



**MAHARASHTRA STATE INSTITUTE OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT AND CATERING TECHNOLOGY**

(UG & PG - Degree Programs)

412 - C, K.M.Manshi Marg, Bahinipati Chowk, Shivajinagar, Pune - 16.

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Research Paper - 2018

3.3.1 Number of research papers published per teacher in the Journals notified on UGC CARE list during the last five years								Link to the recognition in UGC enrollment of the Journal /Digital Object Identifier (doi) number	
Sr. No.	Title of paper	Name of the author/s	Department of the teacher	Name of journal	Calendar Year of publication	ISSN number	Link to website of the Journal	Link to article / paper / abstract of the article	Is it listed in UGC Care list
01	Do Guest Prefer Tech Savvy Rooms? A Perspective from hotels guests	Dr. Seema Zagade	Hotel Operations	International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (IJTSRD)	May-June 2018	ISSN NO. 2456-6470	<a href="https://www.ijtsrd.com">https://www.ijtsrd.com</a>		YES
02	"Eco-Purchasing" A Study of the Solids Waste Prevention Methods adopted by Hotels and Restaurants of Pune City.	Dr. Seema Zagade	Hotel Operations	Abhinav Publication Abhinav National Monthly Journal of Research in Commerce & Management	September, 2018	ISSN 2277-1166	<a href="http://www.abhinavjournal.com">www.abhinavjournal.com</a>		YES

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MAHARASHTRA STATE INSTITUTE OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT AND CATERING TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH SOCIETY, PUNE



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**Research Paper - 2020**

3.3.1 Number of research papers published per teacher in the Journals notified on UGC CARE list during the last five years							Link to the recognition in UGC enlistment of the Journal / Digital Object Identifier (doi) number		
Sr. No.	Title of paper	Name of the author/s	Department of the teacher	Journal Name of journal	Calendar Year of publication	ISSN number	Link to website of the Journal	Link to article / paper / abstract of the article	Is it listed in UGC Care list
01	"Impact of Covid 19 on the Business of Home Bakers in Pune"	Dr. Anita Moodliar Mr. Devesh Janvekar	Hotel Operation	International Journal of Management, IT & Engineering IJMRA	2020	2249-6556	<a href="http://www.ijmra.us">www.ijmra.us</a>		YES
02	"An Analysis of the Effects of OTAS on Travel Agents in Hotel Room Bookings"	Dr. Vidya Vilas Kadam & Mr. Devesh Janvekar	Hotel Operation	International Journal Of Multidisciplinary Educational Research	2020	2277-7981	<a href="http://www.ijmer.in">www.ijmer.in</a>	<a href="https://s3-ap-southeast-1.amazonaws.com/ijmer/df/volume9/volume9-issue7(2)-2020.pdf">https://s3-ap-southeast-1.amazonaws.com/ijmer/df/volume9/volume9-issue7(2)-2020.pdf</a>	YES
03	"A Study On " Effective Handing of Social Media for Branding of Hotels"	Dr. Vidya Vilas Kadam & Mr. Devesh Janvekar	Hotel Operation	IJMSRR	2020	2349-6738	<a href="http://www.ijmsrr.com">www.ijmsrr.com</a>	<a href="http://ijmsrr.com/admin/archives.php?m=082020">http://ijmsrr.com/admin/archives.php?m=082020</a>	YES
04	"The Challenges faced by Travel Agents due to Price Transparency in the Travel Industry Reference to the Pune City"	Dr. Anita Moodliar Mr. Devesh Janvekar	Hotel Operation	GIS Science Journal	2020	1869-9391	<a href="https://gis-science.net">https://gis-science.net</a>	<a href="https://gis-science.net/volume-7-issue-6-2020">https://gis-science.net/volume-7-issue-6-2020</a>	YES

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**Research Paper – 2021**

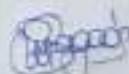
**3.3.1 Number of research papers published per teacher in the Journals notified on UGC CARE list during the last five years**

Sr. No.	Title of paper	Name of the author/s	Department of the teacher	Name of journal	Calendar Year of publication	ISSN number	Link to website of the Journal	Link to article / paper / abstract of the article	Is Journal Indexed in UGC Care (Yes / No)
1	Assessment of Social Media and its Influence on Hospitality Industry *	Dr. Seema Zagade	Hotel Operations	Vijaybharti International Interdisciplinary Research Journal	2021	2319-4979	<a href="https://www.vijaybharti.org/">https://www.vijaybharti.org/</a>	<a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/folder/1gK6N1sXemC2W4ben8Yz8672wV1VwK9">https://drive.google.com/drive/folder/1gK6N1sXemC2W4ben8Yz8672wV1VwK9</a>	YES
2	* Rise of Cloud Kitchens Amidst the Covid 19 Pandemic*	Dr. Seema Zagade	Hotel Operations	Kalyan Bharti	2021	0076-0822		<a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/folder/1gK6N1sXemC2W4ben8Yz8672wV1VwK9">https://drive.google.com/drive/folder/1gK6N1sXemC2W4ben8Yz8672wV1VwK9</a>	YES
3	New technological interventions which aid hospitality industry to develop a competitive advantage in crisis management during challenging times	Dr. Seema Zagade	Hotel Operations	Kalyan Bharti	2021	0076-0822		<a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/folder/1gK6N1sXemC2W4ben8Yz8672wV1VwK9">https://drive.google.com/drive/folder/1gK6N1sXemC2W4ben8Yz8672wV1VwK9</a>	YES
4	*The Emergence of Home-Bakers and the Role of Social Media For Boosting Sales During Covid-19 Pandemic*	Dr. Seema Zagade	Hotel Operations	Kalyan Bharti	2021	0076-0822		<a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/folder/1gK6N1sXemC2W4ben8Yz8672wV1VwK9">https://drive.google.com/drive/folder/1gK6N1sXemC2W4ben8Yz8672wV1VwK9</a>	YES

**Principal**  
Principal  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Sr. No.	Title of paper	Name of the author/s	Department of the teacher	Name of journal	Calendar Year of publication	ISSN number	Link to website of the Journal	Link to article / paper / abstract of the article	Is Journal Indexed in UGC Care (Yes / No)
5	A Study of the Determinants of Business Success for Home Bakers in Pune	Mr. Chintamani Sahasrabudhe Mr. Abhay Manokar	Hotel Operations	International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews (IJRAR)	2021	2348-5138	www.ijrar.org		Yes
6	"To Understanding the challenges faced and remedies adopted by homestay operations pre and post pandemic" ( Coastal Region of Maharashtra)	Dr. Anita Moodliar Dr. Seema Zagade Ms. Sakshi Tanpure	Hotel Operations	AARF – Association of Academic Researchers and Faculties	2021	2348-9766	www.aarf.ae	<a href="https://www.aarf.ae/aarf/pages/management2.php?pr/volum/e8_issue7_July_2021">https://www.aarf.ae/aarf/pages/management2.php?pr/volum/e8_issue7_July_2021</a>	YES
7	"A Study Of Customer Perception Towards Visiting Restaurants for Meals After Unlock of Covid-19 Pandemic"	Mr. Sachin Rayarkar Mr Chintamani Sahasrabudhe	Hotel Operations	IJMSRR	2021	2348-8738	www.ijmsrr.com	<a href="http://ijmsrr.com/admin/article.php?mv=012021">http://ijmsrr.com/admin/article.php?mv=012021</a>	YES



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**Research Paper in 2022**

**3.3.1 Number of research papers published per teacher in the Journals notified on UGC CARE list during the last five years**

Link to the recognition in UGC enlistment of the Journal /Digital Object Identifier (doi) number

Sr. No.	Title of paper	Name of the author/s	Department of the teacher	Name of journal	Calendar Year of publication	ISSN number	Link to website of the Journal	Link to article / paper / abstract of the article	Is it listed in UGC Care list
1	"Marketing Strategies Adopted by the Stand alone Spas in Pune"	Prof. Sampada Paranjpe	Hotel Operations	Shodha Pratha	2022	0974-8946	<a href="https://www.sibers.v.ac.in/newsletter/shodh-pratha">https://www.sibers.v.ac.in/newsletter/shodh-pratha</a>		YES
2	"To Understand and Significant Rise in Acceptance and Popularity of GN Based Beverages"	Dr. Seema Zagade	Hotel Operations	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Mumbai	2022	0972-0766		<a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1qK0H1aXemCaW4sEnBfYzI8T2wW1WK9">https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1qK0H1aXemCaW4sEnBfYzI8T2wW1WK9</a>	YES
3	"Study of the impact of Social Media on Daily Food Choices of Millennials (Age Group 15-25)"	Sachin A. Wankar	Hotel Operations	Journal of Kavikulaguru Kalidas Sanskrit University, Ramtek	2022	2277-7067	<a href="https://kksushodh.asamhita.org/index.php/sdsa">https://kksushodh.asamhita.org/index.php/sdsa</a>		yes
4	"Concept, customer perception and feasibility towards pod hotels"	Dr. Seema Zagade	Hotel Operations	Journal of Kavikulaguru Kalidas Sanskrit University, Ramtek	2022	2277-7067	<a href="https://kksushodh.asamhita.org/index.php/sdsa">https://kksushodh.asamhita.org/index.php/sdsa</a>		yes

  
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## CONCEPT, CUSTOMER PERCEPTION AND FEASIBILITY TOWARDS POD HOTELS

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Pune, Member BOS- Commerce and Management (Faculty Hotel Management)

<sup>\*\*</sup>Research Guide- SPPU, Pune University

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### Introduction

**“Think out of the BOX, while sleeping in the BOX”.** With world inclining towards urban housing and modern accommodation options, consumers are looking for more creative yet comfortable living spaces, whereas few still find their interest in traditional ways of accommodations. Hospitality industry is always geared up to cater all sort of preferences as it keeps on adapting to the present -day trends, hence today we could see a wide range of alternate accommodations in the market which also provides growth and sustainable opportunities for the hotel brands. When discussing about the concept of Urban housing – Capsule sleeping cabins, Tiny Houses and Micro apartments are already influencing the Millennials.

Growth of travel & tourism along with the preference to cost-effective living during travel drives the demand for capsule hotels. However, Capsule or Pod Hotels doesn't not only provide accommodation for budget traveler, but are also a convenient stay options for consumer, who are just looking for a comfy corner to rest between their working hours, as some of them might be living far, in the outskirts of the city. This particular thought was the reason behind conceiving Pod Hotels for the very first time in Japan in 1970. Today, decades later pods are enjoying new wave of popularity and have become hospitality fad. Pods facilitate a multipurpose environment where in people can focus on work, sleep in comfort, collaborate with people and unwind.

India is upgrading as the Indian entrepreneur duo, has founded Urban pod after being inspired from the similar chain in Singapore. Today Mumbai's space crunch is now become a hospitality fad. Experts say that Pod Hotels have substantial opportunities in untapped markets. This study sheds light on relating with the concept of Pod Hotels, gauge the consumer perception and practicality of the concept with reference to Indian Market.

### What Exactly Is A Capsule Hotel?

Capsule hotels are accommodations that have thrown away the idea of a single private room, and have instead focused on basic necessities such as sleep and bath to provide the most accommodating stay at the lowest prices. Capsule units that provide rest are shaped like the cockpits of aircrafts and are stacked in two layers, continuing down the hallway. Many people think that the only thing you can do at a capsule hotel is sleep, but in fact, some capsule hotels have large baths, saunas and spacious lounges that are even better equipped than some business hotels.

In recent years value-adding services such as ladies-only floors, sophisticated business lounges, tablets and manga rental services are making capsule hotels increasingly more attractive at a fast pace. Another characteristic of capsule hotels is being able to secure accommodation without prior booking.

This is because capsule hotels have more rooms than business hotels. Thus, many people such as businessmen who have missed their last trains, or young people who are in town for a concert and want to save on accommodation often make use of capsule hotels, and many show up without reservations.

### **Need Of Study**

Modern approach of finding the purpose driven stay and guest inclination towards the cost-effective accommodation has introduced new styles of rooms to the market. The list includes popular concepts like service apartment's, youth hostels/ dormitory accommodation and Airport Sleeping cabins. India is recognized as an upcoming / Untapped market for such concept hotels, hence many unique living projects like The Urban Pod, Mumbai, Qubestay Airport capsule Mumbai, Snooze at mt space, Delhi and Adventura Ooty are been today listed as one of the best pod hotel properties in India. Operators of the property have come across noticeable changes in guest's approach towards trying new options and surge to keep up with trends. However, still there is a need of bringing more awareness and making people familiar with the Pod – Concept, as "there a lot more to do, with less space".

### **Objectives Of Study**

1. To relate with the concept of Pod Hotels / Capsule Hotels.
2. To evaluate consumer perception towards pod hotels.
3. To analyze the feasibility of pod hotels in Indian Market.

### **Literature Review**

LR 1: - The Japanese capsule - its characteristics and popularity, an essay published by UK Essays on their official website dated January 1st, 2015, highlights the concept of capsule hotel along with the factors motivating tourists to stay in economy hotels. It also helps in understanding whether the capsule hotels would be attractive style of accommodation.

**Link-<https://www.ukessays.com/essays/marketing/the-japanese-capsule-hotel-its-characteristics-and-popularity-marketing-essay.php>**

LR 2: - Gaijin Pot Blog in their article, published on August 31st, 2017 has narrated the unique features of a pod property located in Kyoto. The project has come up with multipurpose environment, where millennials will be able to focus on work, sleep in comfort, collaborate with people and unwind. The property has come up with a significant amalgamation of High-end technology and modern accommodation.

**Link-<https://blog.gaijinpot.com/millennials-kyoto-capsule-hotel/>**

LR 3: - Mr. Aakash Karkare narrates his experience with India's first Pod hotel in his article "Mumbai's urban pod hotel brings Japan's capsule hotels to India" publishes on April 29, 2017 on official website - Scroll.in. "A night at India's first capsule hotel shows that Mumbai's space crunch is now a hospitality fad", says Mr. Karkare. Mumbai is upgrading as entrepreneur duo Mr. Shalabh Mittal and Mr. Hiren Gandhi founded Urban pod, after being inspired from a similar chain in Singapore. Article states that the capsule sized homes might be the future of urban housing someday - tiny houses and micro apartments are already being considered in increasingly overcrowded cities

**Link-<https://scroll.in/magazine/834487/a-night-at-indias-first-capsule-hotel-shows-that-mumbais-space-crunch-is-now-a-hospitality-fad>**

LR 4: - In an article named " The Pros and Cons of staying at a capsule hotel in Japan" published on March 24, 2021 on TheTravel.com, author Kate Machado has shared her experience after having stayed in a pod hotel in Japan. She has given a clear insight of pros and cons which one would experience in terms of location, accommodation, comfort, privacy, silence, service and amenities while staying in a pod hotel property.

**Link - <https://www.thetravel.com/pros-and-cons-of-capsule-hotels-japan/>**

LR 5: - The worldwide capsule industry is projected to reach 276.2 million US Dollars by 2028, was stated in the Global opportunity analysis and industry forecast 2020-2028, report by PR Newswire and Cision Distribution in their article published on Sept. 30th 2021. Study states that the concept of pod hotels / sleeping cabins is a unique and novel type of accommodation, available at affordable rates. Growth of travel and tourism along with preference to cost effective living during travel drives the demand for capsule hotels. Overall, the report provides a quantitative analysis of a current trends, estimations and dynamics of the capsule hotel market from 2019 - 2028, to identify prevailing market opportunities.

**Link-<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/the-worldwide-capsule-hotel-industry-is-projected-to-reach-276-2-million-by-2028--301388811.html>**

LR 6: - Author Ms. Swati Chaturvedi in her article #PodHotels: - Small is beautiful, published on 18<sup>th</sup> Feb 2022 in Hindustan Times mentions that pod hotels are modern, quirky, relating and one of its kind of accommodation. Ms. Swati has also shed light on the concept of pod hotel by elaborating on the specification and amenities offered in the premises. Article also speaks about newly launched pod hotels in India and its pricing and tariffs.

**Link<https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/travel/podhotels-small-is-beautiful-101645165951321.html>**

LR 7: - On October 25<sup>th</sup> 2021, CNBC TV 18 had published an article written by Ms. Shoma Bhattacharjee on their official website, where they have described or mentioned about the project executed by IRCTC and The Urban pod Pvt. Ltd. Article has also stated that these newly developed pods will have basic amenities like wi-fi, luggage room, television, air conditioning, charging slots etc. this facility is launched with 48 pods three types - classic (30 pods) , ladies ( 7 pods) and private pods (10 pods). These pods are available at the minimum rate of rupees 999/- for 12 hours according to the report.

L R 8: - According to a study report published by Research Dive, dated 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021 on their official website, the global capsule hotel market is projected to experience significant growth in near future. It is noticed as a trend among millennial for solo travelling. It also mentioned that Asia Pacific region is more likely to dominate the market of pod hotels with rapid growing brands like Riccarton Capsule Hotel, The Capsule Hotel, In-box Capsule Hotel, Book and Bed Tokyo, Urbanpod hotel, the Pod, Sydney and many more.

**Link - <https://www.researchdive.com/8507/capsule-hotel-market>**

LR 9: - In a research study published by Research Dive, dated 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021 on their official website it is said that there is an increasing demand for affordable accommodations by the growing middle-class population along with the rising interest in travel and tourism. These factors boost the profitable opportunities for the operators. However, the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the growth of the global capsule hotel industry, as the number of both international and domestic Travellers have dropped down because of the fear of spread of the disease. Along with that strict lockdown in various regions has also affected the growth of market.

**Link - <https://www.researchdive.com/8507/capsule-hotel-market>**

LR 10: - In an article published in Hindustan Times on February 18<sup>th</sup> 2022, by journalist Ms. Swati Chaturvedi, it is mentioned by an interviewee that pod hotels are an ultra-modern accommodations concept which has capabilities to cater millennials, free individual travelers and female traveler. Interviewee Ms. Gauri Awasthy also states that it offers accommodation with no compromise on comfort, quality and unique experience at a very economic rate.

**Link**<https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/travel/pod-hotels-small-is-beautiful-101645165951321.html>

LR 11: - Written by author Mr. Alexzander Love and publishes by Hotel Management Network on March 10, 2022. The article shares data regarding existence of capsule hotels from last three decades in various parts of globe and the idea is expected to grow further in upcoming decade as there is a lot more to do with less room. The study also states that future rise by 6,31% CAGR by 2026 and approximately valuation of 288 million dollars.

**Link** - <https://www.hotelmanagement-network.com/analysis/pod-people-capsule-hotels/>

LR 12: - In an article "Things to consider while designing a capsule hotel" publishes by Rethinking the future. Com, and written by Ar. Manasi Khankojee, the various essentials aspects of building pos hotels is covered, Factors such as community living spaces, privacy, luxury elements and amenities, integration of technology, variation in design & décor, standard ergonomics, etc. are elaborated after a systematic study of properties.

**Link** - <https://www.re-thinkingthefuture.com/designing-for-typologies/a3118-10-things-to-consider-when-designing-a-capsule-hotel/>

LR 13: - "India embracing smart stay options like pod hotels" and interview with Mr. Hiren Gandhi – Co-founder, Director of Urban Pod Pvt. Ltd. Published on India retailer.com by their assistant editor Ms. Tanya Krishna talks about the noticeable change in the mindset of Indian travelers and willingness to try modern accommodation options Mr. Gandhi also spoke about the concept, accessibility and competition in the market and their plans for expansion of the brand.

**Link**-<https://www.indianretailer.com/interview/retail-people/profiles/India-embracing-smart-stay-options-like-pod-hotels-Hiren-Gandhi.i1466/>

LR 14: - In an article named - Capsule Hotels, the unique experience for innovation and affordable stays. Published by news 18 on 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2022 the report has enlightened popular pod hotel properties located in India. The Urban Pod, Mumbai, Qubestay Airport capsule Mumbai, Snooze at mt space, Delhi and Adventura Ooty were listed as one of the best pod hotel properties in India

**Link**-<https://www.news18.com/news/lifestyle/travel-capsule-hotels-the-unique-experience-for-innovative-and-affordable-stays-4959200.html>.

LR 15: - According to an article – California start-up offers affordable capsule pods in shared living accommodation written by Ms. Juliana Neira, published on designboom.com, in the month of May 2022. According to the writer, brownstone housing company has come up with a plan in California where in the pods can be used as an option of sharing accommodations. When pods are designed practically along with spacious interiors, it more likely to be preferred by consumers. This might mitigate the issue of rising rent prices pf property in California

**Link** - <https://www.designboom.com/tag/capsule-hotel/>

LR 16: - Article about Transit Hotels – a welcome amenity for long layovers, written by journalist Mr. Joe Kunzler on 16th May, 2022 published by simpleflying.com. the article was about the concept of transit hotels, along with-it journalist Joe has also shared his experience of having stayed in a sleeping pod at an airport. Joe describes sleeping pods as smaller version of transit hotels which offers pay-by the minute system, luggage compartment, charging spots, along with a retracting cover. Sleeping pods has also helped airports in generating revenue from unused and vacant spaces.

**Link - <https://simpleflying.com/airport-capsule-hotels/>**

To have a better understanding about the objectives, these questions were added to the questionnaire, which would help in getting a better understanding about the consumer perception and approach towards pod accommodations

Profession  
60 responses



- Private Sector
- Government Employees
- Entrepreneur
- Student

This data is collected from various working professionals and students of different age in order to have a broader perspective to the concept and thought. During this research, responses were recorded from Government employees, Private Sector, Entrepreneurs and students. Majority of the respondents from working class as the percentage was 56.3%, 36.3% responses were received from the students. Responses from the government employees and entrepreneurs were less as the figures could only reach to 5% and 2.5% respectively.

Similarly, age of the respondents was also taken into consideration while recording responses for this project. It was been observed that 35% of the total respondents were between the age pf 18 to 25 years, another 30% were between the age of 26 to 30 years and nearly 27% people were above the age of 35 years.

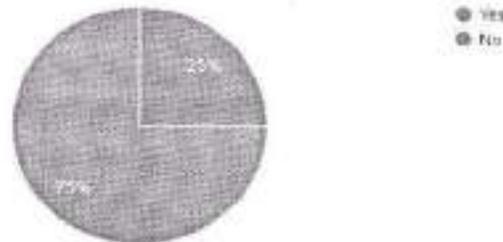
#### **Objective -1: - To relate with the concept of Pod Hotels / Capsule Hotels.**

To gain more clarity about the concept of pod hotel or capsule sized accommodation, I referred literature which was available in the form of articles, Blogs, press release etc. on various online portals and official websites of publication houses. I also referred some articles related to capsule accommodation which were publishes in newspapers. Interviews of hotel operator / owners like Mr. Hiren Mittal and others helped me in understanding the core operations, challenges and opportunities which comes along with the pod hotel business.

**Objective -2: - To evaluate consumer perception towards pod hotels.**

Are you aware of concept of alternate accommodation?

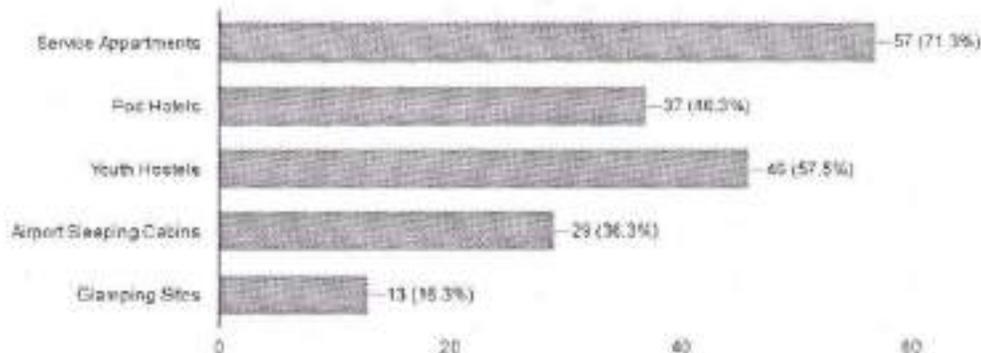
80 responses



attempt was made to gauge the awareness related to the alternate accommodation, it was observed that 25% of the total respondents were not aware of the concept of alternate accommodations, however a positive side to it was also observed as 75% of the total respondents were aware of the concept.

Which of the following alternate accommodation you heard of before?

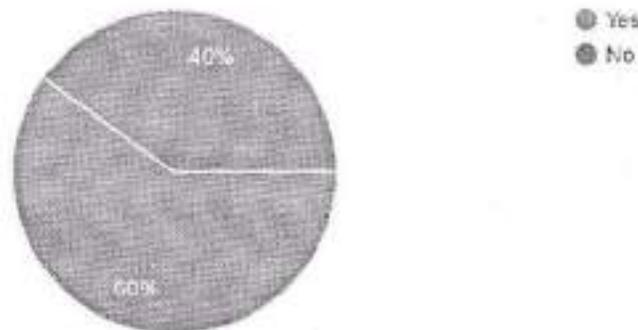
80 responses



It is important to know that what category or type of alternate accommodation do people prefer or are aware of, hence this question helped in getting insight about the same. Respondents were asked to choose between four different categories of accommodation i.e., Service apartments, Pod Hotels, Youth Hostels, Airport/ Railway Sleeping cabins, Glamping sites. Majority of the respondents (71.3%) were aware of service apartments, in continuation 57.5% of respondents knew about the concept of youth hostels. 37 responses (46.3%) said that they have heard about Pods and Capsule hotels. It was observed that people are least aware about airport sleeping cabins and glamping sites as the number of responses was 36% and 16% respectively.

Have you ever heard of any Pod/Capsule Hotel ?

80 responses

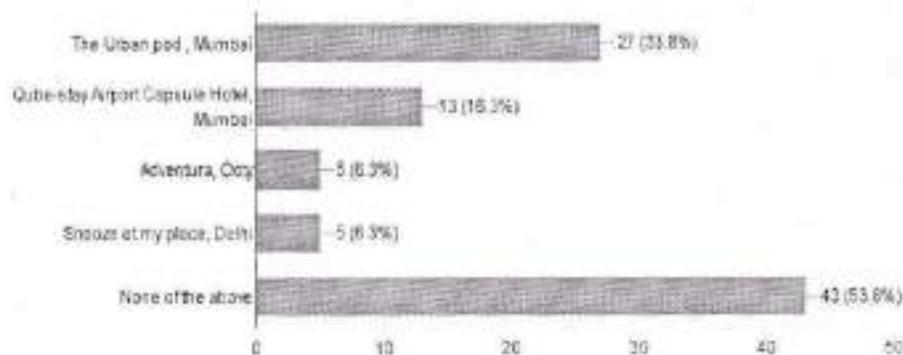


Purpose of this question to gauge the awareness of people towards pod hotels or capsule accommodations. Out of 80 responses 60% people are aware of Pod Hotels as an alternate accommodation, however it is also seen that 40% people are not aware about the concept. They are completely unaware of the capsule sized accommodation

Since there was an attempt to gauge the awareness of pod hotel amongst people, there are few prominent players in this section of business. This question was put forth to see whether respondents are aware of these pod hotel brands located in various cities and states pan India.

Which amongst the below mentioned pod hotel brands, have you heard of ?

80 responses

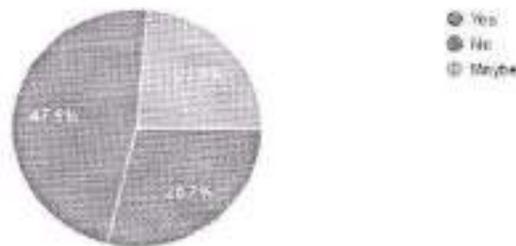


Majority i.e., 53% of the people are not aware of the brands that were mentioned as options. Very few respondents were aware of brands of pod hotels present in India.

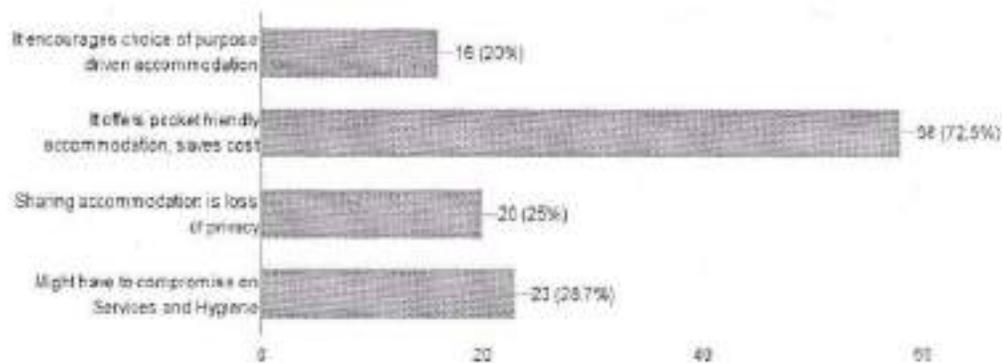
It is important to know the difference between youth hostels and pod hotels. Through this question an attempt to enlighten the difference between both was made. Both categorically fall under shared accommodations however, pod hotels get few more points as they are better in terms of hygiene, safety and privacy. As a response to this question 47% of the total respondents are not aware of the differences between both and 28.7% of the total respondents know how to distinguish between two. In conclusion number of aware people is less than the number of not aware people. There one more category of respondents those may not be able

to distinguish between the two Accommodation options. 23.8% people are not aware of exact differences between pods and youth hostels.

