Approaches of Tourism Services

Travel is multidimensional phenomenon that, on the one hand, evokes images of the adventure, romance, mystery, and exotic places and on the other, involves severing realities such as business, health, and personal emergencies. Since the 1970's the term tourism has been commonly used to describe the field of travel and reflected to some extent the increasing growth in pleasure travelers, who usually were called tourists. However tourism actually comprises only one segment of the travel market, a fact that was recognized in one of the earliest modern writing in the field of, the travel trade.

Travel as an activity dates back to the earliest of civilizations, through the motivation to travel has taken many different forms over the centuries. These reasons range from health, education, and religion to commerce, culture, and recreation. Many important factors have converged to influence the volume and direction of long-haul discretionary travel, including perceived political stability and safety of a destination, economic prosperity, comparative currency value, availability of leisure time and efficient transportation. The transportation improvements of the past half-century for, for example have been a decisive factor in the development of mass tourism on domestic and international market.

The travel industry today is enormous both in terms of number of travelers and travel expenditures, the latter of which has caused many governments to actively seek tourism development as a means of economic growth. Countries and specific regions or destinations within countries, receive and generate varying amounts of tourism traffic depending on such factors as location, economic conditions and types of attractions.
People also travel for many different reasons, including business, visiting friends and relatives, and vacation. In terms of vacation or leisure travel, motivations for selecting particular destinations also vary. Grasping the underlying factors that affect travel volumes and flows is an important element of private sector industries specific to tourism.

4.1 Factors that motivate people to participate in pleasure travel:

- Cultural experience
- Leisure/escape
- Personal values
- Social contact
- Social trends

Other factors could be added to the list, but the intention here is to explore some of the key psychological motivations for undertaking pleasure travel.

Cultural Experience:

Humanistic reasons such as cross-cultural exchanges, experiencing how other people live, and fostering international understanding may be a form of a pleasure travel, which satisfies curiosity about the cultures, lifestyles, and places. Studies among U.S. travelers abroad typically demonstrate that seeking a new cultural experience is a prime reason for international pleasure travel. With respect to the two largest travel markets closest to the United States-Canada and Mexico-Americans tend to view Canadian culture as having distinction from their own but regard as completely different cultural experience.
Leisure/Escape:

As a leisure activity, travel may fulfill an individual’s needs for catharsis, independence, understanding, affiliations, and getting along with others. Leisure travel is also becoming a means of maintaining a healthy balance between work and relaxation or of escaping routine cares, especially with the accelerated pace of modern life. Escape for some people leads to taking adventure tours or pursuing recreational interests; for others, escape means a rest and relaxation.

Personal Value

The concept of personal values is known to be an important travel motivator. Travelers during the Greek and Roman eras traveled to satisfy personal values, such as the quest for spiritual enlightenment. Personal values are still important motivators for traveling today.

"Personal values appear particularly useful in describing those individuals who visit a specific travel attraction versus those who do not visit the attractions. This comparison allows identification of a value comparison profile."

This conclusion was reached by researchers who studied the relationship between personal values and travel decisions of South Carolina visitors and no visitors. Travelers to Lourdes, Mecca, and other holy sites do so to satisfy deep personal values. Other personal values such as patriotism and wholesomeness might be fulfilled by visiting Cape Canaveral and Disney World.

Social Contract

Studies show that the populations of unmarried individuals and senior citizens are large and growing but remain virtually untapped markets. Some tour operators are taking notice of these figures and are catering to these markets by grouping individuals together with similar interest. For windows, empty-nesters,
singles and many others, they enjoy the feeling of companionship when traveling alone and not worrying about with whom to eat or with whom to sightsee.

**Social Trends**

Travel for many people represents fashion. Travel to “in places” can provide a mean of mingling with the jet set and trendsetters. It also can serve as informal means of being part for a social group. Countless other factors also motivate people to travel. Although the research is limited, we do know that people will react differently and seek different avenues of pleasure according to their own psychological, social, physical and cultural dispositions. Changes in their physical and social environment also will influence their motivations for "getting away forms it all."

