

MYSTIC EAST

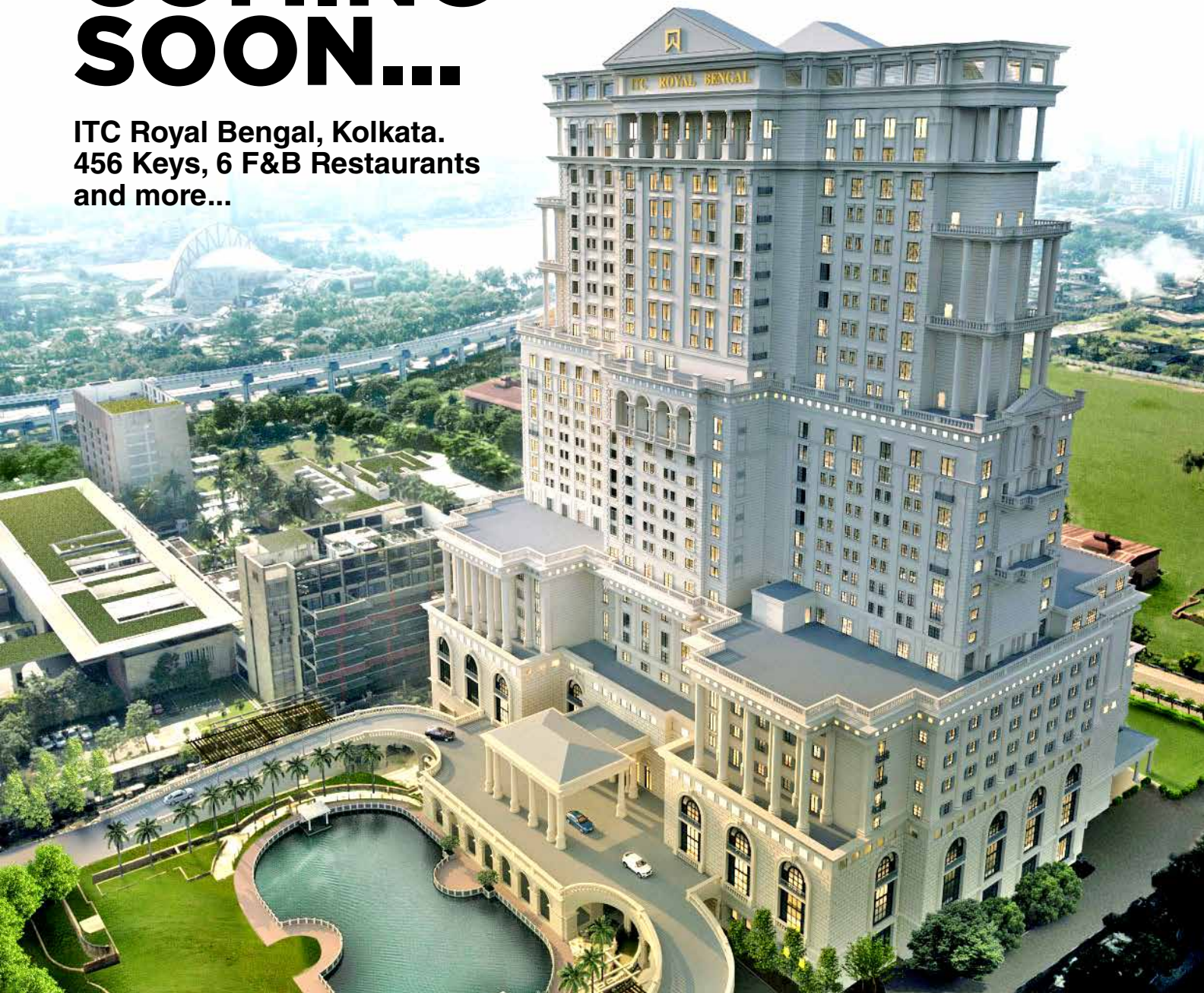
...an unexplored horizon

A bi-monthly magazine by HRAEI | Vol 4 | Issue 5 | September - October 2018



COMING SOON...

ITC Royal Bengal, Kolkata.
456 Keys, 6 F&B Restaurants
and more...





VISION

- ✌️ Make the Eastern Region comprising 12 States and a Union Territory a flourishing destination for domestic and foreign tourists by projecting their captivating tourism assets.
- ✌️ Promoting best industry practices and setting benchmarks for industry constituents.

MISSION

- ✌️ A common voice for hotels, restaurants and associates for unhindered progress of the hospitality industry in the country's Eastern Region.
- ✌️ Create value for members by ensuring government policies remain supportive of tourism and the industry.





R

ecently the #MeToo movement kick-started a nationwide cultural reckoning in India. Even though it has yet to shake out the hospitality industry in a big way, there is no reason to believe that this industry is immune to sexual harassment in the workplace. It's high time our industry takes a cue from the movement and puts things in order. Preventing sexual harassment in an organization is as important as preventing a fire. The physical safety and well-being of your staff in regard to sexual harassment is a work-place safety issue that holds the same weight as any other safety law or procedure.

First, don't believe you don't have time to deal with sexual harassment policies, procedures, allegations or training. It's

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Preventing sexual harassment is as important as preventing a fire.

”

your obligation as an employer. Employers can be held vicariously liable for acts (or omissions) of management staff who commit or permit sexual harassment in the workplace. Next, schedule a meeting with your top-level management team and review your current sexual harassment policy (if you have one). If you don't have one, or yours needs to be re-addressed, make it one of your priorities for this quarter.

Once you have your policy outlined, make sure every person you employ sees it, reads it, understands, it and accepts it. The culture in your organization should be one that encourages open dialogue between you and everyone else—even around difficult subjects like this.

Pranav Singh
President, HRAEI



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India has failed to tap its potential as the top destination for Wellness tourists

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Despite having a tremendous prospect in the niche area of Wellness Tourism it seems India hasn't been able to utilise the advantage as the potential has yet to be tapped properly. It's unfortunate that countries such as Indonesia and Thailand now figure among the top destinations for wellness vacations because they seem to have struck a balance between the much-needed marketing and government programs.

Wellness tourism in India is very unorganized and unstructured because most of the centres are run by Ayurvedic doctors and yoga teachers who don't know much about marketing.

There is a lot of interest in the West about Indian system of medicine such as Ayurveda and Yoga have always been popular. Recent large-scale Indian initiatives such as International Yoga Day also fall short when compared to other countries.

It's time the country's policymakers implement the Wellness Tourism guideline at a war footing. There must be a proper co-ordination between alternative medicine sector and the hospitality industry to grab a pie of the Wellness Tourism boom. The state of Kerala has somewhat taken the initiative and the rest of the country should take a cue from God's Own Country.

Mr Mohammed Azhar
Secretary, HRAEI

MYSTIC EAST

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Vol 4 | Issue 5 | Septemer - October 2018

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Hotel and Restaurant Association of Eastern India,
18A/1, Everest, 18th Floor, 46C,
Chowringhee Road, Kolkata- 700 071;
Telephone- +91 33 2288-1742/43, 40035993.
E-mail: info@hraei.co.in
Website: www.hraei.co.in

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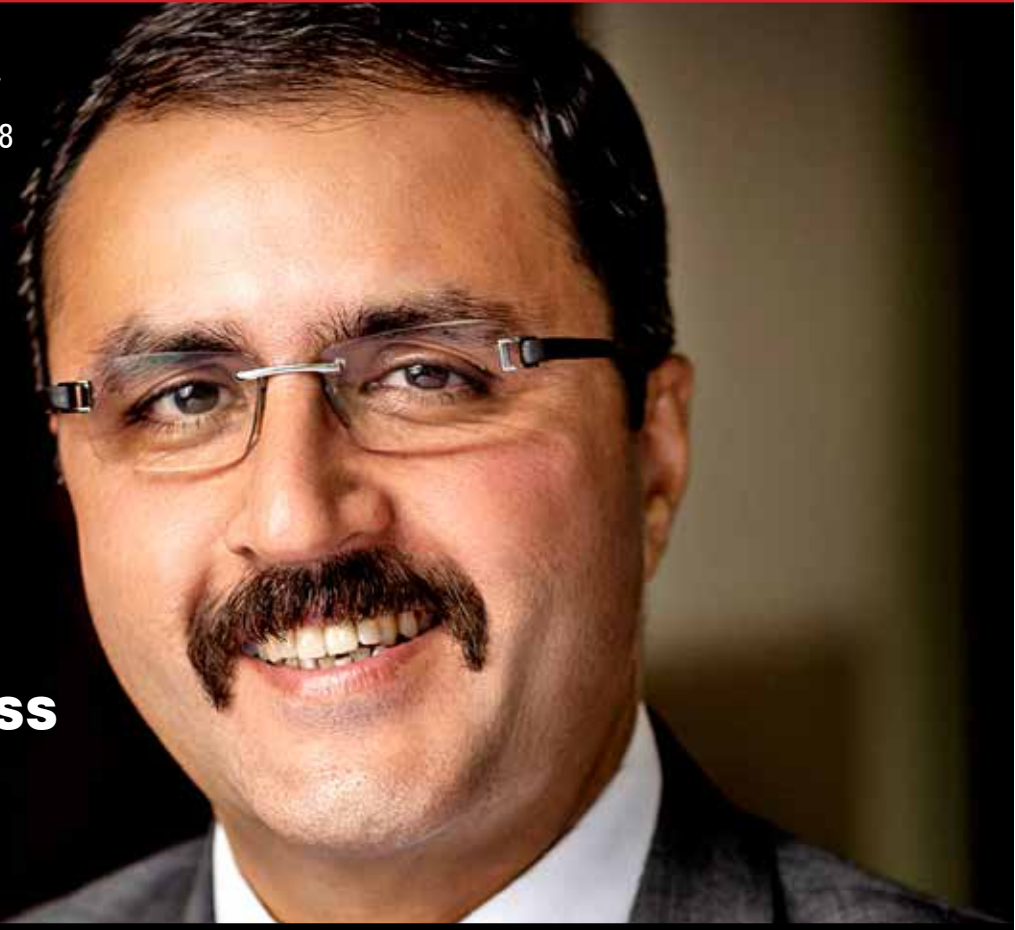
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OUR SUCCESS
IS LOCAL
PATRONAGE**



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A well organised tourism policy has helped Sikkim earn many brownie points



HRAEI'S EFFORT TO CURB DRUNKEN DRIVING

DRUNKEN driving is a rising global problem that is being tackled by governments in most countries with strict police action through imposition of temporary ban on driving, revoking of driving licences, or prosecution in a court of law, apart from pecuniary penalties depending on the gravity of the offence.

Although not all road accidents are caused by drivers emerging out of a bar, hotel or a restaurant, the hospitality industry can play a key role in raising awareness and prevention of rising number of fatalities caused by drunk drivers on the road. This is more important in a country like India where there are large number of

homeless people living by the roads who have often succumbed to death at night by careless and irresponsible moves by drunk drivers.

Since last year, the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI) has been collaborating with Kolkata Police to raise awareness on the menace of drunken driving. Says Pranav Singh, President, HRAEI, "Like last year we are going to campaign for the prevention of drunken driving among our members and customers in different bars, restaurants and hotels across the city as well as the region." The aim is to sensitize members to keep a pool of drivers in case customers are found on the steering wheel

with alcohol level of 30 ml or above in the blood. Facilities of keeping breathalyser test is used to determine the level of alcohol. "The drivers will be available at a chargeable basis," he said.

Last year the campaign had successfully encouraged some members to set up booths of app cabs, such as Ola and Uber at their premises, to help drunken customers travel home safely. "This year our target is to inspire more members to adopt such steps to save more life, ensuring safe drives," he added. "We are advising our members to also provide a pool of drivers at a nominal cost, in addition to setting up Ola and Uber kiosks."

HOTEL INDUSTRY'S RECOVERY TREND TO CONTINUE TILL FY22: ICRA



INCREASE in demand for rooms coupled with muted supply addition will continue to support the hotel industry's recovery trend till 2021-22, according to a report.

"Hotel occupancies have increased across most markets in the country, supported by slow supply addition and improving demand-supply dynamics. However, this has not supported strong traction in accounting rate of return (ARR) growth as was expected. The ARR growth across markets, during FY18 has been

modest," Icara sector head and vice president, corporate sector ratings, Pavethra Ponniah said.

Going by the trends in foreign tourist arrivals (FTA), forex earnings growth and improving economy, Icara expects 5-6 per cent growth in Revenue Per Available Rooms (RevPARs), driven by accounting rate of return (ARR) improvement during FY19, she said.

"The muted supply pipeline will also continue to support increase in occupancies until they peak in FY22

at 69-70 per cent," Ponniah added.

According to an Icara research report, the pan-India demand growth was around 6-6.5 per cent for FY18, slower than the previous year and below expectations. However, it was higher and continues to out pace the supply growth across markets in FY18.