Are you aware of the difference between "Youth hostels" and "Pod Hotels" ?  
80 responses



What is your perception towards shared accommodation ?  
80 responses

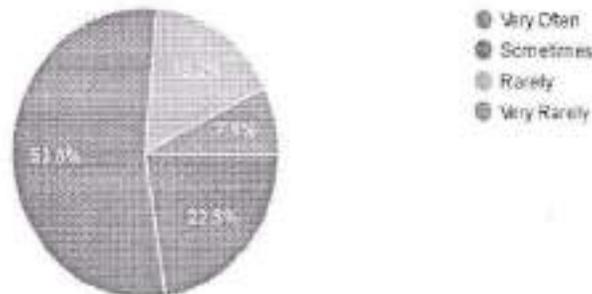


This question was put forth to determine consumer perception towards shared accommodation in terms of safety, security, hygiene and cost and privacy as basic and essential needs. It is been observed that 72.5% i.e., majority of the respondents feel that shared accommodations offer pocket friendly staying option and hence helps in saving costs. However, around 20% people from the total respondents have said that it encourages an individual's choice of choosing purpose driven accommodation. Another 20% people believe that living in a pod hotel or in a shared space may result in loss of privacy and compromise on hygiene, sanitation and safety.

**Objective -3: - To analyze the feasibility of pod hotels in Indian Market.**

How often do you travel ?

80 responses

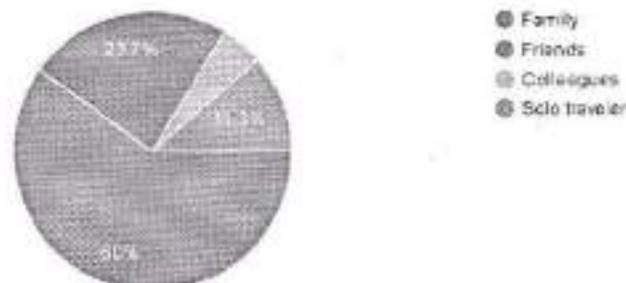


The pie diagram illustrates the frequency of travelling of the respondents. As per the parameters the – Very often means weekly travel, sometimes means Monthly travel. Rarely means travelling six months and very rarely means travelling once or twice a year. Hence, it is observed that majority people around 53.8% (43 out of 80 respondents) travel sometime, next are the 18 (22.5%) respondents who travel very often in a year. 16.2% of the total respondents travel rarely and lastly only 7.5% people travel very rarely.

It is important to know that with whom do people travel, to get a better perceptible about it this question was added. Respondents could choose multiple options at one time. 60% of the total respondents prefer travelling with family which the highest percentage of response received. 23% respondents travel with their friends and 11.3% people prefer going on solo trips. Being the least opted answer, only 5% people travel with their candidates.

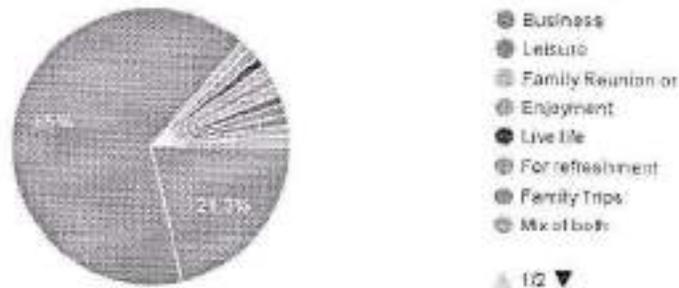
With whom do you travel most often?

80 responses



## What is your purpose of travelling

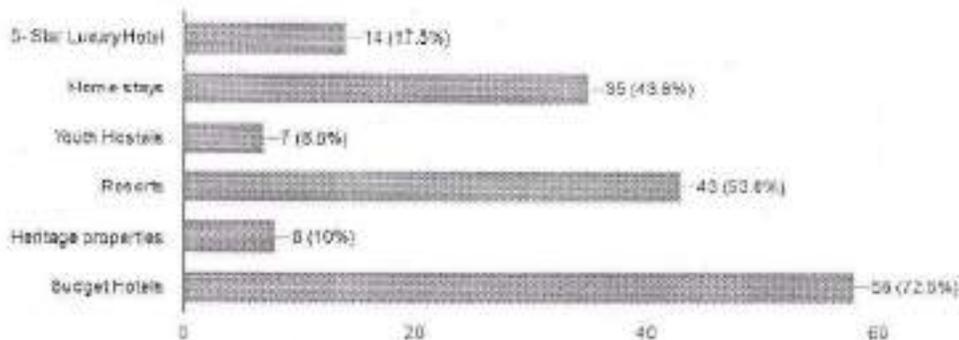
80 responses



Purpose of travelling determines the budget, category of facilities and accommodation that an individual may choose or opt for, hence purpose of travelling has a major influence on preferences. Hence this question was included. Respondents had to choose from Leisure or Business option, as a result percentage of leisure travel is more than that of business travel. 79% people travel for leisure and 21% travel for business.

## Which category of accommodation do you prefer while travelling?

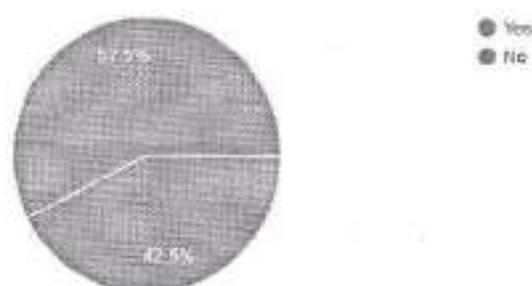
80 responses



There is a varied range of accommodation available to travelers in the market. Above given is the pictorial representation of consumer preferences towards various types of accommodation that one can book while travelling. Respondents were asked to choose from 5star luxury hotels, homestays, youth hostels, resorts, heritage hotel properties and budget hotels. It is been observed that maximum preference is given to budget hotels as 72.5% people have selected that option. Resorts and home stays are the second most preferred option of accommodation as the percentage of votes are 53.8% and 43.8% for both categories. 17% of the total respondents opt for 5-star luxury hotels while travelling. However, two segments have very niche number of clientele as only 10% people have opted for Heritage hotel properties and 7% have opted for youth hostels.

Do you prefer or ever opted for shared accommodation ?

80 responses

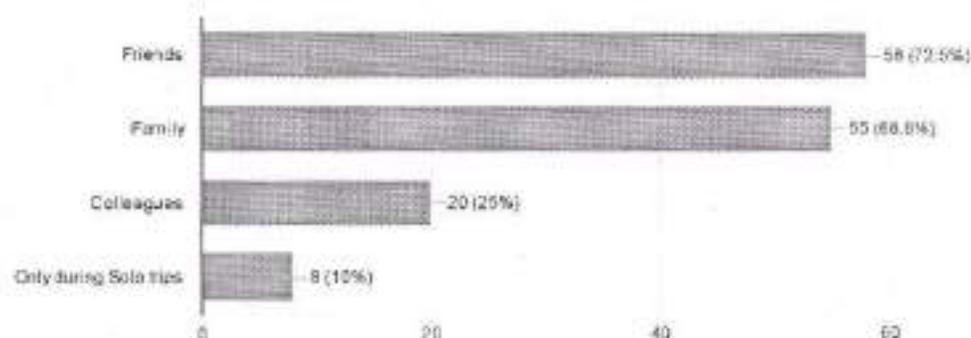


Since respondent's perception towards share accommodation is part of study it is also important to know whether they are willing to opt for any shared accommodation during their tour. Number of people that might opt for an option of shared accommodation is less than the number of people not opting for shared accommodation. 57% responses are not in favour of shared accommodations and 42.5% responses are in favour of shared accommodation.

After having evaluated whether people are willing to stay in a shared accommodation, it is important to know that with whom would people prefer to share their accommodation. 58 responses (72.5%) prefer shared accommodation with friends when on trip. 68% people to

With whom would you prefer or ever opted for shared accommodation while travelling ?

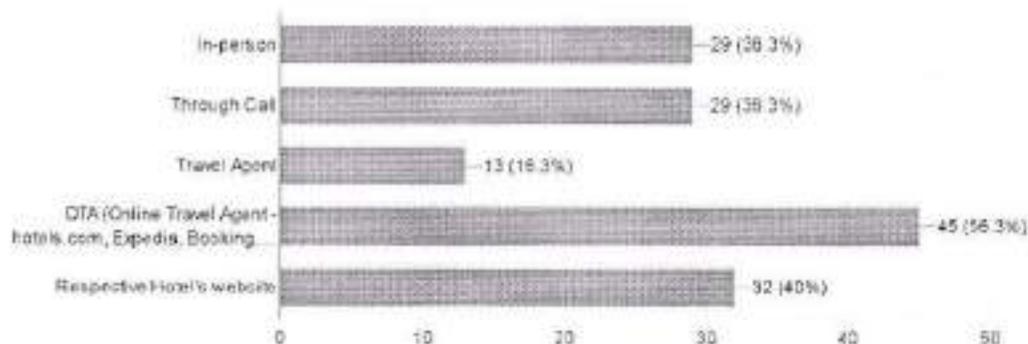
80 responses



opt for shared accommodation when they travel with family. Only 25% responses were in favor of sharing accommodation with colleagues. The least preference to shared accommodation was given by solo travelers as only 10% of them has opted for shared accommodation.

How do you prefer to do your bookings/reservations for vacation ?

80 responses

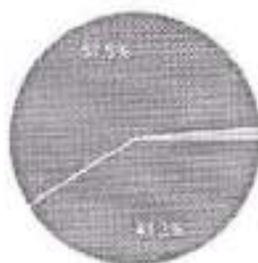


In order to determine the most preferred mode of booking hotel used by consumers, this question was included and responses were recorded for in-person, through call, travel agent, OTA, Respective hotels website ways of booking a room. Maximum people book through OTAs (online travel agent) as the percentage shows 56%, on other hand only 16.3% people book through travel agent. It is observed that same responses are recorded for in-person and phone call booking as 36% of the total responses opted for it.

How much would you like to spend for accommodation while travelling ?

Copy

80 responses



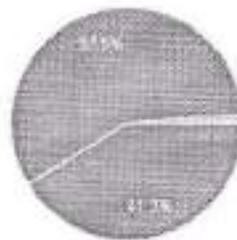
- Less than = 1000 INR / per night
- 5000 to 8000 INR / per night
- 10,000 - 15,000 INR / per night
- More than = 25,000 INR / per night

After determining the mode of booking it is extremely important for the hotelier to be aware of the spending power of the customer, hence with the same motive this particular question was added. It is observed that people tend to spend between the range of 5000-8000 rupees per night, as 57.5% have responded for the same alternative. 41.3% people tend to spend nearly about 1000/- rupees per night according to the responses received. There is a niche base of respondents who spend around 10,000/- to 15,000/- rupees per night for an accommodation while travelling.

How much would you like to spend for accommodation while travelling ?

Copy

80 responses

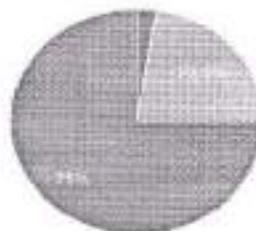


- Less than = 1000 INR / per night
- 1000 to 3000 INR / per night
- 10,000 - 11,000 INR / per night
- More than > 25,000 INR / per night

This question was added in order to determine the spending power or capacity of the consumer, as it is important to know spending power of people towards shared accommodation. As a result, 65% of the respondents are ready to spend between 1000/- to 3000/- rupees per night for shared accommodation and 32.5% people are willing to spend 500/- rupees per night for shared accommodation. However, none of the responses showed inclination towards spending 10,000/- rupees per night.

Has this survey helped you in relating with the concept of Pod Hotel or made you aware of Pod Hotels ?

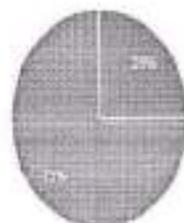
80 responses



- Yes
- No
- Maybe

This question was included in order to get to know consumer perception towards pod hotel and to check whether the survey has helped them in getting more knowledge about the pod hotels and capsules. 75% of the total responses feel that they were more enlightened about the concept after participating in the survey. However, in contrast 22.5% respondents were confused about their opinion.

Are you aware of concept of alternate accommodation?  
80 responses



- Yes
- No

Have you ever heard of any Pod/Capsule Hotel?  
80 responses



- Yes
- No

### Limitations

Although, in order to the fulfilment of the pre-determined objectives of the study various attempts were made for data collection and validation from various sources, but certainly there were few barriers on the pathway. To mention a few, following were the limitations experienced while doing research;

1. Originated in Japan, Pods are much popular in Asian and other European urban areas and now is gradually growing in other countries as well. However, it is a relatively new concept of accommodation in India, hence very limited publications and news articles contained information and statistical data related to pod hotels and their operations.
2. Similarly, there are very few pod properties in India, they are present in varied locations and are far from the city of Pune, as a result conducting an on-site survey was difficult denial of permission from Owners /operators, too was the barrier in conducting actual on-site visit during study.
3. There is lack of awareness amongst the people regarding capsule sized accommodation, hence people were hesitant r at times reluctant to fill the google form or answer the questionnaire.
4. As Pods is a newly emerging idea and people are still trying to be familiar with it. According to the literature operators have observed a change in the preference of the guests and people are willing to experience the pod stay, however, interacting with people who have already stayed in a pod hotel property was little challenging.

While doing research on the concept of pod hotels, its feasibility and client's perception towards the same, it was important to determine whether people in India are aware of the terms like alternate accommodation and the options that are available in the market and their perception towards pod hotels.

Few questions were included in the questionnaire which directly or indirectly helps in collecting data regarding perception and awareness.

### Findings

Following are the findings from the project.

1. People in India are aware of the concept of alternate accommodations, they have experienced or have heard of types of accommodations other than Five-star hotels, budget hotels, resorts or guest houses.
2. The youth of India is more inclined towards choosing purpose driven stay and opt for facilities and amenities that are just enough r essential during that particular transit.
3. It was observed that people are aware of compact living spaces and modern style of accommodations that exist in various part of globe. In contrast pod are not much trendy or most preferred option in India.
4. As there are very limited options available in market for pod hotels, less awareness regarding concept and availability of better competitive stay options, there is still some time and a long way for the capsule concept to grow in India.

## Conclusion

### “There is a lot more to do, with less space”

Modern approach of finding the purpose driven stay and guest inclination towards the cost-effective accommodation has introduced new styles of rooms to the market. The list includes popular concepts like service apartments, youth hostels/ dormitory accommodation and Airport Sleeping cabins. India is recognized as an upcoming / Untapped market for such concept hotels, hence many unique living projects like The Urban Pod, Mumbai, Qubestay Airport capsule Mumbai, Snooze at mt space, Delhi and Adventura Ooty are been today listed as one of the best pod hotel properties in India. Operators of the property have come across noticeable changes in guest's approach towards trying new options and surge to keep up with trends. However, still there is a need of bringing more awareness and making people familiar with the Pod – Concept.

People in India are aware of the concept of alternate accommodations, they have experienced or have heard of types of accommodations other than Five-star hotels, budget hotels, resorts or guest houses. The youth of India is more inclined towards choosing purpose driven stay and opt for facilities and amenities that are just enough r essential during that particular transit.

It was observed that people are aware of compact living spaces and modern style of accommodations that exist in various part of globe. In contrast pod are not much trendy or most preferred option in India. As there are very limited options available in market for pod hotels, less awareness regarding concept and availability of better competitive stay options, there is still some time and a long way for the capsule concept to grow in India.

## Suggestions

1. There are various other options available for accommodation in market for consumer which are very well promoted and because of which the competition is increased, to overcome this challenges pods needs to adopt and implement creative approach of marketing and promotion.
2. Indian crowd tends to buy or avail things as per their requirement and in a specific way, hence the living space must be planed and designed in such way that people prefer pod not only for solo trips but also while traveling with their family and friends.

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## MARKETING STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY THE STAND-ALONE SPAS IN PUNE

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### Abstract-

The word "spa" creates images of long days filled with mud baths and meditation classes, exquisitely prepared spa cuisine offered in serene environments with the most exquisite aroma filled spaces. But spas seem to be everywhere: office buildings, strip malls, village storefronts. Salons with one tiny massage table advertise themselves as spas. How can they all be spas? Though the Egyptians and Romans have reiterated the benefits of spas, Ayurveda has also brought to the fore front the benefits of the messages and the various therapies that help relieve one from simple pains to complicated medical conditions. The stressful lives that people live nowadays has re-livened the necessity for such remedies that are long lasting and effective. The researcher has tried to identify the various strategies used by spas in order to reach out to their customers. The research attempts to look for the most commonly used promotional activities that are enjoyed by the customers and the spa management alike. Spas are here to stay and the slow rise of the customer base has shown that quality of therapy(Service), hygiene (Place) and trained staff (Process and Physical evidence) are the most important issues for customers while the management is in a constant bid to rediscover different needs of consumers and custom create therapies to address them. This constant creativity often takes the focus away from the basic marketing mix of Product/ Service, Place, Physical Evidence and Process, which then affects the quality of service. Thus spas need to balance their research on customer requirements with the physical delivery of the quality services to their end consumers.

**Key words:** Ayurveda, Message, Therapy, Marketing Strategy, Physical Evidence, Process, Service, Marketing Mix.

### Introduction

The word "spa" conjures up images of long days filled with mud baths and meditation classes, exquisitely prepared spa cuisine, and fragrant eucalyptus groves. But spas seem to be everywhere: office buildings, strip malls, village storefronts. Salons with one tiny massage table tout their spa services. How can they all be spas? The concept of spas is very ancient. It was what gave Cleopatra her unparalleled beauty. Roman and Egyptians were one of the early civilizations that recognized the importance and benefits of Spas. The fast-track lives of today that have stemmed from the economic development of the society has brought with it many a disease of the mind and body. Ayurveda has also brought to the fore front the benefits of the messages and the various therapies that help relieve one from simple pains to complicated medical conditions. The stressful lives that people live nowadays has re-livened the necessity for such remedies that are long lasting and effective. Seen as a non-invasive remedy, Spa therapies have slowly made their way into the beauty regime of many. Not only women, but men have been actively utilizing these methods to rejuvenate and revitalize their lives. Spas have taken different forms like destination spas, day spas etc. However their basic focus is to revitalize the mind and body by offering a quiet serene environment in the middle of chaotic lifestyles of their customers.

### Objectives:

1. To identify the marketing strategies used by the spas

2. To understand the customer expectations during service delivery
3. To identify the most profitable and customer oriented marketing strategy currently in use.

**Research methodology:**

The methodology includes explanation of the approach taken to find out the marketing strategies being adopted by spas, instruments required to collect data and to analyze the data.

**Approach:**

A quantitative approach is used in order to accomplish the aims of this study. It would help in collecting the data, which is required to analyze the correction trends and accomplish the aims.

In addition, the quantitative approach would help the researcher to examine the factors objectively. This approach would also help the researcher to make use of some instruments in order to gather the required information.

**Sample Size:** It was administered to 08 Spas and 25 customers from all age group and types of clientele in order to extract quality data.

**Data collection:** A Questionnaire was used as a research tool for collecting data. The present paper is predominantly based on primary data

**Data analysis:** The data collected was analyzed by way of percentile representation of the results of the questionnaire. The result is presented here by way of pie charts.

**Scope of research**

The scope of this research is restricted to examine marketing strategies used in 08 located in various parts of Pune city. It focuses on investigating and exploring the most preferred ones and whether it reflects the customer

**Literature Review**

Medical, wellness and health tourism are three segments that have seen growth of varying levels across countries of the world. Spas form an integral part of the wellness tourism industry. The definition of wellness tourism as per Global Spa Summit is: Wellness Tourism involves people who travel to a different place to proactively pursue activities that maintain or enhance their personal health and wellbeing, and who are seeking unique, authentic or location-based experiences/therapies not available at home. As per Global Spa & Wellness Summit and SRI International report, there is an upward movement in growth of the global spa industry. It has grown from USD 60 billion in 2007 to an estimated USD 73 billion in 2012. Asia has fast-growing markets with revenues increasing at the rate of 20 per cent annually.

SRI International has estimated that 22 per cent increase has taken place in the total number of spas across the world from 71,600 in 2007 to 87,000 plus in 2012.

Success and growth of global spa industry is also a reflection of fast-growing spa markets in developing nations. India has been one of the major countries in the world offering wellness tourism — given its rich traditions of Ayurveda, meditation, yoga and other spiritual and healing practices. As per the ministry of tourism, department of AYUSHI and NABH2, wellness centres include spas, ayurveda centres, yoga and naturopathy centres, fitness centres, and skin care centres, etc. Accreditation of wellness centres is under NABH as per quality standards defined for evaluation. The ministry of tourism has also devised incentives for accredited wellness centres and ayurveda hospitals to promote this segment. As per Spa Association of India (SAI), there are over 2,300 spas in the country generating revenues of about USD 400 million per annum. A double-digit growth rate is estimated in the wellness industry over the next five years, with sectors like spa and beauty treatments, forecasted to grow at 35 to 40 per cent. About 30 per cent growth in the inventory of spas is expected over the coming 2 — 5 years. The factors driving the surge in spas in India are growing annual disposable incomes, increasing health awareness and high potential of good returns on investment for existing as well as new entrants. Given India's strong ayurvedic and yoga

background, the country receives increased attention from foreign travellers for wellness treatments. India's spa industry is witnessing increase in demand of the indigenous spa facilities which have modern designs and a combination of western and traditional therapies. Currently, India has roughly 20 — 25 major spa centres, majority of them being in South India, the main states being Kerala and Karnataka. Kerala is considered to be the centre of ayurveda and wellness tourism with many other states witnessing growth due to investment in services, products and promotions. Kerala is already offering destination spa packages all year round. However, the world's top spa destination namely Ananda Spa — Ananda in the Himalayas is located in North India in Uttaranchal as per ranking given by the Conde Nast Traveller Readers Spa Awards of 2012. Although, destination spa is an even smaller market as compared to day spas and resort spas, however, it does direct in innovation in providing an inclusive mind-body-spirit experience. Globally, destination spas comprise only two per cent of the total number of spas but contribute about 13 per cent of the industry revenue and 9 per cent of the industry employment.

Vana Retreats will launch a wellness resort namely Vana, Malsi Estate in Dehradun in late 2013 which is going to be another example of destination spa in India for holistic wellness, ayurveda and yoga. Also, another destination spa under planning is Bodhi Dhama by GOCO, in Dharamshala. The renowned hotel chain Banyan Tree Hotels & Resorts is also planning to further expand its portfolio with two more properties in India with Angsana Club & Spa in Ludhiana and Goa. Recently, Banyan Tree has opened an all-pool villas retreat in Kerala with a dedicated ayurvedic centre and variety of wellness therapies. Also, Hilton Shillim Estate Retreat & Spa, the first leisure property by Hilton Hotels & Resorts, has started its operations in village Shillim in Pune in January this year. We are witnessing a number of international players investing in the wellness industry in India due to the expanding spa consumer base along with a growing preference for treatments and services that are supported by international brands including skincare and beauty products.

There are various known domestic and international hotel brands offering specialised spa services across India. Some of them are Jiva Spa by Taj Group, Quan Spa by JW Marriott, Heavenly Spa by Westin, Shamana Spa by Grand Hyatt, Sereno Spa by Park Hyatt, Wildflower Hall Spa and Amarvillas Spa by Oberoi, Kaya-Kalp-The Royal Spa by ITC, Maya Spa by Zuri Group, Soham Spa by Movenpick Hotels & Resorts, etc. The newly-opened resort, Fairmont in Jaipur is also likely to introduce Willow Stream Spa in India in the near future. Also, Accor group has tied up with Indonesia-based Mandara Spa for its Novotel and Pullman brands in few upcoming locations. Though, Accor already has an In Balance by Novotel Spa operating to target business travellers. Also, YOO Spa by Six Senses

Spa in Pune Trump Towers alongside luxurious residential apartments by Panchshil realty is yet to open in 2014. This is another stepping stone by spa operators in targeting luxury domestic demand. Thus, awareness of spa among tourists/ day visitors and brand associations for quality services are showing positive sentiments in the growing spa market. Various state tourism governments are also making efforts to revamp tourism, announcing facilities such as wellness and recreational club through public private partnership (PPP) mode. Majority of tourists travelling to India for wellness tourism are high-end travellers from North America, the Middle East, and Europe, as well as affluent Asian countries. Key metro cities are also witnessing incremental spa facilities, mainly day spas and resort spas, by branded hotels to target a wider segment and improve revenue contribution by this stream. Spas in hotels are no more just an "add on" feature but a profit centre in its own right. Spa is gaining significance for the various benefits and are often packaged with beauty and salon services to enhance the experience of the clients.

India is rising towards the concept of spa destinations and with its increasing clientele from the word *wellness* is usually used to indicate a healthy balance of mind, body and spirit that results in an overall feeling of well-being. This expression is tied for alternative medicine, and it is first used by Halbert L. Dunn in mid-50's of 20th century. The modern concept of wellness did not, however, become popular until 1970. The term is defined by the National Institutes of Wellness in Wisconsin as "an active process of becoming aware and making choices toward a more successful existence". This is in line with the changes that the focus is away from prevention of illness and approaching to prevent human health. In other words, wellness is to assess the state of health that emphasizes the entire being and its ongoing development. Wellness can be described as "constant, conscious pursuit of living to its fullest potential". Alternative approaches to wellness are often denoted using two different terms: "health various countries across the world, it certainly is stepping ahead towards one of the sought after options for spa destinations, and wellness" and "wellness programs". Wellness programs offer alternative medical techniques to improve health. Whether these techniques actually improve physical health is controversial and the subject of much debate. James Randi and James Randi Foundation are the honest critics of this alternative concept of a new era of health. Wellness often includes many health related disciplines, such as therapy with natural products.

Wellness, as part of the luxury needs, can readily be found in affluent societies because it involves dealing with the body, after the basic needs for food, shelter and medical care base are already accomplished. Many of the activities applied in wellness, in fact, aimed at controlling the side effects of enrichment, such as obesity and inactivity. Wellness roots can be found in 19th century, when the middle class in the industrialized world found time and resources for different forms of self-improvement.

Wellness, as defined by the Foundation of Wellness, considers prevention without drugs, which cannot be eliminated health problems, but they can be prevented. Wellness focuses on minimizing the effects of the three dimensions of stress: physical stress (which causes irritation to the nervous system), chemical stress which causes toxicity of the body) and mental stress (which can trigger hormonal changes, mainly in the adrenal glands). It may be noted that the definition of wellness vary depending on who promote it. These wellness promoters try to ensure a healthier population and a higher quality of life. It is the pursuit of a healthy, balanced lifestyle. Wellness as an alternative concept generally means more than the absence of disease - an optimal state of health. Supporters of the program believe that many factors contribute to wellness: living in a clean environment, eating organic food, doing regular physical exercise, balance career, family, relationships, and the development of faith.

Participating in wellness programs aims to make people feel better and have more energy. These programs allow individuals to take greater responsibility for their health behavior. Private wellness programs are often enrolled to improve fitness, smoking cessation, and the regulation of body weight. Wellness programs in the workplace are recognized by a growing number of companies. They are part of the health and security of the company. These programs are designed to improve employee morale, loyalty and productivity.

