CONCLUSIONS

&

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mural Paintings of Jehagir Fort, Orchha
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6.1. Introduction:

The purpose of this research work was, as described in Chapter 2, to determine to what extent there was compliance with the expectations of guests, regarding their hotel experience in general and foods and beverages quality, service quality, staff attitude in particular in the leading hotels of Khajuraho & Orchha. A qualitative research paradigm was chosen for this study with the guest perspectives in detail. For this research the self administered questionnaire was the principle method of data collection. The hotels selected represent well known hotels belonging to international hotel chains as well as premier chains of India. However, to gain background information analysis of available data & literature ware used. Subsequently, a number of conclusions emerged from the research project. Description of the general conclusions derived from the research work is listed in the following section. Furthermore, recommendations are suggested for the hotel operators of Khajuraho & Orchha to increase guest satisfaction level from hotel products and services besides suggestions for future research.

6.2. Conclusions:

In this research the total hotel experience was divided into the three primary components i.e. experience achieved from Foods & Beverages, Hotels’ Service & Hotels’ Ambiance. In order to get concrete findings the guests’ expectations rating in respect of each of these components was measured and then calculated overall guests’ satisfaction. However, in order to get precise findings and accurate recommendations service quality dimensions and loyalty study was also conducted. Since, demographic classification & travel behaviour characteristics of the respondents too have bearing on their expectation/satisfaction level; it is also being evaluated. The prime conclusions derived from the present study can be summarized as below:
6.2.1. Conclusions regarding Demographic Classification:

From the analysis of the data assembled during the research work revealed the following conclusions regarding the demographic profile of the hotel guests visiting Khajuraho & Orchha:

a) The ratio of Indian vis-à-vis foreigner respondents resulted into 33%:67%.
b) The gender classification of the respondents as revealed by the respondents during the survey was 48.6% males and 51.4% females.
c) The age wise classification of the respondents participated in the survey discovered that maximum respondents (46%), who took part in the study, were from 36-50 years age bracket.
d) The majority of the respondents (30.4%) who participated in the survey were businessmen by their occupation.
e) Maximum respondents (28.7%) had their monthly household income more than Rs. 40,000.
f) It was also revealed during the analysis that most (45.3%) of the respondents had under graduate degree education as their highest academic qualification.

6.2.2. Conclusions regarding Travel Behavior Characteristics:

a) It was discovered from the data at the study area that the majority of the foreign tourists prefer to refer travel literature and internet websites as against Indians who rely more on the world of mouth information.
b) Regarding availing the services from the travel agencies and tour operators, it was found that most of the foreigners relied more (67%) on them rather than Indians (38%).
c) Air transport emerged as the most popular mode of transport to reach Khajuraho whereas, trains & tourist cabs were used mostly to visit Orchha.
d) It was also found that most of the respondents (61.4%) were traveling along with their family members during their visit to the study area.
e) It was observed in the survey that the maximum percentage of tourists preferred to reside for 2-3 days in Khajuraho (50%) during the season time & 45% during the off season time whereas in Orchha maximum tourists have spent only 01 day both during season (45%) and off season (67%).

f) The prime purpose of most of the respondents visiting Khajuraho and Orchha was to observe the cultural attractions therein.

6.2.3. Conclusions with regard to the extent to which guest expectations regarding their hotel experience and its components were met and the extent to which they were satisfied with the current hotel experience:

From the analysis of the survey results conducted at Khajuraho & Orchha as well as from the discussion of the results in Chapter 5 and interpretation there of it is obvious that the majority of the guests were of the opinion that the current hotel experience and all its components (Foods & Beverages, Hotels’ Service, Hotels’ Ambiance) provided at study area met or exceeded their expectations. The hotel guests of Khajuraho & Orchha have indicated that their expectations were either met or exceeded regarding foods and beverages as 56.77%, 30 % & 29.43%, 45% respectively. Whereas, with regard to the hotel ambiance at Khajuraho & Orchha the percentage of satisfied guests was 67.8 % & 30.5% respectively. When analyzed their responses for hotels’ service, it was found that most of the respondents (73.5 %) of Khajuraho felt that the hotel service either met or exceeded their expectations and in Orchha, most (57.4 %) of the hotel guests’ expectations with hotel service were either not met completely or not met at all.

