2.1. The concept of Marketing:

Human wants are unlimited. These wants are satisfied or quenched by the products which are available either in the nature or in the market. A product is an offering that can satisfy a need or want, presented in terms of goods, services, experiences, events, persons, places, properties, organizations, information, and ideas (Philip Kotler, 2008).

The business organisations provide different kinds of services to meet the needs of common people. The businesses use so many ways and methods in order to make their target customers known about their services and other related information. In the era of commercial warfare, ‘marketing’ their products is the path that the business organisations have chosen to do because they have to be known to the people/customers who need these services. But, as the competitors are also there in the market, the marketing activities are needed to be effective when compared with others in the market.

The so-called ‘marketing techniques’ and its ways are used for promoting and also marketing themselves among the potential customers. The marketing of business organisation and also its services play a key role in this regard.

Marketing has been defined as “the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual (customer) and organizational objectives” (Grönroos, 1990). The Marketing concept is “a business philosophy that defines marketing as a process intended to find, satisfy, and retain customers while the business makes a profit”.

International marketing is defined as “the business activities designed to plan, price, promote and direct the flow of a company’s goods and services to consumers in more than one country for profit” (Hudson, 2008).
The primary difference between marketing and international marketing is that marketing is ‘within a country’ whereas international marketing involves at least two or more countries. The foreign marketing is unique because it deals with the problems which are unaccustomed and different kinds of strategies that are necessary to meet the uncertainty that is faced in the international markets at different levels and intensity.

International marketing is now common for all kinds of business organisations, industries because of the globalisation where most of the big businesses are expanding their businesses to other countries also.

2.2. Businesses and Global Competitiveness:

The world has become a global village and very small because of the information technology. The boundaries between countries, states have been vanishing with the effect of the advancement in communication system. The information can be passed to any wanted place within seconds of time with the advancements in technology. With the effect of all the advancement in information technology, the business organisations need to prepare themselves for global competitiveness. Global Competitiveness is the greatest challenge that a business organisation faces in this globalised era. Gone were the days that the world was big because the technology was not developed much. Now, with the upgraded technology, the same world has been very small because of the easy access of all the information on this earth from one place to another place.

It is because of the increasing competition in the world market with a great number of brands who have already got established themselves in the world market and penetrated even into the rural market as a result of globalisation. MNCs and other large scale business organisations have occupied a comfortable place in the daily lives of all classes of the society including common man in rural areas. Today, the competition has been global because all the companies are extending their businesses to the other countries. So the competition in the local market has become global. The advancements in the technology raised the expectations of the customers towards the businesses. And as the number of business organisations increase, the competition increases between the businesses.
**Businesses and Marketing Apprehensions:**

The large scale organisations have so many advantages in the market. They have penetrated into the market with low prices (due to less cost of production) because of the financial and technological advantages. The way they promote their products with their intellectuality, value addition to the products, the supply chain and distribution management system made them very closer (nearer) to the customers. And, they can even extend their investments on marketing research also so that they can know the expectation about the product, the price perceptions from the target market and all other related things.

The business organisations, with their financial resources and human resource power, try to convince their customers to buy their products. Using the techniques like Labelling the products, comfortable prices, promoting them, advertising from digital media, supply chain and distribution system will surely be a great difficult to maintain because all the other competitors are using the same kind of activities in order to reach out to the customers. If it is difficult to maintain their business with the above mentioned things, it means that, it is difficult for them to survive in the market. If we say that it is a question of survival, business organisations need to think of the ways to stand in the competition in order to protect their own existence.

All the above mentioned activities are like a set of thoughts and that thinking about all the old marketing tools and techniques it is thinking within the box. When the company realises that they have to face the competition in an effective manner in the market, the time has come for them to think out of the box. It means, their way of promoting themselves should be modified. After this many number of years in the globalised market, the traditional marketing practices have turned to become old. Being one organisation among so many, it would not make any positive difference for the company. The business organisation should differentiate from other organisations and must be unique in order to get some special identity. In the market place where so many me-too companies are there, the business organisation should differentiate themselves from the competitors. With the term “differentiation”, the concept of Branding the business organisation comes into the picture when the competition was becoming very tight in the market.
**Need for Differentiation:**

In this juncture, the business organisations have a great challenge to face from larger scale business organisations in the form of competition. Since the other big business organisations maintain global standards, in order to stand in the competition with them, all companies also need to raise the standards to their level with global competitiveness at least for their survival in the market. Unlike all the large corporations, most of the companies cannot simply afford the expenses in branding and image building advertising. But still, companies are ought to build their brands and market image with an effectiveness and consistency in marketing programs.

So, business organisations are facing increasingly competitive environment in the market place. The business organisations try to market themselves in order to be the choice of the customers Since the number of players in the market are big in number, they are finding it even more tough to differentiate in terms of product, price, place, promotion and people. All the traditional marketing practices are not enough to attract the customers. Then what to do to stand in the competition? When all the people are following the similar strategies, then no use to any particular player in the market.

According to Greg Stine\(^{20}\), “the success of any product, service, individual, business, organization, or even a city depends upon how uniquely it is perceived among the public”. Each and every market leader owns a place in their consumer’s mind. It is only they have projected themselves by positively differentiating themselves from the rest of the competition.

**2.3. Relevance of Branding:**

Branding is a better approach to product differentiation. It brings insights for the business organisations in order to compete with their competitors. Branding is all about “building emotional ties between customers and the product/firm”. But how do the businesses brand their products against the big competitors and how do they differentiate themselves in the market. More than what marketing does, branding makes the complete effect on customer perception, experience and creates a memorable identity in the market.

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**Branding Definition:**

Nancy F. Koehn (2001) defines brand as “a name, logo or symbol intended to distinguish a particular seller’s offering from those of competitors” (Koehn, 2001).

In view of John and Loken (2006), “consumers tend to associate a brand with a particular attribute or feature, usage situation, product spokesperson, or logo.” (John, 2006)

Both the statements above are very much significant in the subject of branding as they emphasize on similar things while explaining the term. The first definition explains that, it is all about being specially identified with the help of a ‘special mark’ which is exclusively found in that particular ‘product’ or ‘service’, its ‘package’ or the ‘organisation’. The customers identify the products which are found special in the market.

For many of the companies, branding means, having a special logo or the name and its design or a special symbol in order to differentiate from the other competitors in the market.

A product without any specific name or any other identification is considered as a ‘commodity’. The difference between a commodity and a brand is – “a brand is an offering from a known source” maintaining some standards and differentiated from other products whereas, a mere commodity is an offering from an unknown source and its service is expected just to quench the need of customer and not more than that. If the customers look at a product or any service, its price is the most crucial thing to them and that will provoke a race among the marketers to dominate one another by reducing the prices. Producers must be able to meet the anticipated quality standards of the product/service and a moderate price which will be lead to get orders from the potential customers. Today many products, unless differentiated, run the risk of turning into commodities.
Concept of Branding in Different perspectives:
A ‘brand’ is an offering from a familiar and known source. It is not only the mere logo or the title, but a brand name carries many associations that are already established in the minds of the people: experience, fun, motivation, enjoyment. These associations are heart of the matter because they make up the business’ brand image. All the businesses, and other organisations struggle to build a stronger, favourable and compatible brand image.

The concept of ‘Brand’ is defined with different notions but most of the definitions have viewed a Brand as a tool and form of identity.

American Marketing Association\textsuperscript{21} has defined a brand as “A name, term, sign, symbol or design or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors.”

Branding is an important for every businesses’ marketing decisions especially a strategic tool and of course as a multidimensional construct. Different authors have contributed their views in relate to Branding as mentioned below.

David Aaker has defined “branding in terms of Brand Personality as a strategic tool which can help brand strategists by enriching their understanding of people’s perceptions of and attitude toward the brand.”

De Chernatony and Riley\textsuperscript{22} (1998) avowed, “A brand is a multidimensional construct whereby managers augment products or services with values and facilitates the process by which consumers confidently recognise and appreciate these values.”