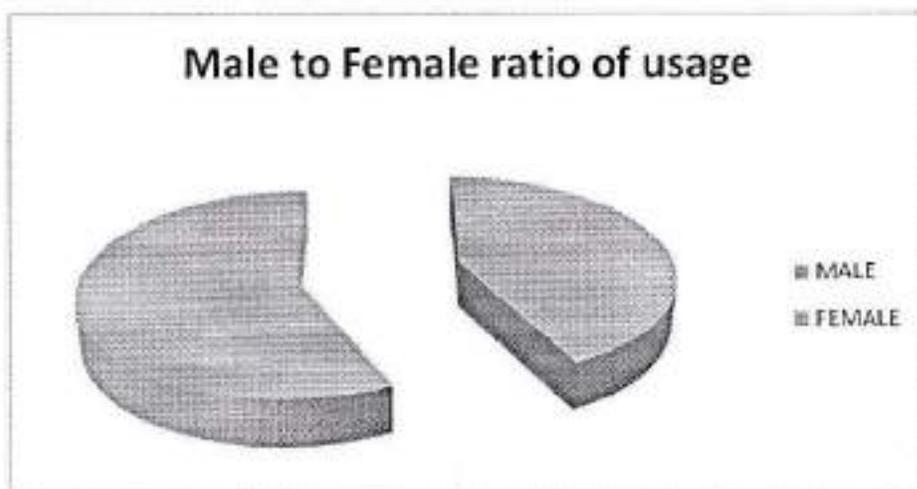
#### **Research Findings and Interpretation**

##### **Primary Data Findings:**

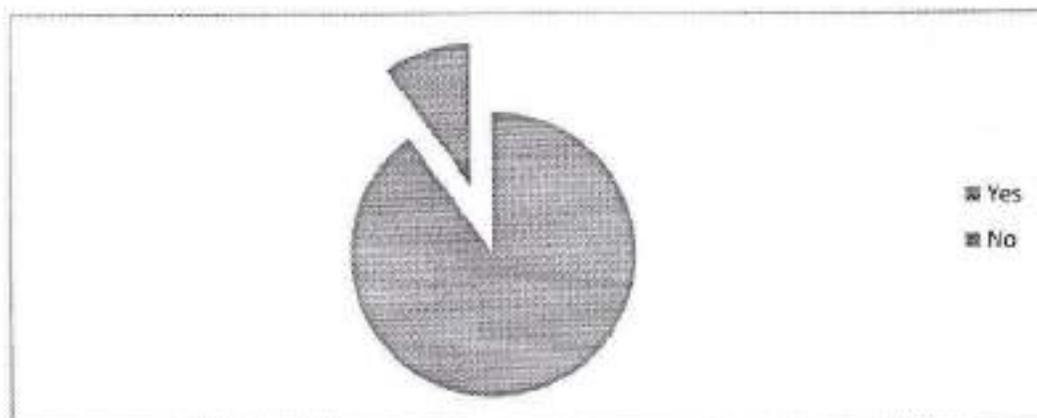
These findings are derived from the data obtained from questionnaires (6 spas and 84 clients) and personal interviews. The findings are based on a sample size and so could vary a little when collective study is done.

##### **Male- female preference chart:**

In the research 84 customers were distributed to the customers. 80% females choose spa whereas in Men 60% chose spa facilities because of the variety of services offered and specialized services as compared to beauty salons.

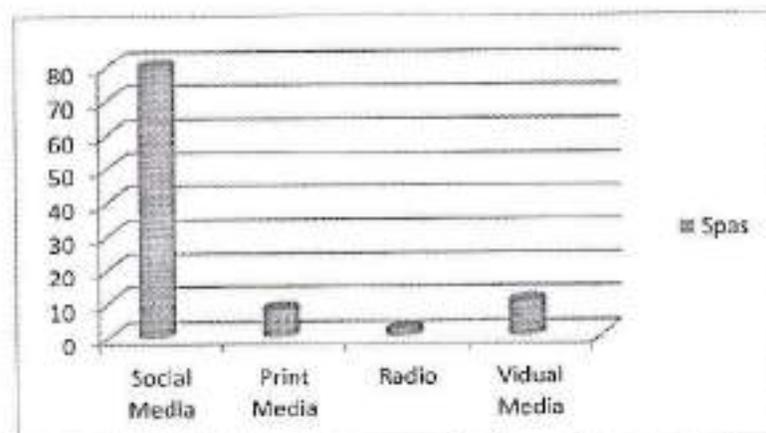


#### Existence of Loyalty programmes:



Nearly all Spas have adopted some form of reward programmes in order to reach out to customers effectively. It also acts as a referral base. Spas have recorded nearly 40-50 enrolments during festive seasons. They also have corporate memberships which entails an entire organization. Such corporate members use the membership as incentives for their employees there by expanding the total exposure of the spa facility.

#### Preferred promotional media:

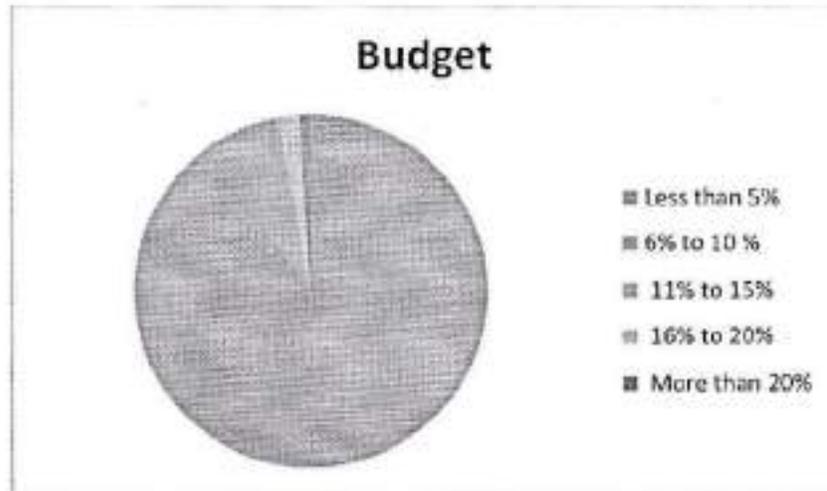


The technologically savvy generation is easier to tap on social media than any other media vehicle. Social media also helps to be in continuous dialogue with the customer and is a two-way communication forum. It not only acts as a promotional media but is also being used to

take appointments and discuss with therapists regarding personalized programs. This creates a strong bond between the customer and the spa.

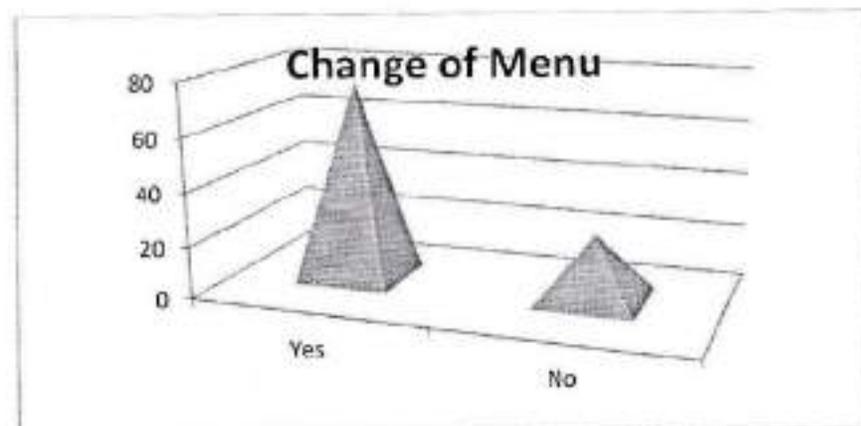
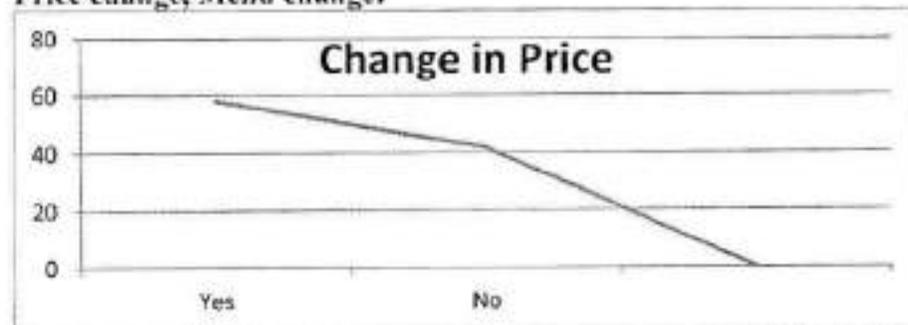
Promotions thus are more regular than a scheduled release. They range from daily to even hourly. The Spa team usually has a designated marketing person monitoring their various social media handles.

**Budget provision in annual plan:**



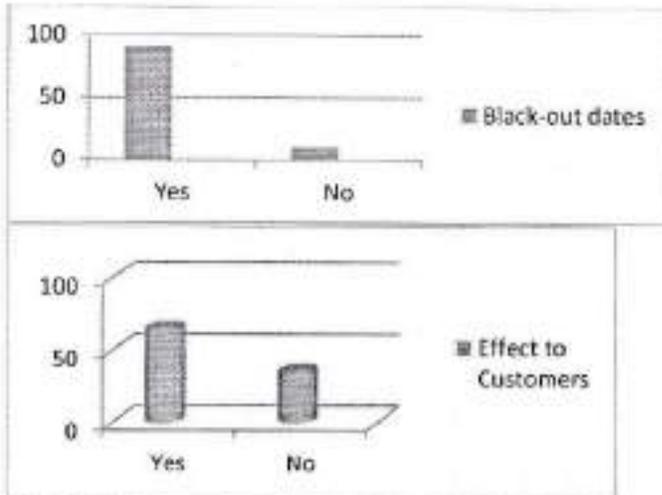
The graph clearly states that majority of staff spend around 6% to 10% of their total budget for Marketing. This is a relatively small amount of funds considering the fact that there is fierce competition in the market and their market presence is very recent and they are yet to find their niche in the diverse market like Pune.

**Price change, Menu change:**



Spas are involved in altering their menus and thus their prices very frequently. New therapies are added especially with respect to the seasonal changes and the prices thus reflect demand for the therapies. Spas have seen to offer new therapies to their loyal customers to test its relevance in terms of market acceptance and price acceptability.

**Use of blackout Dates and its effect on customers:**



The first bar graph tells us that nearly 95 % of the spas whether small or large indulge in the concept of black-out dates. These are some days marked out in advanced when no discounts or any offers are valid. This is a strategy adopted to maximize profits and make up for the lost revenue during slack period. All services are offered at their maximum retail price to all whether they are loyalty members or walk in. However unfortunately for the customers they lose their loyalty benefits and are treated as any other customer. On top of the fact that their loyalty is not honored, their discounted deals are also not accepted. Most spas have a large corporate customer base and the black-out dates coincide with the dates when they can avail of the services. Hence dissatisfaction is rampant. The customer feels cheated as his membership is rendered useless on all terms. Then the question of whether it is profitable to become loyalists of a brand arises.

**Pricing strategies used:**



Nearly 65% of the spas in the city offer daily discounts in order to boost sales. Week day offers are very common and can range from free foot or head massages to the use of steam and sauna facilities on the purchase of therapy. However, most of the spas have no major offers during weekends and are also reluctant to offer complementary therapies for first timers. To counter this limitation, they have introduced Happy hours- these are certain times of the day when extra discounts or buy one get one free offers are prevalent to counter low demands. These are beneficial for the corporate customers which form more than 80% of their client base who can use these benefits to their advantage.

#### **Services Offered- product line extension**

It was observed from the menus, that there was a good amount of variety offered in the spas. Spas provided 35-40 services on an average, it ranged from Swedish Massage (with extensive choices of oils) Aromatherapy Massage, Shirodhara, Vinotharapy Massage, Foot Reflexology, Palmarosa & Ylang Ylang Body Polish, Natural Protein Body Wraps, Healing & Hydrating Facials to Beautiful Bride Package, Steam variations, etc. Most of the focus was given on the massages in the spas which shows the evolution of spa according to the needs of the clients by analyzing target market. Thus the product line is quite extensive and thus the customer has good option and the offerings are very competitive with respect to price and value for money. There are already big Indian spa brand like four fountain, Sohum spas established in Pune with specialized staff and big marketing budgets it is a highly competitive market. Attracting customers and retaining their loyalty is of vital importance.

#### **What are the Customer Expectations of Clients Pune market?**

The customer in Pune market is highly demanding as like any other Spa market in India. It was observed from the finding of this research that the basic demand of any spa client is of professionalism and wide array of services on offer. Some guest also look into the qualifications of the therapist before choosing a particular spa. The word of mouth is the most trusted source of information among the guests as many spa fail to deliver what was promised in the ads. Women need a safe and comfortable environment, and they are always hunting for best deals in town. As hotels are known to deliver their promises females tend to prefer Hotel Spas.

People want best services in least possible costs which is being delivered to a fair extent in Stand-alone spa. It was observed that out of 20 questionnaires filled by the Guests 60% of the guest listed variety in services as a major factor while selecting a Spa. Some other factors were price, location, expertise, equipment, ambience, Staff.

#### **Conclusion:**

Looking at the need of the hour, the Male population of the city desires these facilities. However the spas are unable to target this market segment due to the traditional mindsets of beauty being restricted to ladies. The Spas are active on their social media handles; however, feedbacks should be more detailed so that the visibility of consumers can be used as a leverage to reach out to niche markets. Another interesting and successful strategy adopted by Spas is of seasonal variation of therapies and therefore pricing. Thus they appeal to the customer expectations and thereby result in customer satisfaction. Loyalty members are finding the restriction of benefits during the black-out dates. These are the dates like new year, festive holidays and such other days when the majority of clientele is willing to utilize their loyalty benefits. However, to maximize revenue, Spas use this strategy of blackout dates. Spa therapies are still considered as a luxury more than a necessity and hence the lack of member benefits results in many a member not utilizing the facility during the said dates. Regular week day discounts and happy hour concepts are more appealing to the customers rather than pre purchasing the membership benefits and not utilizing the facility at all. This might result in spas losing their customer base there by impacting the total revenue.

Spas thus have to tread carefully between revenue maximization and customer relationship management and arrive at a win-win for both.

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## STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON DAILY FOOD CHOICES OF MILLENNIALS (AGE GROUP 15-25)

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand the choices made by the young generation which is popularly known as Millennial Generation! This food choices made by this generation has direct impact on the sales of restaurants and cloud kitchens. It has been observed and is being discussed in various literature review that the choices of cuisines, style of preparations, styles of presentation and even the décor and seating arrangements keep changing over the period. These preferences are driven by the frequent patrons of the restaurants and by those who order online. To understand the changing demands of the customer we studied the influence of Social Media. Social media is a collective term for websites and applications that focus on communication and community based input, interaction, content sharing and collaboration. Now Social Media these days for the Millennials is dominated by some well-known digital apps such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Zomato, Swiggy, Food Panda and of course following various Celebrities, Chef's blogs, Food Bloggers and Vloggers.

Today the Millennials are tech savvy, and they form their opinion based on all of the above Social Media networks and apps. This leads to selection of choices of cuisine and restaurant. The choices made by the Millennials are based on the prominent positioning of a particular product or restaurant. These selections start appearing in various interlinked apps as soon as they are logged in. So they influence more and more Millennials.

The study reveals reasons for selection and behavioral traits that are influenced by the social media.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Food Choices, Millennials, Influence of Social media, Consumer Psychology, Food bloggers, Social media platforms

### Introduction to the topic

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is the age of Social media. Everything from the products purchased by consumers to the media is dictated by social media. It has become the most effective way of communication as well as marketing. Everyone right from young to the old is on social media. It has become a necessity rather than medium of recreation. Let us first understand what exactly is social media. Social media is a collective term for websites and applications that focus on communication and community based input, interaction, content sharing and collaboration. Some popular examples of social media are WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Year by year, the usage of social media is significantly increasing. Instagram in particular has gained a lot of popularity. It is one of the fastest growing social networking platforms. Instagram is an American photo/video sharing social networking platform founded in 2010. Currently, there are over 2 billion people using Instagram worldwide and the number is expected to rise further. Over 50% of the social media users log in daily into Instagram making the social media platform number one in terms of generating consumer engagement. According to studies, the food preferences of people tend to get influenced by the type of content they watch more often on social media.

**FOOD**

**Rayarikar\***  
Nagar, Pune

**Selection of the topic**

The motive of this project is to study and analyze how social media plays a role in the changing of daily food choices and purchase intention of the millennial generation. This can be achieved by interacting with millennials and observing their social media usage as well as the content they happen to watch more likely. This will help to study the social media algorithms which will help to understand the changing food choices which are influenced by various social media platforms.

**Significance of the study**

In the age of technology, social media has become an integral part of the lives of people of all age groups. It is not only a medium of recreation but impacts almost every aspect of the daily lives of people right from fashion to lifestyle changes. This also includes the eating habits of people, especially the millennial generation. The millennial generation is very content oriented and gets influenced a lot by social media and the trends in society. The impacts of social media may be positive as well as negative depending upon the individual. This research will help to study these impacts as well as the consumer behavior and psychology of the millennial generation and help organizations and businesses to cope up with the demands and requirements of the millennial generation.

**Objectives**

1. To analyze the impact of social media on food choices of millennials.
2. To analyze the consumer behavior of millennials.
3. To identify the process of purchase intention of millennials while making food choices.

**Limitations of the study**

This study is restricted to the millennial generation only, that is individuals from age group 15 to 25. Thus, this study has a small sample size. Some issues were faced while collecting secondary data as the topic of research is relatively recent.

**Respondents**

A total of 56 people responded to the questionnaire circulated as a primary data source for the study. Out of the 56 responses 54 responses were valid. Approximately 70% of the respondents were aged above 20 and 25% were aged below 20. People from various fields responded to the questionnaire; from interior designers, chefs and medical students to software developers and architects. A majority of the respondents were students.

**Literature Review**

Monique Thomas Published on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2021 'This is How the Instagram Algorithm Works in 2022. <https://later.com/blog/how-instagram-algorithm-works/> . The article explains the working of various algorithms used by the social networking platform Instagram. The algorithms are applied for the Feed (posts), stories, Explore page and the newly launched Reels. These algorithms are studied and used by influencers to increase customer engagement. The four factors that influence algorithms are Information about the post, Information about the person who has posted, User's Activity on Instagram and User's interaction history. Other factors include Time spent on Instagram, Likes, comments, Saves, taps on profile. Based on these factors, Instagram algorithm calculates how likely is an individual to interact with a post, which is known as Score of Interest, which will determine the order in which posts will be displayed on an individual's Instagram feed.

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An article by Sarah Garone 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021, "How Does Social media affect eating habits?"

<https://www.verywellfit.com/how-does-social-media-affect-eating-habits-5188578>. The article talks about how social media has impacted almost every aspect of life, including influence on diet right from type of food to the portion sizes. The article also discusses the pros and cons of effects of social media on eating. Social media influencers an individual follows inspires and encourages the individual towards a positive change in his diet. Social media also provides valuable skills and information, creates a positive food community and exposes an individual to new recipes, diets and lifestyle. However, there are some drawbacks too; distracted eating may lead to over or under consumption. At times, following influencers too much may create unrealistic beliefs and expectations which may lead to disappointment. One must curate his/her feed by following people who have a certified course or degree backing the information or expertise they are posting.

Mr. Andrew Arnold in an article on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019, "How Social Media Can Impact Your Consumption Habits" <https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewarnold/2019/01/14/how-social-media-can-impact-your-consumption-habits/?sh=10c4c9d82796> discusses the negative as well as positive impact of social media on eating. The negative impacts include issues about body image, overeating triggered by looking at food pictures frequently. Another aspect is food photography. Some establishments have banned photographing of food as they believe it degrades the dining experience. It's difficult to enjoy food or make healthy food choices when an individual is choosing a food item based on its Instagram potential. The brighter side is that there are qualified nutritionists, chefs, dieticians out there using social media as platform to share diet advice or information on a healthy lifestyle. Social media is also promoting cross cultural communication, exposing people to new cuisines and widening their food horizons.

Somi Arian, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019, The Millennial Mindset: 10 Factors That Drive Millennials' Consumer Behavior" by <https://smarteookiemedia.com/the-millennial-mindset/>. The article talks about various factors that influence the millennial mindset and shape their consumer behavior. The millennial generation has an abundance of choice when it comes to selecting any category of products as compared to the older generations. This abundance has its positive as well as negative aspects such as a product not being able to survive the competition due to having other very similar range of products which are compared by millennials. There is no limitation of time and space as well information to the millennials; everything is at their fingertips. Millennials adapt to the changing technology as well as trends quite easily. Thus, they do not get attached to their previously used products too much, thus making them less loyal as customers. Environmental factors and climate change affect the consumer behavior as well. Companies need to show their sustainability and their care for the environment in order to garner the trust of the audience. Also, millennial generation has more of a cloud-based thinking inclination. They believe in subscribing/renting services or products rather than owning or investing in them permanently.

#### **Advantages of Social Media Marketing for your Business**

Website- <https://www.bluefountainmedia.com/blog/advantages-of-social-media-marketing>  
The article talks about social media marketing and its advantages in growing a business. It is regarded as one of the most effective ways of marketing. Social media marketing aids in increasing brand awareness by engaging with a broader customer platform and having a higher chance of new customer acquisition. Companies should work on their search engine optimization strategies to make the most out of social media marketing. Each post, image or other content put up on social media may convert the viewers into new customers at the same time increasing the company website's traffic. Social media provides a more personalized

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experience to customers thus increasing customer satisfaction and improved brand loyalty. Most importantly, social media is the most cost effective forms of marketing and only requires the company to invest time in order to get desired results.

Social media marketing: The Ultimate Guide, Published on the Website-<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-media-marketing> The article talks about social media and its effective usage as a tool in social media marketing. Social media marketing is the process of creating content for social media platforms to promote your products and services, build community with target audience and drive traffic to your business. The various platforms used are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp and other platforms. These platforms can be used as a tool in marketing by increasing customer engagement and interaction and increasing the traffic towards the company website, promoting the products and increasing customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Social media marketing increases brand awareness, generates new leads and fosters relationships with the customers. It also helps to keep a check on the competitors. Different platforms can be utilized depending upon the requirement of the companies and their customer profiles.

Hawra Hashem published on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021, 13 Positive effects of Social Media on our society today, by <https://www.kubbeo.com/13-positive-effects-of-social-media-on-our-society-today/> The article talks about the benefits of social media for the society. Social media helps individuals to connect and empowers businesses to build audience. Mindful use of social media can benefit a lot to inspire, educate and gain knowledge and information. Social media helps in enhancing the customer experience and inspiring creativity. It helps in brand awareness and offering quick support and better communication. It helps to drive traffic towards the company website and increasing engagement. It helps in growth of businesses as people provide honest feedbacks and reviews.

The positive impact of Millennials on your Social Media Marketing strategies 30<sup>th</sup> July 2018

<https://sunnylandingpages.com/blog/positive-impact-millennials-social-media-marketing-strategies/#:~:text=Through%20the%20social%20marketing%2C%20the,quite%20beneficial%20to%20the%20company> The article talks about how millennials can benefit a business in various ways. Attracting millennials is a smart move for many of the business owners as it can have a positive impact on their social media marketing as millennials are the most vivid users of social media and like quality content. Millennials have a strong networking and influence which can prove beneficial to companies. They are well aware of the social happenings around the world and may purchase a particular company/brand's product only for supporting their cause towards the society. The millennials are considered as the generation with the highest purchasing power. They are believed to be trend setters and adapt to changes rather quickly. Millennials provide companies with honest feedbacks and reviews through various social media platforms and refer your products in their community if they are satisfied.

Zadrian Ardi, Shania Andrisa Putri 'The Analysis of the social media impact on the millennial generation behavior and social interactions' published in Vol 1, No 2 (2020).

The article analyzes the general impacts of social media usage on the millennials regarding social behavior and interactions. Social media has its own benefits as well as shortcomings. The benefits include easy access to information and knowledge, better communication, and being able to connect with other individuals across the globe easily. The shortcomings include poor mental health, general addiction, anxiety and depression, poor body image and unrealistic expectations.

Angela Woo, 'Understanding the research on millennial shopping behaviors' 4th June 2018

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2018/06/04/understanding-the-research-on-millennial-shopping-behaviors/> This article analyzes the millennial shopping behavior and helps to understand their consumer psychology. The millennial generation wants their purchases to make them feel good and relate with the products on a personal level. They tend to value experiences over material things and are into experiential buying. They like sharing the products with their community and recommend the products if they are happy about them. They tend to shop promiscuously and do not have an issue in trying out new things. They trust peer generated endorsements more and believe in word of mouth and product reviews by influencers more.

Ryan Jenkins, "5 Need to Know characteristics of the new millennial buyer" <https://www.inc.com/ryan-jenkins/selling-to-millennial-buyers-5-things-you-need-to-know.html>, this article talks about the common characteristics of the millennial generation. Buyers re evolving faster than sellers in today's time. There is a growing gap between buyers and sellers. Millennial buyers are influenced by consumer behavior, reviews, personal network recommendations and this impacts in their decision making. They are self-educating and define their needs on their own before reaching out to a particular company for their products. Millennial buyers are raising their expectations and are interested in IQ over EQ while making buying decisions.

### Research Methodology

The type of research methodology used in this study is Quantitative research methodology and is based on the data collected which is converted into charts and graphs which makes it easier to interpret and carry out the research.

### Primary Data

- A Questionnaire was prepared and circulated among individuals with the help of Google Forms, with a sample size of 50 people.
- Personal interactions with acquaintances.

### Secondary Data

- Online articles
- Newspapers and magazines

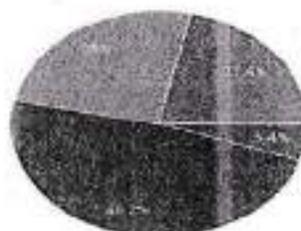
### Data Analysis And Interpretation

#### Time spent on Social Media

How much time do you spend on social media in a day?

Copy

56 responses



- Less than an hour
- 1-2 hours
- 2-3 hours
- More than 3 hours

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The purpose of this question was to understand the amount of time spent by individuals on social media daily. Of the total respondents, 5.4% of the individuals used social media for less than an hour daily, which is the least percentage. A majority of the respondents used social media for 1-2 hours with a percentage of 48.2%. Of the total respondents, 25% used social media for 2-3 hours and 21.4% used social media for more than 3 hours.

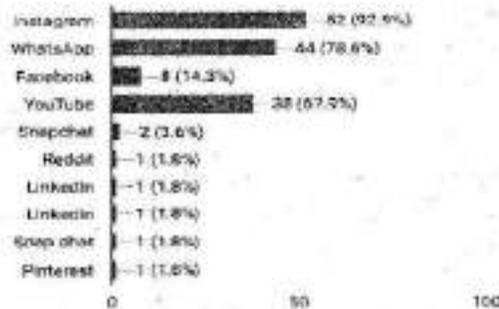
Most of the individuals spent 1-2 hours on social media daily and the least percentage of them used social media for less than an hour.

### Types of Social Media platforms used by individuals

Which social media platforms do you use the most?

Copy

56 responses



Instagram was the most used social media platform with a percentage of 92.9%. WhatsApp was the second most used platform with a percentage of 78.6%. YouTube was the third most used platform with a percentage of 67.9%.

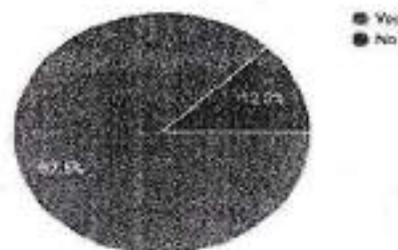
Other social media platforms used by individuals include Reddit, LinkedIn, Snapchat and Pinterest.

### Awareness about the Algorithms used by Social Media platforms

Are you aware that algorithms are used by social media platforms?

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56 responses

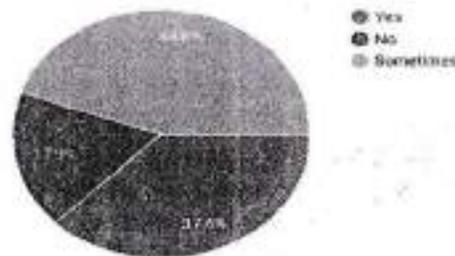


Of the total respondents, 87.5% of the respondents were aware that algorithms were used by various social media platforms. 12.5% of the respondents were not aware that algorithms were used by social media platforms.

### Keeping a track of the current trends

Do you keep a track of the current millennial trends?  Copy

56 responses



Out of the total respondents, 44.6% of the respondents kept a track of the current millennial trends. 37.5% did not keep a track of the current trends and 17.9% kept a track of the current trends sometimes. It can be interpreted that most of the respondents keep a track of the current millennial trends.

### Awareness about the Psychological impact of social media on mindsets

Are you aware of the psychological impact social media has on one's mindsets?  Copy

56 responses



Out of the total respondents 92.9% of the respondents were aware of the psychological impact of social media on individual's mindsets while 7.1% of the respondents were not aware of the psychological impact of social media.

### Various Pages followed by individuals on Social Media

What kind of pages do you follow on social media?  Copy

56 responses



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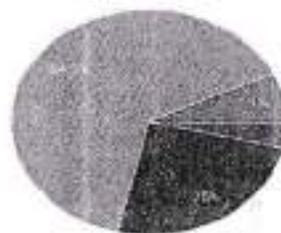
The most followed pages were **Food and Lifestyle**, followed by **Health and Fitness** and **Entertainment**. Other pages included Art and Design, News and Information, Education, Wildlife, Politics and Architecture.

### Influence of Social Media on Lifestyle choices of Individuals

How much does social media  
impact/influence your lifestyle  
choices?

 Copy

56 responses



● Always  
● Sometimes  
● Depending on situation  
● Never

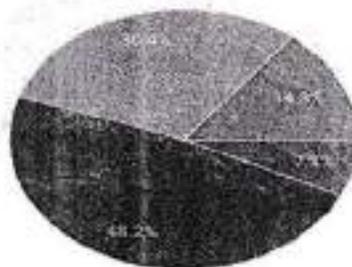
Out of the total respondents, a percentage of 64.3% responded that social media impacts their lifestyle choices depending on the situation. 25% responded that social media influences their choices sometimes and 7.1% responded that social media never impacts their lifestyle choices. A negligible number of respondents said that social media always impacts their lifestyle choices. It can be interpreted that social media impacts the lifestyle choices of individuals depending upon the circumstances.

