While selecting an appropriate destination for carrying out the research on the above lines, many destinations were thought of. However, considering the time, distance, cost, tourist influx and multiplicities of the hotels, Khajuraho, Gwalior,
Agra and Orchha were short listed for final selection. Gwalior, though one of the flourishing commercial and administrative city also having some good hotels, is yet to come up as a tourist destination in true sense, else it would have been one of the closest preference of the scholar on account its relatively closer proximity from the work place (approximately 100 km). Orchha, a fast upcoming international tourist destination, has been nearest from the work place (Jhansi) of the scholar (i.e. 18 km). There were not many options for selection of hotels. It is still more of a transit destination, apart from witnessing foreigner’s visitors as well as Indian devotees going there mainly to Ram Raja Temple.

Agra, one of the most visited destinations of the country by foreign and domestic tourists, alike, has come as one of the closest choice for the scholars but on accounts of the facts that, (i) Khajuraho is one of world heritage site on account of its over a thousand year treasure of eloquently designed temples richly dotted with lively sculptures, (ii) the place is one of the most visited destinations of foreign tourists after the famous Taj City and thus the impression they carry with them will have wide and deep implications with regard to the image of India in general and Khajuraho in particular. The tourism potential of the Khajuraho is aptly evident from the fact that out of 2,02,132 foreign tourists visiting in the entire Bundelkhand Region in the year 2005, Khajuraho alone recorded 81,447 visits Khajuraho as against 59,716 to Orchha and Evidently, Italian, perhaps on account of their inherent inclination towards art and culture, had highest number of foreign visits i.e., 1447 followed by 1400 French and 1320 British, respectively (iii) since the place is still among the youngest cultural destinations of the country and a good deal of the tourist plant facilities are yet to come up with steadily increasing tourist influx, it was deemed fit to visualize the situation now with an eye on future developments, being a resident of Bundelkhand Region, the obvious zeal to work for the Region on first available opportunity too proved to be a stronger point in
favor of taking Khajuraho for the study as against Agra and, ultimately Khajuraho and Orchha were selected as the study area.

Assuming that majority of foreign tourists stay in quality hotels, on account of the favorable exchange rates vis-à-vis the very way of life, it was considered pertinent to concentrate on the leading hotels of Khajuraho and Orchha for the study. Accordingly, Hotel Grand Temple View and Radisson Khajuraho, Taj Chandela at Khajuraho and Orchha Resort at Orchha were opted for the study.

2.6. Research Hypothesis:

With the problem selected for the doctoral research, the hypothesis may come to be “Guest Satisfaction with Relation To Leading Hospitality Units Of Khajuraho And Orchha (M.P.) has been Dissatisfactory”, or contrary to it, “Highly Satisfactory”. However, for convenience of hypothesis testing and accordingly trying to reach to a realistic conclusion, the same has been reorganized into following sub-heads:

The significant relationship between service quality and guest satisfaction has been widely discussed in the literature (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Grönroos, 1984; Parasuraman et al., 1985; 1988; Taylor & Baker, 1994). Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann (1994) found that guest satisfaction requires experience with the service, and is influenced by the perceived service quality. Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman define service quality as guests’ overall judgment or attitude concerning high-quality service (Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman, 1988). Their model treats service quality not as an absolute, but as a relative concept determined by the gap between consumers’ expectations and their perceptions. On the basis of the above discussion, the following hypotheses can be proposed:

**H1: There will be a significant service quality gap between guests’ personalized services expectations and the actual service provided by the staff.**
**H2:** There will not be any significant service quality gap between guests’ expectations and the actual service delivered to them.

Service quality is seen as a multidimensional concept, and different service quality dimensions bridge the gap between specific characteristics and abstract concepts of quality. According to *Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry’s (1988)* five service quality dimensions which are most widely used in the lodging industry are Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy and Tangibles. In this study, it is proposed that hotel guests judge the quality of hotel products and services by the various dimensions. Taken together, these arguments lead to the following hypothesis:

**H3:** Reliability is the most important service quality dimension for the hotel guests of Khajuraho & Orchha.

Guest loyalty (e.g., revisit intentions, willingness to provide positive word-of-mouth communication) is a function of guest satisfaction (*Oliver, 1980*). When guests are satisfied with products or services provided by a service firm, their attitudes toward the firm, its products, or services become more favorable (*LaBarbera & Mazursky, 1983*). Thus, hotels might believe that guest satisfaction is the only feasible strategy to retain existing guests. In general, past research demonstrated that there is a strongly positive association between guest satisfaction and guest loyalty (*Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Bolton & Drew, 1991b; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Fornell, 1992; LaBarbera & Mazursky, 1983; Rust & Zahorik, 1993; Taylor & Baker, 1994)*; the evidence indicated that higher levels of satisfaction lead to greater guest loyalty. Particularly, *Anderson and Sullivan (1993)* presented how guests’ choices, and thereby loyalty, are influenced by guest satisfaction based on prior experiences. *Selnes (1993, p. 31)* advocated that “in some segments guest loyalty may be driven through brand reputation, whereas in
other segments guest loyalty may also be driven by guest satisfaction.” On the basis of the above discussion, the following hypotheses can be proposed:

**H4: Guest satisfaction is positively associated with positive word of mouth communication and revisit intentions.**

The expectancy-disconfirmation theory provided a conceptual framework for this study. The expectancy-disconfirmation theory holds that guests first form expectations of products or service performance prior to purchasing or use. Subsequently, purchasing and use convey to the guest beliefs about the actual or perceived performance of the product(s) or service(s). The guest then compares the perceived performance to prior expectations. Guest satisfaction is seen as the outcome of this comparison (*Clemons & Woodruff, 1992*). Richard Oliver’s academic work on guest satisfaction added to the work conducted by Cardoza and Anderson by formally introducing a methodology to demonstrate how satisfaction is the product of an expectation-disconfirmation framework (*Oliver, 1980*). Guest expectations about a product or service are established prior to a purchase, and perceptions of quality are determined through the act of consumption. From Oliver’s perspective, the important piece of information to understand is guests’ post-consumption evaluations of quality. High quality post-consumption evaluations provide confirmation for higher guest satisfaction, and, alternatively, low quality post consumption evaluations provide disconfirmation (i.e., lower guest satisfaction). Taken together, these arguments lead to the following hypotheses:

**H5: Expectation level(s) of guests to a greater extent, guide their satisfaction level(s).**

### 2.7. Objectives of the Study:

While research title itself clearly defines the objective of the study, the same can be conveniently translated into following sub-objectives;
1. to survey the leading hotels of Khajuraho & Orchha in terms of food & beverages, level of service, accommodation facilities, hotel ambiance/atmosphere and other provisions, and quality levels etc.