Real and effective branding generates a kind of perception that there is no other product, service, organization or community like this brand to meet the particular need of customers. John Morgan (2008) bluntly says that, “Branding is not just about being seen as better than the competition. It’s about being seen as the only solution to your

\textsuperscript{21} https://www.ama.org/resources/Pages/Dictionary.aspx?dLetter=B

audience’s problem”. The consumer believes that you offer the exceptional service. And your product/service is the only solution for their needs.

Even at a point of time, everybody would start branding practices and when all are doing the same thing, it would again be old for a firm and they need to word even more differently and go forward in being special for their customers. Because, brand manufacturers have severe competition in the market from both domestic brands and international brands, which results in rising promotion costs and lessening profit margins.

**Experiential Branding:**

The concept of Emotional Branding can be brought into the picture where the business organisation to get connected to the customers in a unique way, thereby it can attain a comfortable and unique place in their hearts. And that becomes a unique way to differentiate their products from their competitors with that special identity.

As it was discussed earlier, “branding is all about building emotional ties between the product/firm and the customers”. But mere product cannot have an emotional attachment with the customers. The definition by American Marketing Association says, "A brand is a customer experience represented by a collection of images and ideas; often, it refers to a symbol such as a name, logo, slogan, and design scheme" (American Marketing Association, 2015). This definition emphasises the word ‘experience’. A name or a logo cannot give the customer experience but it only can help the customer to identify by its physical appearance distinguished from the products of the competitors. But the question is whether it can make the customer attached to it?

That is where the concept of experiential branding practices came into the practice as a tool of differentiating the hotel’s services from their competitors. As Philip Kotler (1973) points out, it is not mere service, but the service environment and the service offering as a whole that matters.
What is experiential Branding?
Experiential branding is “a process by which brands create and drive sensory interactions with consumers in all aspects of the brand experience to emotionally influence their preferences and to actively shape their perceptions of the brand” (Lab Brand Brand Innovations, n.d.).

Why Experiential Branding?
Traditional marketing have a positive intention, but with its approaches and its one-way exposure of messages to customers, it is impossible to achieve their goals on their own way of thinking and strength. Marketing practitioners certainly realized and understood that ‘consumers experience brands’ is crucial for improving marketing strategies of organisation’s products or services.

There are three fundamental ways to get people to do things: You can coerce them, you can motivate them or you can inspire them. One of the most interesting things in this world is that the people are ruled by their emotions. Practical minds can impact consumers’ decision-making, but some type of emotion is the catalyst to a purchase (Gunelius, 2013). That’s why a brand strategy that focuses on building a brand based on one or more emotions is critical to brand success (Gunelius, 2013).

As the things become old in the life cycle,” conventional, experiential marketing has reached a highest saturating point and became insufficient to impress people. The hotels need to try even more wisely in order to get the unique identity in the sight of customers. Both conventional and experiential marketing services can no more make a tourist (or visitor) get attached to them because the expectations of customers are growing. And at the same time, so called big (luxury) hotels have also raised their standards to dominate the customer expectations by which, they become the first choice to potential customer group” (D, 2015).

Customer Loyalty:
Customer loyalty is the ultimate result which every business strive for. When the customers are aware of the brand, they tend to understand the quality gets delighted in what is provided as a service, they judge the service, and there by decide whether to be loyal to the hotel.
Seiler (2005) had considered two kinds of loyalty viz., i) behavioural loyalty and ii) attitudinal loyalty. Behavioural loyalty mostly refers to “the frequency of the value of purchases made by the customer”. Attitudinal loyalty means “the extent to which the experienced customer develops emotional relationship with that particular company and be able to suggest to his/her family members or friends”.

The way the customer perceives affects loyalty. The level of loyalty towards a particular brand is influenced by the customer’s perceptions of the brand value, along with the market structure.

Branding is commonly attendant to visual and graphical stimulus, which characterises a particular brand; for example, the organisation’s logo, colours, celebrities, icons, mascots, characters, etc. But it is just incomplete representation of ‘brand’. But traditional marketing/branding, has been unfair to maximise the customer loyalty and its levels among the customers and restricted branding to a purely visual expression.

Maximising the customer loyalty is need of the hour. It is very and highly difficult to achieve it with mere traditional marketing and branding practices. And if one firm fails to acquire customer loyalty, their competitors do it faster.

2.4. Sensory Branding:
When faced with these kind of difficulties, marketing guru Martin Lindstrom (2005) advices the business organisations to go back to the basics of marketing and identify what actually appeals to humans on an ordinary everyday basis (Anandkumar, 2008). Two terms strike in the mind - “emotional ties” and “appealing to the human beings on an everyday basis”.

The notion that atmosphere can impact the consumer behaviour is undoubtedly acknowledged in the marketing literature. Not the mere ‘product’, but the overall environment (when the product/service is being offered) and ‘total service’ makes the impact on customers’ behaviour. Many studies have been conducted on the impact of individual pleasant stimuli viz., music, colours or scent on customers’ behaviour. Specifically, the stimuli’s arousing quality in a Servicescape is a dimension which can influence the holistic evaluation.
According to Lindstrom & Kotler (2005), a customer is mostly fascinated towards a brand, or most of the things on this earth for that matter, based on the sensory experience it offers. Lindstrom & Kotler emphasises that human’s entire understanding of the world is experienced and learned through the senses; also reminded that our senses are our link to memory and can tap right into emotion (Lindstrom, Brand sense: sensory secrets behind the stuff we buy, 2005).

Global competitiveness has been a great challenge to all kinds of business organisations especially in this advanced society especially for hospitality businesses. Advancement in technology development, financial ability and intellectual matters have made the competition tougher. Most of the world class and other large scale business organisations, using these advantages, are able to penetrate into the global market segments in many of the tourist destinations. This has become one of the great challenges in the market and brings a question to their existence (survival) of their competitors in the market. Differentiating their products from the competitors is one of the best ways of finding another way to get attached to the target customers, can help the other business organisations to stand in the competition.

**Sense- Meaning:**

Dictionary.com defined a Sense as:”Any of the faculties, such as sight, hearing, smell, taste, or touch, by which humans and animals perceive stimuli originating from outside or inside the body”.

Sense refers to “sight, hearing, smell, taste, or touch, by which humans and animals perceive stimuli originating from outside or inside the body”. Among these five senses, sight is the most powerful and seductive one among all the human senses.
Sensory marketing: “Marketing techniques that aim to seduce the consumer by using his senses to influence his feelings and behaviour”.

Multisensory branding stands for involving several bodily senses in product promoting activities. “Kahn Consulting describes it as the purposeful design and deployment of the interaction between the senses in order to stimulate a consumer’s relationship with a brand; and to foster a lasting emotional connection that optimizes brand loyalty” (Annica Isacsson, 2009).

Significance of Sensory Branding

Branding through senses (Sensory Branding) is relevant for most of the products and services in the market. As products and services have been commoditized, the experiences that companies create among the customers will matter most (BJ Pine, 1998). Sensory branding has critical role to play in creating these experiences.

Human Senses are programmed (by themselves) to be more of danger detection than towards ‘sensory delight’ (Lindstrom, 2005). The human sensory delight will make him/her experience it, enjoy and get attached to that particular service.
While introducing the importance of human senses, (Lindstrom, 2005) explained from the most basic points where most of the humans do not recognize it which we do every day: We sniff the milk before drinking it, we sniff at the slightest indication of smoke and then we act accordingly. Our sense of smell keeps us safe by helping choose fresh and avoid rotten food (D, 2015). Lindstrom in his book Brand Sense, points out that “most of our understanding of this world is learnt and experienced through our senses; these senses are our link to memory and can tap into an emotional stage”. It is not mysterious but interesting that the events in our lives, moods and feelings that we experience, and even products that we use in our lives are imprinted on our sensory recorder continuously from the moment we wake-up and the second we sleep” (Lindstrom, Brand sense: sensory secrets behind the stuff we buy, 2005). More senses the brand appeals to, makes the brand stand out. Consider the impact these senses could have when incorporated into your brand:

Marketing the products and services through the senses will trigger the emotion of mankind. It doesn’t go through the consumer’s “spam filters” which are in built for self-defensive way. Those spam filters do pick only the appropriate information from all of the message, confiscates the irrelevant matter and then passes it on to the conscious brains/minds.