### Influence of Social Media while deciding What to Eat

How often do you get influenced  
by social media while deciding  
what to eat?

 Copy

56 responses



● Always  
● Sometimes  
● Rarely  
● Never

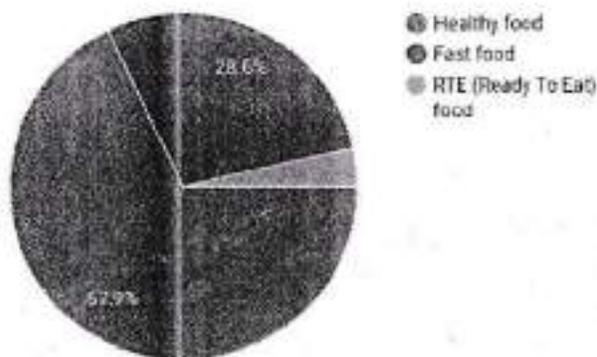
Out of the total respondents, 48.2% responded that social media influences their eating decisions **Sometimes**. 30.4% responded that social media **Rarely** influences their eating decisions. 14.3% responded that social media **Never** impacts their eating decisions. Only 7.1% responded that social media **Always** impacts their eating decisions. It can be interpreted that most of the individuals get impacted by social media at times while making eating decisions.

## Kind of food preferred to be eaten by individuals

What kind of food do you prefer eating?

Copy

56 responses



Out of the total respondents, 67.9% of individuals preferred eating **Healthy food** while 28.6% preferred eating **Fast food**. Only 3% of the respondents preferred eating RTE (Ready-To-Eat) foods.

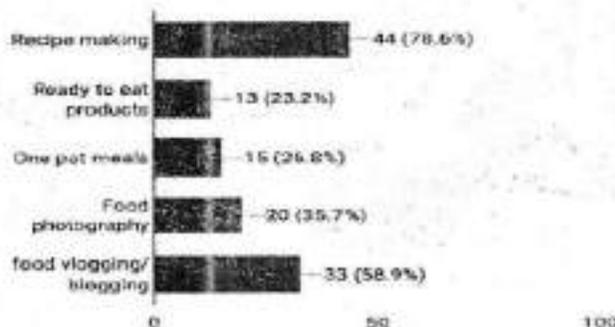
It can be interpreted that most of the individuals prefer to eat healthy food.

## Food related content watched most often by individuals on Social Media

What kind of food related content do you watch most often on social media?

Copy

56 responses



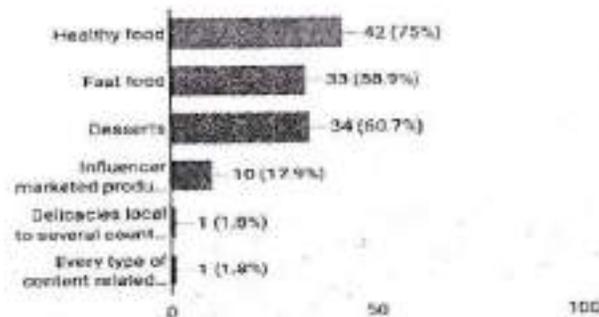
The most food related content watched by individuals on social media were Recipe making videos, followed by Food vlogging/blogging posts. Other content included ready to eat food, one pot meals and food photography.

**Type of Food related posts preferred to be seen by individuals on social media**

Which type of food related posts do you prefer seeing on social media?



56 responses



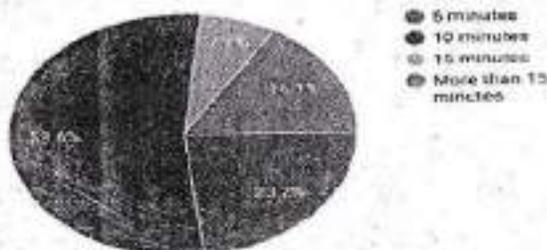
Healthy food (75%) was the most preferred to be seen by individuals followed by Desserts (60.7%) and Fast Food (58.9%). Other posts included influencer marketed products and delicacies local to countries.

**Amount of time spent in selection of food choices**

How much amount of time do you take in selection of your food choices?



56 responses



Out of the total respondents, 53.6% respondents took 10 minutes in making food selection choices, followed by 23.2% who took 5 minutes and 16.1% respondents who took more than 15 minutes. 7.1% of the respondents took 15 minutes in selection of food choices.

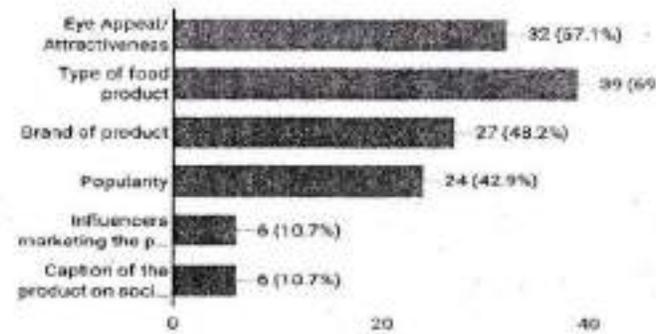
It can be interpreted that most of the respondents took approximately 10 minutes in selection of food choices.

Recipe making ready to eat food

## Parameters for selection of food choices influenced by social media

What are the parameters on which you make selection of your food choice influenced by social media?  Copy

56 responses

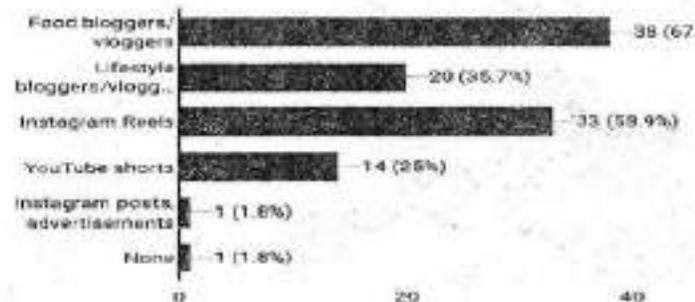


The most used parameter for selection of food choices was Type of food product, followed by Eye appeal/Attractiveness and Brand of product. Other parameters included Popularity, Influencers marketing the product and Caption of the post on social media (marketing). The least influential parameter was influencers marketing the product.

## Category of influencers most influential while buying a food product

Which category of influencers are you most influenced by while buying a certain food product?  Copy

56 responses

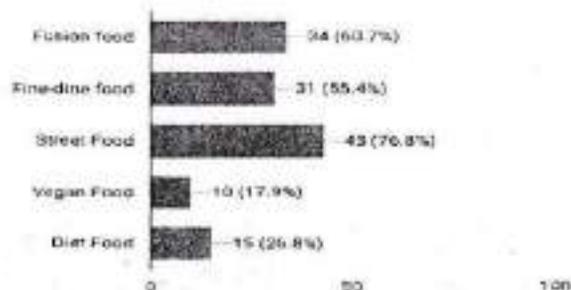


Out of all, Food bloggers/vloggers (67%) were the most influential for individuals while buying a certain food product. They were followed by Instagram reels (58.9%) and Lifestyle bloggers/vloggers (35.7%). Other influencing factors included YouTube shorts, Instagram posts/advertisements.

### Acceptance of food products which are influenced by Social media

What kind of food products would you like to try which are influenced by social media?  Copy

90 responses



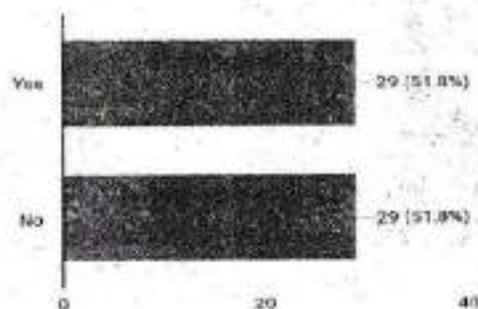
The category of food product which individuals would like to try the most which are influenced by social media is Street food (76.8%), followed by Fusion food (60.7%) and Fine dine food (55.4%). Other categories include Vegan food (17.9%) and Diet food (26.8%).

Thus it can be interpreted that Street food is the most influential category among the respondents which they would like to try by being influenced by social media.

### Changes observed by individuals in their food choices which are influenced by social media

Have you observed changes in your food choices which are influenced by social media?  Copy

56 responses



Out of the total respondents, 50% responded that they observed changes in their food choices influenced by social media while 50% responded that they did not observe any changes in food choices influenced by social media.

**Impact observed by individuals after changes in food choices influenced by social media**

What was the impact you observed after changes in food choices influenced by social media?

Copy

56 responses



- Improved eating habits
- Deteriorated eating habits
- No changes

Of the total respondents, 58.9% respondents did not observe any changes in food choices influenced by social media, 26.8% respondents observed improved eating habits while 14.3% complained of deteriorated eating habits.

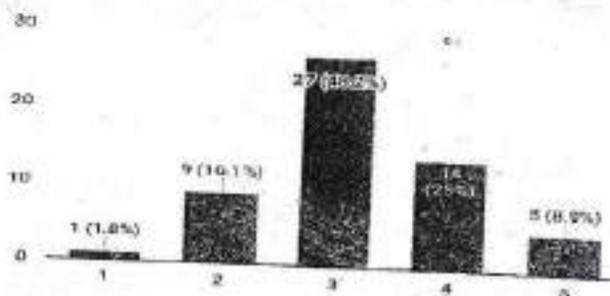
It can be interpreted that most of the respondents did not observe any changes in their food choices influenced by social media.

**Likelihood of recommendation for making changes in food choices influenced by social media**

On a scale of 1-5, How much would you recommend making changes in food choices influenced by social media?

Copy

56 responses



Out of the total respondents, 48.2% were likely to recommend making changes in food choices influenced by social media while 25% were not likely to recommend making changes influenced by social media.

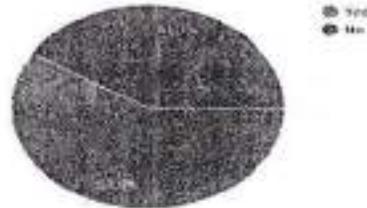
by social media

### Changes in Food Product buying behavior influenced by social media

Have you observed any changes in your food product buying behaviour which are influenced by social media?

Copy

56 responses



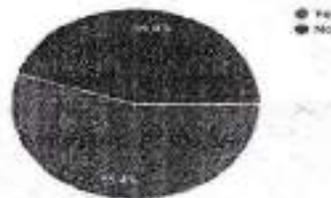
Out of the total respondents, 58.9% respondents observed changes in food product buying behavior influenced by social media while 41.1% did not observe any changes.

### Comparison of the social media advertised product and the product in reality

Was the advertised product you purchased inspired by social media same in reality?

Copy

56 responses



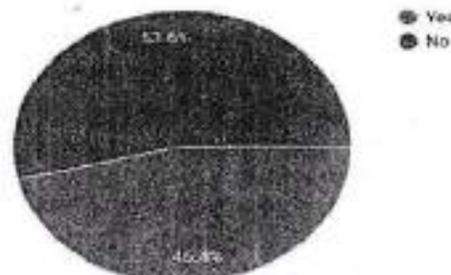
Of the total respondents 55.4% observed that the advertised product on social media and the product in reality were the same, while 44.6% observed that the products received in reality were not exactly the same as the ones advertised on social media.

### Product expectations post purchase

Did the product you purchased inspired by social media meet your expectations?

Copy

56 responses



g changes in food  
id making change

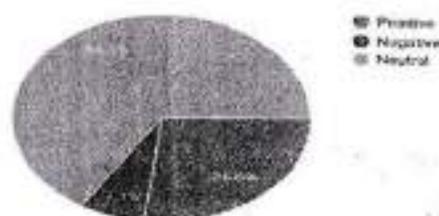
Out of the total respondents, 53.6% responded that the product purchased inspired by social media did not meet their expectations while 46.4% responded that the products met their expectations.

It can be interpreted that most of the respondents were not satisfied with the products they received in reality post purchase.

### Observation of the impact post changes in food buying behavior influenced by social media

What was the impact you observed after changes in food product buying behaviour influenced by social media?

56 responses

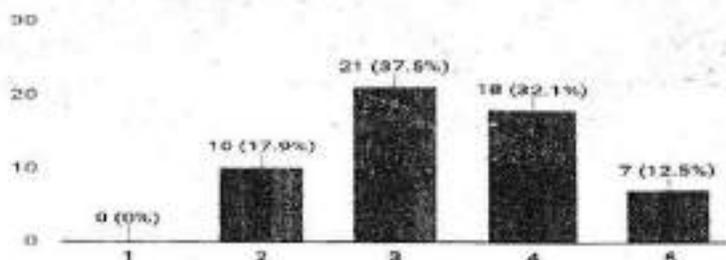


Out of the total respondents, 66.1% gave a neutral response and did not observe any change in their food buying behavior. 26.8% gave a positive response saying that they observed a positive impact in their food buying behavior influenced by social media. Only 7.1% gave a negative response saying they observed negative impact in their food buying behavior.

### Likelihood of recommendation for making changes in food product buying behavior influenced by social media

On a scale of 1-5, How much would you recommend making changes in food product buying behaviour influenced by social media?

56 responses



Out of the total respondents, 55.4% were likely to recommend making changes in food product buying behavior influenced by social media while 44.6% were not likely to recommend making changes in food product buying behavior influenced by social media.

millennial generation is attracted towards change and adapts to changes quite easily as compared to the older generation.

Most of the millennials are likely to follow and are aware of the current trends.

Millennials walk alongside the developing technologies.

Millennial generation is aware of the psychological impact social media has on their lives.

Social media plays an integral part of the lives of the millennial generation.

Instagram and WhatsApp are the most frequently used social media platforms.

Social media influences the lifestyle choices of individuals most of the times, depending upon the circumstances.

Millennials are turning towards healthy food and are thoughtful about their food choices.

They rely on influencers and bloggers while buying a food product.

Social media influences the food product buying behavior of millennials.

Most of the millennials are not satisfied with the product received in reality against the one advertised on social media.

### 5.1 And Suggestions

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that social media does impact the food choices and buying behavior of the millennial generation in some ways and has a significant impact on them. The algorithms used by social media platforms shape the choices and influence individuals and impact them significantly. The impacts observed are positive as well as negative. Appropriate usage of social media can work wonders and help individuals in leading a healthy lifestyle.

The millennial generation needs to keep a check on their social media usage and should be aware of the psychological as well as physiological impact it has on them.

Appropriate use of social media can help millennials gain a lot of information and help them lead a better lifestyle.

Individuals should not go overboard with their expectations influenced by social media and be aware of the practical world. False expectations can lead to negative impacts and poor mental health.

Millennials should verify the sources they follow on social media before getting influenced by them and following them in real life.

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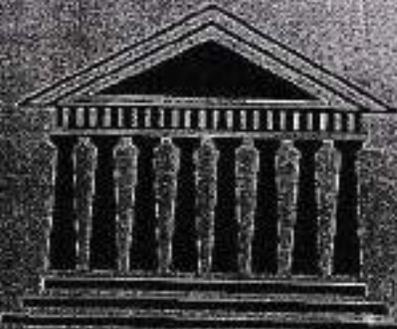
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(A UGC-CARE Listed Journal)

Editors

Parmeeta Deshpande

Ambarish Khare

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# Contents

1. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND SCHOLARLY PUBLICATION  
Dr. Aparna R. Deshpande 1-2
- JAPANESE CUISINE- A STUDY ON ITS ACCEPTANCE AND SUSTENANCE  
IN THE PUNE MARKET
2. Dr. Arun Sherkar 3-16
3. ARBUSCULAR MYCORRHIZAE SPORES DIVERSITY IN SUMMER FROM  
POLLUTED SITES  
Ashwini Deshpande , Dr. Mahavir Gosavi 17-23
4. DEVELOPMENT INDUCED DISPLACEMENT AND RESETTLEMENT:  
OMKARESHWAR DAM  
Bharti Sharma 24-28
5. AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF PROFITABILITY PERFORMANCE OF THE  
INDIAN CEMENT INDUSTRY  
CA Hareesh Budhrani, Dr. Aniruddha Sunil Gachake 29-43
6. WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND PROTECTION IN INDIA: IMPACT ON THE RIGHTS  
M. Deepa, Dr. S.Subash Chandra Bose 44-51
7. NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020 OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN SCHOOL  
EDUCATION & HIGHER EDUCATION  
Prof. Dr. Pratibha .U.Gadwe - (Datir) 52-58
8. EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BANKS - A  
COMPARATIVE STUDY BASED ON PL-CAMEL MODEL  
Geeta B. Mangtani, Dr. Kamaal H. Kharecha 59-70
9. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF ABB INDIA PVT LTD, PEENYA INDUSTRIAL  
ESTATE BENGALURU  
Dr. K. Jayalakshamma 71-75
10. ESSENTIALISM AND THE DEFINITION OF A WOMAN  
Kolyaani Gupta 76-87
11. A STUDY ON THE DETERMINANTS OF KNOWLEDGE AND NOTIONS OF CUSTOMERS  
CONCERNING TO DIGITAL BANKING -EVIDENCE FROM INDIA  
Ms. Krishna Ashutoshbhai Vyas 88-96
12. USER'S OPINION ABOUT QUALITY OF LIBRARY SERVICES IN SELECTED  
CONSTITUENT COLLEGES IN TAMIL NADU AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY: A STUDY  
Manimekalai. N, Dr. C.Sivakumar 97-104
13. ONLINE SHOPPING: A BOON OR BANE  
Dr. Manisha Vinay Aole 105-110
14. IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON ELDERLY  
Manjusha Patwardhan 111-117
15. ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA DURING 2014 AND 2019 LOK SABHA ELECTIONS  
IN INDIA: A REVIEW  
Aijaz Ahmad Mir 118-125

16. TO UNDERSTAND SIGNIFICANT RISE IN ACCEPTANCE AND POPULARITY OF GIN AND GIN BASED BEVERAGES Ms. Mohini Rasal, Dr. Seema Zagade	126-141
17. ACADEMIC STRESS, PERCEIVED PARENTING STYLES AND COPING STRATEGIES AS CORRELATES OF SELF- CONCEPT Monika Luthra	142-149
18. PANDEMIC, POLITICS, AND ELECTIONS: LESSONS FROM SOUTH ASIA. Mudasir Bashir Bhat	150-155
19. STUDY ON AWARENESS OF PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT- 2012 AMONG SCHOOL TEACHERS AND CHILDREN- A CASE STUDY OF BELAGAVI CITY Dr. Nandini G Devarmani, Mr. Venkatesh A R	156-164
20. EXAMINING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ON SELF-EFFICACY OF UNDERGRADUATE TEACHERS TEACHING IN UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL AT WEST BENGAL Nandita Deb, Dr. Meenakshi Chauhan	165-171
21. NEW EDUCATION POLICY: PROMOTING REFLECTIVE PRACTICES IN EDUCATION ENHANCES TEACHING-LEARNING AMONG EDUCATORS IN THE 21 <sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CLASSROOM SETTINGS Dr. Anjali M. Pande	172-177
22. ROLE OF POWER AND FATE IN VIJAY TENDULKAR'S GHASHIRAM KOTWAL Dr. Poonam Nigam Sahay	178-180
23. A SURVEY OF CYBER CRIME IN INDIA WITH RESPECT TO THE BANKING SECTOR Dr. Ashwini R. Balki, Dr. Suwarna S. Mangrulkar	181-190
24. BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORTS IN MAINTAINING THE ECOLOGICAL BALANCE NECESSARY FOR HUMAN SURVIVAL Ranjan B. Kalbande	191-194
25. MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) COMPANIES Dr. Rajesh U. Chheda	195-207
26. EMPOWERING ACADEMIC LIBRARIES THROUGH ICT: AN OVERVIEW Mr. Santosh B. Bhagwat, Dr. Vandana S. Gavali	208-211
27. ROLE OF DIGITAL LIBRARIES IN INDIA FOR BETTERMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM Dr. Savita Mallik	213-216
28. THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT IN A SMALL TOWN: A CASE STUDY OF BHIWANDI Dr. Samina A. R. Shaikh	218-221
29. TRANSFORMATION IN WOMEN'S STATUS AND REVIEW ON CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING UNITS Ramya Shetty, Prof.P Pakeerappa	222-225
30. GENDER ROLE AND IDENTITY CRISIS IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S 'THE HANDMAID'S TALE' Shilpa Nareshrao More	226-229



## TO UNDERSTAND SIGNIFICANT RISE IN ACCEPTANCE AND POPULARITY OF GIN AND GIN BASED BEVERAGES

**Ms. Mohini Rasal**

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**Dr. Seema Zagade**

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Ph.D Guide – Savitribai Phule Pune University

### INTRODUCTION

Alcoholic beverages are defined as safe, consumable and potable liquid. Different types of alcoholic beverages like beer, wine, spirits and liqueurs are present in the market and are available to the customers. Any fermented liquor containing ethyl alcohol or ethanol, such as wine, beer, or distilled spirits, is considered an alcoholic beverage. (Britannica, Alcoholic Beverages, 2021) Alcoholic beverages are classified brewed and fermented, fermented and distilled beverages. All alcoholic beverages are fermented and distilled and have around 38% to 50% of ABV (Alcohol by Volume). Distilled beverages include – whisky, rum, brandy, vodka, gin and tequila. (R.Singaravelan, 2022)

Gin is a spirit made from cereals that is flavoured with juniper berries and coriander seeds. The primary gin-producing countries are England, Holland, Canada, and the United States. The beverage's name is derived from the French word for juniper berry, genièvre, which was altered by the Dutch to genever and shortened by the English to gin. It is said to have been invented by Franciscus Sylvius, a 17th-century professor of medicine at the University of Leiden in Holland, who distilled the juniper berry with spirits to create an inexpensive medicine with the diuretic characteristics of juniper-berry oil. (Britannica, 2021)

### SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to investigate the consumer preference and consumption pattern of gin over other alcoholic beverages in the market. Though India has old connection of gin and tonic as influence of British rule, according to the data whisky rules the Indian market, however 2019 saw the uprise of gin and acceptance of the same by the millenials of India. International brands like Tanqueary, Hendrick, Gordon's and many others rule the market, however today there are 10 Indian brands who have made their mark on the international platform by producing gin in the state of Goa with Indian botanicals of export quality.

According to Statista research, alcohol consumption in India reached 5 billion litres in 2020 and is expected to reach 6.21 billion litres by 2024. Factors such as rising disposable income and a growing urban population, among others, are influencing the beverage industry's growth. According to another study conducted by Statista Research Department, over 88 percent of young consumers under the age of 25 in India either purchase or consume liquor, contributing to the country's liquor sales. Despite bans and sales restrictions, these young consumers are eager to consume alcohol. (Statista Research Department, 2022)



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## RESEARCH PROBLEM

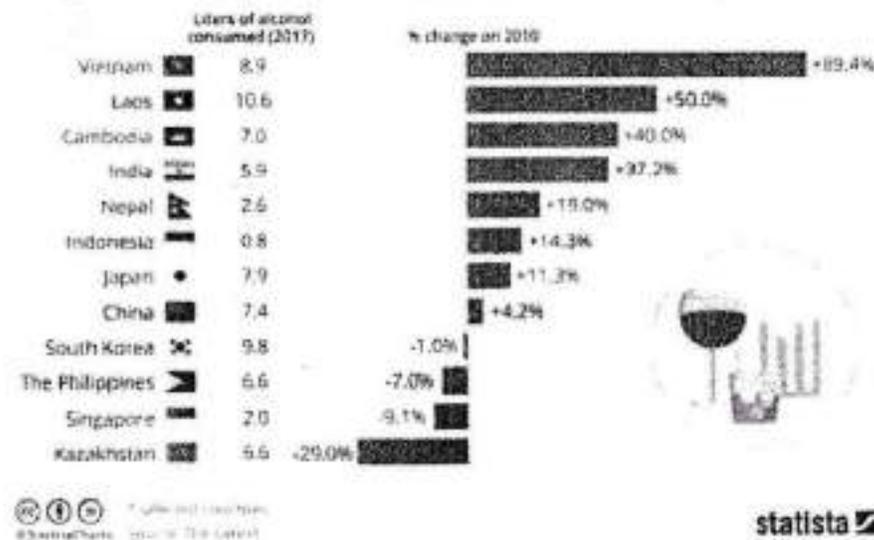
According to the research done by Statista, there has been rise in gin consumption overall in the market and in United States gin ranks fifth in sales and the sales are expected to rise by 4.33 percent by 2024. Until 2019 global gin market was valued just over 9 Billion Dollars which is forecasted to reach to 11.2 Billion Dollars by 2024. (Statista Research Department, 2021). According to article published in The Economic Times, India is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest market to consume gin. (Oberoi,N., 2018). As it is recent beverage trend, there are very few research papers focusing on gin and no thesis published yet. This research will benefit the gin producers of India as it will help them understand the demand of their customers. It will also help to inculcate all essential elements for benchmark performance and to stay on top of innovation for the product.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

India is close behind Southeast Asia, with a 37 percent increase in alcohol consumption, or 1.6 litres, since 2010. Per capita alcohol consumption in India was 2.8 litres throughout 1990, but has since more than increased to approximately 6 litres. This trend is linked to higher spending power and fewer regulations on bars and restaurants selling liquor in the country and region as a whole. (Buchholz, 2019)

### Where Alcohol Consumption Is Rising & Falling in Asia

Average annual liters of alcohol consumed per person in 2017 and % change on 2010



(Figure 1 Source - Where Alcohol Consumption Is Rising & Falling in Asia, Statista.com, Buchholz, 2019)

The Indian alcoholic beverage market is one of the most enticing spirits opportunities in the world. According to a report published by Goldstein Market Intelligence, it is expected to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 7.4 percent during the forecast period of 2017-2030, being the third largest after China and Russia. The alcohol industry's quick recovery during second wave reflects its large and diverse consumer base. According to Nazareth, D. founder and managing director of the Agave company believes India has consumer base for companies like whose focus is to use homegrown raw material to make beverages of international standards. "Because of India's high population growth rate, every year produces 13 million drinking age adults, of which at least 3-5



million eventually end up consuming alcohol in some way or another- so it's definite that the market is huge for any category of liquor and will grow at a fast pace."

With such a rapid growth rate and a growing consumer base of young drinkers who are becoming more privileged and aware of worldwide trends in the industry, consumption patterns have changed significantly, with new developments emerging every year. In combination with the Modi government's atmanirbhar spirit, a venture creation storm has hit India's craft motion quite significantly, with homegrown (Made in India) brands beginning to focus on authenticity, craftsmanship, and innovation to produce something distinctively ground-breaking in order to create out their own specialty within the market. (Sethi, H., 2021)

**Aim** – The aim of this research paper is to gain understanding in significant rise in acceptance and popularity of gin and gin based beverages in the current market. The influence of range of factors contributing to rise in popularity and acceptance of gin were investigated to ascertain the same.

#### **Objectives –**

1. To explore the gin and gin – based beverage market in India.
2. To understand the rise in consumers towards acceptance of Gin over other spirits.
3. To identify factors that affect consumer preference about spirits such as branding, origin country, price, packaging, and flavor profile.
4. To determine the consumer's awareness towards different styles of gins and gin – based beverages in the market.
5. To assess the stereotyped statement of – 'Gin is a feminine drink' through research.

#### **Hypothesis of the research –**

- H0 – Different factors like ease accessibility, branding, origin of the country, flavor profile and price affects the buying decision of the consumer.
- H1 - Different factors like ease accessibility, branding, origin of the country, flavor profile and price does not affect the buying decision of the consumer
- H0 – Gin has health benefits in comparison to other spirits.
- H1 – Gin does not have health benefits in comparison to other spirits.
- H0 – Gin is a feminine drink.
- H1 – Gin is not a feminine drink.

#### **Literature Review**

1. Gin, once the undisputed king of the bar, fell out of favour after the 1960s, becoming associated with a generation of old fogies, country clubs, and imperial administrators. However, gin's star rose again in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Bombay Sapphire, introduced in 1987, and Hendrick's, introduced in 1999, were early forerunners of the tide turning. A resurgence of interest in classic cocktail recipes has shifted the spotlight away from the sweet vodka drinks of the 1990s and toward gin, which is featured in classic recipes such as the Ramos Fizz, Negroni, gimlet, and sling. (Oberoi, N., 2018)
2. Over the forecast period, the growing number of bars in India is expected to drive the growth of the India gin market. For example, in January 2019, Sofitel Mumbai BKC opened Jyran - Tandoor Dining and Lounge, which features a new gin bar called Jyran Gin Bar. This is Mumbai's first gin bar, and its menu features gin cocktails. As a result, an increase in the number of bars in the region will favour the growth of the gin market. Gin market growth in India is expected to be aided by changing demographics. The legal drinking age in India varies



by state, according to Coherent Market Insights. For example, Goa, Uttar Pradesh, and Karnataka have 18 years, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have 21, and Maharashtra, Delhi, and Punjab have 25. This statistic positions India as an ideal country for the gin market's rapid growth. Increased female alcohol consumption is expected to increase demand for white spirits such as gin and vodka, which will fuel market growth. According to the Coherent Market Insights study, women are 50% more likely than men to drink to get drunk and twice as likely to get drunk unintentionally. Furthermore, young women are more likely to drink than young men, and approximately 5% of adult women consume alcohol on average. (India Gin Market 2017-2027, n.d.)

