Chapter 2

Literature Review and Background

2.1 Introduction

Services are the production of essentially intangible benefits and experience, either alone or as part of a tangible product, through some form of exchange, with the intention of satisfying the needs, wants and desires of customers. (Bhattacharjee C\textsuperscript{17}, 2006).

A service is any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another which is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Its product may or be tied to a physical product. (Kotler et al\textsuperscript{18}, 1999)

2.1.1 The Service Sector

A service is any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another which is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Its product may or be tied to a physical product. (Kotler et al\textsuperscript{19}, 1999) The service sector is fast expanding and service quality is becoming very important. Service sector comprises of-

1. Pure stand-alone services like counseling and consultancy
2. A combination of services and goods like restaurants, and also the services we are studying
3. Services like after sales services of goods

Government services typically fall in the second category that is a combination of goods and services. Still they tilt more towards the pure service side rather than the goods side.

From the service firm’s point of view, it should be perceived by society to be legitimate and worthy of support. Being seen as legitimate enables a firm to “acquire

resources” (human as well as material) and successfully “deflect questions about its
rights to provide and its components to provide services” (Bedeian Arthur G., 1993). This is why service firms maintain public relations desk and pay so much
attention to influencing the opinion leaders. The internal or micro environment factors of a service firm consist of the following-

1. External customers
2. Internal customers/providers
3. Competitors
4. Suppliers
5. Regulators

The nature of public service provision is changing on account of new strategic
approaches to control and delivery. The main underlying objectives are those of
increasing value for money and emphasizing the role of the consumer. Responsibilities are more than ever decentralized to service providers whilst overall
control remains centralized in the form of various customer charters. Provision of consistent service quality is becoming more difficult in the context of resource constraints and the need to achieve economies of scale. Furthermore, with increasing awareness people are demanding more and better services.

The scope of service industry includes

1. Travel and tourism
2. Hospitality
3. Catering and restaurant industry
4. IT enabled services
5. Consultancy services
6. All transportation services
7. Couriers, cargo etc
8. Retailing
9. Banking
10. Insurance
11. hospitals and healthcare

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12. Housing and Construction  
13. Communication and entertainment  
14. Leisure  
15. Financial Services  
16. Government  

None of these services are outside the purview of the government service. Actually the government covers all of these service sectors either separately or in combination.

2.1.1.1 Professional service  

A profession implies a vocation, a means of earning one’s livelihood. A professional is a person whose vocation, its norms and the person’s conduct are regulated by a recognized body. A professional’s education which qualifies him to pursue his vocation is also regulated by the organization which is most of the times a government or a para-government body. Professionalism is attitudinal and is expected in all the service providers. Professionalism, on the other hand, implies that that a person is true to his word, profession, is efficient and effective and does not allow his emotions to govern his actions. Professionalism is a benchmark for best practices. (Bhattacharjee C\textsuperscript{21}, 2006)

2.1.2 Society’s perception about service firms-  

From the service firm’s point of view, it should be perceived by society to be legitimate and worthy of support. Being seen as legitimate enables a firm to “acquire resources” (human as well as material) and successfully “deflect questions about its rights to provide and its components to provide services”. (Bedeian Arthur G.\textsuperscript{22}, 1993). This is why service firms maintain public relations desk and pay so much attention to influencing the opinion leaders. In India society has always perceived business as profiteering and exploitative.

The internal or micro environment factors of a service firm consist of the following-

1. External customers
2. Internal customers/providers
3. Competitors Suppliers

\textsuperscript{22} Bedeian Arthur G., The Dryden Press Series in Management, Dryden Press, 1993, Edition 3, the University of Michigan
4. Regulators

Competitors are generally not present in case of a Government organization like Revenue department. However there are examples like telephone and broadband services, banking where the government faces stiff competition from the private or corporate players.

2.1.3 The service change models-

The service industry is undergoing a change. There are two models suggested for this change-

1. The industrial management model
2. The market focused management model

The **industrial model** is an approach to organizing a firm that focuses on revenues and operating cost and ignores the role personnel play in generating customer satisfaction and sustainable profits. (Schlesinger and Heskett\(^{23}\), 1991). The model is employed by many organizations. These organizations believe that factors that bring in the revenue are advertising, sales promotion, accessibility, distribution and location advantages. They are of the opinion that the cost drivers are personnel and operations and these should be controlled.

The market focused management model focuses on the components of the firm that facilitate the firm’s service delivery system. It proposes that the firm should be supportive of those personnel who serve the customers and interact with them. The front line employees are supported in the form of equipment, office space (hygiene factors), moral support, motivation initiatives, career growth and money.

If a service-oriented firm decides to follow this model, then for them customer interaction or service delivery becomes the most important part of their strategy and the front line personnel their most important tool. This model is based on

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the service triangle framework. (Karl Albert and Ron Zemke\textsuperscript{24}, 1985) It depicts the relationship among the three groups of the service organization—

- The service strategy
- Systems embedded in the organization and
- The people of the organization.

The customer is in the centre, interacting with all the groups.

The service triangle model has been built on the following principles –

- The service firm’s strategy must be communicated to its consumers.
- The service firm’s strategy must be communicated to its employees to ensure transparency eliminate misunderstandings and aid in sincerity of commitment at all levels of management.
- There should be consistency in service strategy and the systems developed to achieve the strategic goal the system desire should be in accordance with the service strategy in order to satisfy the customers.
- The impact of the organization systems on customer should be studied – like in depth knowledge of the various schemes, rules, acts etc.
- The importance of organization systems and employee of firms should also be studied. Rule and regulation should aid and employee in accomplishing his task. The system should transform people from administrator to leaders and facilitators.
- The interaction between customer & service provider gives rise to service encounters or critical incidents. The quality of such Moments of Truth (MoT) is the source of customer satisfaction.

2.2 Characteristics of Quality management in Public sector

Quality Management holds a number of features: the objective is to acquire customer satisfaction; quality is defined by the customer; it affects all activities of the organization, whether or not directly related with the product or the service; customers are external; it closes the activities of control, but primarily involves the management of the entire organization; all are involved in its application; the

participation is determined by conviction; methodology is particularly directed toward prevention; it aims to do the right things “from the beginning”; the responsibility and the involvement of everyone from organization.

Public services, like pure services, also fall within the dimensions of service quality. There are three very important characteristics of service quality:

1. Service quality is more difficult to evaluate than goods quality
2. Quality perceptions emerge from the consumer’s expectations and the perception of the actual service
3. Service quality is perceived from the ‘gap’ between the expectations and the perception of the service experience

“Quality” is a generic concept and not new in public administration, either. On the contrary, quality was, at least implicitly, a public administration concept since the creation of the modern administrative state, when it was associated with the observance of regulations and procedures, with formal correctness, viability and absence of arbitrary decisions (Engel25, 2003, p. 17). An overview on the emergence of quality in public administration can be found in Engel (2003), who underlines the idea according to which the “impulse for quality” (Massey26, 1999, p. 2) was present in the public sector in the last half of the ’80s and at a wider scale in the ‘90s. As a consequence, quality management is seen as a “holistic” tool, and since the end of the ‘80s it was implemented more and more in the public sector (Matei, Andreescu27, 2005, p. 50).