2. to assess the gap (if any) between demand and supply of quality levels of various products & services offered by leading hotels at Khajuraho & Orchha,

3. to find reasons for the lesser satisfaction (if any) of tourists with regard to hotel products & services at Khajuraho & Orchha,

4. to appraise the overall satisfaction levels of guests visiting the hospitality units of study area,

5. to map the loyalty level present among the hotel guests by evaluating their intention to visit again to the destination, and to refer the destinations to other,

6. to advise viable actions to be taken to enhance the level of guest satisfaction with respect to hotel services & products and, outline the major hurdles (if any) in this regard.

2.8. State of The Art (Literature Review):

2.8.1. Guest Satisfaction:

Guest satisfaction is one of the most dominant themes & decisive factor in the success of a hotel, more so for its sustained growth. This fact, in turn makes the subject as one of the core area of market research. Thus, obviously, the study on this subject has long history but Cardozo (1965) is credited for undertaking pioneering research on guest effort, expectation and satisfaction. Since than, the state of knowledge in the field has expanded comprehensively. Bitner and Hubbert (1994) defined it as both the outcome of individual service transactions and the overall service encounter. In general, guests tend to compare their perceptions of
actual service performance to expectations prior to purchase or consumption \cite{Oliver1980}. When service performance exceeds expectations (i.e., positive disconfirmation) guest satisfaction increases. Conversely, negative disconfirmation generates dissatisfaction \cite{AndreassenLindestad1998}. Accordingly, guest satisfaction can be concluded to affect a guest’s assessment of service quality and guest loyalty \cite{LaBarberaMazursky1983}.

Guest satisfaction is important to successful hospitality unit because it influences the choice of the property, the consumption of products and services there, and the decision to return \cite{KozakRimmington2000}. Several researchers have studied guest satisfaction and provided theories about hospitality \cite{Bramwell1998, Bowen2001}. For example, \textit{Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry}’s \cite{ParasuramanZeithamlBerry1985} expectation-perception gap model, \textit{Oliver}’s expectancy–disconfirmation theory \cite{PizamMilman1993}, \textit{Sirgy}’s congruity model \cite{Sirgy1984, ChonOlsen1991}, and the performance – only model, \cite{PizamNeumannReichel1978} have been used to measure guest satisfaction with specific tourism destinations. In particular, expectancy-disconfirmation has received the widest acceptance among these theories because it is broadly applicable.

\textit{Chon and Olsen} \cite{ChonOlsen1991} discovered association between guests’ expectations about their destination, and guests’ satisfaction. Then, after tourists have bought the travel service and products, if the evaluation of their experience of the travel product is better than their expectations, they will be satisfied with their travel experience. Furthermore, \textit{Chon and Olsen} \cite{ChonOlsen1991} provided an intensive literature review of guest satisfaction. One thing to be noted, however, is that although the posited social cognition theory offers an alternative way of explaining satisfaction processes, its methodological mechanism is analogous to that of expectancy–disconfirmation theory. In other words, the concepts of congruity and incongruity can be interpreted similarly to the concepts of confirmation and disconfirmation, both of which can result in either positive or negative directions.
Kozak and Rimington (2000) reported the findings of a study to determine
destination attributes critical to the overall satisfaction levels of guests. Pizam,
Neumann, and Reichel (1978) stated that it is important to measure guest
satisfaction with each attribute of the destination, because guest dis/satisfaction
with one of the attributes leads to dis/satisfaction with the overall destination.
Furthermore, Rust, Zahorik, and Keiningham (1993) explained that the relative
importance of each attribute to the overall impression should be investigated
because dis/satisfaction can be the result of evaluating various positive and
negative experiences.

As regards guest satisfaction, Guest Comment Cards (GCCs) used by the
managers to measure guest satisfaction, too provided an insight on the subject. A
guest comment card is the card commonly distributed in rooms leaving it to the
guests to respond. It is a growing trend in hotel chains throughout the India using
GCC's to make strategic managerial decisions. Recent studies in both the United
States and the United Kingdom reveal that many hotel chains still use guest
satisfaction evaluating methods based on inadequate practices to make increasingly
important and complex managerial decisions.

Throughout the literature, guest satisfaction has been measured in different ways.
One measure consists of responses to a single question on the guest-satisfaction
questionnaire: "Overall, how much satisfied are you with...?" Responses for all
satisfaction questions are made on 1–7 Likert type scales labeled between "very
satisfied"(1) and "very dissatisfied" (7) at each extreme. The problems associated
with the use of a single response variable were mitigated by the simplicity of the
question. Satisfaction with key elements of both service and price (measured
independently as the "service index" and the "price index") was developed from
theories found in service management literature. These theories state that the
perceived value is a function of perceived quality and price, and that differing
levels of perceived value results in differing levels of guest satisfaction.
Mill and Morrison (1985) have been invariably referred at various stages from questionnaire preparation and data collection to data interpretation phases. Since, majority of the guests staying in hotels are tourists, particularly in the hotels located at popular destinations, and thus there exists a close complimentarily between tourism and hoteliering, it becomes vital to assimilate the conceptual framework of the tourism system and develop better understanding on the philosophical interpretation of the tourism terminology, tourism planning and tourism marketing etc.