Demand is expected to remain healthy with domestic tourist visits (DTV) during CY2017 estimated to have grown by 11-13 per cent, in line with the trends during CY2015 and CY2016. Domestic Revenue Passenger Kilometre (RPKM), a proxy for domestic travel, continues to exhibit robust growth, annually growing by 22.9 per cent during the first quarter of CY2018. FTA growth picked up strongly by 15.6 per cent during CY2017, compared to the 9.7 per cent growth during CY2016 and Icara expects it to grow by 10 per cent for CY2018.

Meanwhile, on the supply front the pipeline continued to be muted and is the key reason for the current up cycle. Icara's expects 5 per cent growth in inventory in FY19 and 3-4 per cent in the subsequent years.

"The expected growth is lower than the 10 per cent annual supply addition witnessed over the last 7-8 years (FY2010-18). Further, there have been no major new project announcements over the last one year. Supply additions are primarily from projects which were announced during the early part of this decade and delayed over a period due to various issues," the report added.

Source: Economic Times

MAJOR HOTELS IN CHINA INSPECTED AFTER ROOM CLEANING EXPOSE

CHINESE authorities are inspecting several major international hotels after hidden camera video showed room cleaning workers using soiled towels to clean cups and glasses and other questionable practices.

The Chinese tourism ministry said late Thursday that it had asked authorities in Beijing, Shanghai and three provinces to investigate 14 hotels that appear in the video.

Several of the hotels including a Sheraton and Waldorf Astoria have apologised.

The nearly 12-minute video, posted online earlier this week, shows workers cleaning bathrooms.

In several clips, they can be seen wiping down sinks, coffee cups and glasses with the same used towel.

One wipes a glass with the bottom edge of her cleaning uniform.

An activist blogger who uses the pseudonym "Huazong" posted the video late Wednesday on his verified account on Weibo, a Chinese version of Twitter.

He calls the problem long-standing and widespread, and writes that he spent 2,000 nights at 147 hotels over six years.

The video has been viewed more than 30 million times.

State broadcaster CCTV aired video of uniformed inspectors at an unidentified hotel flashing their ID cards and holding a drinking glass up to the light to inspect it.

The Peninsula hotel in Beijing said Friday that city food and drug administration officials had conducted an on-site examination of cups the

previous day and found them cleaner than standards required.

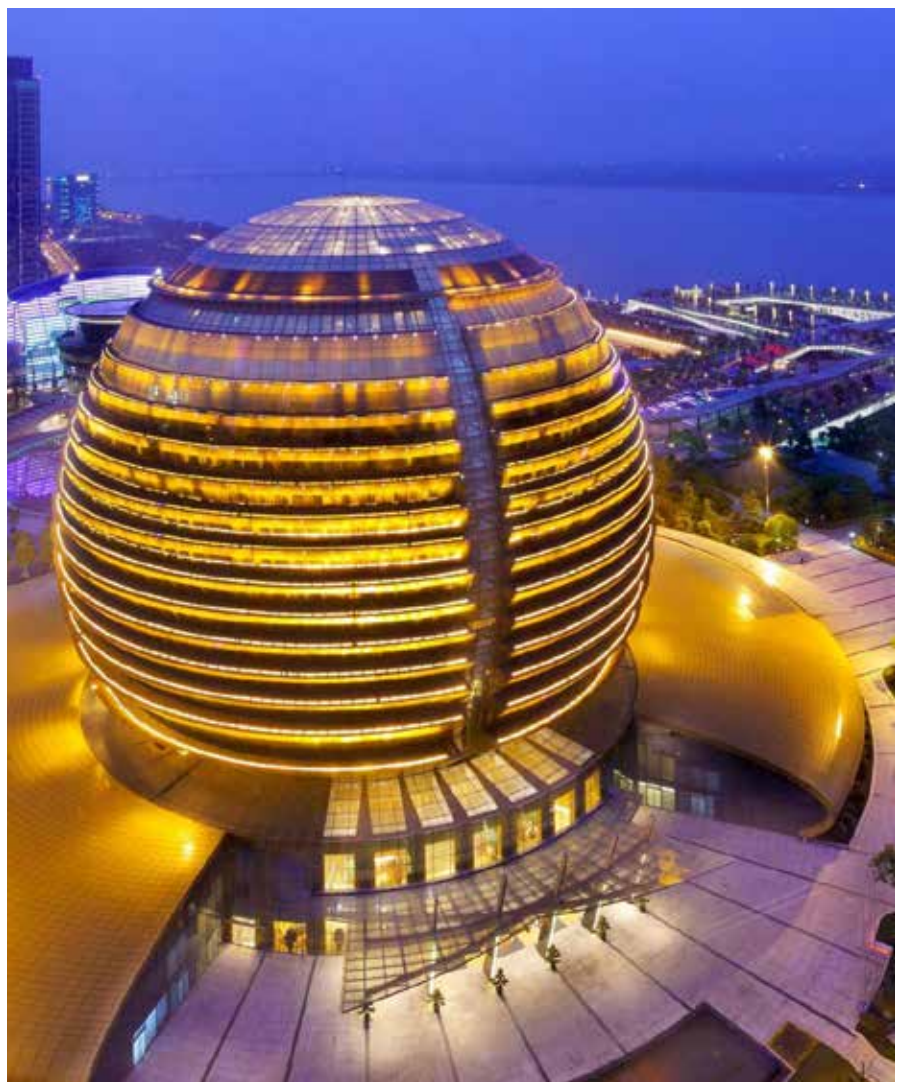
The cups were sent for further tests, the hotel said in a statement on its Weibo account.

"The hotel will still take measures to strengthen the implementation of the standard procedures for room service staff to ensure all aspects

meet the established standards of the Peninsula," the statement said.

The Shangri-La Hotel in Fuzhou said the actions in the video violate its hygiene standards, while the Park Hyatt in Beijing called it an isolated occurrence.

Source: PTI



GARIMA ARORA FIRST INDIAN WOMAN TO RECEIVE MICHELIN STAR

In a rare honour, Indian chef Garima Arora has become the first Indian woman to get a Michelin star for her restaurant in Bangkok. Her restaurant, GAA, featured in the recently released Michelin's guide to Bangkok, Phuket and Phang-nga for 2019.

Born in Mumbai, Garima is an alumnus of the prestigious Le Cordon Bleu. She studied in Mumbai's Jai Hind College and is a former journalist. After having worked with culinary stalwarts like Gordon Ramsay, Gaggan Anand and René Redzepi, she set up GAA in 2017.

According to reports, GAA is also the only restaurant in Bangkok run by an Indian woman and is also the first of its kind. In an interview to Forbes India, Garima said that getting the Michelin star was a "huge stamp of approval" for her and her team.

Garima added that her father, who would travel extensively and then cook exotic dishes he savoured there for his family, has been a huge influence on her. Garima said she knew she wanted to start a restaurant, however, she believed that she would need to have a steady job for a while to be able

to do so. "I began my career at a newspaper, but I soon began to realise that being a chef is a young person's game. I had to do it now, if at all. So I quit my job, packed my bags and moved to Paris to study cooking at Le Cordon Bleu," she said.

She also talked about how the Indian cooking technique of pickling has influenced her, and how she liked to pack strong and unusual flavours, which makes the food interactive and makes the style of eating a familiar, collective one. She added that her time working with renowned chefs also added to her skill and understanding. "While I didn't have the chance to work directly with Gordon Ramsay, from Gaggan I learned the power of Asian hospitality," she said.

Asked about the challenges of being a woman in the industry, she said she could not say, adding that the challenges would be the same regardless of gender, according to her. Leaving family, working long hours and financial challenges were some that she named.

Garima pointed out, however, that it was difficult to see many international chefs coming out of India because of these financial challenges as well. "It's not that we're less talented or less hard-working, but we don't have the opportunities and are not encouraged to explore. In its current state, I don't think a René Redzepi could come out of India," she said.

Garima also mentioned that she would want to come back to India someday, but was presently focused on making GAA bigger.



WORLD'S 1ST UNDERWATER HOTEL OPENS IN INDIAN OCEAN; IT WILL COST RS 36 LAKH PER NIGHT; CHECK FEATURES



THE world's first underwater hotel has been opened in the Indian Ocean. From underwater view hotel room to a private gym, this hotel will cost you Rs 36 lakh per night. But there's a catch.

The hotel is situated 16 feet deep in the Indian Ocean and has been opened by the Conrad Maldives Rangali Island of the Maldives.

The hotel is situated 16 feet deep in the Indian Ocean and has been opened by the Conrad Maldives Rangali Island of the Maldives. Thriving on its tour-

ism industry, the Maldives has finally opened the world's first underwater hotel, which is situated in the Indian Ocean. The hotel will cost Rs 36 lakh per night. But the catch is you can't book it for one night. Only a four-night package is available for tourists that will cost \$2,00,000 or about Rs 1.4 crore.

The hotel is situated 16 feet deep in the Indian Ocean and has been opened by the Conrad Maldives Rangali Island of the Maldives. While the Maldives already has an underwater restaurant — which was also the

world's first — this is the first hotel that has been opened underwater.

The hotel is worth its price. Not only has it a bedroom with the view of underwater life but also has a private gym, private chef, infinity pool among other luxurious services.

The Maldives, which is barely 5 hours away by flight, is one of the top holiday destinations for Indians. The country's tourism data show that about 60,000 Indians travel to the Maldives every year.

Source: Financial Express

PROUD MOMENT FOR INDIA! THREE INDIAN HOTEL CHAINS ON THE TOP

THREE domestic hotel chains - The Indian Hotels Company (IHCL), The Oberoi group and Rosewood Hotels and Resorts - have received 'certificate of excellence' as the TripAdvisor 'most excellent' hotel chains globally, under different categories.

IHCL (Taj and Vivanta) has secured the third rank in the top 10 medium hotel chains category in the TripAdvisor's 'Most Excellent' hotel chains.

Three domestic hotel chains – The Indian Hotels Company (IHCL), The Oberoi group and Rosewood Hotels and Resorts – have received 'certificate of excellence' as the TripAdvisor 'most excellent' hotel chains globally, under different categories.

IHCL (Taj and Vivanta) has secured the third rank in the top 10 medium hotel chains category in the TripAdvisor's 'Most Excellent' hotel chains. The Oberoi group was at the second rank, while Rosewood Hotels & Resorts was in the 10 position in the small hotel chains category.

The certificate of excellence is given to accommodations, as well as other travel businesses, that deliver great service and achieve high traveller reviews on TripAdvisor. The TripAdvisor's 'most excellent' hotel chains is based on reviews and bookings under three categories – large hotel chains (with over 500 properties), medium hotel chains (with 50-500 properties) and small hotel

chains (with 20-50 properties).

"The certificate of excellence is widely recognised by travellers as an indicator for consistent, high quality service and experience, a recognition you will find proudly displayed in hotels all around the world," TripAdvisor's spokesperson for Asia Pacific, Grant Colquhoun, said. Meanwhile, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts topped the list in the medium hotel chains category, followed by Drury Hotels Company. Belmond topped in the small hotel chains category, while Loews Hotels & Co stood at the third place and Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group grabbed the fourth rank.

Source: PTI



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FOOD SAFETY

Chicken, from farm to table

High risk poultry food products need to be handled with special attention--right from purchase to consumption



► Poultry sector's growth in India is being driven by rising incomes and an expanding middle class



► **Flock health examination in a poultry must be done by a qualified veterinary practitioner**

Poultry meat is the fastest growing component of global meat demand, and India, the world's second largest developing country, is experiencing rapid growth in its poultry sector. In India, poultry sector growth is being driven by rising incomes and a rapidly expanding middle class, together with the emergence of vertically integrated poultry producers that have reduced consumer prices by lowering production and marketing costs. Integrated production, market transition from live birds to chilled and frozen products, and policies that ensure supplies of competitively priced corn and soybeans are keys to future poultry industry growth in India. There are number of small poultry dressing plants in the

country. These plants are producing dressed chickens. In addition to these plants, there are five modern integrated poultry processing plants producing dressed chicken, chicken cut parts and other chicken products.

Slaughter

Poultry intended for slaughter shall be in good health. Precaution shall be taken to minimize injury to poultry birds. Flock health examination shall be done by qualified veterinary practitioner. Only healthy poultry / birds shall be transported in a well-ventilated transport system. Coops preferably made of plastic and specially designed to be used for transport of poultry shall be in good conditions to avoid injuries to poultry. Transport coops should not

be over-crowded & it should provide enough space for birds. It is advisable not to use any damaged coops, crates or cages to avoid injury to birds during transportation.