2.5. Services and Senses:
In this context, Bertil Hulten & Niklas Broweus (2009) says traditional mass and relationship marketing theories do not offer the satisfactory answers to the question how a firm should treat its customers in a more individualized way in today’s society. They ignore the significance of the human senses & the supreme sensory experience of human beings five senses viz. Sight, Smell, Taste, Touch and Sound through which we engage, communicate and understand the whole world (Hultén, 2009).

“Anything we see, hear, feel, smell, or taste requires billions of nerve cells to flash urgent messages along linked pathways and feedback loops in our brains, performing intricate calculations that scientists have only begun to decipher” (Pines, 1995).

The earlier researches have concluded that if a brand appeals to the more number of senses, the consumers connect to the brand even more strongly because the stronger the
message will be. Visual aesthetics attract customer’s attention, provokes the curiosity and they help in bringing the material to life. The customary senses used in marketing are sight and sound. According to Lindstrom (2009) visual pictures can work more effectively and meaningfully if they can be combined with other senses such as touch or scent. He forecasts that the mixture of scents and sounds will have a lot of potential and emphasises that that combination can affect the customer behaviour better than what sight alone can do. Smell appears to be the second most persuasive sense followed by the sense of sight, and it implies the importance for multisensory marketing/branding in this regard.

Once the customers have stronger bonding towards the brand, it translates directly into their willingness to pay premium prices. And we have seen all the big organisations have been successful with the help of sensory marketing only. So every time business focused on what does their brand look like, they have to question themselves also how does it sounds, smells and feels. So, sensory strategy is needed in order to give the customers an effective experience in the hotel so that they will be attached to it even in future. Even the advertisement in digital media has been growing; ads are gradually shifting from Radio, Television and magazines, newspapers to internet, and mobile phones.

Sensory branding has wonderful benefits for marketers, their brands and also to the customers. Especially the power, strength and potential of each sense have been discussed above, it is clear that there is a possible chance for hotels to protect themselves (and dominate as well) in the market. They provide a greater impact for enhanced interruption and acquisition by longer attention, higher recall and by bringing the product experience into the communications.

**Sensory Branding in Current Scenario:**
Multisensory branding is in the beginning stage nowadays and we can just find a few firms practicing multisensory marketing strategy during their promotional activities, including tourism and hospitality industry. Several researchers have been quoting that the future of marketing, branding and advertising will be full of multisensory marketing.
During 1950s, since posters were the foremost medium of promoting and advertising, sight and visuals were the only options on which marketers concentrated on, for branding. Colour, appearance, form were focused to promote brands. As the technology started developing, TVs had become popular, another sensory component ‘sound’ was started to focus on in promoting and advertising. Television commercials started using jingles in advertising.

In the 1970s, the businesses started to find the need of smell to be added in brand promotion. Even, they were able to regulate the odours in their services and products to mould the firm more appetizing for the customer. And in recent times, sensory branding was developed by incorporating all five senses, because business firms now aware that more number of senses are involved in, branding will be even more effective. Vision is our most persuasive sense in brand building and bonding with a share of fifty percent, smell the second one with a proportion of forty five percent, hearing stands third for forty one percent, sense taste for thirty one percent with fourth place and fifthly ‘touch’ for twenty five percent.

Each and every sense is highly significant and has its own unique and impactful role in human’s life. The human behaviour will automatically be led by the senses because they are sensitive enough to respond to the environment without even human thinking. If fact, human thoughts are many times lead by our senses.

The sensory branding approach heightens the influence of brand on customers’ purchase behaviour and can build a sustained customer loyalty. The more customers’ senses are on in play, the stronger opportunity for the brand to gain their trust. Since the senses trigger a stronger and passionate emotional response, it results in a stronger memory of that particular brand means in people’s lives. That memory stands as a powerful bond connecting the business firm (brand) and the customer emotionally. Both, memory and emotions together influence the behaviour may be positively or negatively, towards the brand.
2.6. Mehrabian and Russel Model

Mehrabian and Russel in their Stimulus-Response Model (1974), had explained how the sensory environment in the purchase place/market can affect the customer emotions which results in changing the customer’s buying behaviour. The impact will be completely against our natural senses and a positive sensory experience. It has been explained in the figure 2.2 in the following page.

Chart No. 2.2. Stimulus Response Model

![Chart](chart.png)

The proper sensory environment in the market place where the purchasing happens, hits the customers in his/her emotions positively by touching them smoothly and luxuriously. The consumer responds to the environment very emotionally and experiences the pleasure and arousal of feelings for unplanned consumptions. It automatically result in action and thereby they tend to regularly visit for availing the service from the business organisation, and also they spread the business by suggesting to their friends and family members by word of mouth. The maximisation of customer loyalty can be achieved by this and can stand in the market as a leader.

Many studies have shown that pleasant scents and music create pleasant moods. The senses differently respond depending upon the age, gender, cultural background of the customer etc. (Lindstrom, 2005).

Sensory appeal in the product offerings has not yet been defined as essential among even the world’s famous companies, nor have they examined the major potential that sensory branding can make the businesses to reap. The gratification of all the senses
has an important role in the individual consumption experience (Agapito, 2012). The benefit of sensory branding is to achieve a better brand awareness through multi-sensual experience, consistency, and effective process that can penetrate consumers’ memories. The aim is to generate not only new customers but returning customers. Because the returning customers make a significant difference; they are the evidence of a successful sensory branding technique.

So, showing the impact on the behavioural intentions of the customers towards the service environment is one of the strengths of sensory branding and it has potential to make them loyal to the Brand by also informing their families and other friends etc. As some Hotels have already proved that they can compete in the globally competitive local market, they can turn out to be a brand by using sensory marketing ideas in order to make them stand in the competition. If we observe Sakthi Masala, the way they projected themselves, the taste of their products and all other promotional activities have taken them to global level. They had also used a very famous Tamil song Kurai Ondrum Illai while offering employment to the differently abled people in that area. This had helped Shakthi Masala to get closer to the people.

The problem of identity, existence and rivalry are the main things that are faced by Hotels from global competitors. As the literature says, Hotels have high chances of getting succeeded in business by making the customers connected emotionally with the help of sensory marketing. The unique identity and the special method of marketing can surely get the Hotels or any other business organisation, can always become a crucial one in their success.

By using appropriate colour, design of the organisation and design of the product, good ambiance in the selling environment, the visual advertisement, visual cues and all other things related to sight can bring a special identity to the organisation. Associating the product with any particular sound, tune or any other traditional song, and also the type of music in the selling area will surely have a different positive impact on customers. Association of a pleasant smell which is made by the company itself or any other smell which can bring out the childhood memories or other memories which the customers are really missing can surely bring out emotional ties with product. The taste can be used more efficiently with food related things. Even other industry people can also take
help from *taste* and make it closer. The touch of the product, weather conditions at the selling places, textures, smoothness and other touch related things have a significant ability to stimulate the customers to buy.

**Pham (2004)** stated that feelings are “the primary medium of humans’ judgment and decision making system (p.367)" The moment consumers make a decision based on what they see, listen to, smell, and touch in their surrounding situation they are immediately operating their emotions as valuable signals (Kang, 2011).”

2.7. Sensory Branding’s Relevance Tourism and Hospitality Industry:
The tourism and hospitality sector involves a blend of both tangible and intangible products/services. A hotel is a combination of tangible goods (rooms, food, beds, telephone, communication systems) that are connected with a series of services (front desk, room service, housekeeping, finance, and accounting) (Hudson, 2008). A tourist attraction is a combination of different kinds of facilities (e.g., hotels, restaurants, shops, visitor centres) which are located within a physical attraction (for example mountains, forests, or rivers), offering a range of services (guided tours, interpretation, education, etc.); this whole package of tangible and intangible products is perceived by the tourist as an experience, and represents the core of the tourism product (Hudson, 2008).

Every tourism place has competition in hospitality sector. In the context of hospitality industry, ‘brand’ is all about creating a memorable moment or creating an event which is delightful in customer’s mind. When the hospitality organisations provide a memorable event, it allows the organisation to stand out in the competition with the rivals.