The proliferation and globalization of services have provided not only business opportunities but also competitive threats for service firms (Lee & Ulgado, 1997). Moreover, service organizations have also faced other challenges such as a continuous increase in guest expectation (Joseph & Walker, 1988) and guests’ subsequent demands as service improves (Ettorre, 1994). This study is designed to examine the relative impact of service quality, service value, and guest loyalty, including positive word-of-mouth communication and revisit intentions on guest satisfaction. In addition, guest satisfaction has been highlighted as a way to become guest-focused and improve guest loyalty and thus profitability. Recent studies presented an idea that guest satisfaction is a significant mediator of service quality and guest loyalty (Cho & Park, 1999; Lee, Jang, & Lee, 1999). Cronin and Taylor (1992) also revealed that service quality improves guest satisfaction, and in turn can influence guest loyalty.

2.8.2. Service Quality:

Any person who is in business knows the importance of a satisfied guest. This is because satisfying a guest has both long-term and short-term benefits associated with it. The result of short-term dissatisfaction can be demonstrated by a walkout, while on the other hand, long-term dissatisfaction can lead to defection in guests (Gagliano & Hathcote 1994). The effects of these defections and walkouts can
result in the company making a loss (Reichheld & Sasser 1990). With these effects and anxiety of loss, it forces organizations to look towards applying quality in the service that they provide.

To maintain a superior quality of service, service providers need to understand how guests evaluate the quality of their service offerings. Thus, many large hotels have created quality-measurement programs that include surveys to obtain guests’ evaluations of service quality. Feedback allows service changes to be implemented and then evaluated with follow-up survey data (Hauser & Clausing, 1988; Zeithaml et al., 1990). Also, many organizations have realized that maintaining excellence on a consistent basis is imperative to gain guest loyalty. Prior literature has thus demonstrated that service quality has an indirect influence (e.g., Andreassen & Lindestad, 1998; Ostrowski, O’Brien, & Gordon, 1993; Patterson & Spreng, 1997) as well as a direct influence on guest loyalty (e.g., Parasuraman et al., 1988; Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996).

Thus, in the business world today, where service providers are looking at measuring the effectiveness of their service and creating a guide for their development strategies, they have all turned to a measurement called service quality (Murphy 2003). This has prompted the importance of service quality to be an area of increasing concern. In defining service quality, Parasuraman et al. (1988) see it as perceptions resulting from a comparison of guest expectations with actual service performance. Others like Gronroos (1984) also define service quality along similar lines, by defining it as a perceived judgment resulting from guests’ evaluation processes, whereby they compare their expectations with the service they perceive to have received.

In service organizations, the assessment of the quality of a service is made during the actual delivery of the service – usually an encounter between the guest and a service contact person. Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988, 1991) identified the
following *five generic dimensions* of service quality (22-item, *SERVQUAL*) that must be present in the service delivery in order for it to result in guest satisfaction:

1. **Reliability** – the ability to perform the promised services dependably and accurately. It consists of four items.

2. **Responsiveness** – the willingness to help guests and provide prompt service. Responsiveness is communicated to customers by aspects such as the length of time they have to wait for assistance, attention to problems or answers to questions. Responsiveness is important as it captures the notion of ability to customize service according to customer needs as well as the notion of flexibility. It consists of four items.

3. **Assurance** – the knowledge and courtesy of employees as well as their ability to convey trust and confidence. It consists of four items.

4. **Empathy** – the provision of caring, individualized attention to guests, and it consists of five items.

5. **Tangibles** – the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials. It consists of four items.

The *GAP model* conceptualizes service quality as a gap between guest’s expectations (E) and the perception of the service providers’ performance (P). According to *Parasuraman et al. (1985)*, service quality should be measured by subtracting guest’s perception scores from guest expectation scores (*Q* = *P* – *E*). The greater the positive score represents the greater the positive amount of service quality or visa versa.

The gap that may exist between the guests’ expected and perceived service is not only a measure of the quality of the service, but is also a determinant of guest
satisfaction/dissatisfaction. Measuring the gap between expected and perceived service is a routine method of utilizing guest feedback. Vavra (1997, p. 91) identified a sixth gap namely the difference between the guests' desired service and their expected service.

Since, service quality and satisfaction share a common theoretical derivation, the conceptualizations of the two constructs overlap. This has resulted in some believing that service quality and satisfaction are the same construct and that differences between them are semantic rather than substantive. This view was articulated by LeBlanc (1992, p. 15) in his evaluation of service quality in hospitality units: 'Even though both quality and satisfaction are in theory concerned with the difference between expectations and perceptions, at present no theoretical distinction seems to be made between the two concepts in the literature'.

The literature is replete with reports that use the two terms interchangeably as synonyms and do not recognize them as distinctively different constructs. In many cases, operationalizations of satisfaction have used service features or attributes, which are the basis for making quality judgments but are not appropriate for evaluating psychological outcomes. For example, Howat et al. (1996) evaluated guest satisfaction by using indicators of guest service quality based on Parasuraman et al.'s five dimensions of service quality.

The conceptualization and operationalization of service quality has a more recent heritage than satisfaction. It was pioneered by Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988), but it also stemmed from the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm with positive disconfirmation resulting in perceptions of high service quality and negative disconfirmation leading to perceptions of low service quality. Much of the work in the hospitality and recreation fields derives from that of Parasuraman et al. Examples include MacKay and Crompton's (1988) conceptual model of service
quality, and the measuring instruments developed by Fick and Ritchie (1991); MacKay & Crompton (1990); Wright et al. (1992).

Although there is broad consensus that service quality and guest satisfaction is different constructs, there is little agreement on the nature of their relationship. *Table 2.1* summarizes six alternative schools of thought on the nature of the relationship and each of these is briefly reviewed in the following sub-sections. A model proposed by the researcher to reconcile many of these alternative conceptualizations is shown in *Figure 2.1.* and its construction is explained in the narrative that follows.