The holding/ resting area shall be adequate in size to rest the birds. Poultry birds shall subject to ante mortem examination by veterinarian before slaughter. The slaughtering area, equipment and implement must be clean, hygienic and sanitized. Prior to slaughter poultry shall be made unconscious by using any suitable method of stunning (water bath electrical stunning, gas stunning etc.). It induces temporary loss of consciousness and minimizes the reaction of fear, anxiety, pain and distress to the birds. Slaughtering can be done by



► **Every poultry should have enough space between birds and maintain proper hygiene**

different methods of slaughter (like Halal, Jhatka, Mechanical etc.). Minimum 150 seconds shall be allowed to bleed out the slaughtered birds before entering the scalding. No live bird shall enter scalding for passing the bird through hot water so as to loosen the feather follicles. This is followed by dressing of carcass and removal of all internal organs (evisceration) from the slaughtered birds.

Following slaughter Post mortem examination of dressed poultry carcass and visceral organs by the veterinarian for evidence of any abnormal condition. The records shall be maintained as per the lot. Poultry carcass received directly from other slaughter houses for further processing must be verified for whether their post mortem reports are duly

received and in order.

Processing

Carcass shall be properly washed from inside as well as outside before chilling. The water should be potable water and should be internally tested for physical, microbial and chemical parameters.

All dressed carcasses shall be chilled at or below 4°C by appropriate method within 4 hours from slaughter. Dressed birds shall be sanitized with appropriate sanitizer before or during the chilling of bird. Chilled carcasses are then transferred to processing hall. The processing hall temperature shall be maintained at an appropriate temperature to maintain quality of the product.

Deboning, the process of removal

of bones and cartilages from whole chicken to get boneless meat, can be done manually or semi-automatic or in automatic line.

Raw marinated products: Poultry meat with or without bones marinated with ingredients and with or without additives are categorised under "raw marinated products." It includes both whole pieces / cuts and comminuted products. Examples include Marinated Chicken Pieces, Marinated Chicken Tikka, Marinated Chicken Lollipop etc.

Formed/Coated Products: These products are prepared by mixing of poultry meat with or without bones with ingredient(s) and/or permitted additive(s). They may or may not be subjected to different processes like marination, forming, pre-dusting, battering, breading, coating fixation/ forming and fried in fryer etc. Marination can be achieved by simple mixing or tumbling or by injecting marination. Products may be raw, semi cooked, partially cooked or cooked. It includes whole pieces, cuts and comminuted products. Examples of such products include, coated / uncoated products, Chicken Nuggets, Chicken Patty, Coated bone-in products etc.

All the raw materials such as spices, batter and bread crumbs and other ingredients shall, be sourced from certified approved vendors and stored in plant premises as per the storage requirements.

Stuffed Products: Poultry meat mixed/marinated/emulsified with ingredients and with or without additives, stuffed in casing, cooked, peeling of casing or with casing, may be sliced or diced, and frozen. Products may be semi-cooked/partially cooked or cooked. Examples of such product include Chicken Sausages, Chicken Mortadella & Salami, Chicken Ham, Chicken Bacon etc.

Care shall be taken to ensure cleaning and sanitation of Bowl choppers, mixers, extruders, fillers etc before and after use for production. All the raw materials such as spices, batter and bread crumbs and other ingredients shall, be sourced from certified approved vendors and stored in plant premises as per the storage requirements. Critical temperatures monitoring devices must be calibrated at regular interval.

Indian Gravy Products: Products with poultry meat with or without bones, mixed/marinated with ingredients and with or without additives, cooked and frozen. It includes both whole pieces and cuts and comminuted products. Examples include Butter Chicken, Kadhai Chicken, Murg Masala, Chicken Biryani, Cooked Chicken Kheema etc.

Cleaning

Cleaning and sanitation of required for manufacturing plant and machinery are of great importance. Hence, care shall be taken to ensure cleaning and sanitation before and after use for production. All the raw materials such as spices, additives and other ingredients shall, be sourced from certified approved vendors and stored in plant premises as per the storage requirements. Critical temperatures monitoring devices must be calibrated at regular interval.

Other Poultry Products: It includes whole pieces and cuts, comminuted products and formed & chopped products. Examples are Chicken Toppings.

Cured (including salted) / Smoked Products: Non-heat treated processed meat and poultry product. Salted products are treated with sodium chloride. Dry cured (dry pickled) products are prepared by rubbing salt directly on the meat surface. Wet

pickle cured products are prepared by submerging the meat in a brine solution. Pump cured products are prepared by injecting brine into the meat. Curing may also be achieved by addition of additives. Smoked products are also included here. It includes whole pieces and cuts and comminuted products.

Cleaning and sanitation of required for manufacturing plant and machinery are of great importance. Hence, care shall be taken to ensure cleaning and sanitation before and after use for production.

Cured (including salted) and dried: These products are non-heat treated processed poultry products which may be cured or salted as described in Cured (including salted), and then dried, or they may only be dried.

Drying is achieved either in hot air or in vacuum. It includes whole pieces, cuts and comminuted products.

Fermented Products: Non-heat treated processed poultry products, which are a type of pickled product produced by the action of lactic acid bacteria in the presence of salt. It includes both whole pieces and cuts and comminuted products.

Canned Products: These products are "canned / retort pouch poultry products" which are heat treated processed poultry products in whole pieces or cuts or in comminuted form. These products are prepared by mixing of poultry meat with other ingredient(s) and permitted additive(s).

The product may be smoked. The packing medium and other ingredients shall be of food grade quality.



► Poultry meat with or without bones marinated with ingredients and with or without additives are categorised under "raw marinated products"

These products shall be packed in hermetically sealed container and subjected to adequate heat treatment followed by rapid cooling to ensure that the product is self-stable and safe for consumption.

Primary Packing: Processed material is weighed and packed in standard packing material which should confirm FSSAI norms. (Packaging & Labelling). The food grade declaration/ certificate to be verified on COA during receiving of the packing material. Packing of chicken meat & chicken meat products can be done as per the customer requirement and applicable regulation specified in FSSRs. (Packaging & Labelling) & Legal metrology (Packaged Commodities).

Freezing: Freezing can be done either using blast freezer, Plate freezer or IQF. During Freezing core temperature of the product should be at or below - 18°C.

Secondary Packing: Frozen meat / meat products after passing through metal detector shall be packed in suitable container. Secondary Packing material shall be secure to prevent spoilage and contamination during transit and storage.

Chilled Storage: Chilled Poultry meat and Poultry meat product shall be stored in the chiller at or below 4°C.

Cold Storage: Frozen poultry meat and poultry meat product shall be stored in cold store at or below minus 18 degrees Celsius till dispatch.

Cold store temperature shall be maintained at or below minus 18 degrees Celsius except during defrosting cycle. FIFO / FMFO/FEFO method shall be followed in the cold storage for despatch of product.

Quality Evaluation: Finished products are tested in internal / external laboratory as per the sampling plan identified by the processing plant, for microbiological & applicable physio

-chemical parameters as defined by FSSAI.

Warehousing

The product temperature shall be maintained at or below minus 18 degree Celsius for frozen & at or below 4 degree Celsius for chilled products in any part of the cold chain, during storage, transport, distribution, and merchandising in retail stores. Loading and dispatch of finished products. Dispatch vehicle shall be checked for presence of any contaminants, cleanliness, unacceptable odour and proper working of refrigeration system before loading. Loading should be done in shortest possible time. Dispatch vehicles shall be cleaned and sanitized using appropriate cleaning and sanitizing agents regularly to maintain the hygiene standard.

Storage temperature of warehousing should be at or below minus 18 degrees celsius. All the transportation systems are expected to maintain the temperature of the processed meat and meat products within close limits to ensure its optimum safety and recommended shelf life

Warehousing: Stacking methods and height depend on several factors: resistance of the package, handling techniques and thermal state. Packaged and frozen meat is usually handled mechanically, combining forklift trucks with pallet.

Storage temperature of warehousing should be at or below minus 18 Degrees Celsius except during defrosting cycle in case of frozen product and at or below 4 degree Celsius in case of chilled product.

Transportation: All the transportation systems are expected to maintain the temperature of the processed meat and meat products within close limits to ensure its optimum safety and recommended shelf life. It is important that the processed meat and meat products is at the correct temperature before loading since the refrigeration systems used in most transport containers are not designed to extract heat from the product but to maintain the temperature of the product. In large containers used for long distance transportation, food temperature can be kept within recommended frozen temperature (at or below minus 18 degrees Celsius for frozen and at or below 4 degree Celsius for chilled products).

Retail and display: During display; the temperature, temperature fluctuations and visual monitoring (like color of product, packaging intact, etc.) are the main parameters that determine the quality. Products must be stored at appropriate temperatures. Temperature differential or range should be kept at minimum. First-in-first-out (FIFO) method in the display of products for sale must be maintained. Proper declaration on the products is needed & it should comply with requirements of FSSAI norms.



► Ashford Castle in Ireland is a five-star luxury hotel, originally built in the 13th century as a medieval castle with fortified towers

HERITAGE PROPERTY

ECHOES FROM THE PAST

The trend of redevelopment of landmark and heritage buildings as new hotels is catching up fast across the world. India has a huge opportunity in this space

THESSE days most hotels seem to be built on the same master plan—similar match box patterns from the outside, long corridors with identical rooms on both sides. The only identifying element of your room is the number on the

door, everything else is the same and not very memorable. Once in a while you stay at a unique and special hotel and you remember it because it was different in architecture and design.

Anyone who travels frequently becomes more and more discerning and

selective about their hotel choices. This is why the trend in newer hotel developments that reuses historical buildings which in their original life were not built as hotels is catching up fast among all types of travellers. The design of hotels is especially suited



► **Hotel de Rome in Berlin is a symbol of the fusion between heritage, contemporary design and cutting edge technology**

to fit into older buildings which have lost their original purpose as the various functions of hotels are quite flexible and don't need to be the same all the time. What distinguishes them from other new developments is that they are notable landmarks in their city or country. They can be of any architectural age and style, but modern society does not want them to be torn down to make way for new buildings.

In the United States, the Landmark movement has grown in recent decades to the point where almost everybody recognizes the importance of preserving the iconic buildings of prior periods. Every city and state today have landmarks organizations who identify and protect the buildings that are worthy of preservation. And, would you believe it, quite often it is the hotel function which is adaptable and flexible enough to come into an older building whose

original purpose is no longer needed in our times. So it is, that we have hotels in buildings that were created as banks, embassies, palaces for nobility, railroad stations and even office buildings of the modern period.

What distinguishes these hotels from others is that they are unique and not standard and often their interior design is created to accentuate and emphasize the architectural style of the original. Let me describe a few of these hotels and why they are special and appreciated by the discerning guest.

Hotel De Rome, Berlin, Germany

In the heart of Berlin's most impressive neighbourhood, surrounded by monumental buildings magnificent cultural atmosphere and sophisticated shopping area the Hotel de Rome is a symbol of the fusion between heritage, contemporary design and

cutting edge technology offering a outstanding personalized service .There are signs of beauty and refinement everywhere and a superb feeling of being at home .

The city of Berlin lay in ruins only 70 years ago and most of the classical architectural monuments were destroyed and so was this building of the former headquarters of the Dresdner Bank. It was built at the end of the 19th century as a symbol of the wealth and power of the largest bank in Prussia. Of course, it is located in the very centre of the reunited Berlin, in close proximity to museums, the Royal Palace, the Opera House and the Brandenburg Gate. After the reunification of Berlin, this abandoned and forgotten ruin was rediscovered as having possibilities for redevelopment. Its imposing stone architecture has been repaired where possible, rebuilt where necessary, and today it is a five-star hotel with large rooms,

high ceilings, beautiful public spaces, and a roof terrace that is very popular. There is simply no way a new hotel could exhibit such grandeur and majesty.

The Langham, Chicago, Illinois, USA

This hotel occupies one third of the former IBM building located on the Chicago River. The building was designed by Mies van der Rohe and opened in 1970 as a 55-story office building. As a major example of the modern architecture of Mies van der Rohe, the City of Chicago eventually declared it an official landmark structure which means that the exterior

curtain wall cannot be modified or changed. However, it was possible to convert the office floors into hotel rooms. The Langham Chicago has quickly become a successful five-star hotel and has been named the finest hotel in Chicago. The original building's 5 ft window module forced the typical room width to be 15 ft wide and the office lease span of 40 ft gave the rooms a depth which is significantly more spacious than regular modern hotel designs. A ballroom, a pool and high-end spa, a restaurant with distinctive food offerings, and a bar area overlooking the Chicago River and the Loop, are popular meeting places today. The aesthetic of the

hotel is decidedly modern, in keeping with the Mies heritage, but not overly so where "less is more".