This however contradicts guests’ inclination to state that they would like to consume region – specific foods. The reason for this feature might be, as Lewis (1987), Carmen (1990), and Yuksel and Rimmington (1998) stated, that the guests’ expectations are rather hazy and imprecise because the experience is new or unfamiliar to the majority of the guests. Another possible reason might be that the
tourists lack relevant knowledge, since 67% of them were from outside India. Even those from India might have had limited exposure to region-specific food served at Khajuraho & Orchha.

The guests were overall satisfied with the hospitality experience, as shown in Chapter 5, where more than 93% of respondents being either satisfied or very satisfied even though certain aspects of the hospitality experience mainly met their expectations to a lesser extent. The positive responses to most of the questions in the questionnaire at Khajuraho & Orchha regarding hospitality experience also tends to support the views of Pizam and Ellis (1999) that satisfaction with a hospitality experience or service encounter such as a hotel experience, is sum total of satisfaction with the individual elements or attributes of all the products and services that are offered in the hotel.

The analysis of the questionnaire also substantiates the study by Lewis (1987) where he found that consumers obtain a service comprising of a multitude of service transactions (or components- food, service and atmosphere). Each component contributes to the meal experience and has characteristics relating to whole set of components, which is more than the sum of the individual elements.

6.2.4. Conclusions with regard to the Service Quality Dimensions:

Section C of the questionnaire required respondents to evaluate hotel services and to report their perceptions of hotels’ performance in terms of the five dimensions of service quality, identified in the literature review in Chapter 2. The data analysis has clearly demonstrated that empathy dimension (personalized service that makes guests to feel unique and special), was the most important aspect of service quality. It can also be concluded that the hotels are relatively more successful in delivering the promised service (reliability) than the willingness of the staff to assist guests and to provide prompt service (responsiveness), appearance of the hotel, the equipment and the staff (tangibility) and the knowledge and courtesy of
the hotel staff (assurance) in their efforts to deliver quality service.

6.2.5. Conclusions with regard to Loyalty or the extent to which guests would be willing to return or refer to Khajuraho & Orchha:

Every hotel’s management knows perfectly that the loyal customers are key to success or the necessary requirement of survival in a highly competitive market. That’s why they go to great lengths and come up with different initiatives to improve the hotel’s competitiveness and strengthen customers’ loyalty towards the hotel. They know that competition is strong and it is difficult to create something original, something new as every innovation is easily imitated. Moreover, the hotels’ management pays attention to the loyalty because they knows that customer loyalty influences the hotel selection decision if there are a number of similar alternative options are available. After the analysis and interpretation of the results from the question investigating loyalty, it can be concluded that majority of the hotel guests, 65.1% would be willing to return and 69.5 % would be willing to refer others to Khajuraho & Orchha. When investigated the features that build loyalty among the guests it was found that the feature “the hotel provides upgrades when available” is most acceptable followed by Guests can check in & check out at any time, The hotel provides guests with occasional gifts, The hotel uses the information from guests’ prior stay to customize their services & The staff recognizes the guest on their arrival.

These statistics concerning the willingness of respondents to return or refer others coupled with high level of satisfaction with the hotel experience of the validity of the researchers’ views that there is a direct association between guest satisfaction and his (er) willingness to return to an establishment. However, due to the guests’ countries of origin, the majority of the guests will be unlikely to return even though they indicated that they will do so. The most likely positive outcome is that they will refer others to the place they have visited.
The study highlights the importance of guest satisfaction and its role in improving loyalty. Moreover, in a hotel chain, this may present challenges for management since the performance of one hotel may influence guests' perception of other hotels in the same chain. It is thus vital to maintain consistency in service standards of all hotels belonging to the chain. This may prove difficult where the chain hotel has properties in different countries. Although customers value consistency highly, they equally value personalized service. Hence, it is important that a chain hotel also maintain its individuality through personalized service. Customer loyalty can therefore be nurtured by providing consistent superior facilities, complemented by the personalized services.