*Table 2.1: A Summary of Conceptualizations Proposed to Differentiate Guest Satisfaction and Service Quality*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framework</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SQ and GS have different reference standards</td>
<td>SQ is defined by desired expectation; GS is defined by predicted expectation</td>
<td>Parasuraman <em>et al.</em> (1988); Tse and Wilton (1988); Oliver (1993a, 1994, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disconfirmation</td>
<td>Disconfirmation defines SQ; but it an independent psychological state that influences GS</td>
<td>Oliver (1977, 1980, 1981); Oliver and DeSarbo (1988); Tse and Wilton (1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS is transaction-specific, SQ is an attitude</td>
<td>GS is an antecedent to SQ</td>
<td>Parasuraman <em>et al.</em> (1988); Bitner (1990); Bolton and Drew (1991a, b; 1992); Patterson and Johnson (1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SQ is transaction-specific and GS is an attitude</td>
<td>SQ is an antecedent to GS</td>
<td>Cronin and Taylor (1992); Bloemer and Ruyter (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both SQ and GS are transaction-specific and are at the transaction level</td>
<td>SQ is an antecedent to GS</td>
<td>Crompton and MacKay (1989); Crompton <em>et al.</em> (1991); Crompton and Love (1995); Otto and Ritchie (1995); Baker and Crompton (2000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both SQ and GS are global attitudes

GS is experience specific thus can contribute to SQ

Pizam et al. (1978); Geva and Goldman (1991); Ross and Iso-Ahola (1991); Boulding et al. (1993); Bitner and Hubbert (1994); Thach and Axinn (1994); Parasuraman et al. (1994)

Key: GS = Guest Satisfaction; SQ = Service Quality.

2.8.2.1. Service Quality and Guest Satisfactions Have Different Standards:

Parasuraman et al. (1988) differentiated service quality from satisfaction by arguing that although both constructs involved a comparison between expected and perceived service, the expectation standards in the two constructs differed. They insisted that the comparison standard in guest satisfaction was the predicted service, i.e., expectation of what the service is likely to be, while the standard in service quality was the ideal or desire, i.e., what the service should be. Thus, guests' desired expectations and predicted expectations of a product or service co-existed, but they were independent of each other.

This argument is appealing because a number of studies have reported that guests may use different referents when forming expectations for the same service attribute (Miller, 1977). Tse and Wilton (1988) proposed and empirically supported the notion that a guest may simultaneously use desired and predicted expectations when making quality and satisfaction judgments. Similarly, Oliver (1993a, p. 79) suggested: 'In service situations where quality judgments enter, two expectation referents may be operating. Ideal or excellence-based expectations may be the reference for expectations of quality, while the more common predictive expectations may operate for direct influences on satisfaction'. This distinction is shown by flows 1 and 2 in Figure 2.1.
2.8.2.2. The Role Of Disconfirmation Differs In Guest Satisfaction And Service Quality:

When guests avail a service or a product in a hotel, they have a perception of its performance. If the perceived performance (flow 3 in Figure 2.1) is different from what they have predicted (flow 4) then disconfirmation is likely to result. The difference between guests’ predicted expectations (flow 4) and their perceptions of actual performance constitutes disconfirmation, which in turn contributes to guests’ levels of satisfaction (flow 5). Meanwhile, perceptions of performance (flow 6) and predicted expectations (flow 2) also directly contribute to guests’ quality of experience. In satisfaction processes, disconfirmation is a subjective assessment that reflects the degree of perceptual distortion inherent in guests’ own judgments of perceived reality’ (Oliver and Bearden, 1985, p. 79). It is not the difference scores between expectations and perceived performance, but rather it is an independent psychological state (Oliver, 1977, 1980, 1981; Oliver and Bearden, 1985; Oliver and De Sarbo, 1988; Swan and Trawick, 1981; Tse and Wilton, 1988).

In contrast, when evaluating service quality, guests compare their perceptions of actual performance (flow 7) with their notion of desirable performance, and the resulting discrepancy directly determines guests’ perceptions of quality of performance of a hotel. There has been no suggestion that there is an independent construct of disconfirmation that influences service quality judgments. Thus, service quality is the gap between expectations and performance, while satisfaction is a function of disconfirmation, which itself is a function of expectations and performance. Thus, in Figure 2.1, flows 4 and 5 show disconfirmation to be an intervening function between predicted expectations and quality of experience, whereas there is no such function between desired expectations and quality of performance.
2.8.2.3. Guest Satisfaction Is Transaction-Specific While Service Quality Is A Global Attitude:

Parasuraman et al. (1988, pp. 15–16) argued that service quality is ‘related but not equivalent to satisfaction’ because ‘perceived service quality is a global judgment, or attitude, relating to the superiority of the service, whereas satisfaction is related to a specific transaction’. This distinction between service quality and guest satisfaction proposed by Parasuraman and his colleagues was in part drawn from Oliver (1980, 1981) who proposed that satisfaction is different from an attitude, in that it is related to a specific transaction. Conceptualizing service quality as an attitude enables Parasuraman et al. (1988, p. 16) to conclude that ‘incidents of satisfaction over time result in perceptions of service quality’. This relationship is shown as flow 12 in Figure 2.1. In a similar vein, Bolton and Drew (1991a) viewed satisfaction as an antecedent to service quality, while Patterson and Johnson (1993, p. 92) stated that satisfaction is related to ‘a specific transaction or consumption experience’, and service quality ‘represents a more global judgment across multiple service encounters’.

Since satisfaction is viewed as being transaction-specific, advocates of this school of thinking have often studied it in the context of service encounters between guests and hotel employees (Bitner, 1990). Several studies have offered empirical evidence of the relationship between service encounter satisfaction and service quality. For example, Bolton and Drew (1992, p. 68) concluded: ‘this study provides empirical evidence that small business guests’ assessments of telephone service quality and value depend on their satisfaction with service encounters’.
2.8.2.4. Service Quality is Transaction Specific and Guest Satisfaction is a Global Attitude:

In contrast to those who believe that service quality is a super-ordinate concept to satisfaction, others have offered evidence that service quality contributes to overall satisfaction. This relationship is shown as flow 13 in Figure 2.1. Cronin and Taylor (1992) tested this relationship across four industries and reported that service quality had a significant impact on user satisfaction in all four-industry samples, while the causal path from satisfaction to quality was not significant. They concluded: ‘service quality is an antecedent to satisfaction’ (p. 65). Similarly, Bloemer and Ruyter (1995, p. 51) concluded: ‘From a theoretical perspective, the most important finding of our empirical study is that overall satisfaction should be treated as a super-ordinate construct to service quality. From this perspective, quality can be viewed as one of the factors that determine guest satisfaction’.