Ashford Castle, County Mayo, Ireland

Ashford castle, an iconic Victorian castle, located near Cong on the shore of Lough Corrib in Ireland, has been repeatedly expanded over the centuries and converted today as a five-star luxury hotel. It was originally built in the 13th century as a medieval castle with fortified towers and has been enlarged and modified over the centuries by generations of owners. To my knowledge there is no castle, nor landmark hotel anywhere else,



► Palazzo Manfredi in Rome, Italy, is opposite the Colosseum and built on the archeological remains of the gladiator arena



► The Langham Chicago occupies one third of the former IBM building by the Chicago River

that combines so many architectural styles into one contiguous building. Its appearance today is a charming potpourri of medieval, Victorian, French Chateau, Neo-Gothic, and Renaissance architectural styles. In recent years it has undergone major renovations and today is considered one of the finest hotels in Ireland. Obviously, an 800-year-old castle has a long story to tell about the people who lived there, from various noblemen to the Guinness Family, Ronald and Nancy Reagan, as well as John Wayne to film the "Quiet Man" also starring Maureen O'Hara. The extensive and beautiful grounds of the estate formed the backdrop for much of the action in the film. In 2012, Ashford Castle was voted the best resort hotel in Ireland and the third best in Europe by Conde Nast Traveler.

After the year 2000, the hotel went through some difficult times and it

changed hands several times but ultimately, its fortunes were reversed with an investment of 47 Million Euros to restore the property and building. The 83 rooms and public spaces are decorated in the Victorian Style and exude a warm and comforting ambiance for the traveler who wishes to get away from it all.

Palazzo Manfredi, Rome, Italy

The smallest of this selection of notable landmark hotels, Palazzo Manfredi, is also the most recent. Directly opposite the Colosseum and built on the archeological remains of the gladiator arena. It might not be everybody's preferred place to rest for the night when you are aware of what went on more than 2000 years ago in these old walls. However, this small, 18 room, hotel is a fascinating place and seems to be breathing with the weight of ancient history. More than any other

example, Palazzo Manfredi raises the eternal argument between those who wish monuments to be rebuilt to recall their original glory, and those who wish to preserve the building fabric as the physical evidence of history with all its erosion, modifications, and war damage.

Taj Lake Palace, Udaipur, India

Probably one of the most spectacular hotels in the world is the Taj Lake Palace situated in the middle of a lake. The Palace appears to be floating on water as one cannot see any land surrounding the building. The Palace was erected in the 18th century by the local Maharana (king), the 62nd successor of the royal dynasty of Mewar. The original purpose was a summer palace for the royal family. Eventually, over the decades, the enormous building fell into disrepair and abandonment. Time

and weather destroyed the black and white inlaid marble floors and walls and many of the Indian decorative ornaments.

During the 1960's another successor of the same family decided to convert the palace into Udaipur's first luxury hotel. And what a place it is. The guests are ferried back and forth by an elegant speed boat from the ancient land based royal palace, and the level of luxury and splendor is simply unparalleled. Former guests include Queen Elizabeth, Jaqueline Kennedy and many other celebrities. A number of films used the hotel as locations for their scenery sets and vistas including the 1983 James Bond movie "Octopussy". I also have stayed there, and I am grateful that we moderns can enjoy the creations of other cultures and epochs.

Neemrana Fort-Palace, Rajasthan Built since 1464, Neemrana Fort-Palace became the third capital of the descendants of Prithviraj Chauhan III, who had fled Delhi in 1192 after he was vanquished in battle by Muhammad Ghor. Neemrana's rulers, proud of lineage, continued to assert themselves, even under the British, as their kingdom suffered. Thus, their lands were clipped and given away to Alwar, Patiala, Nabha and others who entertained the viceroys of the Raj with shikar and Champagne breakfasts. The Chauhans would bow to none.

In 1947, Raja Rajinder Singh of Neemrana moved down to Vijay Bagh as the façade of his Fort-Palace crumbled and its ramparts began to give way. For forty years he tried to rid himself of his liability but there were no takers. Finally, in 1986, the ruins were acquired for restoration. In 1991 Neemrana Fort - Palace opened its doors with the nobility of its façade raised, and just 15 liveable rooms. In 2000 Neemrana won the Intach-Satte



One of the most spectacular hotels in the world is the Taj Lake Palace situated in the middle of a lake. The Palace, erected in the 18th century, appears to be floating on water as one cannot see any land surrounding the building

award for restoration & tourism for 'being the foremost example of how we can pick architectural treasures from the national dustbin and turn them around... Neemrana has become synonymous with 'restoration for re-use'. In 2004, Neemrana was nominated for the Aga Khan Award. By 2008, Neemrana Fort-Palace was

finally ready with 72 rooms/suites and rampart gardens. An additional wing now houses the pool and health spa, an amphitheatre, the hanging gardens with a salon, a restaurant with a roof-top garden and conference rooms and many special suites.

What was once a grand ruin, now stands resplendent. Neemrana not only strive to revive and restore the heritage structure but it also generate jobs and economic reforms for locals by hiring local peoples.

The developers and architects of such historical structures have available multiple choices from Reconstruction, Conservation, Restoration, Renovation and Repair, all of which should be considered and sometimes combined into a sensitive solution that expresses not only the historical original but tells us today the story of the decades or centuries which have shaped the building in question.

These hotels, and many others in historic buildings, are not just offering rooms to travelers. They are adaptive renovations which offer unique travel experiences in unbeatable locations. Repurposing historic buildings on the one hand, offers the travelling public one of a kind experiences, while at the same time preserving architectural icons in the midst of our cities and countryside.

Preserving the best of the past, is a responsibility of civilized society and it is gratifying to see that the hotel industry, its operators and investors, are taking up this challenge and are creating new and unforgettable experiences as they are saving history. In a wider sense, these hospitality developments are related to the worldwide effort to create a more sustainable human environment. I hope this genre of hotel design will continue to grow and add new dimensions to our travel options.

IN this era of social media, where photoshop allows us to portray ourselves and our lifestyles in ways that may not be entirely forthcoming, the disconnect between expectation and reality in life is not unexpected. Hospitality industry is well tuned to this phenomenon; reality shows like Vanderpump Rules and Below Deck often offer a glamorized version of how the hospitality industry is to our millennial labor

force. Upon entering the industry, our millennials are often met with one or more disappointing truths to contend with.

Miranda Kitterlin, Ph.D. Assoc. Professor, Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management, at Florida International University, conducted an interview to understand the psyche of millennial workers in the hospitality industry, for Hotel Business Review. According to her, "The similarities in

their responses were stark." Following is a summary of her findings on their expectation and reality.

Education to Mean More

The millennial generation is the most educated (i.e. most formal education, degrees, etc.) to date. They were raised to excel in school, and often encouraged to seek not just a four-year degree, but to go on to graduate school. This accounts for thousands

HUMAN RESOURCE

THE GREAT DISCONNECT

There's a wide gap between expectation versus reality in millennial workers finds a survey by a top hospitality educator



► TV reality shows often offer a glamorized version of the hospitality industry to the millennial labour force

of hours, thousands of dollars, and thousands of academic blood-sweat-and-tears. Naturally, the millennial worker would want to see a return on this investment upon entering the workplace. Their expected ROI is not necessarily equating to the reality. As two students told me:

"I did consider that because I hold a Bachelor's degree and I am a current Master's degree student, I was going to be able to find a job such as manager or supervisor. Reality is we have to start at entry-level positions; therefore, it does not matter how much someone has studied or has prepared."

"The salaries offered are not what I expected, especially after doing an investment [such as a Master's degree]. My biggest shock without a doubt is realizing that it is not necessary to have a degree to do my job, and definitely not necessary to have a Master's degree."

This may speak to a need for educators and academic advisors to more strongly impress upon hospitality students the value and importance of work experience during their degree programs. This message might also be great coming from industry supervisors of degree-seeking employees or interns.

More Attention

It is actually not novel information that the millennial typically desires more attention than previous generations. This often translates in the workplace as a need for more (and more individualized) training and supervision:

"I expected further management training. In addition, I expected the communication with my superiors to be more fluid as equals and less structured."

"I am a millennial, and I lots of times I feel I am being used and looked



► **As the millennial generation is educated at the expense of huge investment of funds and hours, they want to see a quick return on investment**

down upon because of my age in my workplace. I expected to learn from other experienced people, especially in the hospitality field. I mean everybody is supposed to be extra nice, aren't they?"

Thus, begets the age-old question: Who should adapt? Do the millennials just get over it and get to work, or should the older co-workers and supervisors bend to their will and provide the much-desired attention? My thoughts: a little bit of both. If we want to retain top talent from this labor pool, we have to provide adequate training. If the employee feels they are not being trained properly (and with enough time and attention), they will feel that this training is inadequate, and they will try to find a more equitable work environment elsewhere.

More Growth

When I kept seeing this trend in my

discussions with millennial hospitality workers, I thought to myself, "Well who would want a career where they feel there is no opportunity for growth? That's not an age thing!". The desire for growth opportunities was definitely apparent among this group, and, sadly, many felt that they were not seeing it in their current industry roles, or they were disappointed by the time in which it would take to obtain these opportunities:

"When I first entered into the hospitality industry I expected growth on a schedule. Where if I put in a certain amount of hours and hard work within a certain time frame I should move up to the next level. I did not experience that, what I came to find out is that growth is not based on a schedule format but on an opportunity. It does not matter how long a person has worked at a certain place, what matters is if the opportunity for

growth is available."

"Another aspect is that I expected to be promoted faster and I actually were. Same happened with my boyfriend who is also a millennial. We expected to be promoted within two years, and in this industry it takes longer than that."

Get involved

Each of the millennial workers I spoke with in preparation for this article indicated a strong desire to be a part of their work "team". They did not want to just show up and do their jobs to collect a paycheck, they wanted to be involved and invested. This is great, right? Having an employee who wants to be a member of the organization is far more desirable than simply a warm body there to collect paychecks. There was a pattern, however, of workers

feeling like they were not being part of the conversation in their workplaces:

"Even after communicating issues to management, giving feedback on [a new process] and how the [new process] started to affect the productivity and the overall guest experience, no significant changes were made."

"I expected [superiors] to be more open minded, willing to listen and to consider new ideas. We millennial's want to feel empowered in our job environment. It is critical for us to be heard. If we feel that they care about our opinion we are motivated and feel more productive to the company."

Studies have shown that job satisfaction and organizational loyalty have a strong impact on performance; when employees are happy and committed to your workplace,

they will do a better job for you.

Feeling dismissed or ignored will definitely take a hit to the millennial workplace satisfaction, and in turn, their performance.

Fun industry

In their defense, I have spoken to many people who have never worked in hospitality who were under the impression that the work is always fun. Why? Because you go to these establishments to have fun. Take the Disney properties, for example – who wouldn't enjoy every day of work at the happiest place on Earth? What those who have never done it may fail to realize is that our jobs carry a great deal of physical and emotional labor, we miss the nights/weekends/holidays with our families, and the burn-out rate is one of the highest among



► Many young people step into the hospitality industry with an impression that the work is always fun, not realizing the fact that the jobs carry a great deal of physical and emotional labour



► **A hospitality worker must get prepared to sacrifice the nights, weekends, holidays and fun with their families**

all industries. This certainly applied to the millennial worker regarding their first hospitality job experience:

"I was always very communicative and sociable and thought it would be very easy for me to work with people. But in reality it is actually not that easy."

"[Millennials] come in with the mindset of it being carefree, and are blindsided by the hard work that most places require. [Millennials] find it very eye-opening when they work very hard to serve someone and get no tip, or have to handle a rude patron in a guest relations position and have to hold their tongue and swallow their pride while getting verbally abused. I don't believe in the application and interview process they are given actual negative realities of the job they are applying for. They are given glamorized facts to appeal to them as many companies are desperate to look for young talent with potential, but don't

want them to be scared off easily by cold truths of the industry."

This may speak to a need for educators and interviewers to provide a more accurate portrayal of what the millennial hospitality worker is in for – being careful not to exclude all of the amazing aspects of our industry.

No Negative Stereotype

While some of the Millennial worker stereotypes may ring true, I agree that much of this young labor pool may get a bad rap due to the extreme behaviors of a smaller portion of their peers. And I can imagine that they are not just frustrated, but exhausted by the 'Millennial bashing' that older generations are so quick to engage in:

"When I look back on my first impressions working in the industry, the biggest revelation was that a person's age didn't really translate into whether or not they are a good or pro-

ductive employee. There are a lot of negative stereotypes of Millennials - they aren't willing to put in the hours unless they get something valuable in return, they hop from job to job, they are more entitled, etc. And while this might describe some people my age, it is important to remember that all employees have flaws, regardless of the generation they fall in. It really bugs me when I read a headline saying Millennial's aren't worth hiring because of x, y, and z because I've had to work with people who could benefit from a crash course on effective communication or develop their active listening skills."

I must say, looking back at this list of expectation/reality gaps, I wonder: Does this really make the millennial generation unique? Feeling heard and valued, opportunity for growth, proper training – are these things that did not matter to previous generations? They certainly matter to me.