3. India is on the verge of launching its own craft gin movement. Anand Virmani and Vaibhav Singh, owners of Delhi's Perch coffee and wine bars, noticed in 2015 that, despite rising gin demand, there were no good craft gins available in India, only mainstream commercial brands. They eventually decided to start their own gin company, Nao Spirits. Greater Than, their first brand, is already available in Goa and Bangalore, and Hapusa, their second, will be available soon. (Oberoi, N., 2018)
4. Gin, as a spirit, has a wide range of flavour profiles. This gives it a significant advantage, as well as making it versatile for cocktails, which are extremely popular today," says sommelier Agarwal. "I see more high-quality gins entering the market, as well as more artisan gins being imported into India." Strangers and Sons, Hapusa, and Greater Than are among the Indian brands. Toast & Tonic (Mumbai and Bengaluru) is a bar with a menu dedicated to Gin and Tonic (G&T) as well as a variety of gin-based cocktails. The bar creates customised drinks for its customers based on their preferred flavours. Since opening seven years ago, the bar has seen a seven-fold increase in gin consumption, a testament to consumption patterns in Mumbai and Bangalore, he adds. "Gin has matured." (Gadge, K., 2019)
5. The country has the fifth-largest gin market in the world. After the British left the country, the spirit went into a tailspin and became known as a "ladies drink." However, it experienced a renaissance as a result of the growing experimental bar culture and the exclusive gin bars that sprouted prior to the lockdown. (Nandwani, D., 2020)
6. According to Maharjan, 2019 in his research paper the alcohol beverage market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 2% from 2018 to 2025 due to increased demand from developing countries, with gin expected to grow the fastest among liquors, followed by whisky, mixed drink, vodka, beer, and wine. He describes consumer preference is an individual's attitude toward a group of objects that provide the greatest anticipated utility to the consumer. Consumer preferences can differ from one person to the next depending on factors such as product intrinsic and extrinsic factors, consumers' perception of the product, and the external environment such as peer preference, retailer suggestions, and advertisements. (Maharjan, R.,2020)
7. Social media marketing has become the most influential marketing tool in the twenty-first century, with platforms such as Facebook and YouTube used to promote products. Because of the presence of people of various ages, genders, preferences, and habits, Facebook is quickly becoming the best tool for product promotion in the alcohol industry. (Maharjan, R.,2020)
8. Tonic water is making its mark into Indian market based on the footsteps of trend that began in the United Kingdom in 2016. However, gin and tonic made its way to India during the British rule. Tonic water contains quinine which was used to treat malaria. Year 2019 saw the bloom in India with bars and restaurants stocking premium brands of gin and promoting gin cocktails.



Indian consumers today are willing to pay premium price in order to try wider range of gin. When a consumer drinks gin, it is 70% time with tonic water as the mixer (Jangwal, 2022)

9. The review paper puts emphasis on consumer attitude and purchasing behaviour in Australia. Authors Prentice, C., & Handsjuk, N., 2016 studied factors of branding, packaging, country origin and social media advertisement of vodka brands. As cited by Prentice, C., & Handsjuk, N., 2016, according to Gallagher, 2014 youths of the country start drinking gin when they are between the age of 20 – 30 years, which is addition to the current consumers of gin who usually are older in age. This portays gin has wide array in the market due to acceptance of the drink. (Prentice,C., & Handsjuk, N., 2016)
10. Mr.Sanchit Mishra throws light on Gin capital of India in the article published in the magazine. Factors like young entrepreneurs, use of local botanicals in craft spirit and friendly government policies contribute to the rise. Over the most recent two years, regardless of the pandemic, around 15 brands of Gin have been made and sent off the nation over and 11 of them, yes a full group of brands, have their origins in Goa. Somewhere en route, Gin lost favor and it was seen as a 'women drink'. India is the fifth biggest purchaser of Gin after the UK, USA, Germany and Spain, however inside the nation Gin represents pretty much 1% of spirits consumed. (Mishra, S.,2021)

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary data collection was done with the help of structured questionnaire. Questionnaire was divided into two sections. First section questions were designed to identify types of participants on the basis of demographics, whereas second section questions were framed to gauge awareness about 'gin' and types of the spirit and factors influencing buying choice amongst participants. Types of questions included in the questionnaire were Close ended questions and Open ended questions. Quantitative analysis was used for close ended questions and thematic analysis was used for open ended questions.

Secondary data was collected through journal articles, books, newspaper articles. Protagonist of this research that is 'gin' is yet to be explored in the academic angle as there are rarely any research papers on the topic of gin. Therefore, secondary data collection also included searching and gathering data relying on different magazine articles, newspaper columns, blogs and interviews of the distillers manufacturing craft gin in India and research websites like [www.statista.com](http://www.statista.com) and [www.alliedresearchmarket.com](http://www.alliedresearchmarket.com)

### Data Interpretation and Analysis

#### Data Graphs

Age of the respondents  
12 responses

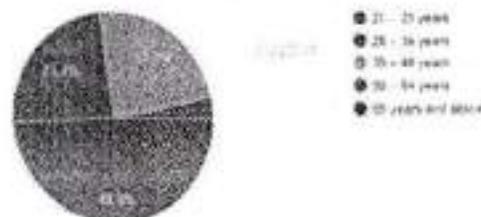


Figure 1 – Age of the respondents



**Interpretation –**

As seen in the figure, out of 92 respondents 49% of respondents belonged to the age group of 21 – 25 years while respondents between the age group of 26 years till 49 years form about 24% each.

Gender

92 responses



- Male
- Female
- Other

**Interpretation –**

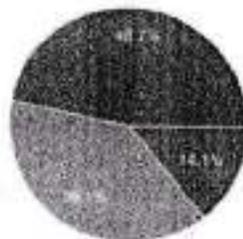
Out of 92 respondents, 67.4% were male and 32.6% were female. This question was significant to the study to gain understanding and to assess stereotyped statement of 'Gin is a feminine drink'.

**Analysis –**

History about gin has been weaved with threads of interesting names earned by the spirit as per the circumstance. Gaining the reputation as 'Dutch Courage' to being called as 'Mother's Ruin', gin has evolved through different situations. During the Anglo – Dutch War between 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> Century, (Anglo - Dutch Wars, 2022) , British soldiers observed Dutch soldier being courageous after consuming their tippel. Intrigued by the result and post observation British military adopted gin. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, as The English Gin Joints allowed women for the first time to share the table and enjoy gin, after effects of consuming gin led to neglecting their responsibilities towards their children giving the spirit name as 'Mother's Ruin'. (Narelle, 2020) The further series of events continued to associate the spirit to women drinkers. (Marsden, M., 2018)

3. Which generation you belong to?

92 responses



- Baby Boomers (Birth year - 1946 - 1964)
- Gen X (Birth year - 1965 - 1980)
- Millennials (1981 - 1996)
- Gen Z (1997 - 2012)

Figure 2 - Generation period of the respondents

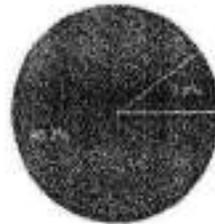




**Interpretation –**

The respondents of the questionnaire belong to different professional domains. 23% (21 respondents) of the total respondents were academicians from Hospitality Industry. As a hospitality professional, one is aware about gin as the spirit. 10 respondents were mixologist, bartenders. Remaining respondents belonged to different strata like Human Resources Professional, IT Professionals, Scientist and Homemakers.

1. Do you consume alcohol?  
92 responses



- Yes
- No

**Interpretation –**

Out of 92 respondents 90% percent consume alcohol, whereas almost 10% do not consume alcohol, but are aware of the product.

**Analysis**

In consideration to above results, respondents who do not consume alcohol are aware of the spirit is consequence of alcohol advertising and marketing on social media platforms. As cited in article released by Vertava Health Ohio on "Social Media Alcohol Advertising, Influencers, and the Impact on Youth", social media engagement with alcohol brands shoot up by 326% in March 2020 in comparison to March 2019. (Vertava Health Ohio, 2021 )

2. Are you aware about Gin as an alcoholic drink?  
92 responses



- Yes - If yes, please go to question no. 4 if no, please continue with question no. 3
- No

**Interpretation –**

This research aims to explore rise in consumption of gin and gin beverages, as observed in the chart 95% of participants are aware about gin as a spirit.

**Analysis**

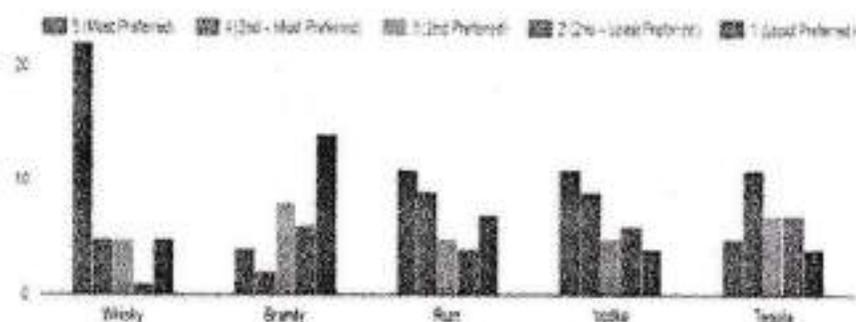
As discussed above, steep rise in advertising of alcohol on social media, Instagram has shown great engagement with alcohol brands compared to Facebook or Twitter. The rising trend of celebrities,



musicians, artists promoting their favourite drink on social media page is one of the significant element in creating awareness amongst their followers.

(Vertava Health Ohio, 2021 )

3. If spirits, please rate the most preferred one - (5 being most preferred and 1 being least preferred)



### Interpretation

The above chart compares the most preferred to least preferred choice of beverages. The most preferred spirit is whisky with tequila and vodka being second most preferred choice. The surprising result with brandy being the least preferred choice of spirit.

### Analysis

According to Mehrota, R., 2021, in published newspaper article mentions India as the country of brown liquors. India ranks sixth as global destination for Scotch Whisky and it can be seen from the above graph. With pandemic push, being at home pushed people to experiment as a chef and try different flavor profiles not only in food but also beverages. According different research reports, India is an emerging market for white spirits like gin, tequila and white rum and younger generation prefers light bodied, floral and fruity characteristics in the spirits. Brandy is considered as the spirit of winters and is mainly consumed in Northern part of India. (Mehrota, R., 2021)

4. Do you prefer international or Indian Brands of Spirits?  
12 responses





### Interpretation

72.8% of respondents prefer to purchase international brands of spirits over Indian brands, whereas 27% prefer Indian brands. The choice of buying the brand can be influenced by taste and flavor profile of the spirit.

### Analysis

According to research by Parkar, P., 2021, global culture, growing purchasing power and social media influence can be elements influencing international brands over Indian brands in skincare products. (Parkar, P., 2021). Similar reasons can be attached to influence in purchase of international brands of spirits.

To understand further the factors that influence buying of the spirit, an open ended question was asked and the respondents. Collected responses were analyzed using Thematic Analysis.

### THEMATIC ANALYSIS FOR INTERNATIONAL BRANDS

Common themes developed based on the responses highlights factors of – Quality and Taste, ingredients, Country of Origin and Availability of Spirits as three major factors that influence choice.

### THEMATIC ANALYSIS FOR INDIAN BRANDS

Three major factors influencing the choice were – Taste, Flavour profile, Price and Vocal for Local. This analysis also helps to realize need of awareness and opportunity to expand market for homegrown brands for all the spirits, beer and wine.

3. How often do you consume alcohol?  
(1) never



- Everyday
- 3-5 times a week
- Once a week
- Only on weekends
- On special occasions

### Interpretation

Approximately 58% of participants consume alcohol on special occasions, whereas 19% consume it on weekends and 14% consume alcohol once a week.

4. Do you prefer drinking in restaurant & bar or at - house?  
(1) never



- Restaurant & bar
- At home
- At home prefer



### Interpretation

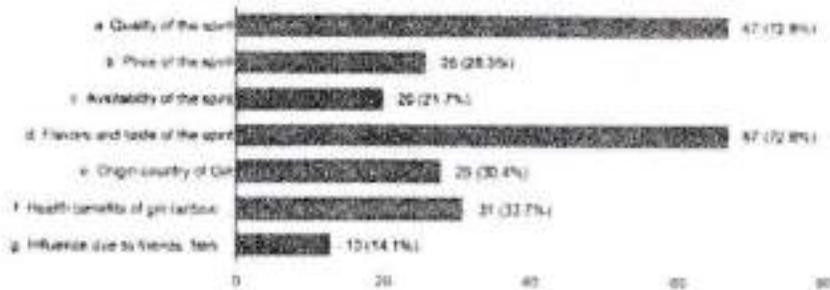
At least 50% of respondents prefer drinking in the restaurant & bar, with approximately 42% of respondents consuming spirit at house parties.

### Analysis –

India still has a shy drinking culture, due to stigma attached to it. This could be one of the reasons for approximately 42% of respondents to consume alcohol at in-house parties. Fortunately, the scenario is slowly changing with younger generation consuming alcohol. The changing drinking culture has given birth to different outlets like 2BHK, The Millers, Di Mora, 1BHK, Culture and Social who focuses on sale of liquor and is the party hub for youth of the town.

7. Which of the following influences your gin choice?

92 responses



### Interpretation

Most striking feature of the above graph ranks quality of spirit and flavors and taste of the spirit as the highest with 73% and most important factor influencing the choice of alcohol. Origin of the country and health benefits of gin were rated as 31%. Surprisingly, price of the spirit affects the choice of gin with only 28%.

### Analysis

According to India's Brand Ambassador of Moët Hennessy Shehan Minocher, young patrons prefer drinks with low sugar content and good presentation and good flavor profile. Today's generation prefer experimenting with flavours and are open to accept new spirits.

8. Which of the following styles of gins are you aware of?

37 responses



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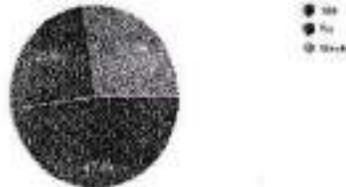
**Interpretation –**

As the graph reveals, London dry gin is the most popular style of gin followed by craft gin and Plymouth gin. Holland gin and Sloe gin are less popular styles of gins.

**Analysis**

There are various different types of gin available in the market. The styles of gin include – London Dry Gin, Holland Gin, Sloe Gin and Plymouth gin. London dry gin gained popularity in London in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century during the phase of Gin Craze and also is easily available in the market. (Almedia, A., 2017)

9. Are you aware of Indian craft gins produced in India?  
N=100



**Interpretation and Analysis**

Gin is categorized as classic and contemporary. Classic gin is with traditional flavors and contemporary gins are additional flavours like spices and herbs to fruits adding to the profile of gin. Approximately, 48% of respondents are aware of craft gins produced in India. Whereas, almost 25% of them unaware of craft gin.

10. Which of the following Indian craft gin brand is seen or tasted by you?  
N=100



**Interpretation**

Relating to the previous question on Indian Craft gins, the graph reveals popularity or awareness of gins among the consumers. With Hapusa gin ranking top with 52% followed by Greater Than and Jaisalmer Indian Craft Gin.

**Analysis**

According to research by Mehratora, R., 2021, younger generation are open to experimentation and have shown acceptance for new flavors of gin. India is an emerging market for white spirits, especially with recent growth of craft gin brands in Goa have seen heartfelt response by the people. Today, India has more than 12 homegrown brands. (Shukla, P., 2021)

11. Are you aware about gin based cocktails?  
28 responses



### Interpretation and Analysis

The above pie chart illustrates approximately 92% are aware about gin based cocktails. Examples of classic cocktails with base of gin are Martini, Singapore Sling, Pink Lady are now the part of bar menu and are part of the brunch menu. For example – Jyran – Tandoor Dining and Lounge has an innovative menu with more than 30 labels of gin. (Sofitel, 2019)

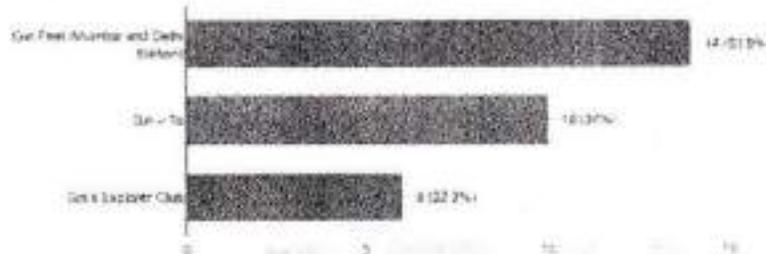
12. How often do you order gin based cocktails while visiting a bar?  
63 responses



### Interpretation

The pie chart shows 16% of respondents order gin based cocktails always, whereas approximately 35% order sometimes. 29% of participants who order rarely can be converted to potential customers who order is most of the time with right promotional tools and strategy by the restaurant and bars.

13. Have you attended any of the following events about gin?  
27 responses



### Interpretation

The above graph reveals information about promotional events conducted by different brands to create awareness about gin in the public. Approximately 52% of respondents have attended Gin Fest in Mumbai and Delhi Edition with 37% attending Gin - To.

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## Analysis

Each passing day, the competition in the market is only increasing and hence it is essential for brands to use different promotional strategies to penetrate in the market. Surrogate advertisements, social media platforms, collaborations with celebrities are the few examples. Above mentioned events are specifically for gin lovers held in cities of Pune, Mumbai and New Delhi. The purpose of these events is also to launch new brands of gin / spirits and provide tasting sessions.

## KEY FINDINGS

As mentioned in introduction above, gin market is growing globally and is not only limited to India or any other country. Recently, India has seen the growth of homegrown brands of gin in the country. According to the findings –

1. Out of 92 respondents 49% of respondents belonged to the age group of 21 – 25 years while respondents between the age group of 26 years till 49 years form about 24% each.
2. With change in generation, it can be observed that generation Z prefers fruity, floral characteristics in the spirits and are more towards buying white spirits.
3. Factors of flavor profile, ingredients used, quality of the spirit are considered by the patrons while buying the spirit.
4. India is an emerging market for white spirits and is expanding with growing demands. Indian craft gins have additional flavor like cardamom, raw mango and clove to the classic flavor of Juniper berries.
5. Gin is also considered to have digestive properties, antioxidants and 96 calories per glass of 1 ounce which is also one of the reason for shift in drinks by the respondents. (Grundy, K., 2019)

## CONCLUSION

The alcohol industry is currently the world's fastest growing industry, with numerous product segments based on socio demographics, social class, and economic factors. Consumer preference is required by industries for product promotion and market penetration, as well as for developing and improving the product. This study looked into people's gin knowledge and the factors that influence their choice of gin over other alcoholic beverages. This is important information for pubs and bars because it suggests they should try to expand their selection of craft and lesser-known gins, which account for a large portion of the gin category and may entice female customers. With consumption and demand continuing to rise, it is critical that gin distilleries and retailers understand their target market and are able to innovate and satisfy demand in order to keep a thriving industry profitable and able to offer new and exciting gins.

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## A STUDY OF CUSTOMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS VISITING RESTAURANTS FOR MEALS AFTER THE UNLOCK OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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### Abstract

*In an unprecedented calamity of Covid -19 pandemic which was set in the more than 180 countries all over the world according to the WHO website published a report in the month of March 2020, it was imperative to understand the conditions and challenges which will be faced by the Stand-alone restaurants.*

*The study carried out in this research paper shows the change of mind set of the guests, the change is seen across the strata of the people irrespective of their age groups, background and meal choices.*

*The stand-alone restaurants in Pune city is one of the large but unorganised business sector which is growing rapidly in the last decade. This sector is very competitive, price sensitive and exploring innovative ideas of food and service very aggressively. The entire sector of stand- alone works on very narrow net profit margins of 10%-15%. This calls for very accurate and precise execution of the operations.*

*The results of the study shows the expected change in the spending patterns of the customers from different age groups, the choice of the out let will depend upon different parameters, the frequency of the visit to even popular and preferred restaurants will be reduced.*

**Key Words:** *Pandemic, Covid 19, Restaurant, Lockdown, Unlock, Customer Perception, Dark Kitchens, Hygiene and Sanitization, Social Distancing, Take Aways, Ecomic Slow Down.*

### Introduction to the problem and its background

After the outbreak of Covid-19, Government of India declared a lock down in the country from 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020. The Stand Alone Restaurants were closed abruptly and for the entire period of lockdown. This resulted in massive losses. The restaurant owners like many other businesspersons had never prepared for this kind of problem. Not only the businessmen community but even the Government of India and all the State Governments were unprepared. The lockdown brought down the cities and towns to halt. None of the businesses were functioning in the initially excluding for the very essential commodities and services for very little period during the day.

The lockdown and further slowing down the economy has led several effects on the society. The virus has altered our mind set the way it spreads and is affecting people worldwide have made people more cautious about the choices they make such as dine out get food from outdoor.

A fascinating and nouvelle trend was set in the last few years of Dark Kitchens or the Cloud Kitchens. These are only the production centres or in our terms called even as Ghost Kitchens, which only produce



the food and deliver the same through, own distribution channels or with the help of more, professional and national level distribution systems developed with the help of new technology like Zomato which being the most popular, trusted and having span in more than 24 countries and in more than 10,000 cities as per the reports of "About Zomato". zomato.com. But apart from Zomato, there are other local delivery options such as Swiggy which has good distribution channel in more than 100 cities according to Madhav Chanchani (17 March 2019). "Online food delivery wars are moving from India to Bharat". The Times of India. Retrieved 13 August 2019. The dark kitchens are cost effective and hence passing the benefits to the end consumers and are becoming popular over the Take Away's!! The young generation is interested in getting their high-quality meal delivered to their home/office and in perfectly packed and has the same quality that they would have been served at the restaurant. There is a steep rise in such organisations since restaurants were not allowed to do business on their premise.

A new competitors, which the restaurants, Take away's and dark kitchens will experience soon, is the upsurge of Home Chefs in hugennumbers!! This will add another contestant for the same size of the market, which will reduce the share of the established restaurants even more. This increase in number of Home Chefs is due to many reasons such as, less or almost NO Capital Investments, less staff requirement, greater standards of hygiene as less or only couple of family members are involved in the whole process from Purchasing to Pick up/ Delivery and over all execution of the order. Such Home Chefs have also increased in numbers during this period of lock down.

In this setting key question faced by the restaurateurs is, will the trusted brands be preferred over new outlets and ways of delivered food? This study tries to analyse when the lock down will be completely lifted and stand-alone restaurants will be allowed to open for operations, what will be the approach of the customers towards the restaurants? Will the customers be happy to go back to their favourite fast food outlets/ restaurants or there will be many speculations that will come to their mind about whether or not to go to restaurant?

There will be few other concerns as well! Such as, 'Will they put the hygiene on major importance for visiting the restaurants? On the other hand, will it be still the taste and the quality of food, will be the primary concerned of the people?

Future for restaurants may be locally sourced food, ghost / cloud kitchens, more dependency on online services and Hygiene, Hygiene, Hygiene!!

### **Scope of the Study**

The scope of the study is primarily targeted at the guest perception towards the changed mind set for revisiting their favourite restaurant and fast food joints for socializing or even for recreational needs. This study will also aim at the challenges faced by the restaurants due to changed perception of their patrons.

### **Objectives**

- To study the perception of the customers for visiting restaurant post Unlock.
- To assess the parameters that contributes the change if any and study the causes and remedies.



## Research Methodology

### Primary Data

- To collect feedback from the guests from different strata of the society. • To collect information from various guests who choose a particular out let over the other options available based on certain parameters.
- To collect information about changed parameters and the causes.
- To understand the new challenges which the stand- alone restaurants will have to face.

### Research Design: Exploratory

- Research Method – Online Survey
- Research Instrument – Questionnaire
- Proposed Sample Size – At least 100 customers from different strata.
- Sample Type – Random
- Secondary Data
- Hospitality Journals and Magazines
- Research Papers
- Relevant Websites.

### Literature Review

According to WHO website <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019> COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new strain of corona virus. 'CO' stands for corona, 'VI' for virus, and 'D' for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as '2019 novel corona virus' or '2019-nCoV'. The COVID-19 virus is a new virus linked to the same family of viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some types of common cold. Virus spreads through contact. The virus spreads between people in close contact (within 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. But the infection can spread before people develop symptoms, which, on an average, take around five days to appear. Some people develop no symptoms and others have mild disease but still infect others. Stepping out also results in contamination of surfaces or objects, from where it can infect people who touch the surface and then touch their own mouth, nose, or eyes. The virus spreads very easily in areas where there is community transmission of the disease, according to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in US. Infection may occur without having close contact also!!

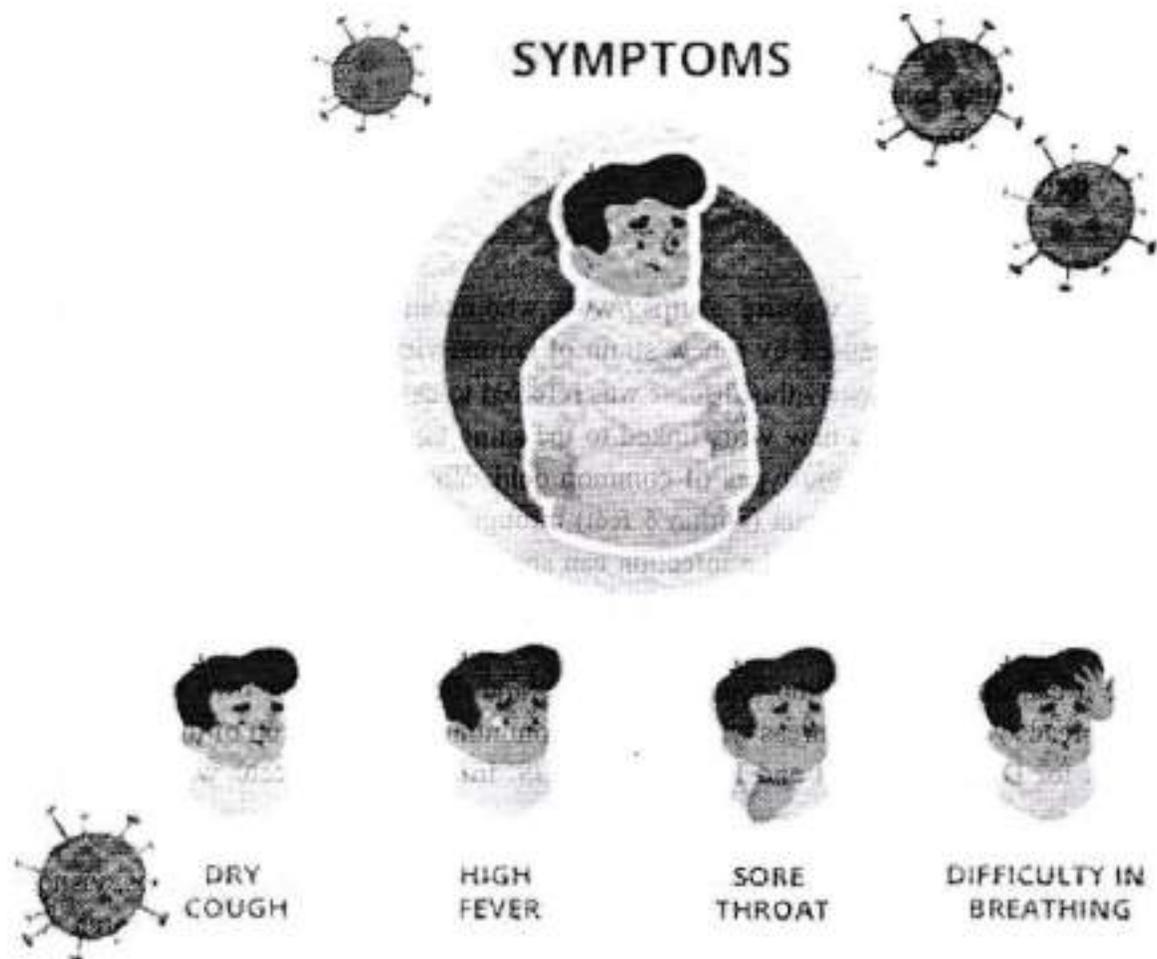
Scientists have documented a cluster of cases among people who worked in shops, visitors or were staff of a mall without direct contact with an infected person, according to a research document called "Indirect Virus Transmission in Cluster of Covid-19 Cases, Wenzhou" in China published by the CDC on March 12. Indirect transmission may have happened among these unrelated cases from spread via surfaces like elevator buttons or restroom taps, said the paper. For case-patients who were customers in the shopping mall but did not report using the restroom, the source of infection could have been the elevators or asymptomatic patients.