It is important to recognize that motivations to travel, whatever they may be, are essential in understanding the growth in travel and tourism. Very often, this simple fact is overlooked by planner, developers, and operators. Even with the time and money to travel, a larger proportion of the populations still choose not to do so. Conversely, a small proportion of the population travels frequently and accounts substantial portion of the trips taken.

Central to the entire issue of tourism development and the movement of people, however, is the question of what motivates people to travels, whether for satisfying economic, political, educational, religious, recreational, health, social, or personal needs. The travel market is a dynamic one. Changing lifestyle and demographic characteristics continue to affect travel flows, the development of new travel products, and the way business is conducted within the industry. Tourism-related research to identify trends and travel motivation and analyze markets has consequently become of paramount importance.
It is important to understand that tourism has a significance reaching far above its educational, cultural, or environmental implications. Not only does it affect a country's finances and balance of trade, but, for certain authoritarian societies, exposure to people of other countries may have political ramifications as well. Efforts have been amide by numerous international and regional tourism organizations to facilitate travel among countries; and there has been agreement in principle that the simplification of travel is a desired goal. Notwithstanding these intentions, travel barriers imposed by governments continue to be a major obstacle in the development of international travel.

**Planning destinations:**

With the advent of mass tourism, the need of engage in formal destination planning in and to establish sound policies with respect to development has become more evident. Not only for the sake of residents who are captive hosts in the visitor destination or just for the preservation or conservation of natural resources, that proper planning also helps to ensure the sustainability of a destination. Closely tied to the success of any destination are the specific markets severed by the community and the various types of traveler personalities that must be accommodated in the developing supporting attractions. Destination that have failed to plant for the orderly growth of tourism with special attention to community and visitor needs have frequently paid the price when problems of a social and environmental nature become overwhelming and once booming tourism traffic began to disappear.

Destination planning entails numerous processes and activates in the conscious planning, financing, developing and marketing of destination to attract visitors. It requires the cooperation and commitment of many parties, including
government officials, community leaders, architects, engineers, investors, environmentalist, socialist, economists, and other experts. It requires also an understanding of the concept of environmental and social carrying capacities of tourist communities on the part of the decision-makers. The key to orderly development seem to lie in proper planning for controlled development, awareness and vigilance on the part of host communities and governments and careful monitoring of actions. Above all, destination development requires education and the understanding of the rights and responsibilities of both hosts and visitors.

4.2 Indian Tourism Industries

India’s governmental bodies have also made a significant impact in tourism by requiring that each and every state of India have a corporation to administer support issues related to tourism. The tourism industry of India is based on certain core nationalistic ideals and standards which are: Swaagat or welcome, Sahyog or cooperation, Soochanaa or information, Sanrachanaa or infrastructure, Suvidha or facilitation, Safaai or cleanliness and Surakshaa or security.

The tourism industry in India is substantial and vibrant, and the country is fast becoming a major global destination. India’s travel and tourism industry is one of them most profitable industries in the country, and also credited with contributing a substantial amount of foreign exchange. This is illustrated by the fact that during 2006, four million tourists visited India and spent US $8.9 billion. Several reasons are cited for the growth and prosperity of India’s travel and tourism industry. Economic growth has added millions annually to the ranks of India’s middle class, a group that is driving domestic tourism growth. Disposable income in India has grown by 10.11% annually from 2001-2006, and much of that is being spent on travel. Thanks in part to its booming IT and outsourcing industry
a growing number of business trips are made by foreigners to India, who will often add a weekend break or longer holiday to their trip. Foreign tourists spend more in India than almost any other country worldwide. Tourist arrivals are projected to increase by over 22% per year through till 2010, with a 33% increase in foreign exchange earnings recorded in 2004. The Tourism Ministry has also played an important role in the development of the industry, initiating advertising campaigns such as the “Incredible India” campaign, which promoted India’s culture and tourist attractions in a fresh and memorable way. The campaign helped create a colorful image of India in the minds of consumers all over the world, and has directly led to an increase in the interest among tourists. The tourism industry has helped growth in other sectors as diverse as horticulture, handicrafts, agriculture, construction and even poultry. Both directly and indirectly, increased tourism in India has created jobs in a variety of related sectors. The numbers tell the story: almost 20 million people are now working in the India’s tourism industry. Tourism in India has registered significant growth in the recent years. In 1951, International Tourist Arrivals stood at around 17 thousand only while the same has now gone up to 3.91 million in 2005.