2.8.2.5. Both Service Quality and Guest Satisfaction are Transaction-Specific:

At the transaction level, guest satisfaction has been viewed as a super-ordinate construct to service quality. This is shown by flow 8 in Figure 2.1. Oliver (1993a) argues that guests are likely to use more dimensions to form satisfaction judgments than quality judgments. He maintains that ‘the dimensions underlying quality judgments are rather specific, whether they are cues or attributes. Satisfaction judgments, however, can result from any dimension, quality-related or not’ (p. 76). Quality is only one dimension that influences satisfaction judgments. Quality and satisfaction are correlated, but the correlation is unlikely to be one.

It has been noted that there are likely to be many cases when ‘a high satisfaction outcome may result even when perceived service quality is low because, for example, the social group interactions are sufficiently positive to offset the low quality service’ (Crompton and MacKay, 1989, p. 368). The opposite can also occur when a low level of satisfaction results although perceived service quality is
high. For example, guests may recently have had a bad experience while traveling to the destination, such as receiving a traffic citation, so they are not in a good mood. Thus, the source of satisfaction or dissatisfaction may have nothing to do with the service itself or the service provider. Guest satisfaction levels are determined by a more extensive array of inputs than only quality of performance by the service provider. *Crompton et al. (1991, p. 2)* observe:

Satisfaction involves a broader assessment of the guest's experiences. It is likely that level of service delivery will be highly correlated with amount of satisfaction, but there are other variables that may intervene. For example, the service provider may perform well but the guest may perceive that it costs too much, or the social group with whom he or she is participating may be inadequate in some way, or the guest may not be in a receptive mental state of mind or physical condition to derive a high level of satisfaction from the outcome, or the weather may be detrimental.

This conceptualization recognizes quality of opportunity or performance as an antecedent to quality of experience or guest satisfaction. Quality of experience is a super-ordinate concept and quality of opportunity is only one of the factors that influence quality of experience. However, this relationship between quality of opportunity and quality of experience is unlikely always to be linear (*Crompton and Love, 1995*). High quality does not necessarily lead to a high level of guest satisfaction, because there are intervening variables that also influence satisfaction judgments. As a result, it is possible that guests may experience a low level of satisfaction when high quality is perceived, and vice-versa.

*Otto and Ritchie (1995, p. 45)* also positioned the quality of experience construct as being super-ordinate to quality of opportunity. They viewed service quality as attribute-based. They stated that the service quality dimensions proposed by *Parasuraman et al. (1985)*: ‘represent abstractions of intrinsic and extrinsic service
attributes, or cues, which in turn allows the attributes to be generalized across alternatives’.

*Figure 2.1. The Relationships between Service Quality and Guest Satisfaction*

Therefore, the authors concluded that quality of opportunity is a cognitive evaluation. However, they viewed satisfaction as being an affective response to
these cognitive evaluations. They argued that service encounters are experiential in nature and that during the process of this experience, ‘(service) performance is converted into a psychological reaction by the consumer’ (Oliver, 1989, pp. 1–2).

Others have pointed out that in addition to the cognitive/affective distinction between the two constructs, Guest satisfaction is super-ordinate to service quality because it has more antecedents (Oliver, 1993a). The major antecedents of service quality have been identified as personal and impersonal communications and previous experience with a service (Oliver, 1993a; Parasuraman et al., 1985; Zeithaml et al., 1993). These are shown as flow 9 in Figure 2.1. These antecedents will also have an impact upon satisfaction judgments since they influence guests’ expectations. However, other antecedents are also likely to influence satisfaction, especially equity and attribution (flow 10 and 11 in Figure 2.1).

Similarly, during a transaction or an encounter between a guest and a hospitality organization, both parties bring different inputs with them. Guests first compare their inputs to outcomes, and then compare the hotel’s inputs and outcomes. If guests perceive that their outcome-to-input ratios are proportionate to those of the service providers, satisfaction results. As Oliver and DeSarbo (1988, p. 496) stated, guests are ‘satisfied if the ratio of their outcomes to inputs is in some sense fair’.

Empirical evidence has shown that attribution has a significant effect on satisfaction judgments (Folkes, 1984; Weiner et al. 1979). For example, Folkes (1984, p. 402) found that all three types of attributions play a central role in determining response to product failure: ‘Stability was correlated with expectancies and type of redress preferred, locus was correlated with deservingness of being charged and receiving an apology, and restaurant controllability was correlated with feelings of anger and desire to hurt the restaurant’s business’.
The multi antecedents to satisfaction indicate that satisfaction is a higher-level concept when both service quality and satisfaction are perceived as transaction specific. The relationship between quality of performance (service quality at transaction level) and quality of experience (guest satisfaction at the transaction level) was empirically tested by Baker and Crompton (1999) in a festival context. Their maximum likelihood equation estimations showed that performance quality had a significant direct effect on guest satisfaction.

2.8.2.6. Both Overall Service Quality and Overall Guest Satisfaction are Global Attitudes:

Service quality can be conceptualized as an attitude if it is accepted that service quality is an assessment of the overall excellence and superiority of a hospitality service over time (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Boulding et al. (1993, p. 11) hold that overall service quality represents guests’ cumulative assessments of the service. They state: ‘We believe guests average/integrate past experience with the firm and their latest service encounters in making a cumulative assessment of the service quality level of the firm’. This view is reflected in flow 14 in Figure 2.1.

Similarly, guests’ satisfaction is not limited to their satisfaction with specific encounters. Johnson et al. (1995, p. 699) explain that overall satisfaction ‘is not a transient perception of how happy a guest is with a product or service at any given point in time. It is a guest’s overall evaluation of his or her purchase and consumption experience to date’. Oliver (1981, p. 27) notes that satisfaction can be, ‘The summary psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with the guest’s prior feelings about the consumption experience’. This relationship is shown in Figure 2.1 as flow 15.