The created memorable moment results in customer delight in their heart and mind which passes through the senses. The provided luxurious facilities in the hotel environment affect the human body and brain which hits the moods and emotions of the customer. This is the result of that provided customer delight.

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**Moods and Emotions:**
According to Gardner 1985\textsuperscript{24}, “mood was defined as a temporary feeling state, fleeting, usually not intense, and not tied to a specifiable behaviour. Moods can be positive or negative, such as cheeriness, peacefulness, or guilt and depression” (Gardner, 1985). According to Alpert and Alpert (1989)\textsuperscript{25}, “feeling states are general, pervasive, and occur frequently, and do not usually interrupt on-going behaviour. Feeling states or moods are distinguished from emotions, which are usually more intense, obvious, and are said to involve a cognitive component” (Alpert, 1989). A numerous studies have concluded that mood has an impact on perception, attitudes and behaviour.

**Chart No. 2.3: Showing the Process of Decision Making in the Human Brain:**

Just like many other industries, the tourism and hospitality and leisure industries have started different styles of marketing in 21\textsuperscript{st} century where it focuses on enhancing the customer’s service experience and managing them for a long term. The relevance of the experiential paradigm in conceptualizing tourism has directed special attention to the human senses in managing and marketing tourist experiences, seeking to remain


competitive in a global market. Furthermore, the role of the senses in the individual’s perception of the surrounding world has attracted increasing attention from different disciplines, revealing its multidisciplinary nature and importance (Agapito, 2012). The beginning of the new era - the combination of marketing research, neuroscience and psychological reactions, has led to interesting results with neurological descriptions, and articulated the prominence of the relationship between these three areas in the rise of sensory branding.

Literature in different field shows that it is through ‘senses’ humans auspicate the information from the surrounding world and make them experience the with everyday experiences, with which they understand the world and react to it accordingly.

In a business store environment, individual consumption experience from the services or the products are offered is influenced by the sensory pleasure and it is the best and highly influenced when all the senses are gratified in the process.

It is argued that, to create awareness among future travellers and motivating them, tourism communication needs to appeal to all user senses also in spite of restricting only to the visuals which creates feelings of authenticity and experience among customers and users (Annica Isacsson, 2009).

2.8. Significance of Each Sense:
In the context of tourism and hospitality industries, moods and emotions, customer behavioural intentions, brand loyalty and brand strength, it is necessary to study the importance and significance of each sense in terms of these concepts so that it will help both the businesses and researchers to move forward.

Each sense has its own significance in all the aspects of our daily lives, our understanding of the world, life, our preferences, sensing good or bad, judging the things around us, danger detection and so on. Only based on the senses we move forward in all the ways in our lives.
So, the marketer needs to know the importance of each sense in detail, so that he/she can reap the wonderful fruits in the form of its results. For this, each sense has been explained in detail in the following order.

i) Sense of Sight  
ii) Sense of Smell  
iii) Sense of Hearing  
iv) Sense of Taste  
v) The Senses of Touch

| Table: 2.1: Significance of each sense in Hospitality Industry ** |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| **Sense** | **Significance** | **Significance in Hospitality Industry ** |
| Sight | • Most seductive sense  
• Often overrules the other senses  
• Colour plays an important role | • Appealing environment  
• Catches the customer attention  
• *Cleanliness* influences consumers’ willingness to buy |
| Sound | • Connected to mood  
• Only 4% of Fortune 500 brands use sound online  
• Role of music is important | • Arouses feelings & desires for consumption  
• So soothing and relaxing one  
• Affects Spending time |
| Smell | • Evokes memory, alters mood and influences choice  
• 10,000 times more sensitive than taste  
• 75 percent of human emotions are generated by scent | • Relieves from stress  
• Evaluate the quality of hotel  
• Attached to past memories |
| Taste | • Sweet, salty, sour or bitter  
• Hard to introduce but highly effective  
• Develops linkage in the memory | • Remembrance in future  
• Unplanned purchases  
• Revisiting Thoughts |
| Touch | • Skin is the largest organ in the body  
• Alerts to a sense of wellbeing or pain  
• Texture of products and experiences | • Comfortability  
• Get attached to the hotel  
• Involvement in the environment |

**Modified Based on:** Victor Anandkumar²⁶ (2008).

2.8.1. The Sense of Sight:
The sight sense is the prominent one among the other senses where most people trust their sight experience completely. And it is obvious that a person gets attracted to anything after seeing it physically, as it creates an impression in the customers’ opinion with its appearance. An image can convey the message better than the words, in an effective manner (Nagarjuna & Bushan Sudhakar, 2015).

Sight is the most alluring and seductive of all the senses. Eyes are the utmost important human sense organs. Very often, ‘sight’ sense overrules the other senses, and as the idiom “Seeing is Believing” has a great significance, it has the power of persuading the humans against all the logic. It is truth that more than two-thirds of the sense cells of the body are located in the eyes.

As it has been discussed earlier that, the main point in branding is to differentiate the products of a firm from competitors in the market. Branding the business organisation has been common and traditional by concentrating on only Name, Symbol and Logo etc. Even though it is proved to be more effective, the importance of the environment and the atmosphere inside the place where the products and the service have been offered has been neglected. In this scenario, the current study makes an attempt to bring out the concept of Visual Branding and its importance in hospitality settings and also its impact on the customer behaviour and Hotels’ Brand Image.

The hospitality industry, as competition in the market is rapidly growing, every business organisation is trying best to differentiate themselves from others. At one point of time, marketers find new ways to make their businesses special in the market. They have to think of adapting new methods and innovative ideas in order to stand special in the market and establish themselves as brands. Which means that, they need to differentiate their services and style from the competitors in the market.

This is where the concept of branding arises; Branding is all about differentiating the products and services of one company from the other competitors. Even for past few years, the concept of Branding also started to obsolete.
Taking all these things into consideration, in the context of hospitality industry, the visual factors are needed to be taken into consideration when they want to offer services to the needed customers. These visual factors can influence them in such a way that the customers will get attracted to the hotel and be involved in the environment.

**Sense of Sight and Importance of Visual Branding:**
Visual Branding is “way of Branding where it is the point of connection between the visual arts and marketing, and the blurred boundaries between ‘high art’ and the everyday, image and photograph, authenticity and copy”.

Humans take help from Sight in perceiving contrasts and differences between the characteristics of all the things around us, small and large, bright and dark, or thin and thick. The sense of sight and the optical system make it easier to discern the changes and differences that distinguish a new design, a different package, or a new store interior. Each of us can notice and observe events, colours, forms, material, texture, things, or people. The ambiance shows an unconscious influence consumer’s views and perceptions about the environment in several ways. First, superior designs distinguish products from competitors and help gain recognition in a crowded market place.

Since we use the sense of sight the whole day, every day and every moment that we are awake, we give great importance to our sense of sight. Through eyes we can communicate with others in different methods many times, the messages are passed with just one look and a glance. “Seeing is believing”, so what the eyes see is primary and important. The eyes purchase seventy to eighty percentage of what the customers buy. More than eighty percent of brand communication is conveyed ‘visually’. Nezami, Parisa (2012) stated that eighty three percent of marketing budget is allotted for the visual sense for the purpose of commercial communication.

Observation is one of the strategies of sense of sight for a firm, to make customer aware of brand and to create an image of brand so that it improves his/her sensory experience (Bertil Hultén, 2009). This ‘experiencing the brand’ starts with visual identification of the firm through different forms of communication such as logos, mascots, emblems, slogans, signs, celebrity, writings and etc. Sight plays fifty eight percent branding when we compare with other senses.
Sight and Hospitality Marketing and Customer Behaviour:
In the current marketing strategies, the importance has been moved away from product displays, towards the psychologically exciting components (e.g., flat screen videos, graphics, music, smells, lighting and flooring) which tend to capture the hotel’s brand image or personality and help to create a unique environment and shopping experience (Michael, 2001). The colours that are used in the business environment and the lighting system in it creates the arousal in the human desire towards the products and the positive influence leads to desire for consumption and finally the action. Each of us can notice and observe events, colours, forms, material, texture, things, or people (Nagarjuna & Bushan Sudhakar, 2015).