6.3. Recommendations:

The research finding can be useful to the planners and marketers of hospitality sector in formulating strategies to maintain and enhance its competitiveness. In other words, they should focus more on maintaining or improving factors that contribute to the overall satisfaction of the guests. Based upon the results of this study, several recommendations can be made to increase satisfaction level from the hospitality products & services as below:

1. The study has addressed many issues from the customers' point of view that were concerning to the hospitality industry in Khajuraho & Orchha. The findings of the study may be viewed as a foundation to have insights on other service sectors and also to develop a framework for guest satisfaction & service quality in hospitality industry in similar regions & developing economies.

2. In chapter 5, section 5.4.2; suggestions are offered to the hospitality operators at Khajuraho & Orchha to include some region specific foods and beverages to the current food menu. This process could form the subject of further investigation, which can include the selection of new dishes, trial runs, evaluation, adjustments
and implementation of the new regional dishes.

3. In order to improve the efficiency of service, the existing level of service, the current training programs for the staff could be evaluated with a view to possible improvement in training as well as awareness of the importance of service.

4. Consideration should be given to improve the efficiency of the staffs’ service. It was observed while the survey that there are a significant number of trainees amongst the service team. The manner in which the trainees and the permanent staff interact with the guests could be reviewed to ensure that at all times the service is efficient.

5. To achieve the desired outcome the hotels must implement long-term human resource strategies in order to recruit, train and develop qualified employees, but not without considering the additional necessary investment in terms of time and training costs, as such investment will be very critical in fulfilling customers’ expectations, and ensuring their satisfaction as well.

6. Consideration should be given by the hotel management at the study area to identify those aspects of foods and beverages which can be viewed by tourists as adversely affecting food quality and ratifying those aspects.

7. The responses to atmosphere were generally positive in case of Khajuraho, but guests suggested reviewing the hotel ambience at Orchha. They have suggested that Orchha lacks the proper aesthetics and interior décor in the identified hospitality unit.

8. The content of brochures and web-sites about the Khajuraho & Orchha attractions should reflect features such as handicrafts, architectures, traditional scenery, arts, museums, galleries, cultural villages, regional cuisine, historical buildings, and monuments. In addition, tourism marketers should provide quality
service with other attractions such as special events, tour packages and factors such
as ease of accessibility, information centers, and accommodations.

9. The hospitality and the tourism managers need to undertake periodic guest
satisfaction measurements, as satisfaction cannot be improved without measuring
it. However, they also need to incorporate relative performance measurements into
their investigations, as any information without relative performance measurements
will be deemed incomplete.

10. The present transport facilities and the resources are inadequately distributed
and poorly coordinated. Thus immediate goal of public authorities to provide
minimum standard of mobility and reorganization of bus services with generally
agreed standards. In addition to this, sustained attention should continue to be paid
to improve the facilities for advance booking so as to reduce the queue length and
the waiting time for passengers in railway and airline reservations.

6.4. Suggestions for Future Research:

This study on the perceptions of customers on quality customer service in the
hospitality industry has a few limitations that could pave avenues for future
research. The major suggestions which can be made from the present research work
can be listed as below:

1. As pointed out in Chapter 2, section 2.10, one of the limitations of the study
was the fact that it only included hotel guests of Khajuraho and Orchha only. A
larger sample size is recommended for further studies to promote validity and
accomplish the effective generalization of the results. Therefore, a study inclusive
of hospitality industry of entire Bundelkhand region is recommended.

2. Further research should be conducted to determine why hotel management does
not succeed in achieving the expected level of assurance as a dimension of service
quality.

3. The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of knowledge in hospitality management. This study could be replicated in independent hotels, in chain restaurants and/or in other service sectors.

4. Research to determine the price sensitivity of the hotel guests in the Bundelkhand region should be conducted.

5. Research needs to be conducted to establish whether relationship marketing can be successfully applied between hotel operators & their customers.

6. Further research needs to be conducted to establish the factors that will influence hotel guests when selecting a hotel.

7. More empirical research is necessary to determine the factors that will lead to return patronage of the hotels.

8. This research could be replicated by other hospitality researchers using different groups of hotels in other regions to see if there are similarities to or differences from this study.

9. More hotels of diverse places could be included in the comparison study in the future.