In the recreation and tourism literature, satisfaction has been measured at various levels of specificity. Mannell’s (1989) review of previous research concluded that
conceptualizations of satisfaction could be classified into two categories: *facet satisfaction* and *global satisfaction*. The former is concerned with particular facets or sub-domains of the tourism experience, while the latter is concerned with overall assessment of a tourism experience. To understand guests’ satisfaction judgments, researchers have frequently focused on identifying the factors or facets that may contribute to guests’ total satisfaction (*Geva and Goldman, 1991; Pizam et al. 1978; Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991; Thach and Axinn, 1994*).

This multiple benefit approach to measuring satisfaction has dominated much of the thinking about tourism experiences (*Williams, 1988*). For example, *Ross and Iso-Ahola (1991)* conducted a survey to assess sightseeing tourists’ satisfaction. At the end of a sightseeing tour, participants of the study were asked to indicate their overall satisfaction with the tour, and with six experiential aspects of it: Knowledge, Escape, Tour Pace, Social Interaction, Social Security and Practical Aspects. The distinction between facet satisfaction and global satisfaction implies that satisfaction with particular psychological benefits derived from the experience will result in guests’ overall satisfaction with the service.

Negative perceptions of individual attributes or negative affective reactions to a specific benefit do not necessarily mean that overall assessments of quality of performance or guest satisfaction will be negative. Guests can have perceptions of high overall quality or high levels of overall satisfaction, even though they think certain service attributes have low quality or they are not satisfied with particular aspects of the whole experience. Thus, *Lue et al. (1996)* in the context of multi destination travel behavior, reported that destinations could offset negative attributes, if there were other attributes, which Guests perceived to be positive. They concluded that in a tourism context, service attributes were compensatory and cumulative.
A differentiating feature between overall service quality and overall guest satisfaction is that *satisfaction is experience specific while service quality is not (Oliver 1993a, 1997).* Since service quality is guests’ perceptions of performance, they can have a general attitude toward the quality of a destination even if they have never been there. This can occur when guests have knowledge about the place through external communications such as advertising, world-of-mouth communication, and newspaper or magazine articles. For example, based on their knowledge about Disney World, potential guests may have a general attitude toward the quality of the destination even though they have never visited it. However, potential Guests cannot express satisfaction with it, because this attitude can only be formed after visiting and experiencing the park at least once. Guests’ levels of satisfaction can only be derived from first-hand experience.

*Flow 16 in Figure 2.1* recognizes that since satisfaction pertains to previous experience with the service, an individual’s level of overall satisfaction can contribute to his/her attitude toward service quality. When individuals have never visited a destination before but they have knowledge about it, they may have an attitude toward the destination’s quality. However, their perceptions of its quality cannot contribute to their overall satisfaction level, because without previous experience there is no basis for concluding if they are satisfied or dissatisfied with the destination.

**2.8.3. Guest Loyalty:**

Guest loyalty is the name of the game in today’s highly competitive hotel industry. Guest loyalty can be defined as “a deeply held commitment to re buy or re patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future” (*Oliver, 1993*). It has been estimated that attracting a new customer is three to five times more costly than retaining an existing customer (*Orr, 1995; Fierman, 1994; O’Brien and Jones, 1995*). These cost advantages are generated by reduced service costs,
increased spending (purchasing), lowered price sensitivity, and elevated word-of-mouth referrals (*Reichheld and Sasser, 1990*). Loyalty is an important issue because it has a positive effect on the firm’s bottom line. This is because it is easier, more direct and less costly to sell to existing customers (*Barlow and Moller, 1996:25*). *Bowen and Chen (2001)* mentioned that loyal guests will help to promote the hotel, they will provide strong word-of-mouth, create business referrals, provide references, and serve on advisory boards. These loyal guests will also increase sales by purchasing a wider variety of the hotel’s products and by making more frequent purchases.

Guest loyalty (leading to repeat business) occurs only when the perceived experience can be considered “excellent”, a level far exceeding merely good service (*Zemke, 1992*). Guest loyalty can be described as the *likelihood of future renewal of service contracts; how likely it is that the guest changes patronage; how likely the guest is to provide positive word-of-mouth communication; or the likelihood of guest providing voice* (*Andreassen & Lindestad, 1998*). If real alternatives exist or switching barriers are low, management realizes the organization’s inability to meet its guests via two feedback mechanisms: *exit and voice* (*Hirschman, 1970*). Exit means that the guests stop purchasing the company’s services, whereas voice refers to guest complaints expressing his/her dissatisfaction directly to the company.

A loyal customer is more likely to find the service encounter and the overall experience with a service provider more satisfying than a non-loyal customer. Although previous research has not viewed loyalty as an explanatory variable of satisfaction, prospect theory (*Kahneman and Tversky 1979*) offers a rationale for why loyal customers may be more satisfied than non-loyal customers (*see also, Mittal, Ross and Balasare 1998*). According to this theory, losses loom larger than gains. In the context of the relationship between loyalty and satisfaction, this theory suggests that if loyal customers have a negative experience and become
dissatisfied with a service provider, then they might gain by switching to a new provider. However, by switching they will incur loss in the form of loyalty benefits (e.g., emotional loss, rewards program) or face a potentially unfamiliar service encounter. Compared to non-loyal customers, loyal customers may perceive the loss to be larger than the short-term gain of moving to a new service provider. Research reported by Ahluwalia et al. (1999) provides further support for the loyalty-satisfaction relationship.

Despite that, some hotels are only worried about meeting guests’ expectations, in having high levels of guests’ satisfaction. These hotels think that repurchase will be increased if they satisfy guests’ needs. However, it has been proven that customer repurchase does not necessarily mean that customers are loyal. They might defect at any moment and for different reasons (Jones and Sasser, 1995).