### How Lockdown helps in reducing of spread of the disease?

Lockdown greatly reduces transmission. A recent study by the Imperial College London's Covid-19 team found that population-wide social distancing would have the largest impact in transmission reduction; and, in combination with other interventions, such as home isolation of infected people and closure of schools and universities. There are many more scientific studies that prove massive social distancing measures can stabilise transmission and give governments time to prepare for a spurt in infections.

One positive change is boosting Ghost / Dark / Central kitchens with delivery-only concept where food is sold online or through a mobile app, instead of traditional establishments will raise which may increase the reach of restaurants where they can reach more people and have less overheads.





## How It Spreads Prevention



### About restaurants

According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Restaurant' is an establishment where the public may procure refreshments or meals.

It is a public dining place where people come together. Food is prepared and served to the customers on the premise. This definition need to be elaborated in today's world where restaurants not only serve food on the premise but also serve food by online takeaway medium.

These meals are prepared and served to customers and during this time they are exchanged through many hands

Let's look at a typical process in which cooked food is handed over to guest--

- **Guest on premise:**

Chef cooks food (let's start from point where food is cooked as when food is cooked there will be no contamination considering the microbial activity is killed at temperatures above 80 degree Celsius) and plates it, the plates are washed by Stewarding assistants. Plated food is handed over to the Aboyeur (One who announces the orders and handover correct food to the waiter ) Waiter then carry the food most of the time by himself and in certain cases one brings it out in restaurant upto the sideboard and head waiter serves it. So the food travels from Chef -- Stewarding assistants -- Aboyeur -- Waiter -- head waiter -- Guest.



- **Take away by help of a Online food-delivery platforms:**

Agent from Online food-delivery platforms brings order to restaurant Chef cooks food and hands over to assistant for packing it. Packed food is handed over to the Aboyeur who further handover to Agent from Online food-delivery platforms who carries food to guest .

Chef – Assistants for packing – Aboyeur – Agent from Online food-delivery platforms – Guest ,The above examples show that food comes in contact with many people before being served which makes it vulnerable for getting infected Also in a typical restaurants guests come in contact with many people other than food handlers which is also to be considered for example, valet, welcoming staff, other people who are visiting restaurant, the cashier, waiting area assistant, housekeeping staff in restaurant, etc.

So considering the spread of the corona virus its method restaurant goers will have many questions before going to the restaurant.

Bob Goldin, a partner at consulting firm Pentalllect Inc. in the article published in The Print an Indian online newspaper published on 17 April, 2020 expressed a concern about the customers thinking who is touching there food, also they are thinking to live without restaurants . In the same article Dr. Erin DiCaprio, an expert on food safety from the University of California, Davis also raised the concern that social distancing will remain for long time and also customers who go to restaurants will have fear to go to crowded places.

**To overcome these doubts restaurant owners will need to take precautions to assure customers about their safety.**

In an article - How Indian restaurants will change post lockdown. Published in THE HINDU on April 17, 2020 and updated on April 18, 2020 restaurateur Ashish Kapur brought forward the necessity of Technology for ensuring safety of customers use of automatic temperature checks for staff, portable washing sinks, minimises contact — mobile wallets, menus on personal devices and automated surface sanitising were highlighted in the article. In the same article restaurateur AD Singh raises the concern about social distancing which will eliminate the crowded bars and restaurants particularly on weekends which are major revenue generators. Chef Manish Mehrotra of Indian Accent brought forth the issue of sourcing of ingredients which have to be done carefully by the restaurants as the guests may be concerned about it, he also raised a thought that customers may also change their diet pattern and prefer more healthy options. in the same article also Sandeep Tandon, managing director of Old World Hospitality that owns Delhi's Indian Accent emphasised that customers may not be willing to pay more for all the extra care taken for the hygiene and sanitisation.

The article What's cooking? Pune restaurants are uncertain as lockdown changes rules of engagement published in The Indian Express Written by Dipanita Nath in May 11, 2020 issue Devesh Bhatia of the Pan Indian Eatery says that trimming of menu, changing it every few days, smaller staff and also the



staff that have gone back to their native places who may not return, extra expenses on sanitization also the rent that restaurant owners have to pay may not reduce are the major concerns of restaurateurs.

“In that scenario, we will trim the menu and keep changing it every few days. The rules of social distancing mean we may operate 10-15 guests at a time. The staff will also be smaller as many of them, who stayed back during the lockdown, will want to return home, outstation, to their worried families. The first challenges we are going to face as soon as the lockdown is lifted, is that at least half of the staff — cooks, service and utility sections — will go back. We hope there will be a reduction in rent from our landlord. Sanitisation will also have to be carried out frequently, probably every hour, which means that the cost of running the restaurant will go up,” says Devesh Bhatia of the Pan Indian Eatery. Vaibhav Paliwal of Nukkad Café in the same article say that the covid19 situation have affected the culture of interacting with people and that people are not allowed to meet, listen and talk which is one of the main reason for people to patronise the restaurants apart form food. Smita Murthy one of the owners of The Fat Labrador Cafe in Bavdhan, Vishal Pipraiya who started Pagdandi Bookstore and Café and Shruti Kapre of Midnight Kakery are the owners of restaurants which operate with a thought of building communities and relationships for doing business are concerned as they have to depend on the food delivering apps to reach the customers this is also one of the concern raised in the article.

Anurag Katiyar, president of the National Restaurant Association of India in a recent interview on the food safety equinox. Said that Hygiene requirements will change the restaurant industry post COVID as it was changed for security after 9/11 terror attacks. Hygiene will be the key marketing factor in the future.

According the paper published by Prof Rayarikar and Ms. Anahita Manna in the journal *International Journal of Business and Administration Research Review*, Vol. 2, Issue.1, Jan-March, 2016. Page 317 , ‘Nowadays, the trend of dining in restaurants has become quite prominent. Frequent restaurant visits are not only the reflection of satisfying hedonistic needs, but also the result of increasing number of single-person households as well as adjustment to the business hours’

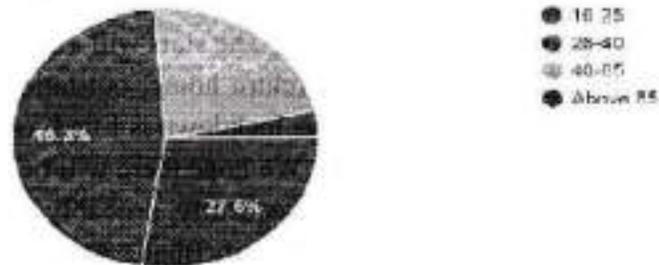
### **Method and Procedures**

This is a explanatory research trying to explain the consequences of the problems that restaurant business is going to face after the covid-19 lock down. This is an initial research on a newly-generated issue in the restaurant business. This research is trying to analyse the impact of covid-19 on perception of customers towards restaurants through quantitative research. It is a field research where the questioner is circulated with sample size of 322 and ananalysis was done on the data collected about causes and effect.



## Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Data

### Q.1 Age of the respondents



Maximum respondents were in between age group of 26 to 65 which includes a large number of people who go out for work and are from the earning class of society who can spend on restaurants.

### How often you used to visit restaurant before covid-19 outbreak?

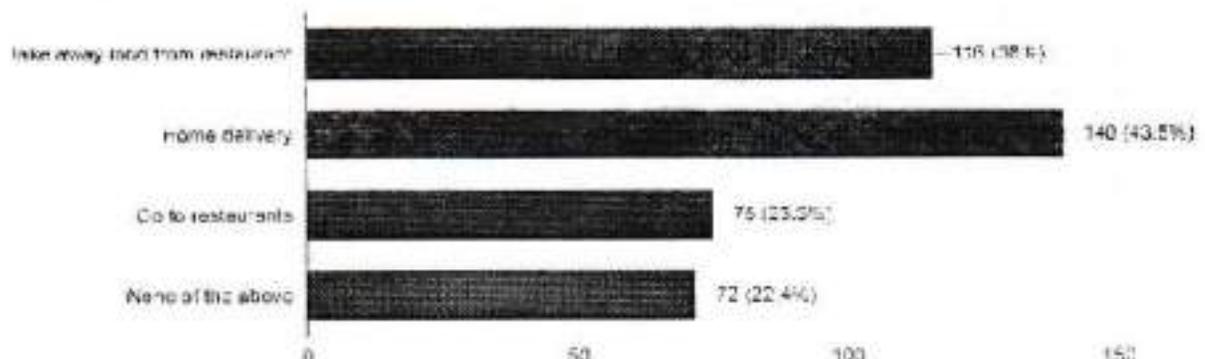
997 responses



A very small section of the respondents are those who go for eating out very rarely. Because most respondents are regular visitors to restaurants the feedback given to the questioner can be considered a valid data.

### What will you prefer more after lockdown is over

322 responses

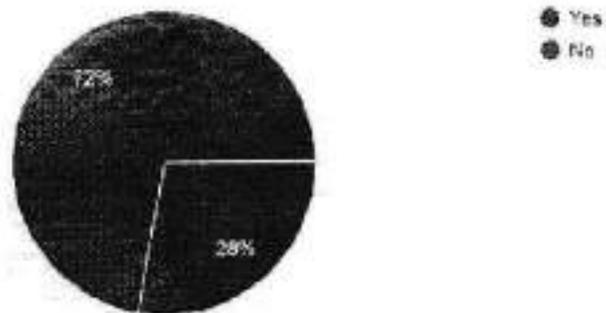


After lock down is over most people are preferring to bring food home than to go to the restaurant. Also there is substantial amount of respondents who dont want to get food from restaurants at all



Did you order food by food delivery apps during the lock down period ?

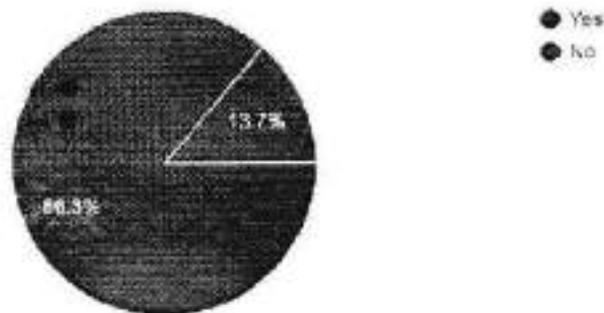
322 responses



Most people have preferred to cook at home than ordering food from restaurants.

Do you think Restaurants are among the hardest-hit in the covid-19 pandemic ?

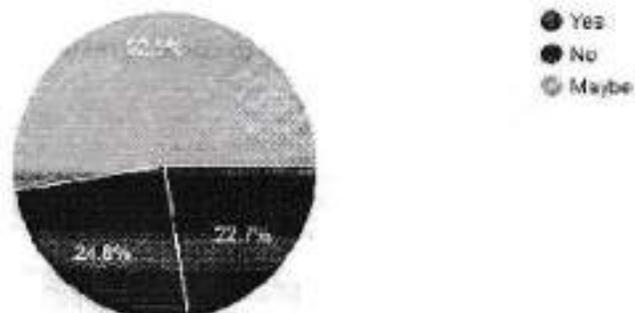
377 responses



Most people agree that restaurants are among the hardest hit sectors.

Will you go to a restaurant for dining after the lockdown is over?

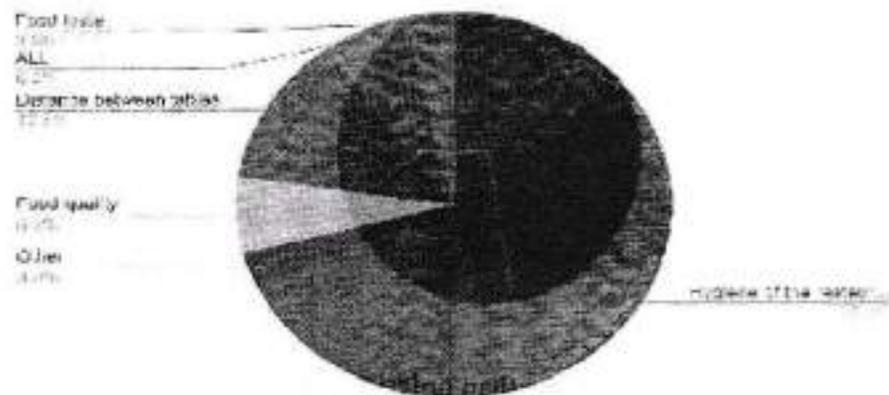
322 responses



Only 22.7 % people have responded positive towards going to restaurants after lockdown



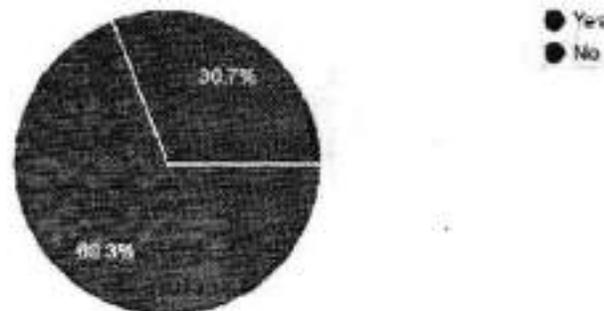
Which is the most important aspect that you will consider to go to a restaurant after the lock down is lifted?



Food quality and food taste are no more important for in selection of restaurant

Will "a unknown person handling your food before it is been served", affect your perception to go or not to go to restaurants?

322 responses



Perception about restaurants is changed after covid-19. People do consider the fact that food which is handled by an unknown person may not be safe to eat.

Which of the following will interest you to come to restaurants considering care of social distancing?

322 responses

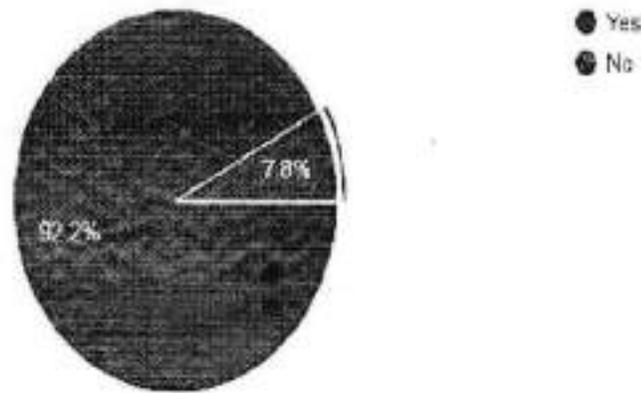




All the Contact less options are considered by respondents as important

Do you think social distancing will be required even after the effect of pandemic is reduced?

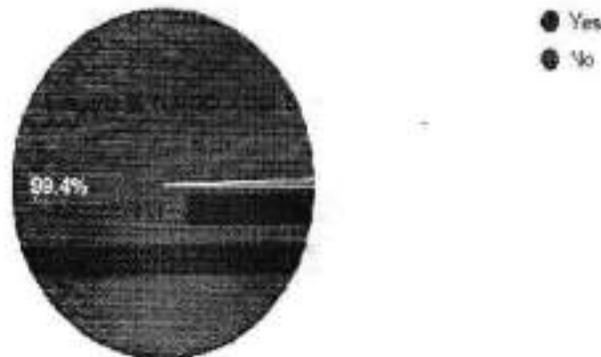
322 responses



Nearly all thinks that social distancing is to stay with us.

Will you expect that workers' need to wear gloves Masks and other safety gears as prescribed?

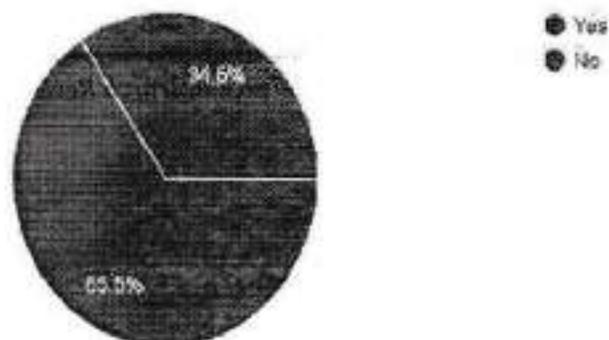
322 responses

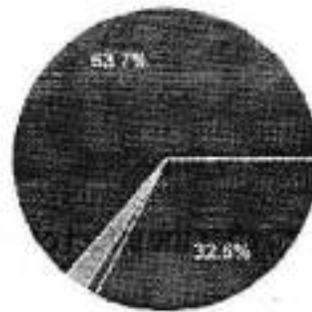


Safety gears are compulsory and will affect the decision whether to choose an outlet or not

Do you expect Restaurants to keep prices same?

322 responses



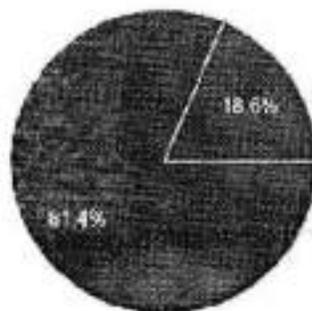


- Vegetarian
- Vegan
- Fish but no other non-vegetarian food
- Covid-19 will have no effect on my preference of food

There is a large section of respondents who have no effect on food preferences.

Do you think uncertainty about finances mean even the privileged may be less inclined to spend in restaurants.

322 responses

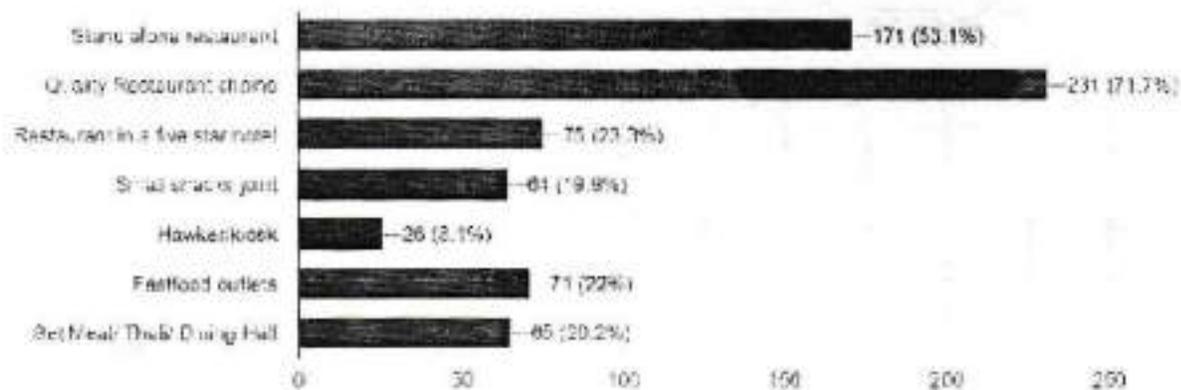


- Yes
- No

Most respondents say that people will spend less in restaurants after covid-19

Which type of food outlets will you prefer to eat at after the lock down is over ?

322 responses





Most preferred joints are quality restaurants chains and Stand alone restaurants.

### Findings

As we try to summaries the findings we arrive at are rather unusual out comes through the online survey of 322 respondents from various age groups and strata of the society.

Many of the respondents are frequent restaurant customers and are fond of variety of food available in the nearby restaurants.

#### Finding 1

The first question was targeted to find the age group of the frequent customer of the restaurants. From the responses received we are able to say the largest group is from age group of 26Yrs. to 40Yrs. This reveals that they are from the middle-aged group having better income and hence higher spending power.

The second highest spending group is from the younger age group of 16 Yrs. To 25Yrs. And has less spending capacity and hence they are not regular patrons of stand- alone restaurants.

#### Finding 2

The second question was aimed at finding out the frequency of the visits to restaurants. The outcome tells us that most of the customers do visit Stand-alone Restaurants 1-2 times in a month. As the stand-alone restaurants are usually higher priced and hence the frequency is relatively low.

#### Finding 3& 6

This question gives us the percentage of the patrons who preferred home deliveries over the other option post Unlock.

The response received tells us clearly that almost 44% of the respondents prefer home delivered food from their choice of restaurant rather than visiting a public place physically.

Only 22.7 % people responded positive towards going to restaurants after lockdown is lifted.

#### Finding 4

The impact of the pandemic was grave on the mind set of the respondents and due to the fear 72% of the people prefer Not to order food from their favourite restaurant or any takeaway kitchens during the lockdown.

#### Finding 5

As we wanted to know if the patrons are aware about, How badly the Hotels and Restaurant Industry is affected? The response was very satisfactory as almost 87% of the respondents agree that Hotels and Restaurant Industry is the most or one of the most affected industry.

#### Finding 7

This question has revealed a new parameter for selection of a restaurant post unlock. The parameter is Hygiene!! Now more than 68% of the prospective customers are preferring higher and better standards of hygiene if they decide to go the public place such as restaurant.



#### **Finding 8& 9**

This question was asked to the customers to understand their perception of social distancing and contactless options they would seek if and when they decide to go to the restaurant.

The response reveals that all the contactless options such as app based menu and ordering and even contactless payment options are preferred options.

More than 92% customers feel that social distancing will continue and is the New Normal!!

#### **Finding 10**

The customers are now more concerned about staff wearing all possible safety gears.

The gears include such as Masks, Hand Gloves and Face shield.

#### **Finding 11:**

Most of the customers expect the menu pricing will not be changed and they will get the same service and quality after restaurants resume their operations.

#### **Finding 12**

This question was aimed at the choice of the food that customers seek post unlock. According to the responses received the customers will Not change their preference of being vegetarian or non-vegetarian or the newer options such as vegan etc,

#### **Finding 13**

This question was include in the survey to check the financial constraint of the customers post unlock. It clearly indicates that even as the restaurants will re-open but the customers will have relatively less spending power to spend on leisure and restaurant visits.

#### **Finding 14**

This question revealed that customers now prefer only such restaurants, which assures quality in terms of food and hygiene. These restaurants may be stand alone or a part of a well known chain which may include branded fast food out lets as well.

#### **Conclusion**

The pandemic has changed the perception of the customers significantly. Many aspects and considerations to which customers pay attention to were evaluated through this research work. Study revealed that large number of respondents are between the age group of 26 to 65 years and are from the earning group and hence they have additional disposable income which they usually spend on leisure in various ways. These respondents used to visit the restaurants 2-3 times in month before the lock down was imposed.

As the first lockdown was extended further with some sectors conditionally reopened the Cloud Kitchens/ Dark Kitchens/ Ghost Kitchens were on the fore front to deliver the food/ meal to the end consumers, restaurants on the other hand took some time to restart and the deliveries with the help of delivery channel partners such as ZOMATO, SWIGY, etc. This increased the scope of this delivery app.



Most of the respondents were aware that restaurants and over all the hospitality industry is one of the hardest hit due to this pandemic. But due to the fear of pandemic more than 50% of the respondents were not sure if they wish to visit the restaurants after the lockdown will be lifted. One of the basic concerns shown by the respondents was Hygiene, and hence that will be the most important criteria if they decide to visit the restaurant after the pandemic or even post lockdown. This is one of the major change that is observed through this study.

Hence customers will prefer Stand alone restaurants and quality restaurants chains.

Though many organizations had been following decent levels of hygiene and employees have been following hygienic practices. But due to the pandemic newer and higher levels of hygienic practices are required to be implemented. Contact less options for menu, placing the order and even service options need to be explored.

Safety gears such as Face Shields, Masks, Disposable hand gloves have become an essential and somewhat compulsory and will affect the decision whether place an order from a particular outlet or not

Food quality and food taste are no more important for in selection of restaurant!!

Restaurant industry is poised and awaiting for the further guidelines from the competent authority.

Post COVID 19 pandemic most customers would prefer 'Take Away' of food deliveries by popular agencies, channels and food delivery app such as ZOMATO, SWIGY, etc.

This study also highlights that many of the respondents are reluctant to order any food from any of the restaurants in near future. People have given preference to home cooked food over the restaurant/ food from Cloud Kitchens/ Dark Kitchens. This has given a rise of another contender, Home Chefs/ Cooks in the existing and stipulated business domain of each of the restaurant.

Perception about restaurants has changed after covid-19. People do consider the fact that food which is handled by an unknown person may not be safe to eat. Nearly all the respondents thinks that social distancing is to stay in the near future. Most people expect the prices of the menu to remain unchanged.

There is a large section of respondents who have no effect on food preferences but preference of the type of restaurants has changed!! Due to lockdown the economy has slowed down this will result in less spending on food and leisure after covid-19.

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# A STUDY OF THE DETERMINANTS OF BUSINESS SUCCESS FOR HOME BAKERS IN PUNE.

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Asst. Professor, asst. Professor

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**Abstract:** This paper gives a focus on home bakers in and around Pune region, about who they are; for whom they are baking; their work style as well as their ambition; the challenges they are facing such as total expenditure for business, time spent by the home baker in their business operations, is the information and communication technology useful for their business process and does baking from home upsets the new upcoming bakers.

The paper also focuses on the increasing consciousness about the availability of generating income from the hobby or skilled possessed from the technical education. Nowadays, there is a significant number of consumers in Pune who wants to eat quality and are trying to make better and healthier choices. With rapid growth in population, affordable prices and varying eating patterns of the local people, bakery products have gained popularity in the Pune region. Many bakery products such cakes, breads, cookies and theme cakes have emerged as consumption items during the normal days or special events in Pune. In fact changing life style and eating habits have shown that customized cakes, cookies chocolates are replacing traditional Indian mithai as gifts for various festivals like Diwali and Christmas.

## 1. Key words

Home bakers  
Bakery products  
Entrepreneurs

## 2. Introduction

Home bakers comprises of a small and disorganized portion of the larger baking industry. Many women have moved in the field of cooking and baking and have taken steps to establish themselves fruitfully as prominent home bakers. These bakers are baking from their homes and baking not just cakes and breads but also cupcakes and cookies that are customized to meet the customers' requirements and demands.

Home bakers usually start their operation on a very small scale. They begin with limited resources and shape their trade through personal effort. At the end of the day, their success will depend on their capability to manage and grow the organization.

The main motto of these enthusiastic talents is they want to

1. Be their own boss
2. To achieve financial independence
3. To enjoy creative freedom
4. To use your skills and knowledge

Baking industry is been recognised as a competitive industry and those who got started earlier have the first mover's advantage but there is also a place for many in this industry to get started at a minor level with limited orders. In general, innovative and creative bakers sometimes achieve amazing popularity because of their passion for baking. They are risk-taking idealists who commit themselves to working long hours to reach desired goals. Home bakers also take pride in what they're doing and achieve satisfaction from doing something they enjoy. These young bakers also have the flexibility to alter to varying situations in order to achieve their goals.

## 3. Scope of the study

The scope of the study is primarily targeted at the home bakers in pune this study tries to study the background of the home bakers, there reasons to opt for home baking, the, challenges faced by them, there source of information and what scope they see in doing the business in this way.

## 4. Objectives

The intention of the study is to progress and produce data as an example how home bakers mounts the ladder of their business success. Precisely, the study looked into the following:

### 1. The personal and business profile:

Whether these new breed of entrepreneurs who have started their home baking profession had received technical skill and knowledge based education, industrial training and experience to give their operation a professional touch, or only passion and hobby can fulfil the needs for the home bakers.

### 2. Does home baking set ups require invest plans, the types of products been baked, whether they bake occasionally or regularly, the sales reaches to achieve profits.

### 3. Strategies applies to different challenges and risk

To understand the new challenges and risks bound with day to day home baking operations. As the business nurtures, different challenges mandate diverse solutions-what worked in the past might not be as operative and reasonable now. So what strategies the entrepreneur adopts to manage different challenges.

### 5. Research methodology

The following research methodology was adopted to conduct the present research study:

5.1 Selection of area: for the purpose of the study Pune region was surveyed as this region has lots of potential in relation to manpower, infrastructure as well as the changing standard of living and disposable income of the people.

5.2 Selection of sample units: 50 home bakers, manufacturing different types of products in and around Pune region were surveyed.

5.3 Period of study: minimum period for the research work was 2 months as the research was conducted at micro level.

Collection of data and information: the primary data was used in this research study. For primary data a detailed questionnaire was prepared for the home bakers.

5.4 Tabulation, analysis and interpretation of data and information: the collected data were arranged in tabular form and were analysed using required statistical tools. After completing analysis work the results were interpreted in a systematic manner.