2.3 The customer

The inherent complexity of the public service environment throws up a number of difficulties and potential conflicts. The identification of the customer of public services is not straightforward. Customers of the government may be individuals, community or interest groups, elected members, MP’s or society as a

whole. These customers or stakeholders may or may not pay for, receive or benefit from the services provided, which further complicates the issue. Different customer or stakeholder groups may well have different expectations of the same service or have different service priorities. Comparative research projects involving different customer and stakeholder groups are now being conducted to help clarify some of these complexities (McNicol28 1997, Stark29 1998). The flexibility of public services to meet customer or consumer expectations may be constrained to a greater or lesser extent according to who decides how much the services will cost to provide, how they will be provided and by whom. (Curry and Brysland30 1999)

The terms "customer" - someone to be served - and "citizen-consumer" tend to be the currently preferred terms to represent the welfare service users (Clarke, Cochrane and McLaughlin31, 1994), at least by the leaders of these service provision organizations. The term customer is preferable to the concept of the client - someone to be managed (Kettl32, 1997). The term "customer" does not capture the complex interaction which occurs when a public sector employee serves someone who is a taxpayer, voter, recipient of financial benefits, and who carries expectations about the role of the public service, yet cannot choose another provider (Seidle33, 1995). In India, the recipients of public services currently do not have a choice of service provider, for example, if you want an "age pension" or an "unemployment benefit" an application must be lodged with the concerned government officer. Not only is there no choice of provider, there is little choice about whether the service/benefit is sought because there is often no other means available for large numbers of people to pay for

food, accommodation and other essentials. The relationship between the citizen recipient and the service provider is thus an interesting and complex one (Bennington & Cummane\textsuperscript{34}, 1998). Hence competition is almost lacking in case of government organization.

Inevitably linked to the issue of control is the issue of measurement. There is a clear need for public service standards and performance indicators so that service users know what they can expect and service providers know whether or not they are doing a good job. Performance indicators refer to ‘consumer interest’ but have tended to measure processes and the numbers of people served rather than consumer perceptions and other service outputs. The difficulty seems to be a concentration of effort on measuring high volume rather than high quality and on measuring what is readily available and collectable rather than what is really relevant. Performance indicators in the public service environment have more often than not engendered staff de-motivation and cynicism; given the remit to increase service quality whilst cutting costs. Future willingness of public service staff to be involved in service quality initiatives is in jeopardy. Measuring what really matters in services is the only way forward. This entails a combination of innovative management thinking and the use of robust, validated measurement tools. (Curry and Brysland\textsuperscript{35a}, 1999)

There are also differences for customers of public versus private services. First, there is often no choice of service provider when state controlled monopolies exist. Secondly, when dissatisfied with the service, the options are also limited. For example, recipients dissatisfied with a private service have, according to Hirschman (cited in Larson\textsuperscript{36}, 1996) three options: exit, voice (complaints) or loyalty. The problems with exit and loyalty are that they are not really options for the public sector social security recipient. Exit can only be accomplished if another source of service is obtained and loyalty may be due to tolerance of the unsatisfactory service being a less


\textsuperscript{35a} Curry Adrienne and Brysland Alexandria (1999), ‘Innovation and Integration in Public Service Management’, Kvalita Inovácia Prosperita, III/1-2 1999 (1-23)

painful option than exiting or voicing. (Bennington & Cummane\textsuperscript{37} 1998). It is not surprising, therefore, to find that customer satisfaction in service settings is influenced by the quality of the interpersonal interaction between the customer and the contact employee, or even that one source of customer dissatisfaction might actually be the customers' own behaviour (Bitner, Booms and Mohr\textsuperscript{38}, 1994) or the presence and behaviours of other customers sharing the "servicescape" (Grove and Fisk\textsuperscript{39}, 1997).

Most of the customer satisfaction literature, published in English, has been related to the private sector where issues of price, value and choice come into play (Anderson and Fomell\textsuperscript{40}, 1994). Little has been published on government services (Scott and Shieff\textsuperscript{41}, 1993). However, increasingly, there have been efforts to measure and improve customer satisfaction with government or public services, and, to open many of these services up to competition from the private sector (Nestor and Nigon\textsuperscript{42}, 1996).

2.4 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has received considerable attention from researchers in Marketing. (Oliver\textsuperscript{43}, 1980; Churchill and Suprenant\textsuperscript{44}, 1982; Oliver and De Sarbo\textsuperscript{45},

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{39} Grove, S.J. and Fisk, R.P. 1997. The impact of other customers on service experiences: A critical incident examination of "getting along", Journal of Retailing, 73, 1, 63-85
\item \textsuperscript{42} Nestor, S. and Nigon, M. 1996 ‘Privatisation in Europe, Asia and Latin America: what lessons can be drawn?’ In Privatisation in Europe, Asia and Latin America, OECD, Paris, pp.9-19
\end{itemize}
1988; Fornell\textsuperscript{46}, 1992; Anderson and Sullivan\textsuperscript{47}, 1993). A review of this research suggests that customer satisfaction is generally construed to be a post-consumption evaluation dependent on perceived quality or value, expectations, and confirmation/disconfirmation - the degree (if any) of discrepancy between actual and expected quality (Anderson E\textsuperscript{48}, 1994). Moreover, customer satisfaction may concern a specific transaction or pertain to an overall evaluation of a particular brand or firm (Oliver\textsuperscript{49}, 1980; Johnson and Fornell\textsuperscript{50}, 1991; Anderson and Fornell\textsuperscript{51}, 1993).

However, service quality practice in public sector organizations is slow and is further exacerbated by difficulties in measuring outcomes, greater scrutiny from the public and press, a lack of freedom to act in an arbitrary fashion and a requirement for decisions to be based in law (Teicher et al.\textsuperscript{52}, 2002). These disheartened support to the underlying premise that SERVQUAL offers a good framework for evaluation of the part of Revenues services. It is a tool to develop service quality benchmarks for Government services. No specific tools to measure customer satisfactions with Revenue/Government Services exist in the research field and no instruments have been identified which focus on measuring Tahsildar’s Service Quality from the customer’s perspective. The study thus undertakes exploration of a service quality instrument in a modified form for evaluation of service quality by the customers/public.


2.5 Theoretical Framework

Surprenant and Solomon\textsuperscript{53} (1987) stated that service encounters are human interactions. They suggested that customers and service providers have roles to play during and possibly after service encounters and that these roles are based on “interpersonal interactions” between organizations and customers. Service quality in all service encounters is thus intrinsically affected by the perspectives of both the service provider and the service receiver. Similarly, Czepiel\textsuperscript{54} (1990) concluded that research on service quality must always include the perspectives of both the provider and the receiver. However, most research on the service quality construct has been restricted to one perspective: that of the service receiver (Parasuraman et al.\textsuperscript{55}, 1988; Guerrier and Deery\textsuperscript{56}, 1998). A few have applied dual perspectives and considered interactive features of service quality in service encounters (Tam and Wong\textsuperscript{57}, 2001; Chow-Chua and Komaran\textsuperscript{58}, 2002; Dedeke\textsuperscript{59}, 2003; Svensson, 2004\textsuperscript{60}, 2006\textsuperscript{61}).