The upward trend is expected to remain travel agency in the coming years. Tourism is the third largest net earner of foreign exchange for the country recording earnings of US $ 5731 million in 2005, a growth of 20.2% over 2004. It is also one of the sectors which employ the largest number of manpower. The first ever Tourism Satellite Accounts for India compiled by NCAER for the year 2002-03 showed that tourism employed 38.8 million persons, directly and indirectly, which was 8.3% of the total employment in the country and who contributed 5.8% of the GDP. These figures are estimated to have increased to 41.85 million
employed in 2003-04 with a GDP contribution of 5.9%. Various studies have also shown that tourism generates the highest employment per unit of investment for the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled. The World Travel and Tourism council (WTTC) has identified India as one of the foremost growth centers in the world in the coming decade. While the growth in tourism has been impressive, India's share in total global tourism arrivals and earnings is quite insignificant. It is an accepted fact that India has tremendous potential for development of tourism. The diversity of India's natural and cultural richness provides the basis of a wide range of tourist products and experiences, which embrace business, leisure, culture, adventure, spirituality, eco-tourism and many other pursuits. Apart from acknowledging the traditionally recognized advantages of developing tourism for the promotion of national integration, international understanding, earning of foreign exchange and vast employment generation, it can play a major role in furthering the socio-economic objectives of nation.

The Ministry of Tourism adopted a multi-pronged approach in order to achieve this growth. Providing a congenial atmosphere for tourism development, strengthening the tourism infrastructure and hospitality related services, integrated development of identified destinations and circuits, integrating elements of tourism, emphasizing on culture and clean civic life marketing of tourism products. Along with a branding exercise and positioning India as a high value destination in the new key markets and giving thrust on the human resource development activities have been the hallmarks of this strategy. The focus of product development in the States also underwent a change by enhanced outlays for destination development up to an amount of Rs. 5 crore and 'circuit development' up to an amount of Rs. 8 crore. A new proposal was moved to allocate up to Rs. 50
crocé for individual destinations with high tourist footfalls in order to totally redesign the experience of the tourist through greater organization and provision of civic facilities. The important initiatives taken by the Government to improve the flow of foreign tourists into the country and thereby increasing the country's share in the world tourism included the following:-

1. Beginning of cruise tourism by an international shipping Travel Agency.
2. Direct approach to the consumers through electronic and print media through the “Incredible India” Campaign called “Colours of India”.
3. Creation of World Class Collaterals.
5. An integrated campaign in South East Asia to promote Buddhist sites in India.
6. Direct co-operative marketing with tour operators and wholesalers overseas.
7. Greater focus in the emerging markets particularly in the region of China, South Korea, Japan and South East Asia.
8. Participation in over 185 Trade Fairs & Exhibitions all over the world.
10. Use of Internet and Web marketing.
12. Re-enforcing hospitality programmes including grant of air passages to invite media personnel and tour operators on familiarization tours to India to get first hand knowledge on various tourism products.
13. Launching of road shows in key source markets of Europe, America, South East Asia and the Middle East.
14. Focusing on growth of hotel infrastructure particularly budget hotels.
15. Enhancing connectivity through augmentation of air capacity and improving road infrastructure to major tourist attractions.
16. Introduction of the Medical Visa.
17. Guidelines formulated for the classification of time-share resorts, serviced apartments, guest houses and home-stay accommodation.

Impressive strides were made in the field of Human Resource Development. The Institute of Hotel Management continued to be the backbone of manpower training for hospitality industry in the country. The scheme of 'Capacity Building for Service Providers' also continued to be implemented for providing basic skills to unorganized sector service providers engaged in activities having direct interaction with the tourists. The first Phase of the "Atithi Devo Bhava" Programme was completed during which over 26,000 stakeholders in seven cities were trained. The allocation of plan funds was raised from Rs.500.00 crore in 2004-05 to Rs.786 crore in 2005-06. The new priorities and initiatives have been actuated with a sound backing of a National Tourism Policy.