Visual components in the firm or the product have a symbolic function which can influence the way a product is comprehended/perceived and evaluated. Images, stylish furnishings, ease of use, freshness, durability, and innovativeness in the hotel are all the special choices that the marketers make in presenting the new products (Forty, 1986) to the target customers. Finally, product presentation is the medium for the formation relationship between customer and the brand/product. Most importantly, it is from the overall sensory experience- a product/brand connects with the potential buyer, and reviews will follow irrespective of product’s class, the judgments.

The nature of shopping environment can persuade the attitudes of customer and their perceptions towards the quality of a service organisation with respect to the uniqueness of the services/products, and levels of service, price of the product and lastly the purchase volume (Michael, 2001).

Chart No. 2.4: Showing the Influence of Colour on Customer Behaviour:

Ref: Philip Kotler\textsuperscript{27} 1973

Colour, brightness, size, and shapes as a visual dimension that impact consumers’ purchase intention (Kotler, 1973-74). A cool colour (e.g., blue) is more affective on pleasure - arousal emotions that can influence in such a way that the customer’s spending money and time will be more (Bellize & Hite, 1992). Bright and colourful environment is correlated with pleasure and arousal (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) that attract consumer patronage (Summers & Hebert, 2001). Colour, décor, and design were examined to affect customer’s emotion and behaviour. The physical environment such as lighting, colour, style of furnishings, signage, layout, and wall décor could be controlled by the organization to increase customers’ affective behaviour (Bitner, 1992).

If that promotional activity can catch emotional way, either by reminding the customer which he is missing for quite a long time or by connecting to the experience which the customer is already attached to - be it childhood, or college lives or religious things (e.g. the candles flickers etc.). There by the sense of sight helps the hotel by being the competency and help in building the brand. Rieunier described the components of Visual factors viz., colours of the surrounding, materials, lights, layout (space, cleanness) (RIEUNIER, 2000).

Visual components such as comfortable and well organized layout; cleanliness; stylish design; and warm colour were proved to be important factors to please the customers. Since those sight and touch related factors showed insignificant relationship with customers’ behavioural intentions, pleasure is regarded as full mediator of sight with customers’ behavioural intentions.

**Chart No. 2.5.: Showing the Influence of Visual Factors on Buying Behaviour:**

![Diagram showing the influence of visual factors on buying behaviour](chart)

**Ref:** E Kang, CA Boger

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The concept that colour affects mood and influences behaviour has long been recognised, but little understood. It is a common misconception that colour psychology is purely subjective, with no objective criteria for predicting response, possibly because everyone responds instinctively and each of us has our own favourite colour. In commercial design, no matter how much time, money and effort are invested in the finest expertise and technology, when it comes to colour the decisions are largely made on the basis of experience.

Visual marketing components influences consumer’s perceptions in several ways. A firm’s brand identity is also be expressed by promoting through advertising, electronic media, or other sources that make use of visual and verbal elements such as design, style, logotype, and symbols to build brand awareness and create brand image. For many commodities a visualized identity can help customers recognize a brand. Furthermore, a visual identity can call to mind positive experiences of more complex products such as cars and computers compared with commodities such as butter and tea.

Consumer decision making involves information processing which is a series of activities by which stimuli are perceived, transformed into information and stored (Hawkins et al. 2004). Figure 1 illustrates a useful information processing model having four major stages, namely exposure, attention, interpretation and memory. The first three of these constitute perception. Exposure occurs when a stimulus comes within range of a person’s sensory receptor nerves (in vision or hearing or smell or touch or taste). Attention occurs when the stimulus is taken notice of. Interpretation is the assignment of meaning to the received sensations.

The slogan ‘Content is not a king if no one is looking’ is correctly said, that if anything has good matter but it is not able to catch the attention of the audience is not a King. Each of us can notice and observe events, colours, forms, material, texture, things, or people. Visual Branding as a whole has a significant impact on Brand Image of the hotels. The colours can influence the customers in such a way that it can make them to revisit the hotel. Wall papers and decorations can attract the customers and appeals to them. The Sight of the customer needs to be concentrated, because it is the most seductive sense in the human organs.
Colour, lighting, decorations, cleanliness and all are supposed to be concentrated so that the hotels can be recognised as brands in the sight of the customers. It will automatically take the hotel towards global competitiveness. There by gets developed as global Brand.

- Colours and lighting in the hotel makes it appealing
- Title, design, layout of the hotel can catch the customers’ attention
- Visual cues can govern consumer behaviour
- Wallpapers and Decoration in the hotel make it attractive
- Cleanliness can increase influence consumers’ willingness to buy

They also affect the customer behaviour in the following ways:

- Spending more time in the hotel
- Unplanned purchases
- Increase/shrinkage in the appetite
- Preferring the hotel
- Colours in the hotel make you visit the hotel again and again
- Affects the customers’ behavioural intention
- Evokes consumer’s interaction

2.8.2. The Sense of Smell:

According to the *Sense of Smell Institute*, an average human being is able to recognize approximately 10,000 different odours. When a person smells something, the odour receptors in the body produce an immediate and instinctive reaction. Pam Scholder Ellen, a Georgia State University marketing professor says “With all of the other senses, you think before you respond, but with scent, your brain responds before you think”.

The smell sense is closely related to our emotional life, and scents can strongly affect our emotions. The perception of a scent experienced earlier is enough for us to associate it with earlier memories.

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**Smell and Human Life:**

Smell is one of the basic things that effects the human behaviour. There is clear link between smell and memory. We suspire the smell of something and decide whether it is good or not. Any object or a substance is judged by the smell it emits. The rotten food is the great example of it. Some areas and places remind us of some typical occasions and incidents and will take us to emotional memories. The candle flicker and its smell reminds us of Christmas and Church environment. The smell of popcorn takes us to cinema theatre environment. **Petrichor** is that one pleasant smell which accompanies the first rain after a dry smell.

Martin Lindstrom explained from the most basic points where most of the humans do not realise it which we do in our everyday life: We sniff the milk before we drink it, we inhale the slightest indication of smoke and then we act accordingly. Our sense of smell keeps us safe by helping choose fresh and avoid rotten food (Nagarjuna Sudhakar, 2015).

Smell is playing a key role in religious faith of the people. The aroma of agarbathi is highly preferred in worshipping Hinduism. An Andhra Pradesh based small scale organisation “Ambica Darbar Bathies” has established itself with the religious sentiment of the local Indian people. The tag line/shibboleth they have come up is “*The Link between God and Devotee*”. By this, in almost every home in then Andhra Pradesh region and many other states in India have been using these agarbathies during their *puja/worship* time.

Diane Ackerman, a researcher and poet says: Hit a trip wire of smell, and memories explode at once (Goldkuhl, 2007). The memories evoked by smell show that they are more emotional than the when compared with the other stimuli. But many times, even though the memories that are induced by smell seem to be ambiguous than others, they are expected to be more accurate because of their emotional quality (Goldkuhl, 2007) (Larkin, 1999).
Scents can contribute to sensory experiences that create lasting memory pictures in the customer's mind, build awareness and thereby create an image of the brand in both temporarily and long term period. This can happen through short-term marketing activities, where the role of the scent is to create attention around a product or a brand, or long-term strategies, as a result, the scent becomes a major element of the identity of a firm.

**Signature Scent:**
The signature scent can be defined as people get to recognize you by your loyalty to a chosen perfume and feel nostalgia long after you're gone. This signature scent is the odour that is specifically designed for the particular brand, so that, when the customer is associated with the particular brand, it registers its self in the mind of the customers. With that affect, the customer remembers it and will be associated with the brand. Singapore Airlines as a marketing strategy has introduced Stefan Floridian Waters, which was specially designed by their management. This scent in the perfume, was blended into the hot towels and would be served by flight attendants' before the flight takes-off and generally permeated the entire fleet of Singapore Airlines planes. The patented aroma has become a unique and very distinct trademark of Singapore Airlines.

Scents are differentiated in three independent dimensions (Spangenberg, 1996), although not necessarily (Verma, 2014). They comprise of - firstly the touching quality of the aroma which means how pleasant it is, secondly its arousing nature which means how much potential it is to evoke a physiological reaction, and thirdly its vividness howmuch strong it is.