The advantages of loyalty can be categorized into three basic groups. First, most of these efforts are designed to protect the existing guest base and thereby maintain sales levels, margins, and profits. The second advantages are to enhance the piece of the pie or the share of the stomach by increasing sales to existing guests. The third advantages is to enhance cross-selling the hotel’s products and services (Dowling and Uncles, 1997). Rewarding guests for their loyalty is increasingly common in many segments of the travel industry, including airlines and hotels (Kim et al., 2004). As a result, guests are now able to pay for goods and services with new currencies such as frequent flier miles and Diner’s Club Rewards (Dreze and Nunes, 2004). Despite their rising popularity, both the academic literature and popular press cast some doubt over the effectiveness of these “frequent user” programs (Fournier et al., 1998; Dowling and Uncles, 1997). For example, a study of frequent gamblers showed that only about one third of the loyalty reward members were truly loyal to the company (Baloglu, 2002). Given these opposing views on loyalty, it is important to understand what kinds of rewards guests prefer when making dining decisions.
Some researchers have examined guest motivations for being loyal. Prior research in sales promotions has demonstrated that monetary rewards (savings) are not the only reason why guests look for special deals (Chandon et al., 2000). Quality, convenience, value expression and hedonic benefits such as exploration and entertainment surfaced as additional motivators among shoppers. Hedonic or experiential benefits might be more relevant to casual dining restaurants while savings might be the driving force in the context of fast foods.

2.9. Modus Operandi:

The research methodology for the proposed research work was centered around Selection of Population, Sampling, The Survey Instrument, Review of the Questionnaire, Data Collection, Measurement Issues, and Measurement Scales.

2.9.1. Selection of Population:

The population selected for this study was the national and international tourists visiting to the leading hospitality units of the study area. In order to get the exact findings the population was contacted during season and off season. They were enquired about the standard of hospitality products & services, major factors influencing the guest satisfaction and the level of satisfaction. Along with the visitors, the hotel management was also included as population to know exactly the, guest satisfaction measures adopted, annual turnover (Season/Off-Season), measures adopted while the in hotel facilities etc.

2.9.2. The Survey Instrument:

After having referred many model questionnaires, the one finally prepared has been a mix of both open and close-ended questions. Some of the close ended questions were designed for qualitative responses while others have the provision of numerical values variedly labeled between "very satisfied" and "very dissatisfied" at each extreme. Respondents were requested to give a score to the attributes on the
levels of expectations and satisfactions separately using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from very low expectation (1) to very high expectation (5) and from very dissatisfied (1) to very satisfied (5). In all 1000 questionnaires were prepared after having incorporated requisite changes in the test questionnaire. Likewise, in view of the diverse nature of the universe, *convenient sampling method* was exclusively used. Perceiving the reluctance of the hotel guests in filling the questionnaire on the spot, and receiving poor response of the questionnaire circulated in the guest rooms through room service staff of the concerned hotel, it was decided that at least 50% of the total questionnaires be got filled through mail – though it was a very costly proposition. But only 30% of the mail questionnaire could be received back. Also, there was considerable difference in the number of responses received from the hotels. After discarding the incomplete and biased question there were only 651 worth including questionnaires to assess the hospitality products & services of Khajuraho & Orchha.

This survey was developed by researching other guest satisfaction, survey instruments that were used in the hospitality and tourism management for data collection purposes. The *first section* of the survey instruments contained questions pertaining to the *demographic classification* of the respondents/guests, the *second section* deals with the *travel behavior characteristics* of the respondents/guests and the third section presents results on the *guests’ expectations and satisfaction with the hospitality products & services* in the hotels of Khajuraho & Orchha. Considering the delicate and personal nature of some questions on the survey an anonymous questionnaire was used to collect all the variable data. A postage paid return envelope was included along with the survey to expedite the return process. Due to the questions about turnover intentions and compensation, complete confidentiality and anonymity will be promised and used to help insure a better response rate. This instrument contains items intended to measure general demographic information for the purpose of gaining a profile of the typical
respondent and for the intention of measuring the differences between groups of respondents' exhibit.

2.9.3. Review of the Questionnaire:

The questionnaire for this study was a self-administered instrument, which probed the service quality, loyalty and satisfaction variables. The questionnaire was constructed to gather information to answer the research questions put forth. Questionnaires were given to tourists staying in the leading hotels of the study area, during a personal interview to determine if any relevant factors of the hotel guest satisfaction were not included on the survey instrument and that they understood all of the questions. The guests did not identify any missing factors on the survey instrument but they advised some suggestion regarding the sequencing of the questions, which were incorporated.

2.9.4. Research Approach and Data Collection Methods:

Numerous studies have focused on tourist satisfaction in tourism destinations. Comparatively few studies concentrate on a guest satisfaction among the tourists visiting to the hotels, particularly those using a qualitative approach. Due to the scarcity of research focusing on satisfaction among tourists, the researcher undertook this research to understand the hospitality service & products which affect guest satisfaction when they take a hospitality package. The qualitative approach is the preferred methodology since the comments of respondents, observation and the in-depth interview can produce a richness of information on the aspects of service provision or improvement.

In researching hospitality industry, there are problems relating to the collection of data on guest perceptions or their satisfaction with hospitality service providers strategies since questionnaires are limited and cannot fully capture the true nature of guests' reactions and the real practices of service performance. Singleton &
Straits (1999) considered that the use of qualitative or field research with exploration and description is appropriate when one has relatively little knowledge about the subject under investigation. It was decided to use multiple methods to establish different views of the phenomena at different stages of data collection.

In order to carry out the study systematically and with in the stipulated time, a time frame was formulated. Thus, first three months were assigned for preliminary literature survey though armchair method and preparation of questionnaires, subsequent three months mainly for preliminary field visit (to have a feel of the area and the prevailing system and trends of the hospitality industry), questionnaire testing alongside collection of generic data on the destination and hotels selected for case study, following three months for visiting libraries and other institutions for information but with main focus on questionnaire filling, another nine months for mainly collecting responses of the hotel guests through the questionnaire, three months for analysis and interpretation of the data and other related information, and last six months for thesis writing. However, while the work was originally planned to be completed in one and a half year it actually took almost two years, mainly on account of the seasonality problem, and to some extent, due to lack of requisite secondary data.