4.3 Profile of Nashik Tourism

Nashik is famous religious center of ancient India. It is the gateway of Khandesh. It is situated on the banks of holy river Godavari. It is believed that Lord Rama resided over here during his period of exile. Due to the importance of river Godavari the religious culture has been developed since historical era. The old city is developed during Maratha Emperor and Peshwas. Many structures, temples, bathing ghats, big residential buildings called ‘Wadas’, were constructed during this period. The religious tourism traffic to Nashik, which includes the holy places of Trimbakeshwar and Shirdi, is tremendous all the year round. The Pandav
Caves (a group of Buddhist caves) and the Chambar Caves (Jain caves) also attract a lot of tourist traffic. The major temple complexes are located around the Godavari river front, which along with the bathing ghats are in the old city area. These were built mainly during the Peshwa period, when the river front was the most important urban space, with the merging of the religious, secular, and commercial functions.

The River Godavari turns south as it flows under the Victoria Bridge, and thereon up to the Gadge Maharaj Bridge its basin is fragmented into various Kunds (bathing Ghats). These Kunds are distributed between the Sunder Narayan Temple and the Mukteshwar Temple. These Kunds have different significance and history. In later years, it is said; acknowledging importance of Kumbha Mela Lord Rama with his Guru Kashyap stayed and lived for one year in Trimbakeshwar. During this period he performed all the religious rites like Yatra, shraddha etc near Kushavarta.

**Why every 12 years?**

Amrut had to be saved from Danavas. So Gods had to hide it at different places - Swargalok, Mrutyulok and Patallok. Gods were on Mrutyulok (earth) for twelve days. Gods twelve days are equal to 12 years for Mrutyulok. Thus Gods were on
earth for 12 years with Amrut. Hence every 12 years Kumbha Mela is celebrated at the four places, where a few drops of Amrut had fallen.

**Where and when?**

Kumbha Mela is a mammoth fair where saints and devotees gather. Kumbha Mela is celebrated at the aforesaid four places depending on the positions of planets and stars.

- When Jupiter (Guru) and Sun are in zodiac sign Leo (Simha Rashi) it is celebrated in Trimbakeshwar, Nashik.
- When Sun is in zodiac sign Aries (Mesha Rashi) it is celebrated at Haradwar.
- When Jupiter is in zodiac sign Taurus (Vrishabha Rashi) and Sun is in zodiac sign Capricorn (Makar Rashi) Kumbha Mela is celebrated at Prayag.
- When Guru and Sun are in zodiac sign Scorpio (Vrishchik Rashi) the Mela is celebrated at Ujjain.

Recognizing the importance of the Sinhastha Kumbha Mela Shri Shankaracharya appealed the disciples of his Vaidik Dharma to assemble at the time of Sinhastha Kumbha Mela. Following his appeal, till now devotees, pilgrims, and people of various sects and religions gather together for Kumbha Mela.

There are dwelling places for different sects. They are called Akhada? The names of these Akhadas are Shree Niranjani, Shree Junadatta (Bhairav), Shree Mahanirvani, Shree Atal, Shree Avahana, Shree Anand, Shree Pancha Agni, Shree Nathpanthi Gorakhnath, Shree Vaishnav Bairagi, Shree Udasini Panchayati Bada, Shree Udasini Naya, Shree Nirmal Panchayati etc. They have been established at
different times and worship their own deity. Leaders of the different sects have arrived at a consensus to follow a specific sequence for taking bath. E.g. In Haridwar Mela, Niranjani Gosawi will take bath first and then Nirwani Gosawi will bath. In Trimbakeshwar, first Niranjani Gosawi will take bath and after they leave Kushawarta Teertha, Nirvani Gosawi will take bath. After them the old Udasee sadhu followed by new Udasee Sadhus will take bath. The Nashik Kumbh Mela is a mammoth affair with over three and a half million people attending it. Thousands of Sadhus and holy men and millions of pilgrims immerse themselves in the holy Ramkund and Kushavarta reservoirs. The peak festival days are August 14 and 25 and September 8 and 20. During the Kumbha Mela, Nashik City and Trimbakeshwar are in a fantastic festive mood. The festive and religious mood makes people get away from their daily chores and experience the spiritual ecstasy.

