A cursory glance at the evolution of the human civilisation reveals the path treded by our ancestors across the ages till the advent of religion. Thereafter, most of which is recorded history, polity – initially monarchy followed by democracies led by republics – ultimately established the rule of law as we see its manifestations across all aspects of our professional, financial, social, and political life. Up until this period the predominant global occupation was agriculture and a gentle portion of surplus agricultural output contributed towards trade. When religion became a state subject, the enlightened agnostic/atheistic populace of the state found it difficult to cope up with the state policy of a unified religion compelling them to come out with a creative standoff with the established powers through a means called science, whose applied aspects later led to the development of technology which paved the way to mechanised production from the manual labour thus effectively leading to the industrial revolution – a direct result of disconcert and displeasure of the intelligentsia towards the powers that be existing at the time. The phased acceptance of the industrial revolution contributed to enhanced standard of living as a result of more and better products leading to satisfaction of many a needs and wants of most of the people across the geography which lead to the demand for services. Typically, any economy is made up of three components: agriculture, manufacturing, and services. It is the composition of these three elements which play a crucial part in labelling a country as the underdeveloped, the developing, the developed, and the superdeveloped. In essence, a country with a greater contribution from the service and manufacturing sectors is the best type opined currently by the economists worldwide. Service sector demands the practitioners to possess a whole lot of specialised and/or expert
physical and intellectual skills cutting across the barriers of time, space, culture, gender, language, religion, caste/sect, education, and status. Aviation industry, which is a subset of the hospitality sector, is a very important part of the service sector as it is the only known technology which transports humans from point A to point B in the shortest possible time – though teleportation and quantum loop have been proposed for quite some time, but they remain largely theoretical in nature, conceptual at best.

Quality is a sine qua non for the service industry since it is sought by all organisations, especially in the service sector. In this context, the current research study took the intellectual task of examining the present state of affairs with regard to the civil aviation in the country. Accordingly, the study identified the research objectives to be studied and selected five airports viz. CIA-Chennai, CSIA-Mumbai, IGAI-New Delhi, KIA-Bengaluru, and NSCBIA-Kolkata across the strategic locations of the country and five leading airline companies operating on domestic routes viz. Air India, GoAir, IndiGo, Jet Airways, and SpiceJet representing both the FSCs and LCCs. A structured questionnaire was designed for data collection based on modifications of Parasuraman et al.’s (1988) SERVQUAL model. Upon mustering the requisite data, it was analysed using statistical packages, the results were interpreted in the context of research objectives, and the set hypotheses were tested. Based on the findings, among the airline companies, IndiGo has been consistently good at almost all the sub-components of the service quality; Air India and Jet Airways – both FSCs – lag behind other service providers i.e., IndiGo, GoAir, and SpiceJet – all LCCs. Similarly, CSIA, Mumbai outshines (though in a marginal way) every other airport considered for the study.