Because service delivery occurs during the interactions between contact employees and customers, attitudes and behaviors of the contact employees can influence customers’ perceptions of service quality (Schneider and Bowen\textsuperscript{62}, 1985).

Moreover, Beatson et al. (2008) found that perceived employee satisfaction, perceived employee loyalty, and perceived employee commitment had a sizable impact on perceived product quality and on perceived service quality. According to Zeithaml and Bitner (1996), contact employees represent the organization and can directly influence customer satisfaction, they perform the role of marketers. Whether acknowledged or not, service employees perform marketing functions. They can perform these functions well, to the organization’s advantage, or poorly, to the organization’s detriment. According to Bettencourt and Gwinner (1996) front-line employees have the opportunity to tailor in real-time not only the services the firm offers, but also the way in which those services are delivered. Customer actions, reactions and other characteristics can have a profound influence on the actions and mannerisms of front-line service personnel (Solomon et al. 1985; Matzler et al. 2004). Customers largely establish their impressions of the organization’s level of service provision based on their encounters with front line employees. Therefore employees involved in the delivery of front-line services can provide valuable information for improving service. Employees are knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the service through their contact with customers and this is an important form of feedback that can be used by organizations in decision-making to better serve customers (Ramseook-Munhurrun 2010). Research has established a positive correlation between the attitudes of employees and those of customers, including employee and customer perceptions of service quality (Schneider and Bowen 1985).

References:

2.5.1 Service Quality Concept

Parasuraman et al.\textsuperscript{70} (1985, p. 42) defined service quality as “a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations; delivering quality service means confirming to customer expectations on a consistent basis”. Parasuraman et al.\textsuperscript{71} (1988, p. 16) defined perceived service quality as “a global judgment, or attitude, relating to the superiority of the service”. Zeithaml\textsuperscript{72} (1988, p. 3) defined service quality as “the consumer’s judgment about a product’s overall excellence or superiority”. It is clear that defining service quality is an important step toward the development of a solid foundation for this study. Therefore, being in line with the service literature, this study looks into service quality as the standard of excellence toward fulfilling customers’ requirements, which contributes toward achieving customers’ ultimate satisfaction. This, in turn, entails organizations and firms to investigate, explore, and identify customers’ requirements and to try to meet them in order to provide a high standard of service quality. Service organizations are competing to achieve sustainable competitive advantage through providing a high-quality service to their existing customers in a severely competitive environment. This has lead to a continued focus on service quality. Organizations have recognized a number of potential benefits derived from service quality, including increasing customer satisfaction, customer retention, customer loyalty and positive word-of-mouth, increasing opportunities for cross-selling, employee benefits, improved corporate image, profit gains, and financial performance (Albassam and Alshawi\textsuperscript{73}, 2010) though customer retention, customer loyalty and profits do not apply much to the services under study.


2.5.2 The SERVQUAL Model

A Parasuraman, Leonard L. Berry and Valarie A Zeithaml have devised the SERVQUAL approach towards measuring the service quality. They defined service quality as the degree and direction of discrepancy between consumer’s service perception and their expectations. (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 19) SERVQUAL is a multiple item scale for measuring consumer perception of service quality (Parasuraman and Zeithaml, Berry 1988). They devised the five factor measurement of service quality- the concept of service quality as a 5-dimensional construct consisting of Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy.

They have identified 22 items to measure the five dimensions universally across service industries. Each dimension is rated against its importance in evaluations the quality of service (Parasuraman et al. 1991b).

The SERVQUAL approach (Parasuraman et al. 1985) begins with the assumption that service quality is critically determined by the difference between customers’ expectations and their perceptions of the service actually delivered. The SERVQUAL model identifies five criteria by which to evaluate service quality:

- **Tangibles:** The appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication material
- **Reliability:** The ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
- **Responsiveness:** Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service
- **Assurance:** A combination of competence (possession of the required skills and knowledge to perform the service); courtesy (politeness, respect, consideration and friendliness of contact staff); credibility (trustworthiness, believability and honesty of staff); security (freedom from danger, risk and doubt)
- **Empathy:** A combination of access (approachability and ease of contact); communication (keeping customers informed in a language they understand and

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listening to them); **understanding the customer** (making an effort to know the customers and their needs).

Perceived service quality can be defined as, according to the model, the difference between consumers’ expectation and perceptions which eventually depends on the size and the direction of the gaps concerning the delivery of service quality on the organization’s side (Parasuraman et al. **1985**). According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry the SERVQUAL model is universal and can be applied to any service organization to assess the quality of services provided.

Research suggests that SERVQUAL measurement is the most common method used in academia and the service industry. According to Shahin (2005), SERVQUAL is the most reliable option of service quality measurement for three reasons 1) it allows for comparison before and after changes, 2) the location of quality related problems can be identified, and 3) organizations can establishment clear standards for service delivery. In addition, SERVQUAL has become the most often used form of measurement due to its capabilities to examine the customers' expectations before the service encounter and to compare the customers' expectations with their perception after the service encounter (Shahin **2005b**).

The SERVQUAL model was theoretically and empirically studied, examined, and discussed in several academic studies. In addition, it has been implemented to measure and assess service quality across different service, industrial, commercial, and non-profit settings.

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**78** ibid

**79** Shahin A. (2002) SERVQUAL and model of service quality gaps: Framework for determining and prioritizing critical factors in delivering quality service. Iran University of Isfahan, Department of Management
2.6 SERVQUAL and Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a collective outcome of perception, evaluation and psychological reactions to the consumption experience to the product/service (Yi, 1990). The expectations of the public are increasing day by day. Public demands are high and the normal infrastructure and processes fall short in fulfilling these demands. The reasons are manifold. The gap between the expectations and experience is widening. A general feeling of dissatisfaction among the public (customers) is experienced.

Hoseong Jeon and Beomjoon Choi (2012) have tried to establish a relationship between the employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. They concluded that employee satisfaction leads to customer satisfaction but customer

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satisfaction did not affect employee satisfaction, which suggests that the relationship between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction is unilateral rather than bilateral. The findings also demonstrate that the dispositional variables (i.e. self-efficacy, cooperative orientation) moderate the impact of employee satisfaction on customer satisfaction.

Services have been defined in various ways by different experts. Most of these ways end up concluding that a service experience is the best way to describe what happens to a consumer (Nargundkar R 82, 2010). A Parasuraman, Leonard Berry and Valarie A Zeithaml have devised the SERVQUAL approach towards measuring the service quality based on a similar assumption. They defined service quality as the degree and direction of discrepancy between consumer’s service perception of the service experience and their expectations before the experience (Parasuraman et al 83, 1990, p. 19). SERVQUAL is a multiple item scale for measuring consumer perception of service quality (Zeithaml et al 84, 1985). They devised the five factor measurement of service quality. They have identified 22 items to measure the five dimensions universally across service industries. Each dimension is rated against its importance in evaluations the quality of service (Parasuraman 85, 1991). The concept of service quality as a 5-dimensional construct consisting of Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy has defined consumer satisfaction as a collective outcome of perception, evaluation and psychological reactions to the product/service (Yi Y 86, 1990).