Akhadas
Late Kusumagraj alias Vinayak Waman Shirwadkar is the recipient of the prestigious Dnyanpeeth Award for Marathi literature. His encouragement, Kusumagraj Pratishthan started to give Janasthan Puraskar to the creative belles-letter writer of Marathi literature. The Janasthan Puraskar is given every alternative year and consists of Rs. one lakh. Janasthan is the name given to this trust, because that is the old name of the Nashik city. Then Pratishthan start to give Godavari Gaurav Puraskar. But It is not a Puraskar (an award), it is Namaskar (Greeting) says Mr. V. V. Shirwadkar. His words express the view of setting up Godavari Gaurav, which is to pay respect and express gratitude to those who have rendered remarkable and excellent performance. The growth of tourism in India has been rapid in the last five years. Tourist’s arrivals have gone up by more than 25% and foreign exchange earnings have jumped by 40%. The rapid growth in domestic tourism can be attributed to the ever increasing middle class, increase in disposable income, improved facilities, stress on urban families, and improved connectivity to tourist destinations. Nashik is the tourist’s attraction ranging from caves, temples, ancient forts, pilgrimage centers, rich traditions of festival and culture. Almost daily 3 to 5 thousand pilgrims come and take holy dip on the ghats.

4.4 Tourism and Cultural Change

Tourism is one of the most important and rapidly expanding economic, social and cultural phenomena of the contemporary world. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, tourism has become globally the most important economic sector since the mid-1990s and is expected to continue its rapid growth. By 2020 it is estimated that there will be more than 1.5 billion annual tourist arrivals worldwide. Through academic research, collaborative projects, consultancy, conferences, publications, professional development and postgraduate
programmes, the aim to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of tourism as a global phenomenon at different social and political scales. There are theoretical and political issues related to tourism / tourist culture, tourism development, and the mobilization of cultural resources by, and for, the tourism sector. The tourism agencies are to promote and support cultural diversity, stimulate intercultural dialogue. Tourism has developed a culture of its own. Tourism in a variety of countries that also offer a source of identity building and cultural renewal to the people featured for visitors. Tourism web sites and tour guides – their words and images – for how they mediate the social construction of travel and tourism destinations

India- The Dynamic Country

India- a diverse land of stunning contrasts has become a very popular holiday destination over the years. In a dynamic and diverse country like India it is not surprising to find numerous rich glories of the past; varied traditions and values; and various interesting cultures. The bustling cities, rare wildlife, pristine beaches, rich cultural heritage, tranquil backwaters, barren deserts standing in contrast with rolling foothills; and innumerable ancient monuments- all this makes India a fascinating travel destination.

Holidays in India, especially during the fair seasons, have their matchless charm. And to indulge into it, foreigners from all parts of the world flow in large numbers. The colorful and rich culture of India has always attracted tourists from round the globe, in large numbers. The fairs are a part of the rich Indian culture and, to see them celebrate with millions of people participating and enjoying themselves thoroughly; is a unique experience in itself. India offers fascinating culture, wildlife and extremely diverse range of landscapes as well as wild rivers.
offering great scope for adventure enthusiast. The geographical and climatic variations found in Indian sub-continent have given it an extraordinary edge. It sports innumerable geological wonders and awe-inspiring biodiversity that serve as a motivation for thrill-seekers to test the limits of their strength, stamina, and endurance. There are various tours schemes like Indian odyssey, nature tour, heritage tour, ayurveda tour, week end tour, yoga tour, pilgrimage tours etc. in different seasons and different climatic conditions. Some schemes are in economical budget, deluxe and Premium class budgeted schemes, depends on customer’s economy.