► As service is core of the hospitality industry an HVAC system directly influences guests' satisfaction ensuring a hotels' success

ENERGY SAVINGS

HVAC: Smart Solutions

Since heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) involves a huge energy cost, it has become increasingly important for senior managers to contain this overhead without impacting service delivery

HVAC systems refer to the technology of indoor or automotive environmental comfort and such systems in hospitality buildings provide control of the interior temperature, humidity, air movement, and air quality within the structure. A well-designed HVAC system is comprised of a number of components including boilers, chillers, centralized and decentralized guestroom HVAC units, large roof mounted PTAC units, air handling units, and cooling towers. As service

is core of the hospitality industry, an HVAC system directly influences guests' satisfaction and therefore plays a big role in ensuring hotels' success.

The needs of an HVAC system can be very different depending on the size, location, structure and style of the hotel property. A small B&B may only have a heating unit while a big luxury hotel may apply a huge temperature control system. With the development of technology, some HVAC systems are very high-tech and efficient. Besides, the renovation of an HVAC system in

some old properties can be highly expensive and complicated. When planning an HVAC system, any small mistake may lead to a big failure and potentially a hotel disaster.

A comfortable and welcoming environment is integral to a hotel, and that's irrespective of which segment a property is positioned in or its size. As a result, heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC), the mechanism that delivers a conducive environment in a hotel, plays a key role. And as a hotel has a number of

sections, starting from the lobby to restaurants, meeting spaces, wellness areas along with guest rooms on higher floors, maintaining the right atmosphere can be a challenge. HVAC systems for hotels can vary from room/split air-conditioners in small hotels to variable refrigerant flow (VRF) systems or screw chillers in medium to large hotels. Ducted splits are also used for restaurants and banquet halls in smaller hotels. In addition, hotels are increasingly using indoor air quality (IAQ) systems for maintaining superior air quality, and ultra violet (UV) lamps for keeping the AHU coils clean and free of microbes along with installing sewage treatment plant (STP) and kitchen exhaust air deodorisation systems.

Key distinction: While a controlled environment is critical for many

industries, the hospitality industry has its distinct characteristics, and the variability quotient is quite high. In a hotel, all rooms are not occupied at a given time, similarly, meeting spaces and banquets are not used all the time. Therefore, the HVAC system needs to be efficient to handle both peak loads and minimal usage. "Occupancies in a hotel are variable. As a result, the system should be capable to deliver efficiency in all conditions – peak, average, and low capacities," according to a Business Head – Climate Solutions of (India Region), a leading air-conditioning company.

According to him, flexibility and reliability are quite important in a "closed environment," like a hotel. He also pointed out that in a hotel, the system should also respond quickly, when a customer checks-in. The

room temperature should turn cozy as soon as he settles down after inserting his key card to the dedicated slot, he added.

Providing an energy efficient HVAC solutions is complex, considering various factors involved such as number of guests, type of guests (business or leisure), geographical location and climatic conditions. "The load on HVAC is varying in nature and it is not constant, as required for other process industry. As the main objective of HVAC is to provide comfort cooling/ heating, there is ample scope for utilising the natural resources to reduce the electrical energy," he stated. Striking a similar view, a Director of Strategy and Business Development of a leading electronic company, said, "Guest room energy consumption accounts for 40 to 80



► Providing an energy efficient HVAC solutions is a complex job

per cent of total energy use across the hospitality industry.

Hotels spend as much as 30 per cent of unneeded costs per room each year on guest room energy use for 'rented but unoccupied rooms.' If room comfort levels aren't adjusted during these 'away' hours, a considerable amount of energy waste can occur. By leveraging smart systems, hotel operators can factor such behaviour patterns into guest room energy management." Soaring energy costs Hotels consume energy for HVAC operations, lighting, cooking and other miscellaneous power requirements. A sizable portion of electricity utilised in a property, approximately one-half is consumed by utilities like refrigeration and air-conditioning alone.

In a highly competitive business environment with hotel rates broadly stagnant and on the other hand, input costs including energy cost increasing

day by day, it has become important for the management of a property to contain operational costs and improve profitability. It's no surprise that in this era of cut-throat competition, a key mantra has emerged - 'saving is earning'. "In the hotel industry, a large portion (around 60 per cent) of electricity cost goes toward HVAC. Hence, it becomes of utmost importance to save the electricity wherever possible in HVAC applications. The small savings in various HVAC units can bring substantial energy savings in totality. Savings in energy cost directly add to the bottom line," informed a president of an electronics company. Striking a similar view he said, "The cost of electricity is a key component in the total operating cost of a hotel. And ever rising

energy bills and reduced availability, necessitates the need for efficient

use and innovative techniques." An official also highlighted the "key dimensions" related to energy consumption in a hotel, and pointed out that while customer satisfaction is critical for a hotel, but controlling soaring energy costs is also key for senior managers at a property. In addition, he enumerated the growing awareness amongst global travellers for sustainable travel.

The stakeholders of the hospitality industry are also increasingly receptive to the mantra of 'eco-friendliness,' and also realising the long-term benefits it offers. In addition, there

LOWER ENERGY COSTS

- Up to 20 percent energy savings through time- and presence-dependent temperature control
 - Daily, weekly and seasonal programs based on occupancy schedules
 - Occupancy-dependent temperature control with presence detection via presence detectors, hotel card switches or connectivity to the reservation system
- Up to 30 percent energy savings through individual room control and automatic data exchange with the heating/cooling plant
 - Temperature can be individually adjusted for every room
 - Automatic data exchange eliminates unnecessary heating or cooling
 - Window contacts, hotel card switches and presence detectors prevent the waste of energy
- 20 to 70 percent energy savings through demand-controlled ventilation
 - The ideal amount of fresh air at the right temperature - at any time
 - Optimal air quality and humidity
 - Ideal working conditions
- Straightforward operation and monitoring of energy efficiency
 - Energy indicator reports unfavorable settings via e-mail or HomeControl app
 - Easy internet-based operation by facility manager or service personnel from any location

are a growing number of hotels, which involve certification agencies and auditors right from the project level, in a bid to get the 'Global Green building' certification. Experts however, stressed despite growing awareness for environment-related factors, there is still complacency in sections of the hospitality industry with regard to adopting or investing in technology, which could deliver long-term benefits. "It has often been observed that very little attention has been paid to energy savings at the design stage. Instead, the focus is largely on aesthetics and maximum utilisation of space. There is little awareness toward implementing the new technologies, especially in HVAC. The industry is adopting the 'low-cost-low return' solutions such as energy efficient lighting, but is not ready for 'high cost-high return' type of investment," added an official.

However, he sees a perceptible "Mind shift" in the hospitality industry of late toward technology that assists in energy savings. "Few years earlier, the hotel industry was looking at these technology solutions merely from a branding perspective, and there were hardly any projects to showcase. Today, the operating environment has forced hotel owners to adapt to the changes, and they understand the value of saving; energy and water, and its ability to boost profitability," he remarked.

In a continuing trend, he added, that the hotel industry asks for authenticated data on energy savings that a system can deliver at different levels when vendors approach them. Technology at A wide variety of technology is available today for running hotel operations intelligently and efficiently. For instance, there are best practices, which could deliver energy savings ranging between 10 and 20 per cent,



► **Rooftop units play a crucial role in providing efficiency to large HVAC systems in hotels**

and they can be achieved via a technical review of equipment and operations, and resulting implementation of energy conservation measures (ECMs). “Best practices via SCADA, use of Energy Optimus and variable speed drives (VSD) can lead to energy savings of nearly 20 – 40 per cent. In the current fiercely competitive operating environment, hotels are keen on adopting energy conservation strategies,” added the official. He also highlighted that their technology helps property management teams, provides customised comfort, optimises air quality in a property, reduces operating costs and at the same time creates a congenial guest experience. Hotels consume a lot of energy as the whole design approach of a hotel is to pamper its guests. The HVAC and building automation systems consume a lot of energy, and by concentrating on these aspects at the design stage, hotels can save up to 30 per cent of energy costs, highlighted an engineer of an electric

company. He said, “We offer intelligent products that save energy. Our lighting control solutions are definitely an innovation in itself. We also have communicable MCBs, which automatically detect hi-load points and trigger a SMS to the owner.

Since, it is a world of convergence, instead of having multiple devices to manage assets, the company helps to bring everything on one platform – a central control. This helps big hotel chains to monitor energy consumption from a central location. All our products and solutions are designed to reduce energy consumption to optimum. By deploying sensors that can sense humans, we can reduce energy consumption.”

Hotels are also increasingly keen to leverage the rapid technological innovations for gaining a competitive advantage. “We have installed and commissioned a new BMS, which helped us to save energy by cutting down the wastage along

with enhancing guest comfort. VFD’s have been installed in the HVAC system and interfaced with the BMS system to maintain uniform temperature in ball rooms and public areas. We have also replaced the TFA’s with dehumidifier heat pipe system for guest room / corridor, in a bid to maintain humidity as per required standards. We also do regular and extensive preventive maintenance of air-conditioning and refrigeration equipment to increase the efficiency of system,” informed, director of engineering of a five-star hotel in New Delhi.

Commenting on the various initiatives being taken at the hotel to improve energy efficiency, chief engineer at a Mumbai hotel and convention centre, highlighted that they are in the process of replacing conventional window air-conditioners with next generation inverter base noiseless split air-conditioners. “We did replace conventional 40 watts T8 tube lights with 28 watts T5 tube lights. We also replaced few incandescent lamps with LEDs, and are in the process of going for LED lighting for the entire hotel,” he added.

At a top hotel in New Delhi, they have set up a building management system for spa and health along with business centre, which have been renovated over the past few years and it has resulted in energy saving of nearly 15 per cent. “Energy audits are conducted annually from reputed organisations and their suggestions are implemented,” said the director of engineering, of the hotel. Striking a similar view, director-engineering, a three star hotel said, “We have taken several steps to reduce energy and at the same time ensure convenience of our guests.”

Clearly, conserving energy makes business sense.



Key to our success is local patronage

Atul Bhalla's journey with ITC Hotels began with ITC Kakatiya, Hyderabad, in 1998. The 51-year-old had joined as general manager, ITC Sonar Calcutta, in 2014, after a stint at ITC Grand Chola, Chennai, where he was an integral part of the pre-opening and launch of the 600-room destination hotel. Under his dynamic leadership the brand new The ITC Royal Bengal is all set to open its door next year with a room inventory of 456 keys including 82 service apartments, over 6 F&B Restaurants offering Globe's Finest Indian and India's finest Global cuisine. Mr Bhalla, Area Manager East, ITC Hotels & General Manager, ITC Sonar spoke to Mystic East in an exclusive interview. The Excerpts:

Last year ITC Sonar completed 15 years. Please describe the journey that began in the dhapa, Kolkata's dumpyard.

It has been a golden journey for ITC Sonar, the hotel was conceptualised at the location when it was not as developed as it is today. Over the years, given the city expansion we are now in the heart of Kolkata ITC Hotels'

philosophy of 'being rooted to the soil' and creating indigenous experiences, an offshoot of this thought is building hotels whose architecture is inspired by local history and culture. ITC Sonar carrying forth this philosophy pays tribute to the beauty and the golden era of Bengal, being lavishly spread over acres of lush green gardens and tastefully designed water bodies. Planned as

a luxury business resort, it captures the essence of Kolkata, the décor of the hotel offers an uncluttered minimalist style, totally eastern in concept, but incorporating subtly a mood of the large stone sculptures and carved friezes, reminiscent of the ancient Pala Dynasty, are strategically located in the lobby and reception area. Built along lines of a quintessential 'Baganbadi' — traditional house



of the erstwhile Bengali nobility– it also boasts of being the first hotel in the world to be registered under UNFCCC FOR its Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) project on reduction of CO2 emission.

Over the last 15 years, ITC Sonar has established itself as a leading Hotel in Eastern India delivering globally benchmarked quality, services with ITC Hotels ethos and guiding premise of Responsible Luxury, that is luxury without compromising the earth and sustainability without compromising luxury. Responsible Luxury is premised on the belief that luxury brands must have sustainable practices embedded in their business ethos. With this as the underlying principle, ITC Sonar has delivered the luxury of experiencing regional architecture, local cuisine and art, indigenous service rituals, culinary and wellness traditions of India in a 'responsible' manner – respecting both, Planet and People.

Personally, how have you enjoyed to be a part of Calcutta in the last few years?

The city grows on you. It is a city with a soul and wonderful warm people

who have become good friends. The key to our success in this city is our local patronage. It has always been my foremost responsibility to nurture and strengthen relationships, by adding a personal connect.

Now that you are ready to launch ITC Royal Bengal, tell us how big the hotel will be?

The Hotel will be opened next year. It will have a room inventory of 456 keys including 82 service apartments, Over 6 F&B Restaurants offering Globe's Finest Indian and India's finest Global cuisine. Kolkata may look forward to the following ITC Hotels culinary brands at ITC Royal Bengal-Ottimo, Royal Vega, Roof Top Bar Jazz Bar and of course an exclusive 24X 7 Café with Banqueting facilities of 5630 sq mtrs

How different will it be compared to ITC Sonar?