SERVQUAL is an instrument to measure the difference between the expectations and perception of the customers about the services they experience. They call the difference as ‘gap’. They defined four key discrepancies or gaps regarding the

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executive perception of service quality and the tasks associated with the service delivery to customers. (Parasuraman et al.\textsuperscript{87}, 1991b)

The potential application of the SERVQUAL scale is, it can help other organizations in assessing the perceptions of service quality (Buttle\textsuperscript{88}, 1996). It will also help the managers identify the areas of service delivery that need special attention and decide action to be taken to tackle these issues (Kettinger\textsuperscript{89}, 1997).

### 2.7 Other models of service quality

The ‘SERVPERF’ scale is one such scale that has been put forward by Cronin and Taylor\textsuperscript{90} (1992) in the early nineties. The "LibQUAL+" protocol is designed by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) expressly for the research library community (Cook\textsuperscript{91}, 2001). Several industry-specific versions of SERVQUAL have been created, including two for provision of information systems services within organizations. Kettinger and Lee\textsuperscript{92} (1994) modified the 1991 version of SERVQUAL while Pitt\textsuperscript{93}, et al. (1995d) modified the 1988 version. Both modifications involved only word changes to reflect the IST environment. The instrument used in this study is the modified version of IS-SERVQUAL developed by Pitt\textsuperscript{94}, et al (1995e). IS-SERVQUAL, like its predecessor (SERVQUAL) was designed to measure service quality in human-to-human interactions but Extranets involve human-to-system interactions with varying degrees of human input. EX-SERVQUAL contains general questions that can incorporate both the human and systems aspects of service quality. No attempt is made to distinguish between these as this would detract from the


\textsuperscript{94} ibid
purpose of measuring overall service quality of an Extranet system. The growing e-tailing and e-services have led to e-SQ model which tells us how efficiently a website facilitates effective shopping (Zeithaml V.95 et al,2008).

2.8 Criticism of SERVQUAL model

The SERVQUAL model is the most studied model of service quality. It provides a technique of measuring and managing service quality. It has become an important topic of research because of its apparent relationship to costs (Crosby96, 1979), profitability (Buzzell and Gale97, 1987; Rust and Zahorik98, 1993; Zahorik and Rust99, 1992), customer satisfaction (Bolton and Drew100, 1991; Boulding et al.101,1993), customer retention (Reichheld and Sasser102, 1990). The model relies basically on the customer’s assessment of service quality in the form of a gap between what is expected by the customer and their evaluation of the performance of the service provider at the time of service creation and delivery.

SERVQUAL applies five (or later seven) quality dimensions according to which the quality perception is formed. The dimensions are: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, competence, courtesy, and credibility, feel secure, access and communication (Parasuraman et al 1985103, 1988104). Their model was widely

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accepted but also criticized severely. Critics claim that customer perceived quality is a performance only construct, meaning that expectations do not play an important role in the formation of customer perceived quality. (Cronin & Taylor105 1992; Teas106, 1994b). It has been empirically verified that a performance based measurement of service quality is better in quality assessments than a disconfirmation based measurement. (Rasila107 2009, Carman108 1990; Bolton & Drew 1991a109,b110; Churchill & Suprenant111 1982; Woodruff et al.112 1983; Babakus & Boller113 1992; Zhou114 2004; Boulding115 et al. 1993; Brown et al116 1993; Lee et al117 2000; Teas118a 1993; 1994119)

Another common comparison standard is “normal service quality level”. When a customer uses the same service (provider) more than once, he will have experience of the service. This experience then forms the basis of expectations. Other comparison standards mentioned in the literature include: goals, promises, cultural norms, values, wishes, best possible offering, ideal offering and competing offerings (Järvelin\textsuperscript{120} 2001; Liljander & Strandvik\textsuperscript{121} 1995). We accept this view of service quality – namely that there happens a comparison. But the comparison is not between expectations and experience but between experience and the comparison standard (Rasila\textsuperscript{122b} 2009). The services provided by Tahsil offices face this problem of lack of a comparison standard. Hence perception scores are given more importance than expectation scores in this case.

Though it has a widespread appeal among service providers, SERVQUAL has been subjected to a number of criticisms. Some of the points of criticism raised by Francis Buttle\textsuperscript{123} (1995) have been discussed below-

A. Theoretical Criticism-

- **The Paradigm**- SERVQUAL is based on a disconfirmation paradigm rather than an attitudinal paradigm. It fails to draw on established economic, statistical and psychological theory.

- **Gaps model**- There is little evidence that customers assess service quality in terms of a difference between Performance and Expectation.

- **Process orientation**- SERVQUAL focuses on the process of service delivery rather than the outcome of the service delivery.

- **Dimensionality**- The five dimensions of SERVQUAL are not universal but they are more contextualized. There is a high degree of correlation between the five factors RATER. They cannot be independent and


\textsuperscript{122b} Rasila Heidi, ‘From B-To-B Service Quality To Customer Experience’, *Journal of Service Science*, 2009, Volume 2, Number 1 pp 35-43

separable. Some services may have all the factors as equally relevant in assessment of the service quality while some services may have one or a few of the factors as predominantly relevant in assessment of the service quality. (Carman\textsuperscript{124}, 1990; Saleh and Ryan\textsuperscript{125} 1992; Gagliano and hathcote\textsuperscript{126}, 1994; Babakus et al.\textsuperscript{127} 1993a). Babakus and Boller\textsuperscript{128} (1992) commented that ‘the domain of service quality may be factorially complex in some industries and very simple and uni-dimensional in others.’ These researchers concluded that the empirical evidence does not support a strictly five dimensional concept of service quality.

B. Operational Criticism-

- **Expectations** - The word expectation has multiple interpretations (polysemic). Customers use standards other than mere expectations. It also fails to measure absolute expectation. The term is relative.

- **Number of items** - The small number of items within each dimension cannot capture the variability within each RATER dimension. The number of items varies with the service industry under study. Parasuraman et al\textsuperscript{129} (1991b) acknowledge that new context specific items can be used to supplement SERVQUAL but caution that ‘the new items should be similar to the existing SERVQUAL items’.

- **Polarity** - The reverse orientation of the items in the scale causes confusion and errors by the respondents. Out of the 22 items in the SERVQUAL questionnaire 13 statements are positively worded while nine


\textsuperscript{127} Babakus, E., Pedrick, D.L. and Richardson, A.127 (1993) ‘Measuring perceived service quality within the airline catering service industry’, unpublished manuscript, Memphis State University, TN


corresponding to Responsiveness and Empathy are negatively worded. This confuses the respondents and makes them take more time to comprehend the statements.