4.5 Customer Relationship Management in Tourism

CRM is data driven approach toward improving customer relationships. This approach involves the use of customer transactional and behavioral data to extract useful information that can be used to make informed marketing decisions. These decisions involve the matching of products to customers, thereby increasing the probability of a customer interaction leading to a sale.

Building customer Value in Hospitality

The implementation of a targeted sale and marketing plan and the development of a customer relationship management (CRM) policy require a deep knowledge of customers’ needs, behaviour, and preferences, and new technologies are one of the major drivers of change in this context. Creating automated guest histories helps hotel managers to define their customer mix, identify which benefits are salient for different segments, ensure that the hotel supply and capabilities match the guests’ desires, and increase delivery efficiency. Enhanced customer satisfaction and retention lead to increased customer loyalty, occupancy rates, and revenue per available customer.
Customer Loyalty versus Satisfaction

Managing customer value by creating quality and service that customers can see now is considered a critical component of company’s strategic marketing. Customer value is what builds loyalty. Orientation to customer retention, continual customer contact, and high commitment to meeting customer expectations are the new strategic rules of relationship marketing.

To stimulate loyalty, hotel managers need to have a clear understanding of guest’s value, drivers and be aware of the ways in which their business contributes or fails to contribute to the creation of such value.

4.6 CRM and Hospitality in Hotels

A major factor that differentiates this Travel Agency from the other business such as durables is related to the kind of contact they enjoy with the Customers. The contact with the customers is not one time, but repeated and might take place for a long time especially in the case of hospitality and airlines. As a result, it is imperative for the Travel Agency to make their service delivery mechanisms as perfect as possible, ironing out the possible problem areas.

The hospitality industry includes hotels and restaurants of various types, vacation resorts and is largely people based and driven by people. The interaction between the service provider, i.e. hotels in this case and the customer, i.e. the guest takes place over a long time period that is essentially the time during which the guest enjoys the hospitality of the service provider. Right from the time the customer makes contact with the hotel either through phone or through an agent to book rooms, arrival at the hotel, occupancy of the rooms and finally till check-out, there is continuous interaction between the customer and the employees of the
hotel. Hence, people (employees), physical environment (ambience of rooms, eating places, etc.) and process have a significant role to play in the satisfaction / dissatisfaction of the customer.

The service providers in hospitality industry understand the need to cultivate long-relationships with their customers. The main philosophy here is to cultivate understanding and caring for customers by anticipating their needs, warmth and concern. The idea is to retain customers and make them visit regularly. The customer retention approach calls for exceeding the expectations of the customers, by providing service of a quality that goes beyond the ‘value for money’ and ends up delighting them. Customers tend to be primarily of two kinds, corporate who visit on official purposes and guests on personal visits. While for the first kind of customers, the customs organization needs to be contacted and people relationship need to be developed, relationships with the second kind of customers can strengthened by ‘the package providing delightful experience.’ Hospitality Service can be looked upon as a process with various service quality standards and benchmark established by the Travel Agency acting as a guide to better service standards. The main effort of the employees should be not only to meet the customer expectations but also to exceed them again and again. Since customers vastly differ in their tastes and preferences it becomes important that each customer is catered to as an individual.

The first step is to know the Customer well. Many hospitality travel agencies now have set up world-class information systems that capture information from various contact points on a routine basis. These are then analyzed and shared across the organization. Such information helps the employees to serve their
customers better by customizing their services to individual tastes. For example, if a hotel is able to know the color a person likes, it can make sure that during his subsequent visits the hotel, the bed sheets and flowers can be of that particular color. Thus personalization to the point of catering to individual preferences likes and dislikes is one of the ways hospitality Travel Agency approach their goal of customer delight.