Research on ambient scent has been less common, but may be of greater interest to retailers and other service providers than product-specific scents. Ambient scent affects the customer perceptions towards the hotel and also its products, even though they are difficult to feel the scent (office supplies and furniture etc.). Ambient scent as an environmental cue can influence the emotional responses of the customers and ultimately their shopping behaviours.
The Impact of Signature Scents on Customer Behaviour:
The Signature Scent can affect a human in the following ways:

i) Queuing is perceived less stressful in scented areas (Annica Isacsson, 2009)

ii) Usage of scent can increase of sales and have positive correlation between them

iii) Marketing communication aims directly or indirectly to influence the demand or to at least have a positive influence on demand (Annica Isacsson, 2009)

iv) To inform the customers and remind them about the services

v) Arouses feelings and desires for consumption (Annica Isacsson, 2009)

vi) Scent can maintain the customer relations, develops and deepen the relationships

However, the over dosage or unpleasant smells of the scent may lead to irritation and customer will have a highly negative opinion about the service provider.

Smell and Hospitality Marketing
The Sense of smell is one of the most prominent in all the five senses. Mehrabian and Russell (1974) presented a theoretical model regarding the effects of physical environment on natural human behaviour. In this model, emotional states are theorised as mediators between environmental stimuli and people’s responses and behaviour. Matching ambient stimuli will lead towards positive evaluations of the service environment, more positive behavioural responses and higher satisfaction levels.

Chart 2.6. Influence of Scents on Customer Behaviour

![Chart showing the influence of scents on customer behaviour](chart.png)

Source: Annica Isacsson, 2009
As the sense of Smell is pointed out above, its significance should also be known to the business organisation. Scent has its influence in increasing sales, effects the time and amount that the customer spends in buying the products. As the smell indicates the quality of the business organisation and its service offerings, the customers will have positive intentions towards the brand.

2.8.3. Sense of Hearing

According to BrainFacts.Org30, “Sense of Hearing is considered as a most important sense for humans, it allows us to communicate with each other by receiving sounds and interpreting speech. Sound waves are collected by the external ear — the pinna and the external auditory canal — and funneled to the tympanic membrane (eardrum) to make it vibrate” (Lydia V. Kibiuk & Devon Stuart, 2012).

Music and the Current Scenario in World:

Music is one of the undeniable things that are ruling the current world. Most of the human beings do make use of music in almost every part of their life. For every different situation in life, be it the time of depression, of happiness, or of sad mood and at different places like discotheques, meditation and yoga centres, eating places, parties, office or work places and all others. We can also find youngsters going to bed for sleeping with the headphones in their ears. Observing all these, now we are sure that the world has given a very important place to music. For many- it is cheering up, for some -it is consoling, for some- giving company and what not? People carry the music with them in every possible way especially through electronic gadgets i.e., mobile phones, cassettes, mp3 players, CDs, iPod, iPad, laptops, internet, FM Radio, TV, movies and so on. Music has been shared, carried and used with the help of all the above things.

30 http://www.brainfacts.org/sensing-thinking-behaving/senses-and-perception/articles/2012/hearing
Significance of Music in our Daily Lives:

Like it was explained above, why are all the people, giving this much importance to music in their lives? They prefer listening to music unintentionally. Because, music is a very powerful medium. It is powerful at the level of the social group because it facilitates communication which goes beyond words. Music also can enable the meanings to be shared, it promotes the development and maintenance of individual, group, corporate, cultural and national identities. It is powerful at the individual level because it can bring up multiple responses – physiological, movement, mood, emotional, cognitive and behavioural. Few other stimuli have effects on such a wide range of human functions. Indian Holy Scriptures say that music can even melt the rocks. The brain’s multiple processing of music can make it difficult to predict the particular effects of any piece of music on any individual.

It is clear that music is very powerful and the world has given very significant to it. Different kinds of music makes the people to get connected to different kinds of events, situation, places, people and purposes. So, music can even differentiate two aspects. Taking all these things into the consideration, as a tool of differentiator in the market, the business organisations use music in their promotional activities in order to get a good place in the hearts of the people, and to be remembered by them.

Now the question is what about businesses? How does the business organisations, especially hospitality services, can use music for promoting their businesses? And what is its impact?

The context of Businesses:
The business organisations are facing an increasingly competitive environment in the market place. Because of the competition in the global level, they find it highly tough to differentiate their business/brands based on the product, price, place, promotion and of course people. Decorative elements like colour, lighting and visual merchandising have always been considered to have immediate effect on buyer decision in a store environment. Now, the emphasis has turned from the product displays, towards elements such as flat screen videos or graphics, music, odours, lights and flooring that
stimulate the customer senses and tend to capture the brand image or personality and assist for creating a distinctive environment and unique positive experience.

**Usage of Music in Businesses:**
The previous researches have examined numerous aspects of music and its influence on consumer behaviour. The effects of music tempo, its volume. Music is a vital component in hospitality atmosphere and has a role in customers’ purchase decision making and its process. A personalised music strategy stands for a brand and has high chances of bridging a powerful and an impactful connection with potential markets and focuses the customer demographics (age, gender and education levels etc.) and psychographics (favourites, preferences, lifestyles, personality and attitudes). The use of sensible music produces an instant differentiation and competency for a brand by stabilising the right mood. The interesting point with music is it motivates the subconscious and establishes a first and long lasting impression. Airtel, with their signature ringtone and music, they had occupied the largest part of the Indian market and became very close to all classes of the customers. The customers especially youth have got emotionally connected to it and there by loyal to it.

Martin Lindstrom, who is considered as the father of sensory branding, has made a significant contribution to the field of branding especially through hearing. Many studies have taken place in the area of audio branding which revealed similar kinds of results.

Many times music awakes the memories which are dormant deep in our subconscious minds. It is associated to our feeling/emotions and influences our mood. Music is used to relax, sing along, and for many people to escape from reality. It is the soundtrack of our lives, and when the beat stops, there is no life.

**Benefits to Hoteliers for Brand Building:**
Taking all the things that are discussed above, we can say that music can help the hotels in making themselves as brands by giving the experience to the customers once when they visit the hotel.
The music can be soothing and relaxing one in the hotel atmosphere. How pleasant will it be if a person hears to a pleasant music when he/she enters into the hotel? The jingles and the light music played inside the hotels make the customers relaxed and music can also involve the customers in the hotel by soothing their souls. It can also take them to different kinds of places in their thoughts. Many hotels create different kinds of environments which will make the customers get attached to the hotel.

**Impact on the Behaviour of the Customer:**
Music can create a pleasant environment in the hotel. Music can play a good role in the hotel to be remembered by people. Any sound which we hear in a particular place will surely make us to remember whenever we hear the similar sound at whatever the place may be. And we observe ourselves humming the same song for the whole day which we started humming it in the morning. Music evokes consumer’s interaction. Music helps to generate moods by creating feelings and emotions. It arouses feelings and desires at the service place for more consumption.

One of the most interesting things in our daily lives is that, if we are riding a vehicle (car or bike or any other thing), we find ourselves that the speed of the vehicle will depend upon the speed of the music. If the music that is played in our ears is slow, the vehicle will also go slow. If it is faster, the speed in which we ride the vehicle will also be faster. So, if the tempo of the music is very fast, we drive the vehicle fast and slower makes it slow. Also, it is proved that the music leads the customer to spend extra time in a given environment especially in hotel if the tempo of the music is slow. Good music has also the strength to influence the customers’ purchase plan and can make them to go for unplanned purchases also, pleasant music makes them to spend money unconsciously. Consumers’ willingness to buy is possible. Good experience can make the customer to prefer this hotel because of good music and makes them visit the hotel again and again.

Here comes the ultimate result which any business organisation needs i.e., Brand Loyalty. Music is useful in maintaining, developing and deepening customer relations. Music can inform and remind the customers about the services of the hotel. It creates a holistic brand experience and can be the critical in the success of the firm. Strengthening
the brand identity and image is one thing that makes the organisation stand in the market with confidence.