- **Scale points**- The use of a seven points scale has been criticized in a number of cases on several grounds. It is applicable to SERVQUAL as well. The seven point scale basically lacks a verbal description/ label of the points from two to six. Another point is that the respondents generally fail to understand the meaning of the middle point- neutral or Don’t know/ can’t say (DK/CS). Babakus and Mangold\(^{130}\) (1992) opted to use a five point Likert scale on the ground that it would reduce the frustration level of respondents, improve patience and increase response rate and response quality.

- **Two administrations**- The responding customers are administered two sets of questionnaires- expectations and perceptions. Respondents get bored and disinterested and sometimes confused when two sets of questions are given to them. Carman\(^{131}\) (1990) is critical about timing of the administration of the two questionnaires and asking the respondents to complete them in one sitting. In case of the study by Parasuraman et al\(^{132}\) (1988) the respondents were asked about their service experience in the last three months. This has been criticized by Grönroos\(^{133}\) (1993). Carman\(^{134}\) (1990) observed that it was impractical to expect customers to complete an expectation inventory prior to a service encounter and a satisfaction/ perception inventory immediately afterwards. He suggested collecting the expectation- perception data with a single question at a

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single administration. Babakus and Boller\textsuperscript{135} (1992) and Babakus et al\textsuperscript{136} (1993) solved the problem by employing a single scale to collect gap data. They contend that expectations may be measured prior to service experience otherwise they may be biased. Clow and Vorhies\textsuperscript{137} (1993) found that –

‘1. When expectations and experience evaluations are measured simultaneously, respondents will indicate that their expectations were greater than they actually were before the service encounter.’ and 2. ‘Customers who had a negative experience with the service tend to overstate their expectations, creating a larger gap; customers who had a positive experience tend to understate their expectations, resulting a small gap’

- **Moments of truth** - A moment of truth is usually defined as an instance wherein the customer and the organization come into contact with one another in a manner that gives the customer an opportunity to either form or change an impression about the firm. (Carlzon\textsuperscript{138}, 1987) Many services are delivered over several encounters and moments of truth. The perception and even expectation of the customer may be different at each moment of truth. Hence catching the right moment is difficult and thus the distribution of the service experience over a few factors restricts the scope of the study.

### 2.9 Major Debates in Service Quality Area

There appear to be five major debates taking place in the service quality area. (Robert Johnston\textsuperscript{139}, 1994) One debate concerns the similarities and differences between the constructs of service quality and satisfaction (see e.g. Anderson and

\textsuperscript{135} Babakus E, Boller G. W. \textsuperscript{135} (1992), ‘An Empirical assessment of the SERVQUAL Scale’, Journal of Business Research, 24, 253-268


Sullivan\textsuperscript{140}, 1993; Bolton and Drew\textsuperscript{141}, 1991; Cronin and Taylor, 1992\textsuperscript{142}, 1994\textsuperscript{143}; Oliver\textsuperscript{144}, 1993; Parasuraman et al.\textsuperscript{145}, 1988; Zeithaml et al.\textsuperscript{146}, 1993). There appears to be a consensus emerging that satisfaction refers to the outcome of individual service transactions and the overall service encounter, whereas service quality is the customer’s overall impression of the relative inferiority/superiority of the organization and its services (Bitner and Hubbert\textsuperscript{147}, 1994).

A second debate is about the efficacy of the expectation-perception gap view of service quality, which is similar to the disconfirmation theory found in the consumer behavior literature (see, for example, Berry et al.\textsuperscript{148}, 1985; Grönroos\textsuperscript{149}, 1984, 1990\textsuperscript{150}; Haywood-Farmer and Nollet\textsuperscript{151}, 1991; Parasuraman et al.\textsuperscript{152}, 1994). Some researchers now believe that there is strong empirical evidence that service

quality should be measured using performance-based measures (see for example Babakus and Boller\textsuperscript{153}, 1992; Cronin and Taylor\textsuperscript{154}, 1994).

A third debate is concerned with the development of models that help our understanding of how the perception gap arises and how managers can minimize or manage its effect (see, for example, Brogowicz et al.\textsuperscript{155}, 1990; Grönroos\textsuperscript{156}, 1990; Gummesson and Grönroos\textsuperscript{157}, 1987; Parasuraman et al.\textsuperscript{158}, 1985).

A fourth debate concerns the definition and use of the zone of tolerance. Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml\textsuperscript{159} (1991) suggested that “the zone of tolerance is a range of service performance that a customer considers satisfactory”. The importance of the zone of tolerance is that customers may accept variation within a range of performance and any increase in performance within this area will only have a marginal effect on perceptions (Strandvik\textsuperscript{160}, 1994). Only when performance moves outside of this range will it have any real effect on perceived service quality (see also Johnston\textsuperscript{161}, 1995; Liljander and Strandvik\textsuperscript{162}, 1993).

\textsuperscript{160} Strandvik, T. (1994) Tolerance Zones in Perceived Service Quality, Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration, Helsinki
A fifth debate, and the area of interest for this study, concerns the identification of the determinants of service quality. This should be a central concern for service management academics and practitioners, as the identification of the determinants of service quality is necessary in order to be able to specify measure, control and improve customer perceived service quality. The next section provides an overview of the literature on service quality determinants.

Ladhari\textsuperscript{163} (2008, p. 68) stated that “It has been suggested that industry-specific measures of service quality might be more appropriate than a single generic scale”. This argument was supported by Dabholkar et al.\textsuperscript{164} (1996, p. 14) who stated that “It appears that a measure of service quality across industries is not feasible; therefore, future research on service quality should involve the development of industry-specific measures of service quality”. Ladhari\textsuperscript{165} (2008) reported that in recent years, more attention was paid by researchers and scholars toward the development of an alternative industry-specific research instruments for measuring service quality. Consequently, a number of industry-specific research instruments have been developed in the past several years in different service settings and various countries and cultural backgrounds (Albassam and Alshawi\textsuperscript{166}, 2010).

Ladhari\textsuperscript{167} (2008) summarized a list of theoretical and empirical criticisms of the model. First, he argued that the use of gap scores is not the right method because of the lack of the support in literature to consumers evaluating service quality in terms of perception-minus-expectation. He stated that it has been recommended that service quality is more precisely and correctly evaluated by measuring only perceptions of quality. On the other hand, he mentioned that the concept expectation is not well defined and can be interpreted from different perspectives; as a result, the

operationalization of SERVQUAL may have different interpretations as well. In addition, he pointed out that previous research suggested using perception-only scores rather than gap scores for the overall assessment of service quality. Bolton and Drew\textsuperscript{168} (1991) stated that assessments of overall service quality are affected only by perceptions of performance levels. They suggested that direct measures of disconfirmation are more important than expectations. Boulding et al\textsuperscript{169} (1993) also suggested that perceptions alone influence overall service quality. However, this procedure also gives rise to two issues: the first is disagreement over what really is being measured in SERVQUAL with expectations and the second is the problematic nature of the resulting difference scores. These two issues are resolved if one follows Cronin and Taylor\textsuperscript{170} (1992), and Teas (1993), who recommended that expectation ratings be eliminated altogether. In addition, Liljander\textsuperscript{171} (1994) states that there is more support for performance only models than for the disconfirmation model of service quality. Bolton and Drew\textsuperscript{172} (1991) stated that assessments of overall service quality are affected only by perceptions of performance levels. They suggested that direct measures of disconfirmation are more important than expectations. Boulding et al.\textsuperscript{173} (1993) also suggested that perceptions alone influence overall service quality (Osei et al\textsuperscript{174}, 2012). Hence in this study only perception scores have been considered in the main research for data collection and analysis.