Employees are a very important resource in the hospitality industry because they are the ones who serve the customers directly and have the maximum interaction with the customers. Employee morale, welfare and training directly affect the quality of services rendered. Top travel agencies provide good training to their front-line employees and rotate them around the organization in various departments so that the employees get an idea of the importance of their roles and the place that it occupies in the service delivery mechanism. Most travel agency having good services has well-defined processes for their employees and proper feedback and appraisal. One has to make sure that all employees understand the vision of the travel agency and the service philosophy it embodies with the involvement of the top management. Many innovative CRM programmes have been implemented in the hospitality industry. Frequent usage programmes reward customers for using the services of the travel agency. The more a customer uses the services of a Travel Agency, the greater are the rewards. These might be the points that get accumulated and which can be redeemed for free stays or services. Another innovative scheme is ‘membership programmers’ wherein regular customers are encouraged to join an exclusive club which offer benefit such as discounts on choice of hotels at different locations for holidays and others for their regular patrons. Hotels keep in touch with their regular customers through frequent
newsletters and publications and may also offer sightseeing and advisory services. The aim of all these efforts is to earn the good will and loyalty of their customers. This usually results in good word of mouth publicity for the travel agency especially; if the guest is very satisfied, also industry where referrals play increases the percentage of repeat clientele. Hospitality is one the hotel because they not a very important role. Repeat clientele are very profitable for the hotel as not only they spend more during the first visit but also generate additional customer by referrals.

4.7 Accommodation management software

The basic package offers simple guest and room management, while the more complex ones cover every aspect needed to manage and run a big hotel chain. This includes reservations, service, retail, inventory, staff roster and training, accounting and much more.

Front desk: A front office software package should enable reception staff to keep track of all bookings, state of rooms, guest details and charges, coordinate restaurant reservations for guests, plan housekeeping duties and process guest check-in and check-out. They should also provide a means to communicate effectively with all travel agents and activity operators linked to the system. Features you should look out for include: Reports of tour arrivals & departures, hotel rooms and status. Visual schematic of calendar with room availability. Facility for printing check-in cards for guests. Flexibility in re-assigning guests to different rooms. Charges of rooms, restaurants, spa, and gift shop, etc. Incorporate all payment options upon check-out and print receipt. Print work roster for staff.
Facilities for storing guest history Communicate efficiently with reservation and travel agents

**Housekeeping/maintenance software:** Easy-to-use software for the housekeeping and maintenance departments of your accommodation place will increase the efficiency of cleaning and servicing of rooms. Main features of this module will be: Keeping track of room status - dirty, cleaned, inspected, check-ins and check-outs, etc. All information such as number of guests, number of beds, length of stay, special requests (e.g. baby cot, high chair) should be visible to both housekeeping staff and management. Staff can enter maintenance issues as they arise, and those are automatically sent to the maintenance department. Staff can request cleaning materials and toiletries ordered. Staff can keep track of laundry status for uninterrupted linen supply.

**Online reservation system:** This software package is essential to any accommodation place. It helps you increase direct online bookings instantly. Prospective guests can view hotel rooms (size, choice of beds), availability and prices, plus services and facilities offered. The systems should have instant confirmation of credit card payments or other secure online payment method. After payment of deposit and confirmation by email, guests should be able to login to view or change their reservation details. Cancellation policies should be stated, airport transport options mentioned.

**Hospitality management systems for point of sale (POS) operations:** This includes restaurants and bars, the hotel gift shop, spa, tour desk and other guest services. It should have the options of direct payment or charge to room. Apart from recording normal vending operations, it should include issuing daily
transaction reports to management or the accounting office, and a daily revenue report. In the POS sector there are many operating hospitality management systems catering for the food vendor sector, namely restaurants, cafés, takeaway shops and delis.

**Restaurant (POS) management packages:** For POS management packages, you have the choice of an off-the-shelf system for restaurants and cafés, where you can set the options that suit your operation, or a customized one, specifically configured for your business. Most systems are quite easy to use and are cost effective. Their features vary, but most offer the following: Order taking, tallying, and cashier options using a hand-held PDA system. Credit-card processing interface Receipts customized for your business. The more advanced systems also offer:

**Administration software:** This module is directed at top management and offers access to all levels of the organization. It provides instant access to the data base of all sectors, ensuring total transparency of operations overseeing and early intervention by senior staff can prevent mistakes being made by inexperienced employees and save money and the reputation of your business.