

## REVIEW ON SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYEES OF HOTEL INDUSTRY (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO JODHPUR)

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### ABSTRACT

*In every business human resource capital is the most precious capital. In present scenario of cut throat competition skills development plays a crucial role in performance of this human capital in every industry. Hotel Industry is one of the sectors where skills of employee play a very vital role to determine the success of the organization. Soft skills not only help in improving the overall performance of human assets but it also enhances the tourist's satisfaction. This paper is an attempt to identify the significance of soft skills.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Human Resource Management, Hotel Industry, Tourism, Tourists Satisfaction.*

### Introduction

The Collins English Dictionary defines the term "soft skills" as "desirable qualities for certain forms of employment that do not depend on acquired knowledge: they include common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive flexible attitude." Soft skills are a bunch of prolific characteristics that characterize an individual's relationships in a certain situation. These personalities traits can include social graces, communication abilities, language skills, personal habits, cognitive or emotional empathy, time management, team -work and leadership traits. Soft skill is a common term for skills under three key functional elements: people skills, social skills, and personal career attributes. Soft skills are important job-related skills that encompass little or no interaction with machines and whose application on the job is quite generalized." A study conducted by Harvard University noted that 80% of achievements in career are determined by soft skills and only 20% by hard skills. A person's success in an organization is highly dependable on his/her soft skills.

Indiana Business Research Center (IBRC) has found that, while credentialing in the form of degrees and certificates is important, development of soft skills; skills that are more social than technical will be a crucial part of fostering a dynamic workforce. Skills projected to be in the highest demand for all Indian occupations through 2014 include active listening, critical thinking, speaking, active learning, writing, time management, and social perceptiveness (Davies, 2007). Soft skills are those skills which becomes the main channel of communication when one person interacts with another person. Soft skills are today's power skill and are blend of interpersonal, communication and social intelligence skills that are in high demand in hotel industry. Soft skills complement hard skills also known as technical skills, for productive workplace performance and everyday life competencies (Arkansas Department of Education, 2007). Soft skills are increasingly sought out by employers in addition to standard qualifications. Hence, soft skills are as important as cognitive/technical skills (John, 2009; Zehr, 1998).

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Hospitality sector requires a unique mixture of skills. In this sector staff is not only expected to be technically sound but soft skills are equally important. Soft skills of the employees are the aids which canalize proper communication, disbursement of information, efficient and effective flow of commands which in turn leads to better management of organization and customer satisfaction.

### **Types of Skills**

The term "skill" can be defined as the capability to perform a task with dedicated and determined outcome within a stated amount of time and energy or even both. Skills can be basically divided into domain –general and domain –specific skills. In domain of work , some basic skills may include like communication skills , strong work ethic, leadership, time management and many others, whereas domain –specific skills revolves around only to a particular job. Human resource need to deal with a wide range of skills to prepare itself for the cut-throat competition and also to keep oneself ahead of the pack. Further in its simplest form skills can be divided into soft and hard skills.

- **Soft Skills**

Soft skills are said to be those natural abilities and interpersonal skills that help us to interact in a well efficient way with others at the workplace. These skills work complementary with the technical skills in the organization. The skills includes innovative and creative problem solving skills, adaptive to the change, character traits, logical reasoning , Brainstorming and many more which are essential for the success of an organization.

- **Hard Skills**

Hard skills are the skills or qualifications which are required to perform a job at the workplace. Though they are job specific skills, so they are learned through education and training. These skills include customer service skills, computer skills, administrative skills and others.

### **Role of Soft Skills**

The hospitality industry has variety of positions which deploys diverse workforce that may or may not have strong educational constituents. Workforce of any organization showcases its hospitality culture, specific values and standards. That is why it is very important to have trained employees and staff from top to bottom level. Company culture, developing talent, problem solving and service, safety and security etc. are some values on which organization must focus upon. Skill development is also an important factor to have reliability among staff in the hotel industry. There should be consistency as to how the hospitality staff acts and how they do things. Every organization wants to offers great service to its customers that leads to amazing experiences, which is the ultimate goal of every organization "Customer Satisfaction". Basic skills include communication and ways to interact and tackle with the guests in hotel. Uniformity among all is also a trait to attain as customer will perceive the staff as a team, so teamwork training and diversity training is also important.

Hotel Industry have diversified workforce with cultural diversities. Skill development plays an important role to bring this diversified workforce together and to train them on a common platform. A well-trained employee will perform better on the job. For better and continuous development of employees, various training modules are designed and run at regular intervals. A structured training and development program strengthen employees experience and knowledge. It helps to create a supportive workplace and improves employee's performance by overcoming weaknesses which results in professional growth and satisfaction of employees. Results drawn from such programmes might be used in mapping and career planning, promotions, job enhancement and job enrichment. Skill development is an important part in Human Resource Management, to improve employee performance and to use talent in optimum way. Application of an efficient training process has an important impact in increasing employee performance. The aim of this study is to understand the importance of personnel training in hotel industry.