2.8.4. The Sense of Taste:
Taste is one of the most significant and very important sense in our human body. Our daily observation tells us that the ‘sense of taste’ is another most neglected among all the human senses by the marketers. The ‘taste’, being the highly effective and operative one, seldom we see it being used for marketing any product or a service. It is mostly because of lack of knowledge about this sense, or having no idea of introducing these senses in marketing, branding, or while promoting the product or service or the business organisation itself. Even though so many researches have been taken place in this regard, the fruits of those researches about the importance of senses have not properly reached to the marketing and business environments in the whole world. Taste is the ability to respond to dissolved molecules and ions called tastants.

Philip Kotler in the year 1973, had emphasized the importance of store atmosphere and possibility of its effect on purchase decision making of the customers. He had explained four sense related factors visual, sonorous, olfactory and tactile. One of the considerable things in that study is that since the ‘taste’ is related to eating, this sense was ignored because, an atmosphere can be seen, heard, smelled and felt but not tasted. But, even though the presence of taste sense in marketing has been limited to demonstrations and tastings traditionally, many of the business organisations like demo kitchens in grocers’ stores, opticians, hair stylists, car resellers, are offering welcome drinks like coffee, juice and others to their customers. By this act, the businesses create a first and fresh impression which can last for long time in the hearts and minds of their customers.

Importance of Taste:
Food is an undeniably integral part of human life. From early ages, behaviour of the peoples towards foods seems to be influenced strongly by the effects of its taste and flavour. Mostly the humans share their time of joy with their friends are relatives, colleagues and other loveable people by offering food and beverages in a social interactive gatherings. This social interaction happens at the dining table, and food plays a pivotal role in tradition and other ritual. There by the intimacy between themselves will grow.
The humans’ survival closely links with what they eat. Taste is the most specific function of all the five senses. ‘Sense of Taste’ is said to be a chemical sense, linked together with ‘smell’. A person can smell some aroma without tasting it, but he/she can’t taste something without sensing its aroma. In effect, “different tastes are distinguished by various combinations and a more sophisticated sense of smell” (Lindstrom, 2005).

Properties of the taste system (Kimball, 1994):
Observing the human body and its structure is very interesting and it will be surprising if we go deeper in research about the body and its significance. Taste related truths will make us even more amazed.

- One taste bud on our tongue comprises of fifty to hundred taste related cells all of them representing five taste sensations.
- Every single taste cell contains receptors on its apex surface.
- There are transmembrane proteins. They admit the ions which give rise to the sensation of salty; bind to the molecules that give rise to the sensations of sweet, bitter, and umami.
- A stirred taste receptor cell triggers action potentials in the sensory neuron connecting back to the brain.
- A single sensory neuron can be connected to several taste cells in each of several different taste buds.
- The sensation of taste lies in the brain just like all other sensations.
- The sensory neurons for four of the tastes (not sour) transmit their information to four discrete areas of the brain.

Another interesting point is ‘one smells more flavours than they taste’. When the olfactory senses are not functioning, i.e., nose does not react because of any natural reason, the human can’t enjoy 80 percent of taste. Loss of taste without loss of smell is pretty rare.
Arousal and Desire for Consumption:
Taste of the food carries emotions in the hearts and minds of the customers. Good taste of a food item would have the capacity to influence the customer behaviour. One of its most important strength is that the sense of taste can increase the arousal of the feelings towards consuming the food items. The arousal will lead to the desire for consumption of the food. It also has the potentiality to make the customers to order more food than what they had already come prepared with. The positive and negative impression regarding the taste of the food items in a hotel effects the emotions.

A good number of factors have been identified which make a crucial contribution to emotion induced changes of eating viz., arousal/intensity, valence and food relatedness of emotions as well as restrained and emotional eating.

It is also possible to evaluate sensory discrimination from a psycho-physical perspective, by mapping differences in sensation to purely physical differences in stimulus, customers seldom experience products/services under such kind of conditions.

Food and Sensory Experience:
Many foods are consumed mostly for the pleasure value that they impart. Products such as chocolate, coffee, alcohol, ice cream are often consumed to enhance positive perceptions in the minds, or at least to lessen the effects of the negative perceptions.

There are many reasons why we consume food, the obvious and most important one being to get nourishment for a healthy body. However, because of adequate food supply, safety and nutrition are provided by most major manufacturers in our society, issues related to the consumers’ food choice are popping up where we should be careful. Food consumption is considered to be one of the most over-looked aspects in which the customers want to relish their food. In fact, in the modern days, most of the foods outside are consumed almost entirely for pleasure value which they impart. Products such as coffee, chocolate, ice cream and of course alcohol are often consumed to escalate positive states of mind, or at least to lessen the effects of the negative perceptions.
When we finally consume the food and experience the sensory characteristics (consciously or subconsciously), we can make a decision on whether we like the food or not. The sensory characteristics, (the aroma, appearance, texture and taste) of a food will influence this decision of the customers to a greater extent or lesser.

**Sense of Taste and Marketing:**
The marketing and advertisement of products generally addresses only our higher senses, sight and hearing, and tends to neglect the other senses (Lindstrom, 2005). It is also worth trying to take advantage from the other senses, like as taste, which can increase the appeal and sensation of a product and make it more interesting to its anticipated consumers.

The taste can be used more efficiently with food related products and services. In the globally competitive market, taste can play an important role in order to protect their own identity and special recognition for any organisation. "Signature dish" is a dish which is specially prepared and made available only in a particular hotel. It is so much important in such a way that, many signature tastes were registered with patent right also. The success of the taste of the signature food results in gaining good demand for the brand. After it has become famous in one area, it can be spread to other nearby areas thereby they expand their brand and get the customers attached to it emotionally.

It is because, some businesses were succeeded only by its taste and recipe. By using the famous recipe in a locality, hotels can make themselves brand by using that *taste* which makes the people to be loyal to it because they are already attached to it by culture and nativity.

By using the local tastes like these or by using specially manufactured recipes by themselves, the hotels and restaurants can have a place in the hearts of the customers as it can compete the other business organisations in an effective way. Kumbakonam betel leaves, Saravan Bhavan and other tastes in Tamilnadu have got a great fame.
There is enough proof that the sensory characteristics of food, the taste and flavour in particular, have a very specific effect on the consumers’ food preferences. The sensory attributes could be seen as a key area in many ways with which manufacturers can differentiate their food products.

There by, the sense of taste can also be used to brand a hotel or any business organisation. What makes a dish really memorable is the synergy that prevails between different elements of ‘whole sensory package;’ If the chef were appealing only to taste and aroma, it is doubtful if the restaurant would attain the same results. But ‘taste’ of the food items can fulfil the satisfaction level of the customers.

Taste experience is one of the best ways to actually get a genuine perception of the quality of the product. This procedure is used very often in grocery retail stores, especially for promoting a certain product, but it is not always possible to use it for all the products.

The perceived sensory attributes of a product/service will help the hospitality organisations, to increase its perceived value among the consumers. A consumer may make up to fifty cups of coffee from one jar; it means, fifty occasions he/she experiences the sensory characteristics.

The Sense of Taste has high potentiality where it can catch a customer in his attention and can occupy the best preference in his choices. Signature taste can surely be an important aspect in attracting the customer. Taste can maximise the customer experience and satisfactory levels. KFC, with its unique recipe, has become the best chicken provider worldwide.

While offering the services, the hospitality organisations need to take many things in to consideration which are highly significant in influencing the eating and consuming behaviour.

- The effects of emotions on eating can be classified into five basic classes:
- Emotions aroused by food stimuli affect food choice.
• Emotions high in arousal or intensity suppress eating due to incompatible emotional responses.
• Emotions in arousal or intensity affect eating depending on motivations to eat:
  • In restrained eating, negative and positive emotions enhance food intake due to impairment of cognitive control.
  • In emotional eating, negative emotions elicit the tendency to be regulated by eating and, as a consequence, enhance intake of sweet and high-fat foods.
• In normal eating, emotions affect eating in congruence with their cognitive and motivational features.

2.8.5 Sense of Touch:
Skin is the largest among all of our organs in the body. It is through the skin, as our receptor for touch, we are in contact with the world. Touch is the non-verbal communication.