### 6. Review of literature

In the article "The rise of home bakers" published on women's web dated 29 January 2013 by Melanie Iobo who had interviewed some home bakers and her interpretations are as follows- Bhayiravi Mani a resident of Gurgaon who was working for an event management company admits that she had no interests neither in cooking nor baking and she had never baked a single product any time before 2011. She also admits that there is no family history of baking. Bhayiravi started taking interest in baking after she visited her friend and after reading recipe books and she realized that ingredients used for baking are the most common and are readily available. So she purchased the oven and started baking from home since November 2011. She strongly agrees that home bakers has to work hard as there are no helpers to help her and she has to start from the scrap for producing a baked product. The major challenge faced by her was the delivery of the baked products as people were ready to purchase but after looking at the delivery distance they need to travel for the purchase, used to deny the orders. But as her business and her reputation reached the peak the problem faced was habitually decreased as people started taking efforts of travelling for the required baked products baked by her. At the end the satisfaction gained by the efforts added in the home baking operations is fruitful. Another home baker Monika Manchanda who is from technological background left her job due to her small baby son. As baking was her hobby she started she started writing a blog and slowly she became passionate to start a small home based business. As her business grew, she stopped baking from her home based kitchen and converted one of the room in the house as baking unit. In the article "The rise of home bakers" published on women's web she mentions that set cost is the hurdle and is a necessary investment so one must plan this investment carefully before starting any business. Another major challenge for her was procuring raw material especially food colouring agents which she found it's better to source from us. As competition among home bakers nurtured she adopted a strategy -to produce lot of breads and savoury products which not all the home bakers bakes. Lynette Dias who is 37-year-old, operates her home baking business in NIBM, Pune, Dias, was a hr professional in the it industry, and now she takes four orders a week.

She mentions in the article oven fresh published in Pune mirror on Sep 28, 2014, that home baking business has boomed 200 per cent in last two years and has started reshaping as an enterprise it is daily source for cash. The orders for home bakers have increased drastically from one or two orders a week to even three orders a day. In recent years clients taste and preference have also changed from regular cakes to customised cakes. She also focuses how home bakers are different from professional bakers. Home bakers bakes fresh products as per the order which is not always a case with commercial bakeries. Also most of the bakeries have baked products with common typical flavours on the other hand the home bakers are always on their foot to bake as per the customization. Also according to many home bakers they suggests that clients can rely on them for better quality and hygiene standards as it's a one man show right from greasing, mixing, baking and packaging.

Focus is also given why most of them are driving towards home baking operations. Independence, creative freedom, control on work load, freedom for creativeness all such factors have given birth to most of home bakers. According to Dias independence is a major reason why most of the home bakers do not want to expand their home based operations into business operations. In the era of competition these home bakers knew they have to be different all the time for creating new market at the same time not losing their mental piece. Internet has proved one of successful weapon to reach out a huge unknown market. Home bakers are making use of social networking sites such Facebook, What's up, Instagram to spread their business apart from good word of mouth communication. Most of the home bakers are part of the forum on social networking site called Pune home bakers guild a social networking site creates a platform for most of the home bakers to share information related to their business.

According to chef Rishabh Anand, of the Leela Palace Delhi, in the article "home baked goods" in bakery review (Feb – March 2019) home bakers take lot of efforts to bake their orders up to the customer's standardization. As well as they do not compromise for the quality of ingredients used for baking as most of the clients are regular. Several bakery and pastry academies are operating in major metro cities who are providing vocational and technical qualification to most of the upcoming home bakers. They also provide training facilities to such candidates which can further help them in starting their own home banking unit. These home bakers have started making use of the social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and related sites to promote their business. They keep posting regularly on their own websites and such sites regarding their products and their day to day activities related to baking. As home bakers create customised products for special occasions to create special effect the pricing of the products go little high which seems a challenge for the home bakers according to him.

Further in the article "home baked goods" in bakery review (Feb – March 2019) chef Balendra Singh, founder Institute of Bakery and Pastry Arts (IBPA) says that home bakers have their own identity as there products are unique and different from the regular bakeries. One can easily order products and rely on home bakers as they are make less use of artificial flavours, colours, and minimum use of preservatives. Quality product as per customisation, better coordination and ease of delivery are some of the factors why people order to home bakers. These home bakers are not only baking as per the clients but they have started creating and developing new recipes which is replacing the traditional festive mithai. A fusion of bakery and Indian mithai is a trend coming up during the festivals and attracting the clients around the city. They also produce very exotic products like cakes in jars, sugar free

and the business is growing. The business is growing because of the demand for home baked goods with special treats like chocolate cake. The home baker's target market is people who are looking for high quality, delicious and delicious are the targeted market for the home baker's business. The business is growing because of the demand for home baked goods with special treats like chocolate cake.

According to the article "Home Baking Business" by the author, the author states that these home bakers gain technical knowledge by joining short term bakery courses and workshops. These courses and workshops keep them well updated with the recent trends. According to the home baking business, the home baker's business is a family life and taking profession but still it has some hurdles such as Limited capital: they are not able to compete with the retail bakeries as they have less capital and therefore less investments opportunities for machinery and tools. Lack of space: as the operation has to be carried out from home they have to balance the space and equipment needed. Lack of marketing: contact is on a large scale and has rely on close ones and good word of mouth. Limited range of products: produces few well known and customised products so the menu is shorter as compared to bakeries. Low shelf life: most of the times products are made to order so sometimes if the order is cancelled cannot be sold to other customers. Pricing: they put lot of efforts in the quality, designing and presentation as per requirement which indirectly increases the cost of the product, the clients always compare the cost with retail bakeries. Time constraint: most of the times last minutes orders have to be processed in a short span of time.

Further in the same article "home baked goods" in bakery review (Feb - March 2019) director of Delta Narratives Pvt Ltd Mr. Prakash Sangvi comments that home bakers are very particular in buying ingredients they look for the quality products which have longer shelf life and within their price constraints. To gain knowledge about the recent happenings in the baking world these home bakers also attend workshops conducted by well-known chefs and also visit the bakery expos.

Mrs Jyotsmita Sharma in her article- bakery in age of social media in bakery review (Jun - July 2019) focuses on the study by Microsoft owned professional networking platform LinkedIn which states that 94% sales professional's uses technology to upgrade sales. Media marketing is equally important to those who depend on mostly online orders for their sales, as one cannot only rely on recommendations as these do not always spread through communication. Therefore, social media offers an opportunity for small and medium bakers to reach their targeted markets. While doing so one has to maintain the regularity in their posts and making use of high quality images. The social media marketing should also generate new baking ideas from the target market so it increases the engagement levels of the clients.

In the article lazy door -the complete door to door pick up & delivery services for your home baking business the firm lazy door is a firm which provides logistic solution to home bakers and people who runs operations from home in the city of Pune. The organisation has enough trained and expert staff ready to work in case of emergency. They charge the home bakers according to the kilometres and not as per the weight of the delivery product. Customised delivery options such timings as per the client, utmost care taken against delicate products, they do collect cash on delivery if required. They suggests after getting acquainted with their services the home bakers have a scope to expand the business all around Pune and PCMC area. They have special delivery systems according to weather conditions to protect the delivery products. And in short one does not has to invest on the delivery person. The most important is that they feature the clients on their website and social media which is indirectly helps in promoting the business of home bakers.

In the article by Tarunika Vyas - meet the home bakers who are redefining the world of desserts in the city on 12 June 2015 she states that Mrs Trupti Darye who started baking as a hobby and later turned into a full time baking profession. Mrs Darye highlights by saying that she started baking for her family which further brought her end numbers of orders through in house publicity. She had never done any technical course to upgrade her skills but had put large amount of efforts to achieve the necessary skills. And she is ready to spent long hours to complete the target. According to her fondant is too sugary so she prefers modelling chocolate for the art work required on the cake. Another home baker Mrs Varsha Darye-Daik, who was an occasional baker, quitted her comfortable job for getting tuned with baking. She admits that if one has creative ideas he/she can create better products and keeping the charm of the life going at the same time. If family members can be made engaged in the activity of baking which will give more confidence to the home bakers. She agree that proper training and guidance is necessary when it comes to the application of fondant which is recent trend in cake decoration.

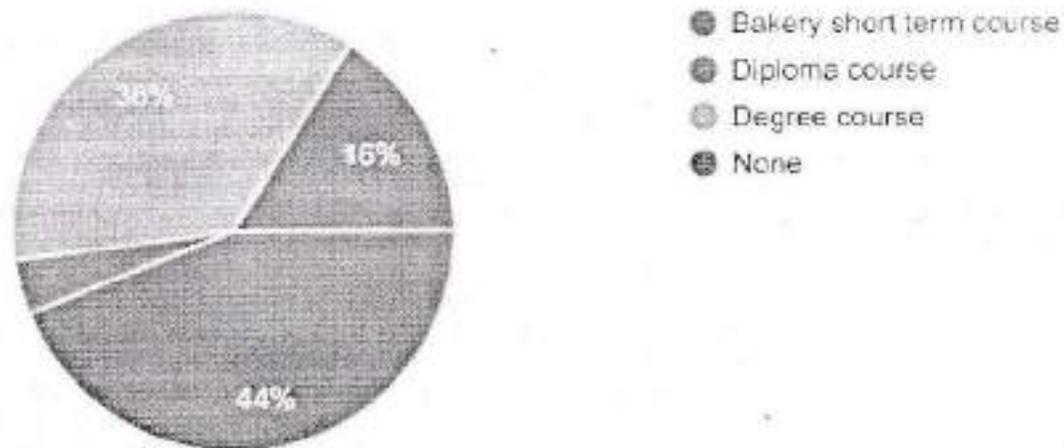
In the case paper, a business start-up case study custom case design business (in good taste by craft factory) Ms. Aditi Ghosh, director - craft factory published in IOSR Journal of business and management (IOSR-JBM) e-issn: 2278-487x, p-issn: 2319-7668, Pp 01-08 she admits that she had a hobby and passion for baking right from the childhood and she fulfilled it by doing the same for her friends and family members. At one stage of life she decided to put her ideas into profession which was backed by her friends and family members. She first started home baking profession in october 2013, and as the word of mouth spread her business grew and she realized there was quite a demand for decorated cake as per the requirement of the clients to pursue skill in the art of decorating cakes she started reading and practicing the same in her free hours. She also attended skill building workshops organised by the well-known chefs. As the load of work increased her skills were also enhanced. She started earning more from the newly started work with her house hold appliances and she invested her new earnings in purchasing new baking appliances which will help her as well as will give a more professional look to her operations. From the business safety point of view she realized that trade licence and food safety licence is the must to keep her business going and she got it done from the respective departments. She admits that personal communication with clients, marketing, branding, use of social media multi-tasking are all the basic inputs for the running up the home business but if one man looking into all these aspects might affect the product quality output.

## 7. Method and procedures

This research details are of people who started a home bakery business, the reasons for starting a home business of bakery, the size of business and their growth plans, problems faced in opening a business and running it. It is a field research where the questionnaire was circulated and 62 responses were received and an analysis was done on the data collected about the home baking business.

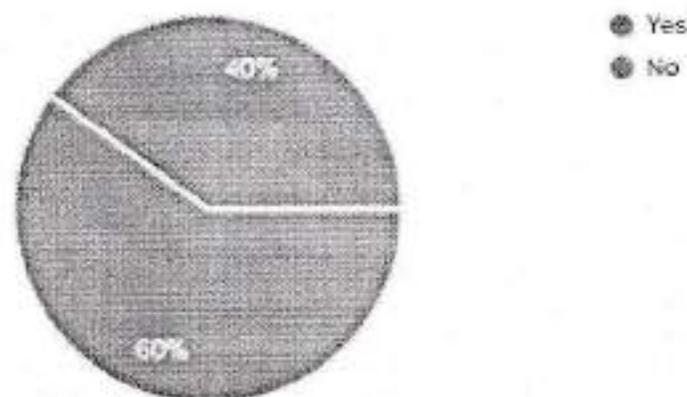
## 8. Data presentation, analysis and interpretation of data

Q. Do you have a professional qualification in bakery and confectionery if yes at which level specify?



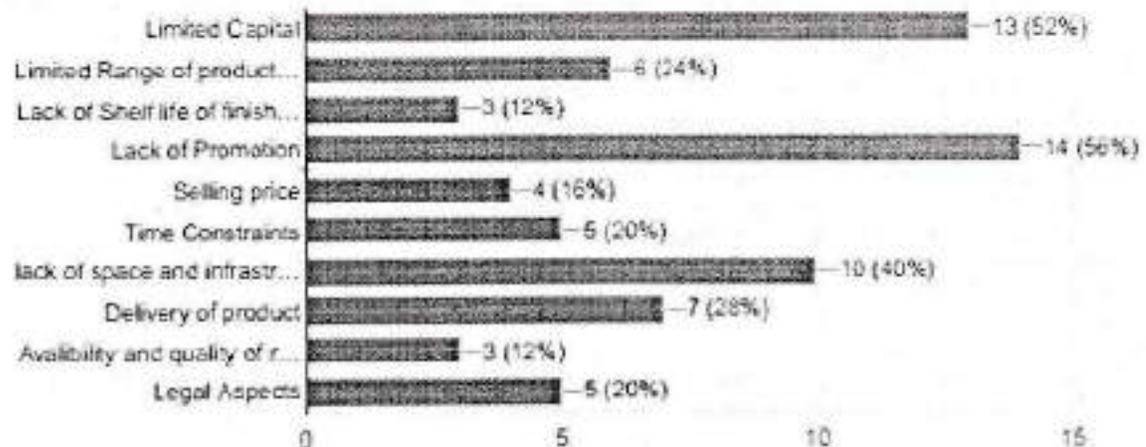
A large section of respondents ( 60 % ) don't have a degree / diploma in hotel management or a professional degree in culinary or bakery

Q. Do you have a professional mentor, to whom do you look up to in this industry?



Though a large section of respondents don't have a professional degree in hotel management culinary or bakery they have a professional mentor who can help them.

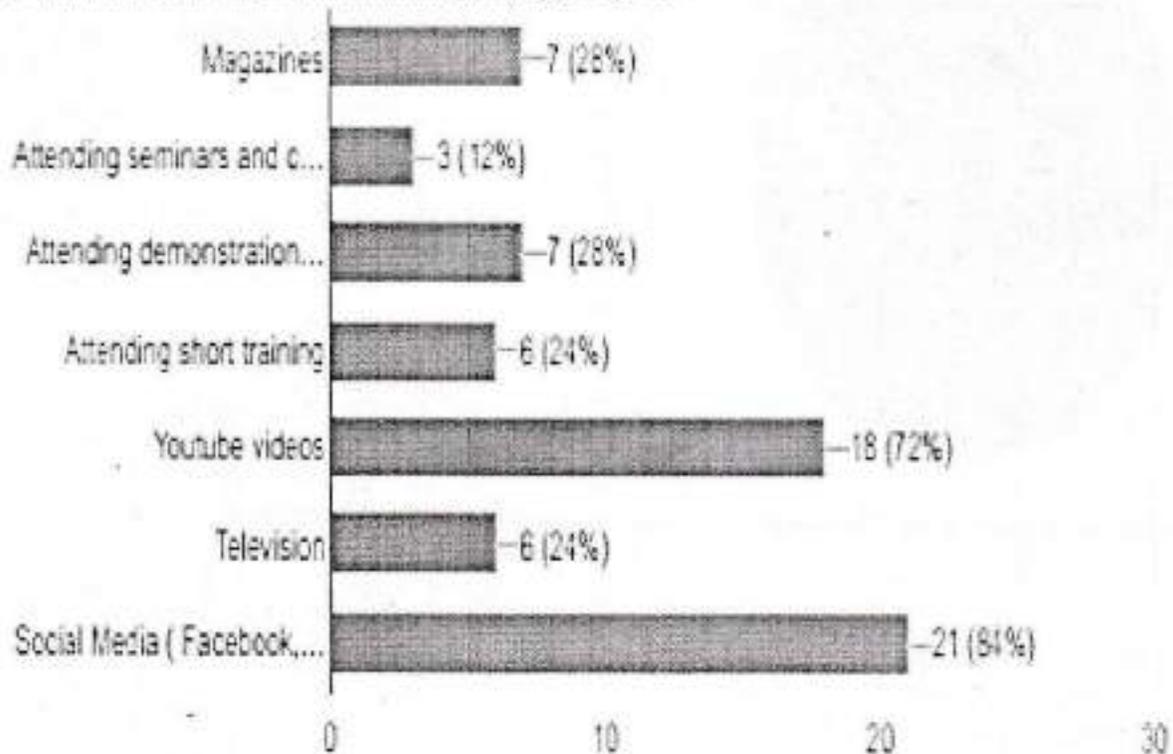
Q. What was the biggest challenge in starting your bakery/baking business?



The major problems faced by home bakery business are lack of promotion and limited capital and home bakers have come out with some solutions like :

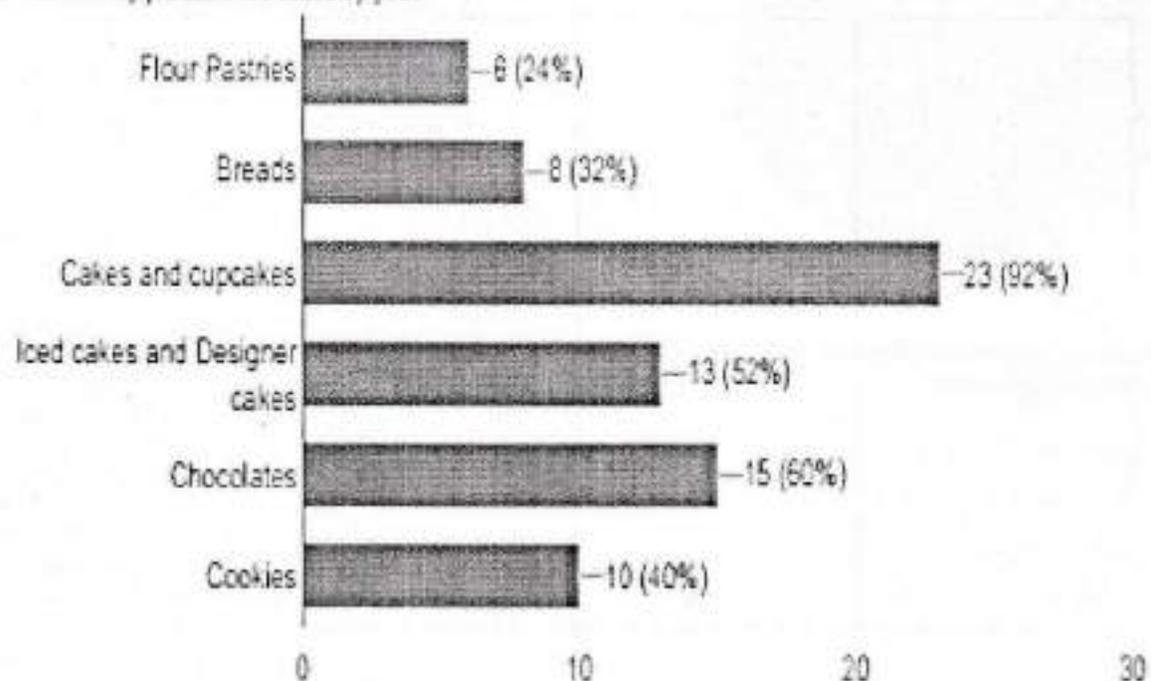
- Application of some promotional or advertising techniques like visiting card.
- Getting in touch with finance company or sponsors who are willing to sponsor
- Social media was stressed by many as major tool for promotion and using it effectively can increase the promotion for business
- Explaining the uniqueness of the product to the customer
- Studying how to process loans and find various schemes for financing.
- To find a suitable market for specialised products like gluten free, sugar free reduced fat contain products etc.

Q. Which of the following sources of latest trends keep you update?



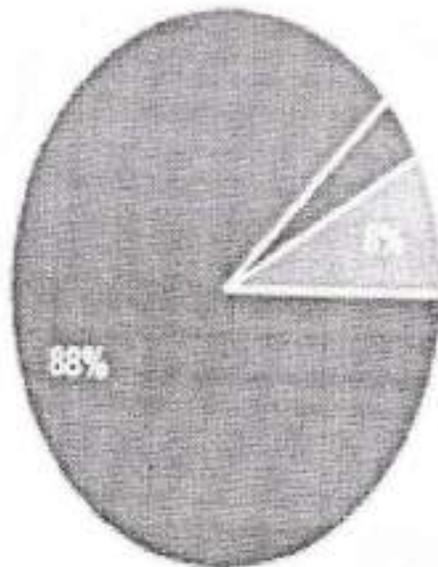
As in solution to problems social media and YouTube is also a major source to find latest trends.

Q. What bakery products are baked by you?



Major product baked and sold are cakes and cupcakes and chocolates. Flour pastries and breads are not produced and sold by home bakers at large.

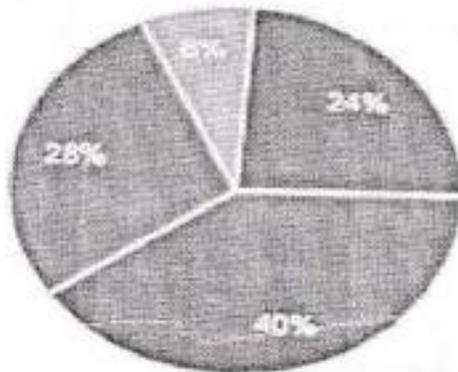
Q. What is your business pattern?



- I bake according to orders
- I bake goods and sale
- I bake only on festivals

Nearly all (88%) of the respondents bake according to orders. This is to control cost and reduce uncertainties.

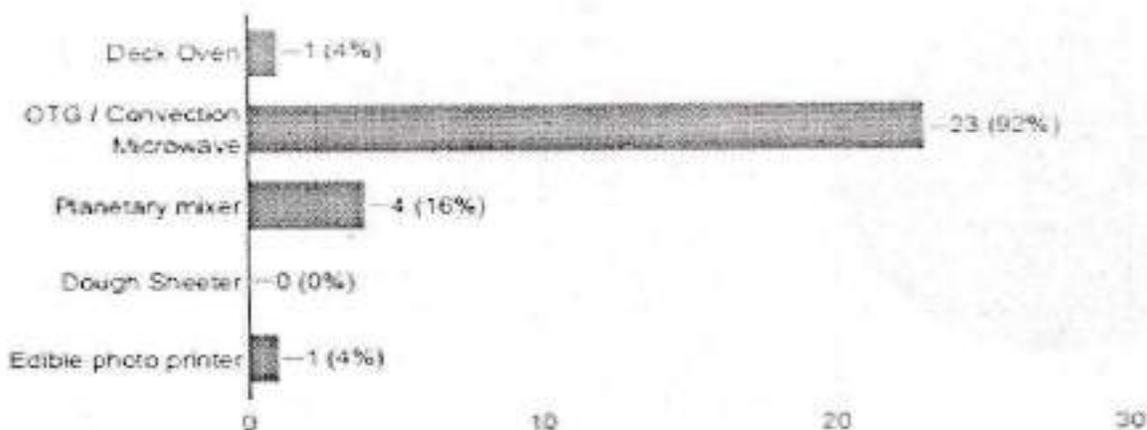
Q. If you bake according to order, how often you bake?



- Once a week
- 3 - 4 times a week
- Daily Once
- Multiple times a day

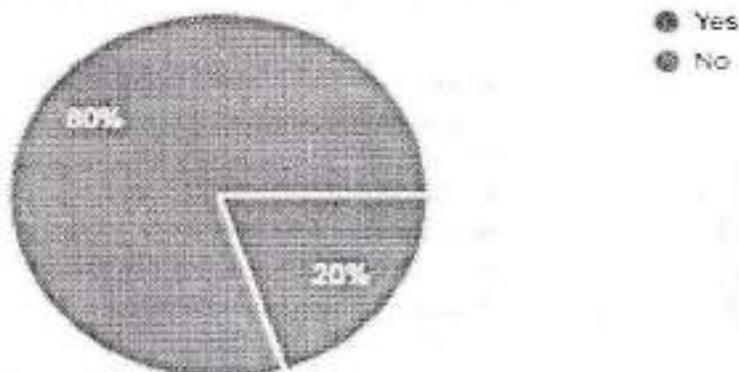
Very little portion of respondents bake daily. This shows the irregularities in flow of business. Bakers need to find a market where they will get a continues business.

What equipment do you use for the manufacturing of product?



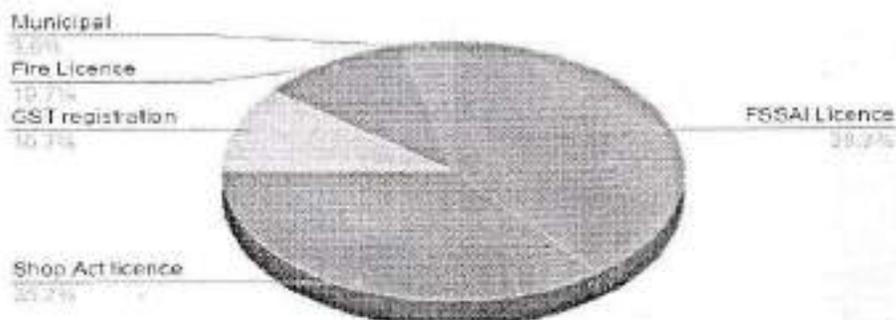
Large section of respondents bake in otg and convection microwave as they have limit of investing in business

Do you use imported tools?



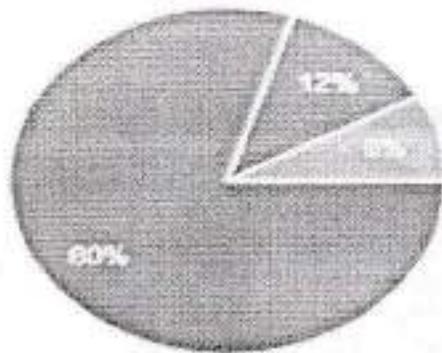
As most of the home bakers have investment problems they cannot use the imported tools.

Q. Have you procured following license?



Only around 40 % of home bakers have done fssai licence which is a requirement for anyone who does food related business. There were also some home bakers who have not responded to the question as they don't have any licensing done.

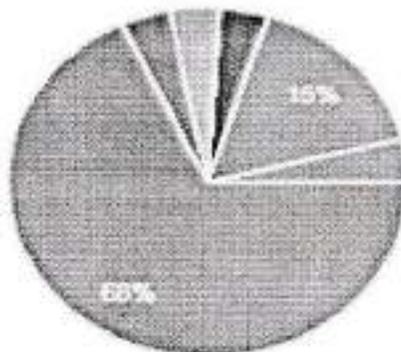
Q. How much cost is incurred in setting up your kitchen?



- Upto 1 lakh
- More than 1 lakh
- Less than 5 lakh
- More and above

Most of the home bakers invest less in the initial stage of business hence a large number of respondents have invested less than 1 lakh rupees in setting of the kitchen (bakery).

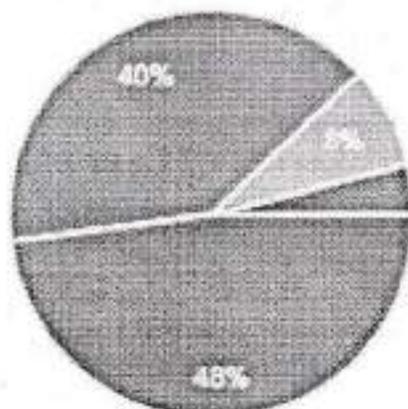
Q. Do you make use of imported food materials for the manufacturing of the bakery products? If yes which of the following



- NO
- Essences
- Colours
- Fat
- Icings
- Chocolate
- Imported high fat cocoa powder

Large number (68%) don't use imported food materials and those who dose use mainly chocolates .

Q. What is your monthly raw material cost?



- 0 to 5000
- 5000 to 10000
- 10000 to 25000
- 25000 to 50000
- 50000 to 100000
- more than a 100000

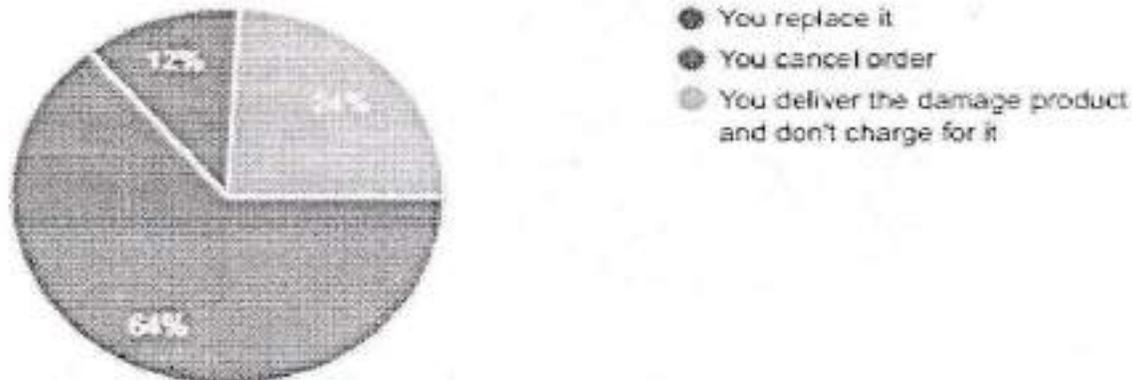
Most of the bakers have a very less material cost monthly below 10000 rs. This also show a relevance with the number of times they bake and why the home bakers rely on bake according to orders. As the material cost requirements are low that shows that the business is also a low profile business where bakers need to take precautionary measures to reduce losses.

