

## **The services of hotel industry in Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu**

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### **Abstract**

In 1990s and particularly at current juncture “quality” concept was introduced in services marketing. A feeling is also developing that services marketing is important not only in services sector but also in every business enterprise. Enterprise which deals with physical products and some services are an integral part of business operations. Thoothukudi district is attracting a lot of foreign tourists as well as domestic tourists. There is also big contingent of floating population who comes to the city for work and stay for a period ranging from three months to one year. It would be worthwhile to assess the quality of service produced by the existing hotels to the tourists, and this study is to assess and examine the perceptions of the guests of the hotels regarding the quality of the hospitality and to demonstrate ways by which these hotels can make qualitative improvements in services.

**Keywords:** hotel industry, service quality, marketing service and business strategy

### **Introduction**

In this modern world services are widely used by people in all aspects of life. They are largely used from education to entertainment, finance to fast food, travel to telephone, advertisement to amusement parks, market research to maintenance services, retailing to recreation and so on. Now-a-days services are increasingly being used by the corporate as well as the household sector. This emphasis on services and its increasing use has not happened started in the twentieth century especially after the end of the II world war. In the developed societies, service is one of the targeted growing sectors and is becoming more and more pronounced vis-à-vis agriculture. In the developing countries too, service industry is becoming one of the major employers. Today, the fastest growing segment of the US economy is services. The economies of other countries are also dominated by services. This trend has been so strong that some people term it as ‘the second industrial revolution’.

### **Role of Service Sectors in India’s GDP**

Service Sector in India today accounts for more than half of India's GDP. According to data for the financial year 2006-2007, the share of services, industry, and agriculture in India's GDP is 55.1 per cent, 26.4 per cent, and 18.5 per cent respectively. The fact that the service sector now accounts for more than half of the GDP marks a watershed in the evolution of the Indian economy and takes it closer to the fundamentals of a developed economy. The hotel and tourism industry’s contribution to the Indian economy by way of foreign direct investments (FDI) inflows were pegged at US\$ 2.35 billion from April 2000 to February 2011, according to the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP).

The service quality (SERVQUAL) Model offers a suitable conceptual frame for the research and service quality measurement in the service sector. The model has been developed, tested and adopted during various researches in co-operation. The model is based on the defunction of quality as a comparison to the expected and the obtained as well as a consideration of service quality in the

### **Statement of the Problem**

Thoothukudi district is one of the tourist spots in Tamilnadu and attracts foreign and domestic tourists. Numerous businessmen and officials make regular official visits to Thoothukudi district. These activities regularly promote the floating population to Thoothukudi district. Thoothukudi district has been surrounded by historical monuments and places. There has been an opinion that if the district needs to attract more tourists then it must offer better boarding and lodging facilities. Considering these aspects and the hotel accommodation available in Thoothukudi district, an attempt has been made to understand the visitor’s expectations and perception about the quality of hospitality industry in this District.

The key for success of any business is customer satisfaction and hence hotel industry business also faces hectic competition. The business risks are very high, by virtue of its nature. The risks are listed below:

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To study the marketing services provided by the hotel industry.
2. To assess the customer’s satisfaction towards the hotels in.
3. To measure the service quality of the hotel industry.
4. To suggest suitable measures for the improvement of hotel industry.

### **Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant relationship between age of the Respondent and purpose of visit.
2. There is no significant relationship between length of stay and purpose of visit.
3. There is no significant relationship between marital status of the Respondent and purpose of visit.

### **Methodology**

If any study on research is to be recognized as valid or true, it must be done in systematic and scientific manner. Hence research methodology is a way to systematically solve the

research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. In it, we study the various steps that are generally adopted by researcher in studying his research problem along with the logic behind them.

The methodology used for carrying out the present study is explained in the forthcoming paragraphs. It covers title of the study, significance of the study, aims and objectives of the study, research hypothesis, research design, and pilot study, sampling design, sources of data, tools for data collection, method of data collection, statistical analysis and limitations of the study.

### Service Quality Dimensions

Research suggests that customers do not perceive quality in a unidimensional way but rather judge quality, based on multiple factors relevant to the context. The dimensions of service quality have been identified through the pioneering research of Parasuraman (1985), Valarie Zeithml (1985), and Leonard Berry (1985). Their research identified five specific dimensions of service quality that apply across a variety of services contexts.

#### 1. Reliability: Delivering on promises

Of the five dimensions, reliability has been consistently shown to be the most important determinant of perceptions of service quality among U.S. customers. Reliability is defined as the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. In its broadest sense, reliability assures that the company delivers on its promises, promises about delivery, service provisions, problem resolution, and pricing. Customers want to do business with companies that keep their promises, particularly their promises about the service outcomes and core service attributes.