ITC Hotels East will be two unique Hotels with ITC Ltd's legacy. The two distinguished hotels next to each other, linked by a walkway will offer two different experiences yet be connected in soul by providing Kolkata

superlative standards in accommodation and an unprecedented choice of Food & Beverage in restaurants and conference venues. Combined with our Spa, it will be the ultimate destination of the Luxury global traveller and an important MICE and Wedding destination.

Will the new property focus on the MICE market? Will it be wedding destination?

As mentioned earlier ITC Royal Bengal has superlative and unparalleled MICE and Wedding possibilities in Eastern India. It will open new markets and attract new business for the city which has not happened earlier. The Milan Mela grounds, EcoPark, Biswa Bangla Convention Center HIDCO and others along with ITC Royal Bengal will attract international events. The influx of tourists will boost the job economy, the close proximity to eight north eastern states and south eastern countries is an advantage.

How good is the market for another luxury hotel in Kolkata?

I feel that the hospitality industry in Kolkata is growing and is poised to see several new entrants. In coming days it would be an interesting market with several more rooms than what was available earlier.

What is the future of hospitality industry in eastern India? You've recently opened a hotel in Durgapur? Are there any plans to expand your footprint across the eastern region?

We are expanding in Eastern India, in addition to ITC Royal Bengal, we have signed up for a new property in Durgapur which is under construction and we are opening a Welcom-Hotel in Bhubaneshwar next year.

Responsible luxury

ITC Hotels is one of India's leading luxury hotel chains operating according to highest principles of environmental stewardship



► ITC Mughal in Agra

ITC Hotels operates under four distinct brands with more than 100 hotels in over 70 destinations in the country. Integrating India's fine tradition of hospitality with globally benchmarked services, the luxury hotels reflect the culture and ethos of each destination.

With 'Responsible Luxury' as its guiding premise, ITC's Luxury Collection hotels combine grandeur with intimacy to operate according to the highest principles of environmental stewardship. The brand features

opulent accommodations, state-of-the-art business facilities, renowned signature cuisine and award-winning wellness experiences.

The 12 ITC Luxury Collection properties are: ITC Maurya in New Delhi, ITC Mughal in Agra, ITC Windsor and ITC Gardenia in Bengaluru, ITC Grand Central and ITC Maratha in Mumbai, ITC Grand Chola in Chennai, ITC Rajputana in Jaipur, ITC Kakatiya and ITC Kohenuur in Hyderabad, ITC Sonar in Kolkata and the ITC Grand Bharat in the New Delhi Capital Region.

Other brands in ITC's hotel group repertoire are: 'WelcomHotel' in the 5 star segment, Fortune in the mid-market to upscale segment and 'WelcomHeritage' in the heritage leisure segment.

At ITC Hotels 'Responsible Luxury' is manifest in a collection of hotels that mirror the ethos and culture of the destination; through culinary experiences like Bukhara, Dum Pukht, Royal Vega that abet India's dominance on the global culinary scape and initiatives like 'SunyaAqua'-Zero km water, Local Love, Kitchens of India series-showcasing the lesser known culinary legacy of the nation; through Well-being initiatives like Kaya Kalp-the spa brand, initiative on the science of 'Sleep' and Swasthya cuisine; through social initiatives like engaging with local communities towards providing gainful employment that demonstrates a commitment towards nation building, coupled with a commitment to operate according to the highest principles of environmental stewardship.

Each ITC luxury hotel is an archetype of the culture and ethos of the region that it is located in. The concept of each of the hotels weaves in the strongest elements of the culture of the region – harking back through architecture, interiors, art and artefacts to the major dynasties who have ruled India.



► **ITC Maurya in New Delhi**

Our unique value propositions, including the differentiated character of our hotels, coupled with indigenous Indian experiences is what makes every ITC luxury hotel part of a unique collection of hotels and an archetype of the culture and ethos of the region that it is located in

From product design to room configuration to interiors, every aspect of ITC's hotels are conceptualised and built around the diverse and evolving needs of our guest. We ensure that we stay relevant and contemporary in our offerings.

Innovation, guest orientation, globally benchmarked products and service excellence steeped in Indian-ness, based on the commitment to responsible luxury form the cornerstones of ITC Hotel's value proposition. These pillars have governed and inspire our business philosophy.

TC Hotels's culinary legacy is reflected in its awards winning brands that continue to be recognised on global platforms. The Bukhara acknowledged among best



► **ITC Rajputana in Jaipur**

restaurants in the world by Conde Nast Traveler USA & among asia's 50 best restaurants at the S. Pellegrino awards. Dum Pukht is India's first and only Golden Fork award recipient, Dakshin has consistently shone at the Miele asia top 20 restaurants and Royal Vega dominates as one of the 'hottest destinations for Vegas'

according to CNN. Each of our Indian culinary brands reflect ITC Hotels' relentless pursuits in presenting the gastronomic traditions of India's centuries old heritage. Our international cuisine portfolio Tian, Edo, Pan Asian, Ottimo and West View endeavor to offer the best international dining experiences in the country.



WORKPLACE WOES

STOP IT BEFORE IT SPREADS

Sexual harassment is rampant in hospitality industry and what can you do about

Scores of recent stories have exposed the pervasiveness of sexual harassment in industries such as Bollywood, media, sports, politics, and academia, thanks to the MeToo movement. Less attention has been given to lower-paying jobs, such as those in the service and hospitality industry, where the problem runs rampant.

More sexual harassment claims in the across the world are filed in the hotel and restaurant industry than in any other, where as many as 90 per cent of women and 10 per cent of men reportedly experience some form of sexual harassment. While the industry has had its share of high-profile stories (with a number of well-known film

stars and media personalities being accused of inappropriate behavior), even more insidious is the routine harassment of service workers by managers, coworkers, and, even, customers.

There are several factors that make employees in the field particularly susceptible to sexual harassment. First, men make up the majority of management and higher-paying roles in this industry. The typical frontline hospitality employee is young, female, and working for a male manager. Women, particularly women from small town or village, are often placed in jobs with lower status and are more likely to be hired for lower-paying segments like quick-serve and family-style than for higher-paying segments like five-star or fine dining. This difference in power can create an

environment where sexual harassment is tolerated, ignored, or normalized, because employees do not feel comfortable confronting others about their inappropriate behavior. The industry's high turnover rate can also contribute to this culture, as targets of harassment are likely to leave before making any complaints.

Second, hotel and restaurant culture still praises the customer as "always right." Qualitative studies show that service employees face harassment and mistreatment from customers on a daily basis, but often refrain from complaining or reporting these incidents. When they do, management tends to ignore them or change servers instead of confronting the customer. Managers can also be more forgiving of sexual harassment

from customers.

In addition, because employees, especially in the restaurants, often rely on tips, customers play an integral role in the both the evaluation and pay of the employees — which can both lead customers to sexually harass employees and make employees and managers less likely to speak out against it.

Third, the hospitality industry is a “looks” industry, in which women are expected to use their appearance as part of the service experience. Restaurants often have strict grooming and uniform rules, requiring employees to maintain certain “looks.” But a culture that emphasizes and rewards looks can help customers and managers justify sexual harassment toward employees. And our other research shows that women who are perceived to have used their looks to get ahead are seen as more “deserving” of sexual harassment.

Gross misconception

Many people think that men working in the hotels – right from the managers to the chefs or women, for that matter, are most likely open to the idea of having consensual sex. Also there’s a misconception that a woman in the industry must be “broadminded” (sic) and ready for any kind of liaison if she wants to survive or ‘rise up’ the career ladder. That’s the patriarchal attitude, “Indians” still have for women who work in the hotel industry.

It’s not just in India, sexual harassment rampant in hospitality industry, found a survey reported in The Guardian, the British newspaper. According to this survey by Unite Union, published early this year, nine out of 10 workers said they have experienced abuse.

Workers in bars, restaurants, clubs

and hotels face a barrage of abuse so common it has become entirely normalised, with the vast majority of workers subjected to sexual harassment, according to new evidence seen by the Guardian. Preliminary research gathered from workers in the hospitality industry found that 89% said they had experienced one or more incidents of sexual harassment in their working life.

Testimony from workers suggests sexual harassment is happening in plain sight, with many employers accused of failing to protect staff from regular abuse.

Of those who had experienced sexual harassment and who responded to the Unite union’s Not on the Menu survey, 56.3% said they had been targeted by a member of the public and 22.7% said they had been

harassed by a manager. At least half of workers who had been harassed said the experience made them want to leave their job and made them feel unsafe and less confident at work.

Adding to this saga are not only small or inexpensive hotels. Even prestigious hotels have time and again been accused of not being able to protect their employees. It was in 2015 as per a report by The Economic Times that a female executive alleged that the CEO of India’s top hotel group of sexual abuse. However, the CEO was given a clean chit by an independent panel constituted by the company. Eventually, he quit the company predominantly due to ‘personal reasons’ as per BSE filings.

In 2017, a video of a woman being abused by a security manager of mid-market hotel chain in India, with a third person (woman’s immediate supervisor) present in the room and not reporting the matter. The aftermath of it? The woman was sacked from the job for reporting the matter. In 2017 June, one of biggest Indian hotel chain of India was in news for an alleged case of sexual harassment by its CEO.

Why is the situation so terrible? As per this report in Business Standard, the number of women working in the hotel industry is fairly less. The article recites a story of a young girl named Kiran. She was one of four girls in a class of forty during her course. Thirty-six boys and four girls. It is because of such a scarce number that women’s agony and pain generally go unnoticed or unreported. A major reason for the same is society’s perception about the female employees in the hotel industry. They do not understand that it is similar to any other day-job and it needs to be equally respected.

A culture that emphasizes and rewards looks can help customers and managers justify sexual harassment towards employees. Research shows that women who are perceived to have used their looks to get ahead are seen as more “deserving” of sexual harassment



► **Service employees often face harassment and mistreatment from customers, but often refrain from reporting these incidents**

Case study

Kiran, at 22, is the perfect embodiment of the new India, a student of hotel management in Pune, she is independent, ambitious and devoted to her job. Of the various hotel management disciplines, she likes front office and service the most. One aspect of the hotel management programme is the mandatory internship at a hotel to enable students to see the details of the job first-hand. Over the last two years, Kiran, who is only one of four girls in a class of 40, has coordinated several corporate conferences and banquets. At various

times, she has tended the bar, served starters, looked after desserts, and ensured overall smooth running of operations. Her pleasing smile and gentle attitude make her an ideal stewardess.

As a woman working in the service sector, however, Kiran has also faced her share of harassment. At a suppliers' conference of one of India's top corporate houses, Kiran was in charge of the buffet spread. One of the men, a "truckdriver-type" in her words, kept looking in her direction. When she approached his table with a salver, he grabbed her hand and said: "Ma'am,

why do you work so hard? That too so late into the night. So sad, no?" Kiran, who had half a mind to drop the salver on his head and give him a ringing slap, merely replied: "Yes, I do work late, but that's because people like you hang around way beyond time."

Of course, she knew even that was crossing limits. But it was okay since she knew who she was talking to. It was only a supplier who probably had come to such a place for the first time and could not believe his luck that the corporate house had invited him and his ilk to a grand dinner. But



► **Housekeeping staff at hotels are at high risk of sexual harassment from guests**

what if the too-friendly gentleman had been a suited upper class-type? In that case, says Kiran, "I would have kept my reply to myself and reported the matter to a senior."

Which brings us to the other, gratifying aspect of this issue. The management at the hotels Kiran has interned with -- and in the hotel industry at large, she informs me -- is extremely conscious of protecting female employees. Housekeeping is one area where female employees are not permitted to venture alone. They must at all times be accompanied by male employees. And if the guests



are drinking in the room, the kitchen never sends women to serve them.

"Do you like your job?" the reporter asked Kiran. She replied, "I love it," she beams, "and no horny loser will make me change my mind."

The probable solution

As per this report, Human Resource (HR) experts blame bad or no orientation program for training the employees or the management. In the article, an HR expert who handled Corporate HR and Training of many hotel companies in India says, "Today, most of the people dealing with labor and

In a society where depriving a woman out of modesty is considered "normal," people need to be sensitized at all levels



HR matters are ignorant of the rules and compliances to be followed while handling matters concerning allegations of sexual harassment. How many hotels' annual reports mention the number of employee orientation programmes they undertake in the hotel. Sensitisation is most important at all levels about what all comes under sexual harassment."

In a society where depriving a woman out of modesty is considered "normal," people need to be sensitized at all levels. There need to constant seminars, the inclusion of sexual harassment policies in the brochures,



► It is important to understand if someone touches sexually at work, even over clothing



► Metoo movement has shaken the entertainment and media industry in India

induction programs, online courses, a detailed list of what should be done and who should be called in case of harassment provided to each and every individual in the organization.

If you are a woman or someone who is witnessing any such harassment, here are some of the steps you can take:

- Do not stay quiet! Say no! If there is any person from the management (or the visitors) walk away if they make you uncomfortable. There is no job

which demands you to be respectful towards those who demean you.