Validity of (P-E) measurement framework has also come under attack due to problems with the conceptualization and measurement of expectation component of the SERVQUAL scale. While perception (P) is definable and measurable in a


\textsuperscript{174} James, Osei Mensah; Emmanuel, Owusu Damoah, ; Robert Aido (2012), ‘Assessing Farmers’ Satisfaction of Agronomic Services Received in Ghana Using the SERVQUAL Model- a Case Study of Kumasi Metropolis’ \textit{International Journal of Business and Social Science}, Vol. 3 No. 19; October 2012 pp 51 to 60.
straightforward manner as the consumer’s belief about service is experienced, expectation (E) is subject to multiple interpretations and as such has been operationalized differently by different authors/researchers (e.g., Babakus and Inhofe\textsuperscript{175}, 1991; Brown and Swartz\textsuperscript{176}, 1989; Dabholkar et al.\textsuperscript{177}, 2000; Gronroos\textsuperscript{178}, 1990; Teas\textsuperscript{179}, 1993, Teas\textsuperscript{180}1994).

Cronin and Taylor\textsuperscript{181} (1992) were amongst the researchers who levelled maximum attack on the SERVQUAL scale. They questioned the conceptual basis of the SERVQUAL scale and found it confusing with service satisfaction. They, therefore, opined that expectation (E) component of SERVQUAL be discarded and instead performance (P) component alone be used. They proposed what is referred to as the ‘SERVPERF’ scale. Besides theoretical arguments, Cronin and Taylor\textsuperscript{182} (1992) provided empirical evidence across four industries (namely banks, pest control, dry cleaning, and fast food) to corroborate the superiority of their ‘performance-only’ instrument over disconfirmation-based SERVQUAL scale. (Jain, Sanjay K. and Gupta Garima\textsuperscript{183}, 2004).

Despite the various shortcomings SERVQUAL has undoubtedly had an impact on the business and academic communities. This research has been designed


\textsuperscript{182} ibid

keeping in mind these concerns about SERVQUAL. This study would help improve our understanding of the service quality construct and assess the value of the SERVQUAL instrument.

2.10 Service Quality related studies in Government Sectors-

In the current socioeconomic scenario the service sector is gaining lots of importance. The public awareness and their demands are increasing. It is always observed that public services are criticized by the public on a number of grounds. Public Services are a mixed kind of services where both face-to-face and backroom components are involved. They differ from ‘pure’ services where there is high level of customer contact and ‘quasi-manufacturing services’ where there is less or no consumer contact (Chase, et al\textsuperscript{184}, 1984). This peculiar nature of public services makes it difficult to assess their quality.

A study on service quality in the Local Government of Mauritius has been conducted by drawing on front-line employees (FLE) and customer perceptions of service quality. The study investigates how closely customer expectations of service and FLE perceptions of customer expectations match. SERVQUAL is used to measure service quality amongst FLE and customers in a major public sector department in Mauritius. (Ramseook-Munhurrrun\textsuperscript{185}, 2010).

Most of the customer satisfaction literature has been related to the private sector where issues of price, value and choice come into play (Anderson and Fomell\textsuperscript{186}, 1994). Little has been published on government services (Scott and Shieff\textsuperscript{187}, 1993). However, increasingly, there have been efforts to measure and improve customer satisfaction with government or public services, and, to open many


of these services up to competition from the private sector (Nestor and Nigon\textsuperscript{188}, 1996).

In India, Sanjay Jain and Garima Gupta using an empirical study reported in Vikalpa (2004) that SERVQUAL Scale outperforms SERVPERF with higher diagnostic power. Deviprasad and Rajasekar\textsuperscript{189} also successfully developed RAILQUAL for measuring service quality for Indian railways in 2010. RAILQUAL was developed by adding 3 Railways related dimensions to SERVQUAL. Responses analyzed by factor analysis confirmed the reliability and validity of the instrument.

Public sector services are responsible and accountable to citizens and communities as well as to its customers. Several researchers have dealt with service quality in public services (Wisniewski and Donnelly\textsuperscript{190}, 1996; Rowley\textsuperscript{191}, 1998; Wisniewski\textsuperscript{192}, 2001; Brysland and Curry\textsuperscript{193}, 2001). Brysland and Curry (2001) stated that the literature clearly supported the use of SERVQUAL in the public sector. According to Gowan et al\textsuperscript{194} (2001), service provision is more complex in the public sector because it is not simply a matter of meeting expressed needs, but of finding out unexpressed needs, setting priorities, allocating resources and publicly justifying and accounting for what has been done. In addition, Caron and Giauque\textsuperscript{195} (2006) pointed out that public sector employees are currently confronted with new professional challenges arising from the introduction of new principles and tools inspired by the

\textsuperscript{188} Nestor, S. and Nigon, M. 1996 ‘Privatisation in Europe, Asia and Latin America: what lessons can be drawn?’ In Privatisation in Europe, Asia and Latin America, OECD, Paris, pp.9-19


shift to new public management. Anderson\textsuperscript{196} (1995) also measured the quality of service provided by a public university health clinic. Using 15 statements representing the five-dimensions of SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al.\textsuperscript{197}, 1988), she assessed the quality of service provided by the clinic at the University of Houston Health Center. Patients were found to be generally dissatisfied with the five dimensions of SERVQUAL. The highest dissatisfaction was felt with assurance. On the other hand, tangibles and empathy exhibited the lowest level of dissatisfaction. Using the SERVQUAL approach, Wisniewski\textsuperscript{198} (2001) carried out a study to assess customer satisfaction within the public sector across a range of Scottish Councils services. In the library service, the analysis of gap scores revealed that tangibles and reliability had negative gaps which indicate that customer expectations were not met. On the other hand, responsiveness and assurance were positive implying that customer expectations were actually exceeded by the service provided. Furthermore, Donnelly et al\textsuperscript{199} (2006) carried out a study to explore the application of SERVQUAL approach to access the quality of service of Strathclyde Police in Scotland. The survey captures customers’ expectations of an excellent police service and compares these with their perceptions of the service delivered by Strathclyde Police. The paper also reports on a parallel SERVQUAL survey of police officers in Strathclyde to examine how well the force understands its customers’ expectations and how well its internal processes support the delivery of quality services in the police department. It was found that Strathclyde Police appears to have a good understanding of the service quality expectations of their customers as represented by the responses of elected councilors in the area covered by the force. There is room for improvement in service quality performance both from the viewpoint of the customer and through police force attention to the definition of, and compliance with, service quality standards. Agus et


al. (2007) carried out a research to identify management and customer perceptions of service quality practices in the Malaysian Public sector. It is important to note that whereas the SERVQUAL model focused on identifying “gaps” between expectations and actual delivery, their model focused only on perceptions of actual service delivery. They used nine of the ten service dimensions identified by Parasuraman et al. (1985). Their study looked at the perceptions of management and customers, thereby excluding the views of FLE. It is thus observed that most of the studies to date, have concentrated on service quality in US and European public service sector, while some more recent studies have looked at service quality in developing countries (Agus et al., 2007; Ramseook-Munhurrun, 2010).