Rapid development of hotel industry and competition has created the need for personnel training. The level of quality of service is correlated to the qualities of employees. Employee qualities depend upon knowledge, skills, competences, experience etc. which lead to the development of hotels. Therefore, employee training plays a vital role in employee performance and productivity. Training is not only beneficiary for workers, management and the organization, but also for consumers, as they will get better services. Management also gets benefited from training, as they can assess the performance of every individual and can plan their human resource policies accordingly. HR Managers also gets help in creating talent pool and to use human capital in an appropriate way.

### **Research Methodology**

The present study is based on the secondary data which is published by various agencies and organizations. The present study also makes use of information and data provided by Ministry of Tourism, Newspapers, Books, Magazines, Research papers, Economic journals and Internet etc.

### **Benefits of Soft Skills**

Soft skills development is beneficial to increase the productivity and improves the performance of the human resources, organizational skills, goal setting and the success of the organization. Its several benefits are mentioned below:

#### **For Employees**

- Soft skills enhance the overall job performance of employees towards the industry and help in managing its day to day operations.
- These skills prove to be a milestone for the encouragement as well as boost up the self – confidence and motivational level of employees.
- The skills enable the employees to inculcate or to make them prepare for the distressful and tough challenges of the current scenario of the hotel industry.
- Helps in effective communication skills and relationship enhancement with its clients, tourists', employers and co –workers of the industry.

#### **For Employers**

- The skills help magnetizing more tourists (domestic and international) which results in strengthening the financial growth of the sector.
- Employers can easily able to fight against the complicated challenges with the help of well-skilled human assets of the hotel industry.
- It results in efficient and sound working of the organization with optimum utilization of resources and helps upgrading the goodwill among its tourists.
- Soft skills help to make the work on high priority by its human capital which increases the productivity level and hence results in attainment of tourists' satisfaction.

### **Challenges**

In the current scenario, there has been seen a drastic change in the technologies, policies, ethics and challenges which are to be considered while developing skills among employees and it is imperative to adapt to the prevailing changes. Despite of the marvelous benefits which the hotel industry is taking the advantage of, this industry at the same time also facing severe drawbacks or challenges which are being stated below:

- There are ill-structured strategic plans for the soft skills development and the initiatives taken to deal with are also defective.
- Learning materials are too much complicated for the employees to implement which results in huge wastage of time and resources for the industry.
- The poor communication between the employers and its sub-ordinates gives birth to miscommunication or creates disturbing environment for the organization.
- Initiatives taken for the development of soft skills at inappropriate time or poor allocation of time may lead to disappointments and failures.
- Bad physical environment is also one of the biggest factors which lack interests of the human capital to learn efficiently and they will become distracted and uncomfortable in their learning environment.
- Soft skills development is not a one –time event or a short -term plan rather a process which continues till the evaluation of improved behavior, knowledge and skills of human resource than follow up plans, if required.

### **Initiatives Taken by the Government for Tourism**

The Indian government has realized the country's potential in the tourism industry and has taken several steps to make India a global tourism hub. In the Union Budget 2017-18, the Government

of India announced some initiatives to give a boost to the tourism and hospitality sector such as setting up of five special tourism zones, special pilgrimage or tourism trains and worldwide launch of incredible India campaign among others. Government of India appreciates various initiatives and efforts for skilling of the youth which have created a positive impact in making them employable and enabling sustainable livelihoods.

India's Travel & Tourism sector ranks 7th in the world in terms of its total contribution to the country's GDP, shows a new report by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC). According to the new data, Travel & Tourism generated INR14.1 trillion (USD208.9 billion) in 2016, which is the world's 7th largest in terms of absolute size, the sum is equivalent to 9.6% of India's GDP. Additionally, the sector supported 40.3 million jobs in 2016, which ranks India 2nd in the world in terms of total employment supported by Travel & Tourism. The sector accounts for 9.3% of the country's total jobs. India's Travel & Tourism sector was also the fastest growing amongst the G20 countries, growing by 8.5% in 2016. A further 6.7% growth is forecast for 2018. It has been the endeavor of the Ministry of Tourism to put in place a system of training and professional education with necessary infrastructural support capable of generating manpower sufficient to meet the needs of the tourism and hospitality industry, both quantitatively and qualitatively. For the purpose institutes were set up as autonomous societies with a specific mandate to impart / conduct hospitality education / training in hospitality skills. Training programs in the field of Hotel Management, Catering and Nutrition were initiated by Government of India in the year 1962 under the Department of Food, Ministry of Agriculture.