- Demand a copy of the sexual harassment policies from the hotel you are going to join if they haven't already given you one. It is important for you to know how much the organization is willing to protect you.

- Keep your friends and family informed if you sense anyone trying to make advances towards you. However, it is always better to file a

written complaint with the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) if the advances are too strong to overlook.

- Keep yourself updated about the law. You can read articles like these or take a course which can inform you about your rights. If you are an HR, it is all the more important for you to know the sexual harassment laws and keep the employees informed about the possible remedies. You can actually help the organization design a comprehensive



► In extremely rare cases, male workers are also victims of sexual harassment at workplace

sexual harassment policy.

•Never accept a plea from your workplace that is along the lines of “it is a first time and won’t be repeated.”

Remember a crime once committed is committed and there are no two ways about it.

•As a last resort, remember you can always file a written complaint to the ICC within 3 months of such crime being committed against you. If you think that it won’t be of help, file the complaint with the Local Complaints Committee (LCC) or the police station near you. Remember there is an Act in place to come to your rescue.

Get up and speak before it gets too late. The law is with you.

Acknowledgement: The Guardian and Aditya Srivastava.

Prevent Sexual Harassment



Preventing sexual harassment in your organization is as important

as preventing a structure fire from wiping you out. The physical safety and well-being of your staff in regard to sexual harassment is a work-place safety issue that holds the same weight as any other safety law or procedure.

*Don’t be foolish & believe you don’t have time to deal with sexual harassment policies, procedures, allegations or training.

*It’s your obligation as an employer. Employers can be held vicariously liable for acts (or omissions) of management staff who commit or permit sexual harassment in the workplace.

*Your position on sexual harassment starts at the top. Schedule a meeting with your top-level management

team and review your current sexual harassment policy (if you have one). If you don’t have one, or yours needs to be re-addressed, make it one of your priorities for this quarter.

*Once you have your policy outlined, make sure every person you employ sees it, reads it, understands, it and accepts it.

*Awareness & training should be included at a weekly staff meeting and at pre-shift meetings for all the teams. It’s important for your employees to feel your support in implementing the policy in you business.

*The culture in your organization should be one that encourages open dialogue between you and everyone else—even around difficult subjects like this.



► Wellness tourism in India is still very unorganized and unstructured

NICHE TOURISM

WHERE'S THE BOOM?

Wellness tourism has a long way to go in India despite tremendous prospects in the field

INDIA seems to have created a niche for itself by becoming a preferred destination for yoga and meditation. The practices are so popularly known now that they are considered a 'booming' industry in the country.

The country is among the top five destinations for wellness services, along with China, Brazil, US, and Indo-

nesia, according to a KPMG report on tourism industry. Acupuncture, naturopathy and Ayurveda are among the growing sectors along with yoga and meditation. A FICCI report also shows that the wellness industry in India is expected to grow at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of nearly 12 per cent for the next five years.

However, industry professionals are

wary about hailing it as a success yet, and point out that the opportunities coming their way are beset with challenges as well.

Wellness tourism in India is very unorganized and unstructured, believes a hospitality aggregator head. "That is because most of the centres are run by Ayurvedic doctors and yoga teachers who don't know much about

marketing. So even though we have the potential to be one of the leading wellness tourism destinations, it hasn't been utilized in a productive manner."

There is a lot of interest in the West about Indian system of medicine such as Ayurveda and yoga has always been popular. But the potential hasn't been tapped yet. Compared to the global scenario, India seems to be struggling to be at par with the many of the other wellness tourism destinations. Countries such as Indonesia and Thailand are among the top destinations for wellness vacations because they seem to have struck a balance between the much-needed marketing and government programs.

Recent large-scale Indian initiatives such as International Yoga Day also fall short when compared to other countries. Countries like Thailand and Indonesia are much more visible to tourists, giving them an edge over India, for which information is not that easily available.

BEYOND YOGA

The wellness industry today offers much more than before, and India has expanded a bit beyond yoga and meditation. Services such as naturotherapy, traditional spas and organic diets offer more diverse experience to customers. The most popular themes are detoxification and rejuvenation. For example, ayurvedic detoxification, particularly Panchkarma which involves removing toxins from the body, is a popular 21-day program. The objective is to bring back your body into the right shape in three weeks.

No wonder then that many people swear by the effects of Panchkarma, especially those who are was tired of physiotherapy and medications

which led to other complications.

While India is exploring the options to offer lesser-known therapies such as Unani, which are popular among people from the Gulf, there exist areas that haven't been adopted properly. For instance, India lacks in wellness programs related to sexual health. As sex is such a taboo in India, people are not aware of it. So such packages are rarely created and promoted.

The potential in wellness industry is huge but growth has been sluggish in the country. Market experts believe that in addition to better infrastructure, steps such as vocational training and promotion of rural entrepreneurs can create a lot of difference.

Now, that's a lot of prescribed measures for rejuvenation of a drowsy industry, which aims to become the leading destination for ensuring others' wellness.

India was supposed to grow 20% growth through 2018, as per 'The Global Wellness Tourism Economy' study by SRI International five years ago. The study noted that over half the growth in the segment in the next four years will come from Asia, Latin America and Middle East/North Africa. By 2018, the segment is projected to grow at 9.9% per annum—twice the rate of global tourism.

Travel today can be bad for your health. Airport stress and transportation hassles, jet lag and poor sleeping, disruption of exercise routines, and excesses in eating, drinking, and sun exposure can leave a traveller more stressed and less well after a trip. A Columbia University study of business travellers found that frequent and extensive travel can even increase cardiovascular risk factors (obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol).

This is ironic because many people look forward to travel as an adventure

and as an opportunity to rejuvenate and de-stress. In fact, when an SRI International survey asked consumers what they do to maintain/enhance their personal wellness, "take a vacation" was among the top five activities selected. As more and more people pay attention to their health, they increasingly want to keep up their healthy habits when they travel. And a growing segment of travellers are even taking trips specifically focused on maintaining and improving their personal health and well-being. This is driving the growth of wellness tourism.

Although wellness tourism is a relatively new niche segment within the global travel and tourism industry, the practice of wellness-focused travel is not new. Since ancient times, people have visited the Dead Sea for its therapeutic properties. Romans travelled to baths, hot springs, and seaside resorts for treatments, healthier climates, purification, and spiritual rituals. For 1,500 years, the Japanese have travelled to hot springs or onsen for healing and community. In spite of the rigors of travel in today's world, the act of travel itself has long been considered a wellness-enhancing activity.

THE ECONOMY

Measuring the size and economic impact of an industry is complicated and can be especially daunting for a segment that is not easily defined. Following international conventions for measuring tourism, this study measures Wellness Tourism by aggregating the expenditures of people who are defined as wellness tourists, instead of aggregating activities of "Wellness Tourism industry businesses."

Wellness Tourism spending may or may not take place in businesses or activities that one typically associates



► **In India, only the state of Kerala has been able to woo a large number of wellness tourists**

with wellness. For example, the lodging used by a wellness traveller could be a destination spa or a traditional hotel/resort. Other categories of Wellness Tourism expenditures (food & beverage, shopping, etc.) may range from “generic” to “wellness specific.” All of these types of expenditures are part of the Wellness Tourism economy so long as they are made by a traveller whose primary or secondary trip purpose is to pursue wellness.

Primary-purpose international wellness travellers represent the smallest segment, but they spend more per trip (\$2066). On the other hand, secondary-purpose domestic wellness travellers constitute the largest segment, but they spend less per trip. Wellness tourists currently tend to be middle-aged, wealthy, educated, and from Western and/or industrialised countries. The top source

countries for outbound international wellness travellers are currently in Europe and North America. Future Wellness Tourism growth will be driven by countries and consumers in Asia, Middle East, and Latin America.

The top five countries (United States, Germany, Japan, France, Austria) account for over half of the market (63% of expenditures). Among the world’s top twenty countries for inbound/international and domestic Wellness Tourism (in terms of combined market size), over half are in Europe. Countries that receive the most inbound international Wellness Tourism arrivals: United States, France, Austria, Germany, Switzerland. Countries that have the most domestic wellness tourism trips: United States, Germany, Japan, China, France. Fifteen countries account for 75-85% of outbound international

wellness trips, led by Europe, North America, and wealthier / developed Asian countries.

NICHE SECTOR

Niche tourism, or special interest tourism, has long been a growing global phenomenon. Wellness Tourism shares many commonalities with other niche tourism segments, including overlapping traveler motivations and interests. A “secondary purpose” wellness tourist may be simultaneously engaging in Adventure Tourism, Culinary Tourism, or Eco-Tourism. We estimate that international and domestic Wellness Tourism is similar in size to Eco/Sustainable Tourism and Culinary Tourism.

However, medical tourism and wellness tourism are fundamentally different activities that meet different traveler or patient needs. The conditions and factors that make a destination successful in either type of tourism are also very different. The distinction between medical tourism and wellness tourism is best understood by applying the concept of the “continuum of health” (see Page ii and below). Inconsistent use of these terms, as well as attempts to market medical tourism and wellness tourism together, have led to confusion among industry, governments, and consumers alike – to the detriment of both sectors. In fact, it is best to avoid using vague terminology such as “health tourism,” since it is not clear whether this term refers to medical tourism or wellness tourism, or is casually linking the two. While there are areas of overlap, cross-marketing must be pursued carefully to target specific consumer markets. From a policy and industry promotion perspective, the two are best developed and marketed separately.

Conventional medicine is beginning to embrace preventive and Alternative approaches to care. The overlap between wellness tourism and medical tourism occurs around activities toward the middle of the health continuum, such as thalassotherapy, thermal baths, health resorts, sanatoria, medical spas, DNA testing, and executive checkups – activities that can be both preventive and curative.

As the conventional medical industry increasingly turns toward preventive, alternative, and traditional approaches in order to deliver more effective care and improve costs – and as the scientific evidence base for alternative and wellness-oriented therapies grows – the lines between medical tourism and Wellness Tourism will in some instances blur.

NEW POLICY

Ministry of Tourism has drafted guideline for wellness tourism. These guidelines address issues regarding making available quality publicity material, training and capacity building for the service providers, participation in international & domestic Wellness related events, etc.

Mushrooming of wellness centers in the country have given rise to the concern for quality service. The Guideline for Accreditation of wellness centers have been developed by National Board for Accreditation of Hospitals & Healthcare Services (NABH) in consultation with AYUSH and released during the workshop on wellness tourism organized by Ministry of Tourism on 15 Feb 2011.

The Ministry of Tourism has also

extended its Market Development Assistance (MDA) scheme to wellness tourism service providers including accredited wellness centers. Presently the wellness centers accredited by State Tourism Departments are also eligible for the MDA. After the accreditation guidelines of NABH is in place, all wellness centers seeking MDA would be asked to be as close to the accreditation guidelines of NABH as possible.

The initiative of accreditation of wellness centre by NABH and AYUSH has been greatly driven by the Ministry of Tourism as also consultation with the Wellness Tourism Service Providers, State Governments and other stakeholders.

Hope the policy launched by the Government helps the industry bloom.



► Ayurveda is all about the science of holistic healing that originated thousands of years ago



STATE SURVEY: SIKKIM

OSCAR FOR BEST POLICY

Tourism in the State of Sikkim has been growing at a rapid pace in a very well thought of and planned manner.