Little is known about service quality perceptions in India (Jain and Gupta, 2004) because research focus has primarily been on developed countries (Herbig and Genestre, 1996). Given the relatively mature markets where the service quality scales have been developed, it seems unlikely that these measures would be applicable to India without adaptation. Angur, Natarajan, and Jahera (1999) examined the service quality in the retail banking industry and reported a poor fit of the scale to the empirical data. Despite this, several researchers (Sharma and Mehta, 2004; Bhat, 2005) have used the SERVQUAL scale in similar settings.
with no assessment of the psychometric soundness of the scale. (Kaul Subhashini\textsuperscript{208}, 2005)

2.10.1 Quality Certifications in Government

The ISO 9000 series developed by the International Organization of Standards since 1987 is an international standard accepted for quality assurance in the field of production and service provision, which offers indicators and positions regarding the manner in which a quality system is elaborated within an organization. The series consists of instructions for using the standard (ISO 9000) and requirements for the organizational processes specified for the organizations performing different activities (Engel\textsuperscript{209}, 2003, p. 24). The ISO 9000 series works with the instrument of certification by third parties (executed by certification structures) and allows organizations to officially obtain certificates for their activities. The certificates are issued for a limited period of time, but can also be withdrawn. Concerning the application of international quality regulations in public administration, the first quality regulation was ISO 9000; there are also applied regulations regarding the environment ISO 14000, ISO 17020 and ISO 17025 and technical regulations in the field of public administration. It is appreciated that the application of the ISO 9000 standards is useful, especially, for organizations lacking the transparency of the written rules, of structures and processes (Löffler\textsuperscript{210}, 2001, p. 28). Many of the Collectorates in Maharashtra are keen on process standardization and getting ISO certification for their offices. ‘Does the ISO 9001 certification really serve the purpose of quality management and service improvement?’ is a question.

Hence some of the aspects of customer perception, like feeling safe, are found non-relevant to the customers of these services. The trust of the customers in the Government setup plays a big role in the expectations and perceptions of the customers.


2.11 Deming’s 14 points on Quality Management-

Edward Deming\textsuperscript{211} referred as one of the Gurus of service quality offered fourteen key principles to managers for transforming business effectiveness. These principles, a core concept on implementing total quality management, are a set of management practices to help companies / organizations increase their quality and productivity.

1. Create constancy of purpose for improving products and services.
2. Adopt the new philosophy.
3. Cease dependence on inspection to achieve quality.
4. End the practice of awarding business on price alone; instead, minimize total cost by working with a single supplier.
5. Improve constantly and forever every process for planning, production and service.
6. Institute training on the job.
7. Adopt and institute leadership.
8. Drive out fear.
9. Break down barriers between staff areas.
10. Eliminate slogans, exhortations and targets for the workforce.
11. Eliminate numerical quotas for the workforce and numerical goals for management.
12. Remove barriers that rob people of pride of workmanship, and eliminate the annual rating or merit system.
13. Institute a vigorous program of education and self-improvement for everyone.
14. Put everybody in the company to work accomplishing the transformation

Reilly Norman B \textsuperscript{212}(1994) in ‘Quality: What Makes it Happen?’ has commented that ‘massive training is required to instill the courage to break with tradition. Every activity and every job is a part of the process.’


2.12 Training and service quality

It is often argued a strong human resource focus is a vital component to helping achieve sustainable perceived service quality. This is because consumers of a service are involved in an understated, but important, personal and psychological experience (Schneider\textsuperscript{213}, 1994, p.82). The relationship between a successful service quality strategy and a considered human resource management (HRM) policy in the service industry has been analyzed by a number of studies which have highlighted the link between a successful HRM strategy and service quality outcomes (Haynes and Fryer\textsuperscript{214}, 2000; Lashley\textsuperscript{215}, 1998). Training forms an integral part of human resource development strategies in any organization. Gronroos states the first rule for achieving successful ongoing service quality is; “people develop and maintain good and enduring customer contacts. Employees ought to act as consultants, who are prepared to do their duty when the customer needs them and in a way the customer wants. The firm which manages best to do this strengthens its customer relationships and achieves the best profitability” (Gronroos\textsuperscript{216}, 2000). In order to maintain and improve the quality of service and to ensure customer satisfaction, quality staff is required and that, in turn, requires HRM practices such as ongoing staff training and strategic career development planning (Van der Wagen\textsuperscript{217}, 2005). Schneider\textsuperscript{218} (1994) suggests “without customer focused HRM, inappropriate people may be hired, training might fail to provide people with the kinds of knowledge, skills and abilities required, supervision might be too loose or too tight and rewards might be dispensed for the wrong kinds of activities”. Therefore customer needs and expectations must be at the Center of any HRM and service quality strategy and be emphasized throughout all organizational operations so as to sustain a successful operation. Often customers

\textsuperscript{217} Van der Wagen, L. (2005) Building Quality service: With competency based human resource management (Mumbai: Jaico Imprint)
judge the quality of the service they receive largely on their assessment of the people who provide the service (Lovelock and Wright\textsuperscript{219}, 2002). Organizations, who understand this successfully, devote significant efforts to the recruitment; training and motivation of their staff, so as to ensure their customers experience a service exceeding their expectations (Lovelock and Wright\textsuperscript{220a}, 2002). Unfortunately at times, organizations find difficulty in maintaining superiority based on the tangible elements of the service encounter, as competitors can easily replicate these elements of the service offer. However, a positive personal interaction with an obliging employee can readily demonstrate a firm’s superior service (Kandampully\textsuperscript{221}, 2002). Training is a crucial part of the ‘armoury’ of any employer in ensuring sustainable perceived service quality is attained. The importance of training has been identified as a way to achieve professionalism, improve the levels of service quality, improve consistency and maintain a set standard. Additionally it helps to increase the experience of staff, ensure they do it the right way, guarantees standards and systems of work, attains timeliness and reliability, increases communication and stimulates staff while helping deliver the economic bottom line (Delahaye\textsuperscript{222}, 2005). In spite of this training has been identified as largely an ad hoc process. The primary purpose of a training program is to help achieve overall organizational objectives but, at the same time, an effective training program must demonstrably contribute to a trainee’s personal goals (Nankervis et al\textsuperscript{223}, 2005). Cannon\textsuperscript{224} (2002) argues “crucial internal services include employee training and development in preparation for career advancement and continual professional learning”. Nankervis, Compton and Baird\textsuperscript{225} (2005) also argue successful training requires relevance via a thorough needs analysis, precise goals and


\textsuperscript{220} ibid


outcomes, employee involvement and understanding and a transparent evaluation and feedback process. (Cairncross et al\textsuperscript{226}, 2008)

Training has direct relationship with the employees’ performance. Basically training is a formal & systematic modification of behavior through learning which occurs as result if education, instruction, development, & planned experience (Michael Armstrong\textsuperscript{227}, 2000). Because of the practical implications of training, it is important to have training that is effective. Studies have proven that more costly but effective training can save money that is wasted on cheap but inefficient training (Ginsberg\textsuperscript{228}, 1997). Therefore, training has acquired a strategic value for service industries (Partlow\textsuperscript{229}, 1996; Tihanyi et al.\textsuperscript{230}, 2000; Boudreau et al.\textsuperscript{231}, 2001), since service quality depends on employee customer care effectiveness (Tsaur and Lin\textsuperscript{232}, 2004).