#### 2. Responsiveness: Being willing to help

Responsiveness is the willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service. This dimension emphasizes attentiveness and promptness in dealing with customer requests, questions, complaints and problems. Responsiveness is communicated to customers by the length of time they have to wait for assistance, answers to questions, or attention to problems. Responsiveness also captures the notion of flexibility and ability to customize the service to customer needs.

#### 3. Assurance: Ability to convey trust and confidence

Assurance is defined as employee's knowledge and courtesy and the ability of the firm and its employees to inspire trust and confidence. This dimension is likely to be particularly important for services that customers perceive as high risk, or for services of which they feel uncertain about their ability to evaluate outcomes – for examples, banking, insurance, and brokerage, medical and legal services.

#### 4. Empathy: Provision of caring, individualized attention

Empathy is defined as the caring, individualized attention that the firms provide its customers. The essence of empathy is conveying, through personalized or customized service, that customers are unique and special and that their needs are understood. It includes approachability, sense of security and the effort to understand the customer's needs.

### 5. Tangibles: Representing the service physically

Tangibles are defined as the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials. Tangibles provide physical representations or images of the service that customers, particularly new customers, will use to evaluate quality. Service industries that emphasize tangibles in their strategies include hospitality services in which the customers visit the establishment to receive the service, such as restaurants and hotels, retail stores and entertainment companies.

### Findings

In this study 76% of the hotel owners who started the business belong to the age group of above 41 years. Out of 25 hotel owners 24 are male and only one is female. 28% of the hotel owners' income ranges from 4-5 lakhs per month. 94% of the hotel owners procure milk from private source for their hotels. They procure grocery items from wholesalers and they purchase daily. 90% of the hotel owners had insured their hotels in government insurance company.

In this study 72% of the hotel owners provided both catering and restaurant services. 80% of the hotel owners do not provide cultural shows, beauty parlours and gym facilities. 96% of the hotel owners provide first aid facility and television facility, only star hotels provide ambulance facility to their customers. 80% of the hotel owners provide lift facility, ticket booking facility to their customers and accept credit card payments. 80% of the hotel owners provide special discount to their regular customers. 100% of the hotel owners say that word-of-mouth promotion gives more impact their business. Generally the hotel owners allow the employees to receive the tips.

Table inferences show that 51% of the respondents who preferred to stay in hotels belong to the age group of 21-30 years. They stay in the hotels for employment and professional purposes. 77% of the respondents are male and 93% of the respondents are Indian. 75% of the respondents stay in the hotel for the purpose of occupation, conference, marriage and pilgrimage. Friends and relatives had also been the source of influence to select these hotels. The customers were very much satisfied with the tariff charged, quality of the service provided, check in procedure, clean environment, friendly approach of the employees, special discount provided, and varieties of food offered and pricing of food items.

Hypothesis testing between services received and various demographic details of the respondents reveal that there was no significant association between choice of hotel and service provided. There was significant association between age, sex, nationality, educational qualification, occupation, marital status, monthly income, purpose of visit and length of stay and services provided by the hotel owners. The significant positive relationship between services provided and demographic details of the respondents reveal that quality services provided at these hotels were the main criterion of all the respondents irrespective of age, sex, nationality, educational qualification, occupation, marital status, and monthly income, purpose of visit and length of stay.

### Suggestions

Hotels do initiate effective steps to constantly improve the quality of services provided to their customers. It is seen that the customers are waiting for table. So, increasing the number of seating facilities would solve the problem and in addition

provide employment to many by increasing the attendants. Medical facilities and equipments may be kept ready at all times at the hotel premises. The time taken to deliver the service to the customers shall be minimized to 10 minutes. A special discount in tariff may be considered for regular customers. Management could see that tariff charged by them is affordable to customers of all classes, not compromising on their quality of services and maintaining good customer relations. The hotel authorities may go out of their way in serving their customers with the best food, accommodation services and bringing about flexibility in their services to make their stay a pleasant experience. The management needs to take efforts to see that basic facilities like sanitation, flexibility in check in and out timings, money exchange, cab facilities, ticket booking facilities are adequate to attract and retain customers. The staffs employed have to be well trained. They need to respond to their guests in an amicable way and be prompt in their services. Appearance of the hotel, neatness maintained in the premises, and the appearance of the staff count to a great extent to sustain the competing market share. Hotel staff may be trained and motivated at regular intervals in providing quality services. Regular feedback from their customers helps to increase their quality of services and serve their guests better.

### **Conclusion**

“Service to man is service to God”. As the proverb says the hotel owners and the managers provide good service to their customers, which in turn will increase the profitability of the hotels. In the hotel industry, service quality, as an extremely subjective category, is crucial to the satisfaction of the customers. If they increase the quality of service it will attract more customers at the same time they can expand the business, and it will lead to more employment opportunities. But also helps the hotel owners to discover the needs, tastes, preferences and expectations of the guests. It also lists out various facilities provided by the hotels to their customers and also various services mixes provided. We can say that it helps managers in setting the standards for the provision of services in the hospitality industry.

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