The primary data for this study were collected using three different research methods: in-depth, semi-structured face-to-face interviews with managers from randomly selected hotels; tourists’ stay experiences; and semi-structured telephone interviews.

Background information about the destination and the hotels taken for the study, has been collected through secondary sources, physical observations and on the spot collection of the data through interviews with the concerned persons. Since the information on occupancy and income was available in extremely fragmented form it was found better take year 2005-2006 as the base for discussion and
interpretation in view of the maximum available data for a particular year. For analysis and interpretation, instead of complex techniques, the simplest frequency, percent/percentile analyses have been employed to measure guest satisfaction.

2.9.5. Data Analysis:

After collecting all the data the process of analysis begins. After sorting out the invalid questionnaires, the data was summarized and rearranged through several interrelated procedures during the data analysis stage. The data will be analyzed through frequency; percent/percentile and also gathered data’s from consumers will be compared by the government organization’s data. The relationship between overall satisfactions with the hotel’s services & products and the generation of repeat business (loyalty) were also investigated.

The measurement of the difference between expectations and fulfillment of each component was analyzed and discussed in order to gauge the extent to which hotel guest’s expectations regarding the hotel products and services were met, their satisfaction with the current hospitality units of the study area and the extent to which they would be willing to return or refer others.

Therefore, the findings of this piece of research has been derived by analyzing and interpreting the facts collected from both primary data based on field survey done by the scholar and available secondary data on the diverse perspectives.

2.10. Limitations:

Due to scarcity of reference and model studies on guest satisfaction with special reference to hotels in general, hotels sector of developing economies in particular, the scholar had to face obvious constraints in using appropriate research tools and techniques to reach to nearly authentic conclusions.
The researcher attempted to conduct extensive literature research aiming to include all relevant literature on the topic in the study. It is however possible that some important research and literature on the perceptions of service quality & perceptions of loyalty of hotel customers may have been excluded. Literature that was not published in acknowledged journals and text books were excluded.

The study was limited due to the fact that it was confined to a single typology namely the guests visiting to the leading hotels of the study area which as such represent only one end of the continuum. An additional limitation to the study is that it was only conducted in Khajuraho & Orchha. Therefore, the behaviour of the guests visiting to both smaller and larger hotels of the entire Bundelkhand Region should be considered in order to get precise and accurate findings.

Since the universe for sampling has been be too diverse in terms of socio-cultural economic, demographic, geographic and psychographic factors etc, there has been problems not only in deciding the size and type of samples, getting requisite number of questionnaires filled by the hotel guests but interpretation of data has proved comprehensively complex due to intricate interrelationship between large number of variables. More than often, the hotels were reluctant to cooperate perceivably for two reasons, (i) to avoid any kind of disturbance for the guests and, (ii) the shortcomings of the hotels are not exposed. Otherwise also, the guests, by and large, too avoided filling the questionnaire on the pretext that they have already done so many times at various other destinations. The alternate option of mail questionnaire also proved futile as only 30 % of the questionnaire sent could be received back. It is also worth pointing out here that the interviews and their subsequent analysis were done only by one researcher (i.e. the author of the thesis) which may result in a potential bias as the interviews’ key themes were interpreted by one person.
The scholar tried his utmost to get the details on such perspectives of the selected hotels, e.g., number of available rooms, total available capacity, food and beverage related perspectives, the sales aspects, customers those checked in and actually stayed in the hotel, and the individual and groups those used the facilities of the hotel for banqueting and like functions, but unfortunately the information was available in bits and pieces. The only available details in this regard were for the year 2005-06 and incidentally that too not covering all months. The state tourism department also had the data for the year 2005-06 and that too in fragmented form. Therefore, the observations made in the study are based on the 2005-06 data.

On account of the dynamic interplay between consistently changing tourist demand in qualitative and quantitative trend, awareness level and attitude of host population, professional skills and ethics of the various tourist service providers, policies and planning concerning the economy as a whole, seasonality and multiplicity of jurisdiction with regard to general infrastructure and tourism plant facilities, and environmental / ecological quality vis-à-vis carrying capacity etc, the study obviously has complex propositions. Collection of authentic information on all requisite perspective shall be one of the major constraints due to the multitude of the data, and more so, due to limited man power, expertise, budget and time frame. Extreme paucity of the information, especially in the context of the proposed study area may also prove as a strong hurdle on way to a smooth conduct of the project. Translating a wide range of responses on expectation and satisfaction level of the effective and potential tourists into generic empirical data would require use of multiple data interpretation techniques. Nevertheless, it is hoped that such limitations could suggest and encourage additional directions and guidelines for future study.
2.11. Organization of Report:

The thesis consists of seven chapters as per the research proposal. The Introductory chapter presents an Overview of Guest Satisfaction with relation to the hospitality sector. Therefore, it outlines the theoretical basis, components, dimensions, measurement approaches of guest satisfaction and the concept of guest delight.

Second chapter is devoted to the Research Design & Literature Review throws light with regard to selection of the problem, hypothesis, objectives, literature review, methodology, significance of the study, constraints faced in carrying out the research and its limitations and of course literature survey. The chapter focused literature review on guest satisfaction, service quality, loyalty and pricing strategies in the hospitality context.

Study Area: Touristic Personality & Hospitality Sector, the third chapter presents a brief account on the geographical personality of the study area, history and major attractions at Khajuraho & Orchha. It is also providing a brief introduction three leading hotels of Khajuraho & Orchha, namely, Hotel Grand Temple View, Hotel Radisson, and Taj Chandela, and The Orchha Resort opted for present study.

Chapter four is named as Major Determinants of Guest Satisfaction, which highlights attributes influencing guest behavior, the relationship of service quality, loyalty and price to the guest satisfaction.

Chapter five gives an oversight on analysis of extent of guest satisfaction achieved from different hospitality products and services. The responses after having been analyzed and interpreted, leads to chapter six, conclusions, recommendations & suggestions for future research which is followed by the last but most vital chapter seven, i.e., References.