Training has been given priority for excellent services delivery. Quality control of services is very difficult. Manufacturing of products can be checked in the production area before any customer is aware of any defect (Juran\textsuperscript{233}, 1992). Automation can used to standardize production process to ensure consistency. This is simply less possible with services. Since the customer is involved in the service delivery process, there is no opportunity to check quality of service in advance. Customers are instantly aware of breakdown in services. Further since humans deliver services to other humans, automation can rarely be used. Therefore staff training in

service delivery becomes a high priority for service firms (Kandampully J\textsuperscript{234}, 2001). A large number of researchers have studied the importance of training in service quality in restaurants. (Kandampully\textsuperscript{235}, 2007; Cairncross et al\textsuperscript{236}, 2008; Khanfar\textsuperscript{237}, 2011; Xiao Yang\textsuperscript{238}, 2010; Ul Afaq et al\textsuperscript{239}, 2011;) Staff training is an essential and indispensable part of Human Resource Management, The importance and value of staff training has long been recognized. Consider the popular and often repeated quotation, ‘Give a person a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a person to fish and you feed him for a lifetime’ (Mcclelland\textsuperscript{240} 2002). This understandable and far-sighted saying was from a famous ancient Chinese thinker and philosopher Confucius. This saying has explained clearly how important it is to train an employee to conquer his/her work than just give him/her a job of income (Yang\textsuperscript{241}, 2010). Acknowledgement of the importance of training is evident in the introduction of the National Training Policy in 1996 (Maxwell et al\textsuperscript{242}, 2001). This objective tries to assess the impact of training on the quality of the services provided by the Tahsil Offices in Maharashtra and Rajasthan; to find out the relationship between training and quality of services and to find out whether training can improve the quality of services.


\textsuperscript{235} ibid


\textsuperscript{241} Xiao Yang, 2010, ‘The Importance of Staff Training in The Hotel Industry - Case study: Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel’ , Business Economics and Tourism 2010, Vaasan University of Applied Sciences, Degree Program of Hotel and Restaurant Business

The primary purpose of a training program is to help achieve overall organizational objectives but, at the same time, an effective training program must demonstrably contribute to a trainee’s personal goals (Nankervis, Compton and Baird243, 2005). Cannon244 (2002) argues “crucial internal services include employee training and development in preparation for career advancement and continual professional learning” (p.94). Nankervis, Compton and Baird245 (2005) also argue successful training requires relevance via a thorough needs analysis, precise goals and outcomes, employee involvement and understanding and a transparent evaluation and feedback process. Taylor and Davies246 (2004) argue one of the most important core functions of human resources (HR) that can lead to the attainment of numerous benefits for the organization is a strategic training plan. Their argument in regard to training is based on Hay’s study which found training employees to provide quality service is essentially a large contributing factor leading to customer satisfaction and positive perceptions of service quality. “It has been long recognized effective staff training allows an organization to provide a unique and differentiating standard of service resulting in increased profitability to service providers” (Hays247, 1999, p.466).

2.13 Study of service quality in this research

This study thus aims to find out the service quality criteria for the revenue administration and the ways and means to improve the service quality through either training initiatives or non-training interventions. This study uses the standard SERVQUAL instrument only in the pilot study. The limitations of the SERVQUAL instrument for the study of Administrative services were evident in the pilot study. The typical SERVQUAL instrument focuses primarily on the expectations and perceptions of the external customers and very little scope is left to the researcher to...

study the perceptions of the internal customers. The services provided by the Tahsil offices are not aimed at profit generation. Also, these services do not have any competitive advantage due to their exclusiveness. The concept of service quality in case of Government service is quite dilute because of the lack of competition. The customers have no choice other than the Tahsil office to get the necessary services. The relationship between service quality, expectations, perception and training has been studied in the SERVPERF model by Cronin and Taylor\(^{248,249}\) (1992, 1994). The aspect of customer satisfaction is applicable to this service but customer retention is not applicable because of the monopoly of the service. Also, the market share and revenue link are also not strongly applicable to this service due to its highly monopolistic nature.

2.14 Employee Stress

Stress experienced by the employees in their workplace has negative impact on their health, performance and their behavior in the organization. Thus, stress needs to be managed effectively so as to set off these harmful consequences.

Kelley and Hoffman\(^{250}\) (1997) have researched a closely aligned area - that of the moods of service providers and customers which they say has received scant attention in the empirical literature even though it is one of the few antecedent states potentially affecting all service interactions. They found that employee positive affect was positively related to altruistic organizational citizenship behaviors and customer-oriented behavior. According to Zeithaml and Bitner\(^{251}\) (1996, p.304), there is “concrete evidence that satisfied employees make for satisfied customers” (and satisfied customers can in turn reinforce employees' sense of satisfaction in their jobs). Similarly, Bowen\(^{252}\) (1996) supports the view that there is a linkage between


employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction, pointing to, amongst other work, Heskett\textsuperscript{253} et al.'s (1994) service profit chain, and many business practitioners maintain that employees must be satisfied before external customers will be satisfied (Gremler, Bitner and Evans\textsuperscript{254}, 1994). Although Hartline and Ferrell\textsuperscript{255} (1996) found that employee job satisfaction had a positive effect on customers' perceived service quality, they report that only a modest correlation has been formed between job satisfaction and employee performance but they suggest this is due to the measurement of employee performance in terms of outcomes rather than behaviors; the logic of this rationalization perhaps not being readily acceptable as the latter should lead to the former. Similarly, Piercy and Morgan\textsuperscript{256} (1995) argue that the "happy employee" leading to a "happy customer" is a largely untested assertion.

Zeithaml and Bitner\textsuperscript{257} (1996, p.305) have concluded that "ultimately there is a connection between employee tension levels, poorer quality service and negative customer reactions" and suggested that some writers have gone further and indicated unless service employees are happy in their jobs that customer satisfaction will be difficult to achieve. (Bennington & Cummane\textsuperscript{258}, 1998)

The design of the study and methodology adopted for the research is discussed in detail in the following chapter 3 on Research Methodology.