#### **National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT)**

To connect the resources and to provide a shove to the program, Ministry of tourism also established the National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT) in the year 1982. Main objectives for setting up the Council at the apex level were:

- To advise the Government on coordinated development of hotel management and catering education.
- To collect, collate and implement international development in human resource development for the hospitality sector.
- To affiliate institutes and prescribe courses of study and instructions leading to examinations conducted by it.
- To standardize courses and infrastructure requirements for institutes imparting education and training in hospitality management.
- To prescribe educational and other qualifications, experience, etc. for members of staff in the affiliated institutes and organize faculty development programs.
- To award Certificates and Diplomas in Hospitality and Hotel Administration.

#### **Tourism and Hospitality Skill Council (THSC)**

Tourism and Hospitality Skill Council (THSC) is a Not – for – Profit Organization, registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. The Tourism and Hospitality Skill Council (THSC) is promoted by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) with inclusive representation of the Government, Industry, Industry Associations and Training Institutes across India, with financial support by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) Tourism and Hospitality Skill Council (THSC) which is formed by the Industry and for the Industry to tackle the skilling of large manpower to fulfill the industry requirement plays a crucial role in bridging this ever-growing gap. THSC is mandated to create a robust and sustainable eco-system for skill development in the industry. THSC caters to all the sub sectors of the Industry, namely, Hotels, Tour Operators, Food Service Restaurants, Facilities Management and Cruise Liners.

#### **Hunar Se Rozgar Programme**

A special initiative was launched in 2009 -10 for the creation of employable skills among youth belonging to economically weaker sections of the society in the age group of 18- 25 years (upper age limit raised to 28 years in November, 2010) with the basic objective to reduce the skill gap affecting the hospitality and tourism sector and to ensure the spread of economic benefit of tourism to the poor. The programme offers short duration courses of 6 to 8 weeks which are fully funded by the Ministry of Tourism.

### **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)**

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE). The objective of this Skill Certification Scheme is to enable many Indian youth to take up industry-relevant skill training that will help them in securing a better livelihood. Individuals with prior learning experience or skills will also be assessed and certified under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Under this Scheme, Training and Assessment fees are completely paid by the Government.

It Provide short skill based training in the field of:

- Bar Bending.
- Food Production.
- House -keeping.
- Hotel Front Office, Tourism & Hospitality

### **Other Initiatives**

Some of the major initiatives taken by the Government of India to give a boost to the tourism and hospitality sector of India are as follows:

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, is planning to revise India's coastal regulation norms aimed at opening the 7,500 km long coastline for developmental activities like tourism and real estate.
- The Central Government has taken several steps for smooth transitioning to cashless mode of payment to ensure that no hardship is faced by the tourists and the tourism industry remains unaffected from government's demonetization move.
- Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) has come up with a unique tourism experience of visiting the open cast coal mine of Gondegaon and underground coal mine of Saoner, which are near Nagpur and part of Western Coalfields Limited.
- A Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed among the Indian Ministry of Tourism, National Projects Construction Corporation (NPCC), National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC) and Government of Jammu and Kashmir for the implementation of tourism projects in Jammu and Kashmir.

### **Conclusion**

Soft skills development allows human resource to present themselves in more innovative and creative way in their working environment. The literature focuses on the importance of skills for the hotel industry of Jodhpur and the challenges and deficiency of soft skills which the industry is dealing with. Though many positive and purposeful initiatives have been taken by the government and by many other agencies to overcome such deficiencies in the sector of tourism and also further research is being conducted in the region of soft skills development to reach the soft skills competency level that hotel industries are looking for. Development of soft skills along with technical skills helps employees to improve their skills and qualities in a continuous way, by gaining professional knowledge and preparing them for future challenges. Today, tourism sector is growing in the developed countries and its development has influenced a lot for the growth of hotel industry.

Human Resource Management in hotel industry plays a crucial role in this global environment of uncertainty and complexity. So, knowledge and skills are the sole sources that create competing advantages to achieve its objectives. Thus, training of human resource is becoming an optimal response to complex challenges of the industry. Hotel industry of Jodhpur is becoming more and more competing in perspective to its quality of services provided for tourists' satisfaction which is the foremost factor for its success. This study is helpful for hotel industries of Jodhpur to grasp the importance of personnel training. Human resources are said to be an asset for hotel industry, so their training and development plays a key role in achieving the goal of tourists' satisfaction. I hope this study proves to be much valuable to help the hotel industry in developing their human resources, as the process that is an essential tool of management that result in many benefits is training and development of its personnel.

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