When all the other senses fail, skin is the one which can come to rescue us. The well-known write Helen Keller, who became deaf and blind through illness at age two. Such was the experience she had in all her life and was able to complete her graduation (Lindstrom, 2005).

Our body is promptly alert towards cold and heat, plain and pain, or pleasure and pressure. Probably there are 50 receptors per 100 sq. mm. in which each receptor contains 640,000 microreceptors devoted to the senses. The word ‘touch’ covers a world of meaning. We "stay in touch" with our friends, and sometimes we "lose touch" with them.

Potentiality of the Touch Sense:
Sense of ‘Touch’ is shown to enhance positive feelings in the case of interpersonal touch, to improve confidence in product judgment when the environment allows physical inspection.31 It also enhances product evaluation, for high quality products, when softness and texture vary (Krishna, 2010).

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31 Nagarjuna, K., & Sudhakar, B. D. Refine the Services by Touching the Customer Senses Sensorial Marketing Strategy for Hospitality Industry.
Hornik (1992) found that the influence of touch differs between men and women. Usually, women respond more positively than men to the ‘touch’ of the product (Hornik, 1992).

When two people are shaking their hands, the recipient tends to reason that the toucher is honest and in genuine need which results in toucher liking and trusting the recipient. The perception of great and genuine need will tend towards increasing the compliance.

Tactile inputs play an essential role in evaluating the product’s substance properties, viz., roughness, hardness, temperature and weight, because it provides unique perspective which cannot be realized through visual inspection (Grohmann, 2007).

Apart from physical development of human beings, the skin also plays an important role in our behavioural development. The literature reveals that ‘touch’ generates a stimulation which creates a gratifying feeling of pleasure by activating our brain, influencing our feelings and there by impacting the behaviour.

Khadi and other handloom products, is the industry which directly needs to adopt this touch sense and other sensory marketing techniques in India. This sensory marketing/branding techniques can help the industry to gain - a special identity in the public, a better market share, there by spread the market and stand firm in the global competition.

**Impact on Customer Behaviour:**

Touch is an important part of our social and emotional lives where both children and adults have an underlying urge to touch products (Krishna, 2010). In the hospitality setting, the key elements in the sense of touch include softness, smoothness, temperature and weight (Kotler, 1973-74).

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One of the highest strengths of touch is that it enhances the brand experience for a customer by adding sensory information of a brand. The touch of opening the doors in the hotel, the feeling of walking on the floor and the sensation of touching some exclusive materials etc. (Gobé, 2001). As an example, we can find McDonalds maintaining touch screens to their customers for making their orders.

The visual presentation of the products and the pleasure of touching them should not be neglected. Touching a product is a way of ensuring its quality and is consequently more important when faced to unfamiliar brands. Touch enables consumers to make more accurate judgments and to by discriminating the varying levels of product quality (Grohmann, 2007). Touch of the product, weather conditions at selling places, textures, smoothness and other touch related things have a significant ability to stimulate the customers to buy.

Touch plays an important role in persuading the customers. A touched customer would mostly be more inclined to comply or help the server. It is because touch is potent to increase feelings of intimacy and closeness to the organisation. So, the businesses need to provide a facility to their consumers where they can physically touch and interact with products which can result in creating a positive impact on customer attitudes, intentions to purchase a product as well.

The sense of touch has been recognized as the one which can influence the customers’ behaviour and also, succeed in their physical interaction with products. Allowing the consumers to get the tactile information has positive effects on consumer responses by up surging the confidence in evaluating the product and decreasing the frustration (Grohmann, 2007)

Touching the human hearts with the sense of touch can bring a place in the lives of the people which, for a global competitor, is not possible to destroy it. That way, global competitiveness can be achieved with the help of sensory branding in hotels.

Touching a product and its influence on customer evaluation

Recent researches show that tactile components in the product and the service environment play a crucial role in product evaluation by the customer and also on his/her decision making (McCabe, 2003). Consumers also tend to prefer only select products from retail shops who allow the products in the store to be touched (McCabe, 2003). This is very obvious in the case of the products like clothing, portable electronics. Generally, touch is considered as a key element of approach behaviour. This approach behaviour can persuade the customers towards preference, liking, and of course, more positive attitude. When customer gets an opportunity to touch an object, it creates a feeling of ownership on that object (Peck, 2009), and Underhill (2009) states that consumers are buying more products than ever before due to touch and trial.

“Touching causes liking” (Heslin, 1983). For high quality products, touch enhances product evaluation when softness and texture vary. In addition, recent research shows that mere imagining the touch experience results in increasing the perceptions of product’s ownership (Peck, 2009). As a whole, the literature suggests that this tactile input leads the customers to positive responses for products with acceptable quality level. So, the sense of touch plays an integral role within consumer behaviour and also sensory engagement.

Tactile components can help the consumers’ in their perception of product quality. Touching of a product during evaluation is a proficient means for consumers in assessing intrinsic cues (attributes that are part of the physical product itself) (Grohmann, 2007).

However, one of the considerable things in this matter is that the need to touch a product varies from person to person where some will be satisfied with mere touching the product whereas others will take some more time to better explore the product before taking the decision to purchase. One interesting thing is that, people with a high need to touch are more positively influenced by marketing that integrates touch sense.

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Integration of two or more senses like between smell and touch can lead to heightened product evaluations. The more senses involved wisely, better and nest can be reaped by the businesses.

According to Bitner \(^{36}\) (1992) as an overall view of touch senses and its significance in hospitality marketing, the following things can be deduced. The service environment with touch sensory cue includes temperature (warmth/coolness), weather condition, and quality of the air (Bitner, 1992). A comfortable seating is considered as an important element in the restaurant for perceived quality. Along with that, there are many more elements which provide tactual experience such as hardness-softness, thin-thick, sticky-slippery, rough-smooth, bumpy-flat (Kang, 2011). The touch senses has significant influence on the customers way of thinking, perceiving and behaving in daily life and of course in a purchase environment. The positive influence lets the customer to purchase the product/service and also there is high possibility of referring this to friends and family because of the strong impression on the product.

**Chapter Conclusion:**

This situation gives rise in the level of competition in hospitality market. Since many international customers are there, the hotels in Pondicherry have to grow their standards to meet the needs in international standards and offering better than any other hotel in the City.

Sensory branding, as a tool, was introduced to the business which can especially help the hospitality organisations to provide luxurious facilities to the potential customers in such a way that their trip/visit will be delightful/complete/fulfilled and special. This sensory branding serves the hospitality organisation in giving best facilities to the customers which results in customers’ pleasure and satisfaction experience thereby customer loyalty.

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Multisensory branding is need of the hour which can help the hospitality industry especially the individual organisations to provide a luxurious services to the customers. Since the senses are key very important in letting the people to experience and perceive the service and its quality and the customer loyalty.

Sensory environment triggers the customers’ emotions and memories which create pleasure and arousal of their feeling and desires for consuming the productions. The behavioural intentions will be positively changed so that they visit the business again and again; they suggest to their neighbours and families and families.

The sensory delight can be described as the best way of giving pleasure and experience to the customers as of now. Since the customer are tend to be loyal, the strength of the brands will also grow there by the brand image of the hotel will be strengthened.

The customer spending time, money will be proportionately related to the positive sensory environment. The customers tend to prefer the same hotel when they choose to spend their time in hotel. The music related, touch related and taste related sensory components have highly positive influence on the customers’ spending time and consumption time as well.

**Research Gap:**

Even though the concept of sensory branding is quite new to the area of branding in marketing, some studies have been conducted on sensory branding with focused on its significance, environmental stimuli, and customers’ emotional states. Most of the researches were limited either to study customers’ response to the sensory practices in the hotels, or the sensory strengths and potentials (the emotional impact it can create on the customer). No study was found on ‘how far the customer behavioural intentions can impact their loyalty towards the hotel in terms of revisiting and suggesting to others there by strengthening the brand image of the hotel. There is also no study found which explains the impact of level of awareness about sensory branding on the brand image of the hotel. So, the study was undertaken to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on Sensory Branding.