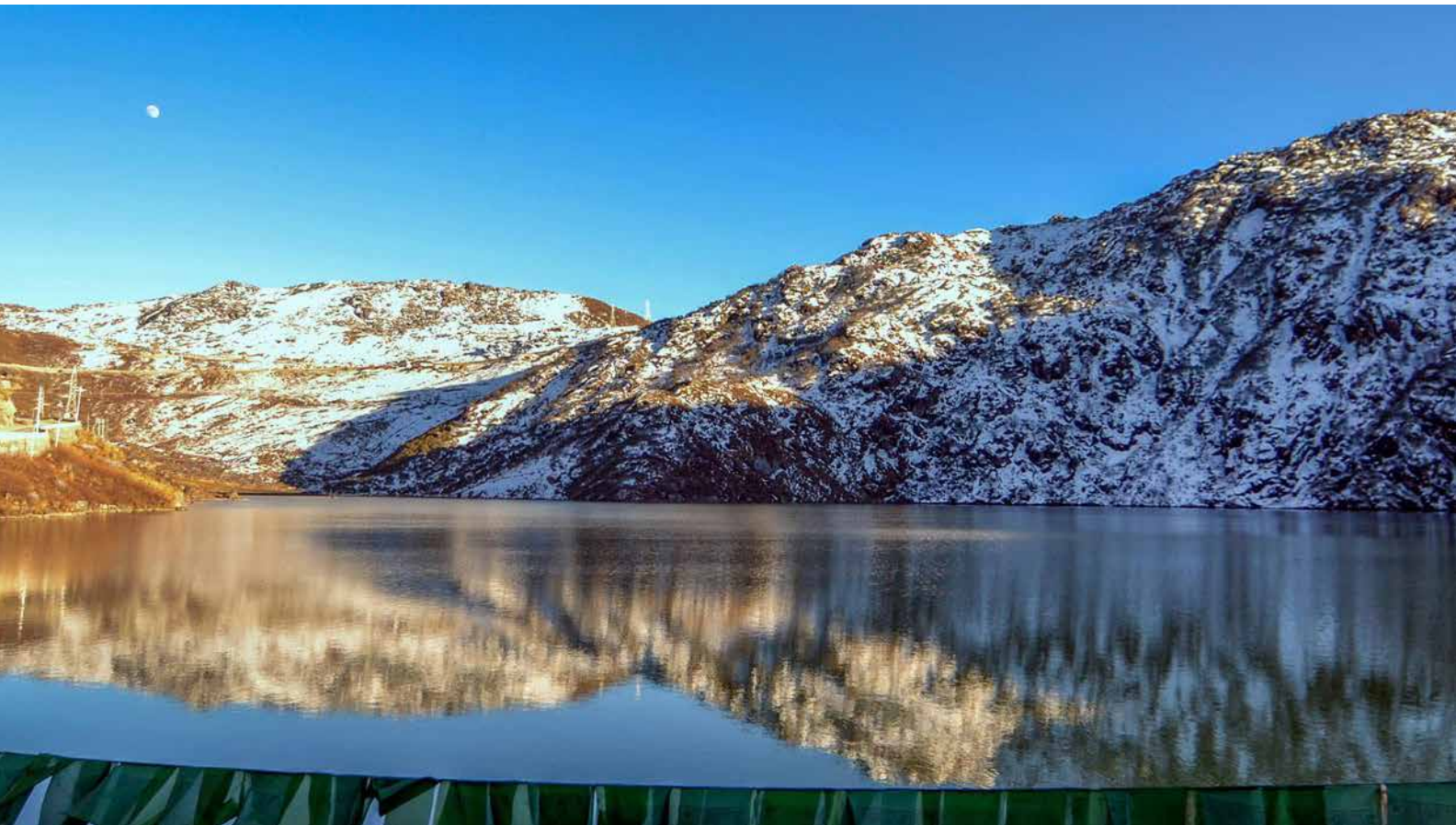
SIKKIM has become a highly valued responsible tourism destination with tourism contributing significantly to the State economy while conserving its natural and cultural heritage.

The state has now transformed itself into a world class tourist destination. Be it in agriculture, cleanliness, health and education, it has set a benchmark for other states to follow and tourism is no exception. As testimony to this, Sikkim has been receiving awards and recognition both at the national and international level. A credit largely attributed to the dynamic leadership of the Hon'ble Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling, the state today has nurtured

The state has now transformed itself into a world class tourist destination. As a testimony to this, Sikkim has been receiving awards and recognition both at the national and international level

an environment highly conducive for tourism industry to foster. It is a matter of pride for all of us but this achievement also sets before us great challenges to maintain our position to be amongst the best tourist destinations in the country. Moreover the complexity of the industry, as a result of involvement of independent sectors like transport, accommodation and the fragility of our resources, demands a careful approach to maintain a balanced and sustainable path of development.

A dire need was hence felt of a document that could be a guiding force to regulate the tourism industry of Sikkim. Such a document needed to be based upon a participatory



► Tsomgo is a fascinating glacial lake in east Sikkim



► **Snowclad mountains and hairpin bends in roads make the journey to mountain tops fascinating**

approach consolidating the collective views of all stakeholders. The “Sikkim Tourism Policy 2018” thus is an outcome of a series of brainstorming and successive meetings with the tourism stakeholders, scholars and officers from various line departments wherein the best of suggestions have been incorporated to make this document meaningful. Excerpts from the document:

The following principles shall guide the tourism sector in Sikkim:

Environmental Sustainability: Tourism development will not be at the cost of degradation of the environment and natural resources of the state.

Cultural integrity: Tourism development will ensure appreciation, pro-

motion and conservation of Sikkim's diverse culture.

Equity, Inclusiveness & Social Justice: Opportunities and benefits of tourism shall not exclude those disadvantaged by gender, remoteness and poverty, and tourism practices shall ensure the upholding of human rights and justice.

Atithi Devo Bhava: Tourism development shall focus on providing quality experiences and services for all visitors and ensure their safety and satisfaction.

Goals

In line with the need for tourism to contribute significantly to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the five

main goals that the policy objectives of tourism development in Sikkim will achieve are:

1. Develop tourism as a key sector in Sikkim's economy
2. Promote low impact sustainable tourism for the State
3. Make Sikkim a prime round the year destination for nature, adventure and culture
4. Tourism benefits are broad based to support local, social and economic development in Sikkim and also ensure social justice.
5. All tourism infrastructure and services shall be of the best standards and quality delivering a consistent high level of satisfaction and hospitality to tourists.

Key tourism products

Sikkim's main attraction is its nature and cool climate which makes it a perfect getaway for travelers. The richness of the State's diverse culture and tradition with strong bonds with nature and religion also add to the attraction. To address the policy goals of promoting cultural and natural heritage of Sikkim for developing high value low impact tourism in the State the key seven products are proposed as:

Conventional Leisure based

Tourism: This pertains to that section of tourists who come with the prime purpose of sightseeing and recreation, to enjoy Sikkim's natural scenery along with its cool climate and peaceful atmosphere. They are the casual holiday makers and currently comprise the bulk of the tourists who visit Sikkim. This form of tourism with high volumes and limited spending is the main driver of the tourism industry. However this sector has high impact on the environment and local resources in the form of high generation of waste, high consumption



► Solophok Chardham at Namchi is a newly developed pilgrimage-cum-cultural centre in south Sikkim

of energy and water, high pollution from vehicles and traffic congestion.

This form of tourism shall be encouraged but with a close watch on numbers and with a designed shift to higher value tourism with softer footprints and through improved quality of services. Such measures taken to upgrade the infrastructure and services with a resultant hike in tariff can serve as a disincentive for the unchecked rise in high volume tourism. Further this will be backed by regular carrying capacity studies to determine negative impacts and peak capacities of tourist traffic permissible in all high tourist density areas and mechanisms to ensure that the recommended capacities are not exceeded.

Nature based tourism or Ecotourism: Nature and natural scenery forms the main draw for tourists

Buddhist Monasteries and numerous places of hermitage and meditation are present in all corners of the State, some dating back nearly 300 years, offering great spiritual pull for visitors

to Sikkim. According to the International Ecotourism Society (TIES) "Responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves the environment and which provides benefits to local communities while ensuring enriched experiences for visitors can be termed as ecotourism." The Forest Environment and Wildlife Management Department has prepared the Sikkim Ecotourism Policy 2011 which advocates for certain strategies and guidelines for ecotourism development particularly for protected areas and also to bring consensus on the concept of ecotourism.

For serious nature lovers, Sikkim has a host of products to offer such as birding, butterfly watching, botanical and zoological excursions, nature walks and soft trekking around protected areas.

Sikkim's wealth of biodiversity that include some of the most enigmatic species of flora and fauna can be leveraged to attract researchers, students and hobbyists for high value tourism, with development of specific action plans.

Adventure based tourism: Sikkim with its stupendous mountains, gorges and valleys, glaciers, snows, lakes and rivers, forests and altitudinal and topographical diversity, has tremendous potential for development of adventure tourism which would also be in alignment with the tourism policy goals of bringing in high value tourists to the State. Some of the key adventure tourism products are trekking, mountaineering, paragliding, mountain biking, rafting/ kayaking, zip-lining. With the establishment of the Indian Himalayan Centre for Adventure & Ecotourism (IHCAE) at Chemchey, there is an excellent opportunity to develop high class training and certification within the state. There is a need to have long term

comprehensive planning, high quality infrastructure, encouragement of local stakeholders, improvement of standards and training with strict regulation and aggressive marketing in adventure sports. Focused efforts to improve and promote tourist traffic in routes other than the already popular ones such as the Yuksom-Dzongri-Goechela route.

Culture based tourism & village homestays: Sikkim with its plethora of ethnic communities has tremendous potential for offering tourists a multidimensional cultural experience. At the heart of the rural experience are the homestays spread across the state which provide a glimpse into the village lifestyle and culture. Village based resorts catering to the high end tourists are growing in number. Ethnic cuisine and food products, organic produce, ethnic songs and dances, traditional dresses, handicrafts, vernacular architecture, festivals, traditional medicines, folktales, are some of the items on offer in the cultural basket. There is a growing concern that rapid development and modernization is slowly eroding these cultural treasures and tourism can play a major role in its conservation. The Tourism Department's project to create over 1500

homestays in villages across the state and the State's organic mission shall support the culture and rural based tourism provided linkages are developed.

Religion based Tourism: Sikkim has wide acceptance as a place for understanding Mahayana Buddhism as practiced by the Karmakargyudpa and Nyinmapa sects and owing to the strong association it has with Guru Padmasambhava and Lhatsun Chenpo. The Nay-Sol, a religious scripture, details and describes Sikkim as a sacred landscape and is like a travel

guide for location of the sacred sites in the State.

Buddhism in Sikkim while retaining the basic principles of Mahayana Buddhism has assumed a characteristic distinct from that of Tibet by its amalgamation with the Bon religion practiced by the Lepchas the original inhabitants of Sikkim in the pre-Buddhist period. Buddhist Monasteries and numerous places of hermitage and meditation are present in all corners of the State, some dating back nearly 300 years, offering great spiritual pull for visitors. Monasteries such as Tashiding, Pemayantgtse, Phodong, Dubdi, Tholung, Ralang and Rumtek see a constant stream of pilgrimage visitors and tourists throughout the year and especially during religious festivals. Sikkim's close association with Bhutan religiously has also drawn many visitors from the neighbouring country for

religious purposes. The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology with its storehouse of ancient Buddhist manuscripts and texts and a long history of research in Tibetan Buddhism serves as an asset for the State, drawing in researchers and scholars from all across the world.

Apart from this rich religious heritage, the State Government has also developed religious monuments and religious places such as the statue of Gurupadmasambhava in Samdrup-tse, Tathagatha Tsal, Char Dham, etc. that are boosting Sikkim's pilgrimage tourism. Sikkim is therefore well positioned to attract pilgrims and tourists with religious interests. Char Dham or the four abodes are four pilgrimage sites in India that are widely revered by Hindus which comprises of Badrinath, Dwarka, Puri and Rameswaram. The replicas of these four sites have been constructed in South Sikkim at



► Some of the key adventure tourism products are trekking, mountaineering, paragliding, mountain biking, rafting, kayaking and zip-lining



► **Pakyong airport has opened a new vista for national and international tourists in the state**

Solphok along with a main temple having the statue of Lord Shiva making it a unique Pilgrim Centre which bagged the 'Most Innovative and Unique Tourism Project' from Ministry of Tourism in 2012.

MICE Tourism: In recent years Sikkim has become an important destination for the holding of Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE). Many hotels have upgraded or planned their infrastructure to include proper conference hall venues with the necessary equipments to cater to the demand for this fast growing

form of tourism. Sikkim's peaceful atmosphere, salubrious climate and numerous cultural and natural attractions forms the perfect combination for institutions and companies to hold their MICE events in the state. MICE tourism also offers an excellent product to tide over the seasonality of tourism. It can also be linked with other tourism products on offer as part of the pre-/post leisure activity for such packages. Current capacity for hosting MICE events is very limited, with very few venues big enough to hold large events indeed some of these belong

to the Government. Quality of the infrastructure and supporting equipment generally needs improvement. Current customers comprise mainly the Government, local companies and institutions, though the number of companies and organizations from outside holding events in Sikkim is slowly growing. There is a strong need to build more high quality and larger MICE infrastructure to attract the corporate world.

Health and Wellness Tourism:

With increasing consumer demand for wellness services and products, the global wellness market is now estimated to be around US\$3.4 trillion (The 2014 Global Spa & Wellness Economy Monitor). While a large section of visitors specifically travel for seeking wellness experiences to maintain their health, there are growing numbers of tourists who want to keep up with their healthy habits when they travel for business or pleasure. Sikkim's cool climate and unpolluted environment makes it ideal as a retreat for those seeking recuperation and well being. Moreover, there are rich traditions in the landscape that make use of the vast treasures of medicinal plants and healing herbs that are available along with hot springs and hot stone baths (Dotho). An important part in the wellness sector Sikkim is on spiritual healing and Sikkim also has a lot to offer in this through various meditation techniques, Yogasthans and setting up of Ekanta Vaas getaways. Also a number of spas have already been established and initial capacity building exercises for this sector conducted through various agencies. The wellness industry has a strong potential for jobs in the North East Region. This is reflected in the large number of trainees graduating in this sector from the training institutes. There is a need for herbal medical centers, Yogasthan, etc.



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HOTEL & RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION OF EASTERN INDIA

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Phone: +9133 2288 1742, e-mail: info@hraei.co.in