Q. To whom you sell your bakery products?



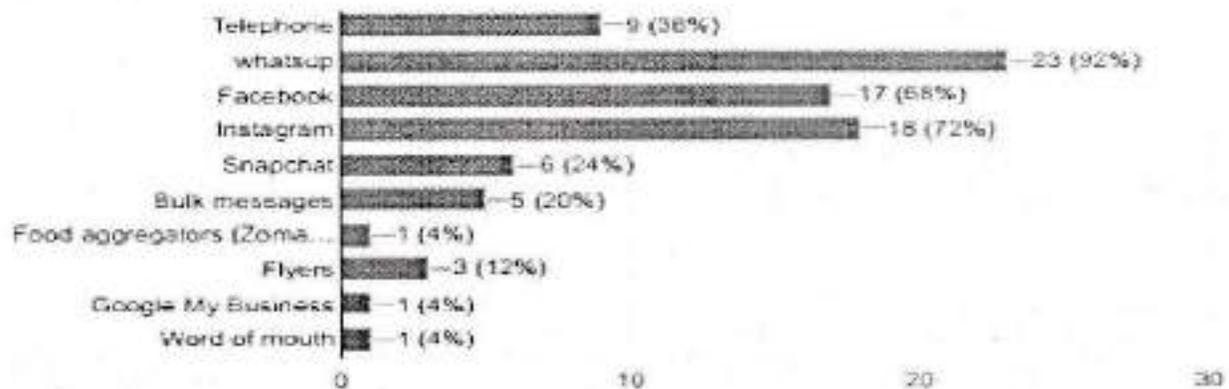
A very few home bakers are targeting the cafes, shops and kiosks as their potential markets which can give them a continuous business.

Q. How do you deal with damages during delivery?



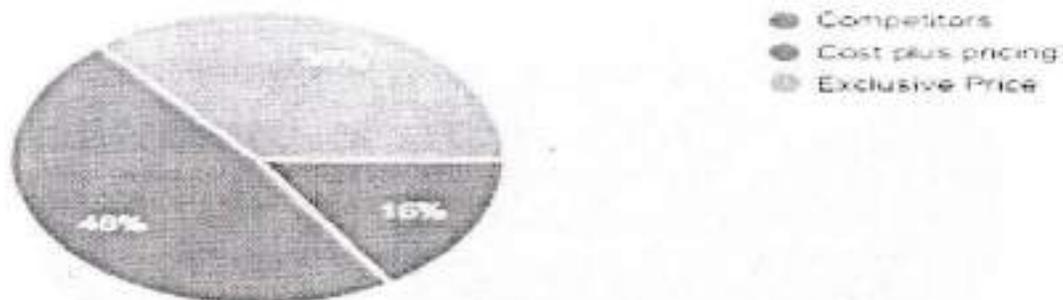
In case of such accident very few bakers cancel the order rather they replace it or deliver the same product without charging them, which is a good way to retain the business.

Q. How do you market your products?



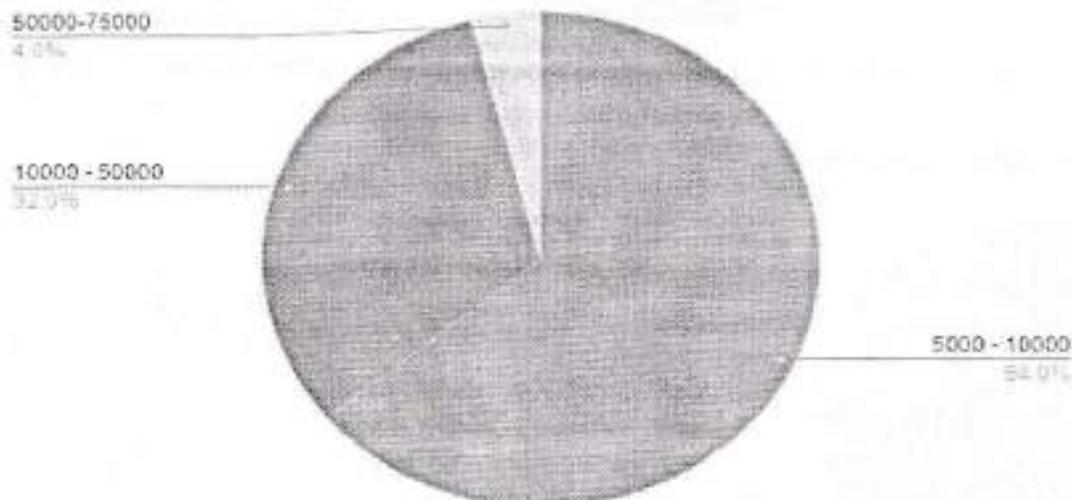
Whatsapp, facebook and instagram looks to be the choice of media to market the products for home bakers.

Q. How do you fix the price of your bakery products?



The pricing strategies for home bakers is cost plus or exclusive very little section of respondents rely on prices of competition.

Q. What is your monthly sales in rupees?



The largest section (64%) of respondents have monthly sales of 5000 to 10000 which is a reflection of the material cost they spend. The home bakers lack in promotion and initial investment which results in a low profile of business. The 4 % of respondents show more than 50000 rs of monthly sales which shows that there is a scope in the business and home bakers can do better if more efforts towards promotion are taken.

Q. What are your future plans for your bakery?

Most of the respondents want start there own cafes or bakeries on large scale. There is a small section of respondents who do home baking as hobby and don't have any intention to increase the scale of business.

## 9. Conclusion

1. A large section of home bakers don't have a professional degree in hotel management culinary or bakery but they take help from professional mentors. These new breed of entrepreneurs who have started their home baking profession do not have received technical skill and knowledge based education, industrial training and experience to give their operation a professional touch it is only passion and hobby that makes them to be the home bakers.
2. Lack of investments leading to insufficient promotion and marketing budgets and small space and simple equipment are the major concerns of home bakers. The home bakers are aware of their investment problem and have planned to grow the business through systematic investments from their earnings.
3. Social media is a boon for the home bakers as it not only have given a free platform for promotion of their business but it is also a source of information which home bakers rely on for information related to latest trends.
4. There are irregularities in flow of business for home bakers for which they need to find new market where they will get continues business like small cafes and restaurants. They also need to make different baked goods and advertise them to the market as most of them rely on cakes as there major product. Adding more items like pastry products, cookies and artisan breads can open new markets to them.
5. Awareness about fssai licence is lacking in the home bakers, which requires to be addressed as having this licence will help them to reach larger market.

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## ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS INFLUENCE ON HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper seeks to explore the influence that social media has on the choices that consumers make with regards to decisions of the place that they would like to visit, savour food as well as helps generate revenue and build a brand image. Social media plays a major role in bringing numbers to the hospitality industry. It has made building relationships easier and marketing easier at much lesser cost than it was a half a decade before. The awareness and visibility that an organisation has today is widely due to the marketing, either directly or indirectly by social media platforms. Furthermore, attractive food and locale posts help create a factor which enables viewers to visit as well as upload their content which brings in more awareness, which was the outcome of this exploratory research. The result would be significant to hotel and restaurant owners as well as consumers who rely on social media while making a food choice.*

**Keywords:** Social media, viral food, branding, bloggers, customers and hospitality

### Introduction

Hospitality does not stop at hotels and restaurants; it has rather grown vast. It now includes tourism, IT sectors, Malls, Hospitals and more. With the boom in industry comes the challenge and competition. A race rather, a race to sustain and rise above the other. How do they do that, you ask? They market. Now the world does not have enough billboards to cover them all nor do the newspaper have enough space. It is the social media and the tech savvy generation that has taken over. 25 years back, painting of walls of houses and streets, flyers were pasted on public and private properties were in focus.

A decade ago, brands started to advertise their properties in newspapers and televisions. Tajness is one such video ad which was made by Taj group of hotels. Another popular mode of marketing was via pamphlets which is a practice still used. Previously pamphlets were distributed inside newspapers, magazines and another mode which is still practised today is, things have changed and dynamics as well, the way of marketing and the way consumers attract to a product are different too. Today, it is all about aesthetics, picturesque locations, trending items and Instagram-able life.

Today it barely takes hundred rupees to make a flyer and post it online. You can run ads and target your audience. The entire process at the most takes 6 hours and reaches as many as

millions. That is the awareness and visibility today's social media give.

Along with marketing, the audience is also interested to know who has visited the properties, who have posted pictures of it, who ate what. They look forward to seeing everything that has happened online with the brand or property. Every movement related to the property is closely observed and if it looks promising, the deal is then and there turned concrete.

### Objectives

- To learn social media's role in the hospitality industry.
- To analyse effective ways of marketing.
- To understand how it is different than other modes of marketing.
- To know the impact of social media on the audience.

### Significance of Study

- This study will help you understand how a little more attention towards building social presence on Internet can bring more value and money to the hospitality industry.
- It will help to analyse different social media strategies that will prove to be a blessing for hotels and restaurants to get more rev. and money wise

### Literature Review

(Gururaja, 2015) stated that the will to try a new place, food item or restaurant becomes more concrete after viewing the pictures posted on social media and that more than 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the online world population depends on social media to find eateries and hotels to cater to their needs.

(Lim, 2010) in his thesis mentioned that social media is here to stay, and it has the potential to highlight a business and achieve financial benefits. A dedicated team to handle social media is needed to communicate with potential customers and the organisation.

(Healy & Wilson, n.d.) This article reflects on the hotel reservations received with relation to the social media engagement that the hotel guest have undertaken. With the help of data mining, it ascertains the pre and post reservations made.

(Kushwaha & Sainy, 2018) states that digital media has taken over all businesses and industries, including the hospitality industry. Hotels not only engage with their guests via social media, but also aim at creating a brand for themselves.

(Seth, 2012) this article takes into consideration the consumer's perspective of the various channels of social media that have created an impact on the purchasing choices and brand imprint for an organisation.

Aswani & Gugloth (2017) states that the hotel sector in India has been rapidly growing over the years, alongside, social media has also been actively used by the service sector as a communication tool in India. In a country that has nearly 200 million active social media users, the growth of travel and tourism among the younger generation.

### Scope of the Study

This research focuses on how impactful and sustainable social media marketing is and how a strong social media presence of a brand is the need of the hour for the hospitality industry.

### Limitations of Study

This study focuses entirely on Hospitality industry; however, this can be used in any other sector.

### Research Methodology

**Primary Data:** Primary Data was collected from 118 respondents by circulating structured questionnaire and online interaction with general audience.

**Secondary Data:** Secondary Data was collected by referring various brand's social media presence, social media marketing strategies, print and published material, which was available in the form of e-books, webinars, e-journals, e-papers, etc.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

The questionnaire was circulated amongst 160 respondents where in 118 gave their feedback.

**Age:** Majority (70.3 percent) of the audience age is between 21 and 25 years.

On being asked how familiar they were with social media, 100% of respondents said they are well familiar with social media.

### Which of the following social media do you use more?

Instagram: 76; YouTube: 23; Facebook:12; Twitter:7 - To identify which social media platform can be more beneficial to invest in for the hospitality industry to which most of the respondents said Instagram and YouTube followed by Facebook and twitter.

### How many hours do you spend on the app scrolling in a day?

The analysis is categorised as per the amount hours spent:

3-5 hours: 37.8%; haven't timed but very often: 37.8%; 30mins to an hour: 15.6%; More than 5 hours: 11.1%

### How many times have you been influenced by a picture on social media and decided to go to that place or eat at that restaurant / try that dish?

To analyse the power and impact of a picture on respondents and the scale of profit a picture can give to the brand. 44.4% said Yes, sometimes they go to the restaurants to try that dish, another 33.3% said they Very often try out the dish they saw on social media or they go to that restaurant to try that and another 22.2% said they follow this all the time but neither of the respondent said they

don't get influenced by a picture on social media.

**Do you follow your favourite restaurant / destination on their social media platforms?**

To understand another means to connect with their customers other than newsletters, social media can be very personal and ease the communication on day-to-day basis.

46% of the respondents follow their favourite restaurants on social media platforms.

40% confess that even if they do not follow the restaurants on social media, they often check their profile if they have any new offers or to see what new is happening at the restaurants.

22.2% says they follow quite a few restaurants and travel pages on social media.

**Have you ever planned an itinerary looking at pictures on social media?**

77.8% people agree that knowingly or unknowingly they plan on visiting/ adding it in the itinerary as the picture/video gets stuck in their minds

13% say once they see something on social media, they create concrete plans on doing that. This could be anything, dish, restaurant, hotel or even a city.

11% of the respondents do not plan on experiencing what the picture is about, they just like to look at it.

**Have you seen trending food videos on social media?**

Social media has the power to make or break the brand's sales. Social Media is a very powerful and influential platform. A lot of the times a food video starts trending on social media and the response it gets from the viewer who want to try that dish helps the market understand the demand. More than 85% of the people are a fan of such videos. One of the respondent quotes "A lot! In-fact I inspire my cooking from those recipe"

**Have you ever felt tempted looking at the videos online example tandoori chai?**

To follow up with the previous question, how impactful are these trending videos.

51% respondents answered with 'Yes! Had to try' 15% say they tried and are still a fan of it.

20% do not consumed chai but still tried the trending tandoori Chai to know what the hype was about and only 22% said 'No! Haven't tried'

**How many viral food items did you try? (e.g. pull up cakes, pinata cake etc.)**

79: Yes; 24:No; 15: I wish too

79 out of 118 respondents have tried maximum viral food dishes like pull up cakes, momos, and fusion food. 24 of them have not tried any yet but they are looking forward to it and 15 have put this as their wish-list. This indicates the power of social media and how influential it can be.

**Do you check social media reviews/ tagged pictures of the brand before going to that place?**

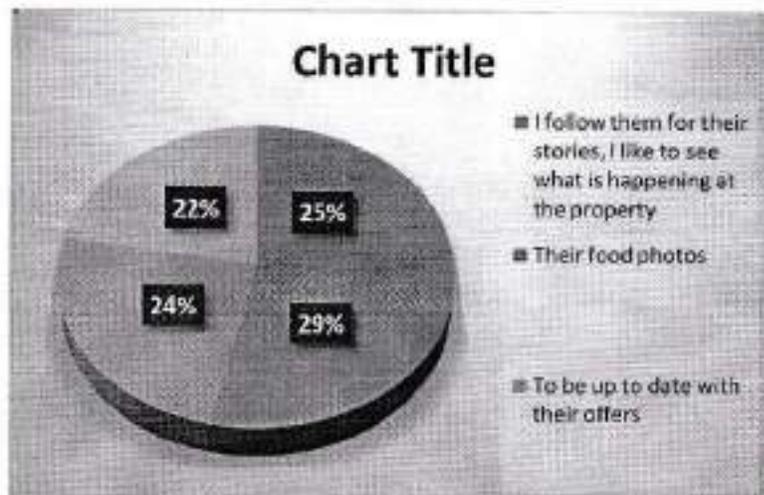
Alongside Zomato reviews and Swiggy reviews, Reviews on social media play an important role. 57.8% feel they get better insight on such platforms and almost check tagged pictures of the brand every time. 31.1% claim to check occasionally and 22.2% solely depend on tagged pictures and their reviews to decide to visit the restaurant. 2.2% says they do not believe strangers on the internet.

**On an average how many restaurants, food pages, travel pages do you follow?**

To analyse how many restaurants, hotel brands a respondent follows on social media, 60% say they follow quite a few. 13.3% say nearly 10 to 15 accounts. 17.8% say 1 or 2 and 8.9% claim to follow a lot of such brands.

**What matters to you when you follow a restaurant on social media?**

To understand what is it that the viewer wants from their favourite restaurant's social accounts, the respondents was asked what, is it that attracts them towards the brand and 28.9% said their attractive food photography of dishes, to learn what new good-looking dishes they serve. 24.4% follow them for their stories and daily active and to know what's happening at the property. 24.4% follow them to be updated with their offers and 22.2% for brand aesthetics and how well they manage and represent their brand.



### Conclusion

1. Consumers spend a lot of time on these apps. More often they are found browsing on these apps. When you advertise on big boards on signals and roads, it takes a lot of money and the attention span you get is very minimum, Where-as when you post on social media with right strategies, you get greater attention span, The viewer opens and stalks the profile, goes through all the pictures, and tagged pictures, Saves the posts, Shares the profile with the people they want to go with. All of this with minimum cost.
2. Aesthetic food posts have the potential to attract customers at your door, hence more revenue.
3. Customers are interested to keep in touch with their favourite places even after visits and look out for their social pages in hope to see what's happening at the property.
4. When a post is set up at a picturesque spot at your café or the view of the rooftop bar or simply about your property, even if the viewer is not from your city, He/she would unconsciously plan on visiting the brand of when in town.
5. Social media tells a lot about your brand and what to expect. Especially the tagged pictures and food posts. Being active and engaged with the customers is always recommended.
6. Looking at the statistics, customers are interested to keep in touch post their dine-ins at the restaurants too.
7. While starting a brand's social media, professionalism is key, pre-planning the feed using apps like preview or UNUM. Creating a content calendar, using trending hashtags, making attractive highlights and engaging stories, having a budget for food photography.

### Recommendations:

From all the above study, it is safe to say that social media plays a major role in bringing numbers to the hospitality industry. It has made building relationships easier and marketing easier at much lesser cost than it was a half a decade to a decade before. Being active on social media and interacting with customers, Uploading the restaurant's best dishes with descriptions/ captions that will tempt them to order food from the restaurant or visit them, Using the correct appropriate hashtags of around 20-25 with niche specific can help bring more attention and reach out to newer, potential customers.

Dedicating a budget to social media will give a good boost and is a long-term investment, Budget can include hiring a social media manager, Food photography, to run ads and influencer marketing. A lot of which of onetime thing and other can be combined.

How influencer marketing works in most of the cases, A restaurant invites a social media influencer, blogger to the restaurant to host them for a dine-in or in case of hotels, Stay which is on the hotel and the blogger or influencers are paid the convenience fees i.e., the travel fees in return of which the restaurant/Hotel asks for a few deliverables on the blogger's social media.

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## NEW TECHNOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS WHICH AID HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY TO DEVELOP A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT DURING CHALLENGING TIMES

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### Abstract

The world is on the threshold of recovering from the pandemic COVID-19. The pandemic has put the safety and security of the guests as a prime focus for every industry. The Hospitality industry is all geared up to welcome the guests while adapting to the newer technological trends which assure guest safety and security to handle crisis. The industry has realised the value of technology which acts as a catalyst in providing guest satisfaction while reducing the operational inefficiency. The Hotels which are quick to adapt to the technology would be ahead in the business as compared to the ones which are late. The reassurance of the technological applications at various touch points will add value and satisfaction from the customer's perspective. The industry has been quick to adapt strategies for efficient management of the crisis. Implementation of safe and hygienic practices to handle guests with inclusion of technology has increased. The staff has undergone systematic training sessions to handle any crisis situation. In this paper we would explore the new technological interventions which the Hotels have adapted to enhance value perception while assuring health safety and confidence. The adaption to the new technology is increasing the expectations of the guests and even the hospitality operators to add competitive advantage. The paper will carry a qualitative research to understand how the hotels adapt the new ways to deal with crisis which impacts the industry in the adverse manner. A study of literature from articles and papers in Scopus Journals, Web of science, Google Scholar, UGC Care journals, Previously publishes articles in leading Hospitality Magazines will be reviewed for the completion of the paper.

**Keywords:** Technology, Crisis Management, Hospitality, Competitive advantage, Pandemic, COVID-19.

### Statement of objectives:

-To understand the impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Hospitality

-To analyse the advancements of technology to provide touch less service and the use of technology for effective crisis management.

## Hypothesis:

H<sub>1</sub>. The Pandemic, COVID-19, has had an immense and adverse impact on the hospitality sector.

H<sub>0</sub>. There has been no significant impact of the Pandemic, COVID-19 on Hospitality

H<sub>2</sub> Hospitality sector has adapted the technology for better service and experience of the guests.

H<sub>0</sub> Technology does not affect the hospitality sector as it works on the principles of human touch and technology hasn't developed in the sector.

H<sub>3</sub> Hotels have adapted technology in the testing times to manage crisis and also sustain the business.

H<sub>0</sub> Hotels have no clear strategy to handle crisis.

## Research Methodology.

This study uses the evaluative research methodology to analyse the effectiveness of the technology in the crisis situations to make recommendations for the future of the Hospitality Industry. The basis of this paper is on the secondary data and the outcomes are qualitative in nature. Scholarly articles from reputed journals are reviewed and assessed for compilation of the data. The scholarly articles from reputed journals and authors from national and international repute have been reviewed. The work is also an outcome of articles and e newsletters published online. All the referred work is recent and most of the articles referred are published in the year 2020 which adds validity and recency to the work. A detailed questionnaire has been circulated to gain a clear understanding of the situation and the impact of technology in these crisis times. Responses from 45 industry experts and guests have been recorded and analyse for the purpose of this research.

## Introduction:

In December 2019, the world woke up to a virus which actually changed human beings drastically. The disease was described as an infectious disease that is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (Adim, et al 2020). The spread of the virus was very quick and soon the virus had spread to 196 countries in the world. The disease has greatly slowed down economic activities across the world, with many countries coming under partial or total lockdown (Oruonye, & Ahmed, 2020). Human being is a social animal, it is really difficult for a human to not indulge in activity which includes his/her close people, be it family, friends. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the world's economy was shut down almost overnight (UNWTO, 2020). In only a few months, the coronavirus (COVID-19) impacted the world, both socially and economically. As the hospitality sector thrives on international and domestic tourism, got affected severely due to the lock down which was imposed by many countries. Hospitality businesses are expected to make substantial changes to their operations in the COVID-19 business environment in order to ensure employees' and customers' health and safety, and enhance customers' willingness to patronize their business (Gössling et al., 2020). This actually has paved a way for newer ways of service and bring the confidence in guest. History has shown that a crisis can bring about technological innovation and development (Colombo, Shikha, Hasanat, Arif & Hamid, 2016). Due to advances in artificial intelligence (AI), miniaturization, and other technologies, robotics have grown increasingly more viable in hospitality and tourism industry settings to provide concierge, housekeeping, food, and other service tasks (Yu, 2020). The service industries

have come to recognize their potential for delivering an automated service to increase productivity, service capacity, provide consistent service quality, improve competitiveness, to cut costs, and improve financial results (Belanche, Casalo & Flavián, 2019; Ivanov & Webster, 2019c). For example, after the current pandemic (COVID-19) people may desire to have physically distant service which may not be possible with receiving service from human employees. Thus, robotics may increasingly gain importance in terms of providing physically distant hospitality and tourism services (Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2020). The hospitality industry is a dynamic environment in a constant state of movement and evolution. Through technology, the last several years have witnessed the industry change at an unprecedented pace (<https://tishoh.edu/>).

## Review of Literature

The outbreak of the new coronavirus infection, COVID-19 was initiated from the Hunan seafood market in Wuhan city of China in December 2019, and within a couple of months it turned out to be a global health emergency (Adim, et al 2020). This caused the countries to call a nationwide lock down, close national and international borders. As the situation is still recovering, travel restrictions are being observed at national and international levels. These travel bans, border closures, events cancellations, quarantine requirements and fear of spread, have placed extreme challenges on tourism and hospitality sectors (Gössling et al., 2020a, b). Air travel, for instance, has been regarded as an amplifying and accelerating factor for influenza (Browne et al., 2016) and this segment has witnessed significant curtailments as the need of personal safety and survival has become pivotal (Nicola et al., 2020). Social media is playing a huge role in today's world to connect with the guest and provide a clear and up to date information about their favourite brand, and the status of operations. The hotels are also using live promotions in many live streaming platforms to help their guests to get reliable, timely, accurate and reliable information about the hotel. The experience of the Covid-19 pandemic shows that robotic technology could be efficiently and effectively used for cleaning, disinfection, delivering food and medicines, or providing information related to the pandemic to people (Yang et al., 2020), as robots are not affected by the virus. The service of the food or any small housekeeping requirements can be delivered by robots to curb any contact of the human being and to spread the feared virus. To provide a suitable example, in February 2020 the food delivery giant Meituan Dianping introduced robots in some of its partners' restaurants in Beijing that helped in taking food from kitchens to delivery employees and customers waiting for takeout orders (Toh & Wang, 2020). If a guest is infected and is obliged to remain under quarantine in the room, a hotel may use robots to deliver food, linen, and other items, without risking the health and safety of the staff (Ivanov and Webster, 2018; Webster and Ivanov, 2020; Yang et al., 2020). In the post-viral world, the use of robotics may be widespread as people would be more concerned about their safety; safety and security may be one of the main factors that influence tourists' choice of a destination and particular tourism/hospitality service provider (Hall, Scott & Gössling, 2020). Hotel operators are beginning to pay closer attention to the potential benefits of artificial intelligence (AI) and its applications, such as robotics, in hotel management practices (Zabin, 2019). Although the hospitality industry is known for its human touch, such a development in technology will take some time to actually come in to existing at least in Indian business situation. The robotics would also require a huge investment from the Hotels end to be fully operational. Apps, such as Hilton's Digital Key app, allow hotel guests to choose their guest room, check in, and unlock their door using their mobile device (Comcast Business, 2018) Such apps can be developed to increase guest convenience and confidence.

## Data Analysis

According to the survey conducted for the specific research to understand the technological interventions in the Hospitality Industry, the respondents believe that the Technology does play a major role in the Industry.

The Impact of the Corona Virus has been one of the longest in the History of other Infectious viruses which has made the world to come to a standstill.  
45 responses



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

A total of 45 respondents participated in the survey and almost 70 percent of the people feel that COVID-19 has been one of the longest pandemic in the History of other pandemics in the world. There have been other Pandemics like the Plagues, SARS etc. but Corona has been one of the longest which has affected many lives across the world.

The Pandemic's Outbreak has been highly impactful for the Hospitality and Tourism Sector.  
45 responses



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

One of the most severely affected industry by the COVID-19 is clearly the Hospitality Industry. As this industry is clearly dependent on the domestic and international tourism, the lockdown and travel ban due to the Pandemic. Also the hospitality industry mostly depends on human beings for much of the service part. With number of people involved the risk of the infection is much higher and hence the industry had to pause its operations to ensure the virus does not spread due to the industry's characteristics of Human Touch.

Hospitality, being one of the most Human oriented industry, has been taking more cautious efforts to bring the business back on track.  
45 responses



- Yes
- No
- Maybe

It is very clear that the industry must be very cautious in resuming the business and bringing it back on track due to the nature of the Industry. The Industry has always been known for its service and human touch, and hence it becomes more important for the Hospitality to be more careful to resume business.

Technology will be one of the key factors for Hospitality Success post Pandemic.  
45 responses



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- May be
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Even though the Hospitality thrives on the Human touch and services offered are personalised, the technology has started playing a major role in the hospitality. Many of the services are now technologically enabled and provide a better option for the sector to decide the exact nature of the service which is required or would be required for the guests. This will further become necessary post the pandemic as many of the services required would be touch less, to add value addition and safety for the guests.

The Hospitality industry has been taking every possible precaution to ensure guest safety and health as responses



Strongly Agree  
Agree  
May be  
Disagree

The change in service delivery from manual to digital is slowly taking place in the Hospitality sector, which allows the sector to provide assurance of safety and security to the guests availing the services. The industry is taking steps to adapt technological interventions wherever possible. Self-check ins, check out kiosks, chat bots, smart key cards, access through guest mobiles are some of the key examples of the touch less precautions taken by the industry.

Hotels are using the social media to pass timely information to the guests, which will help the guest to bring their guests and even create a positive impact during booking times.



Strongly Agree  
Agree  
May be  
Disagree

Social media has been playing a major role in today's world. The Hotels too, are using these social media platforms to inform the guests about the timely updates of the protocols guided by the local governments, the social distancing practices being practiced at the hotels, the hygiene and sanitation measures taken, the common areas of the hotels, adaption of technology, special rates etc. The social media influencers too have a role to play in these times as the ones who have already witnessed the services by a specific hotels may put information about the hotels efforts to ensure safety and security may also help the hotels in big way.

Application of Technology in these times would assure guests about the precautions taken by the hotel for guest safety through touchless services, e.g. self-check in, check out, menu scanning on personal gadgets, sensor lightings, virtual tours etc.



Strongly Agree  
Agree  
May be  
Disagree

The technology would only add value when it comes to guest satisfaction and security. The guest would become more confident when the technological interventions would help him enjoy a seamless, happy and safe stay.

Technology can be very useful in providing seamless guest services.  
43 responses



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- May be
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Technology will add confidence in guest to avail services in a hotel in the post pandemic world.

Digitization of the process will help the hospitality organizations to manage their resources well and help maintain costs.  
43 responses



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- May be
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Digitization of the processes will also help hotels to manage their own resources effectively and help maintain the costs. Technological advancements like sensor motion lights, temperature control enables the hotels to save energy.

Technology allows the hotel to provide convenience to the guests.  
43 responses



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- May be
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

The guest services can be customized and can be served at the guest's convenience and need. The guests can use their own gadgets and use them whenever they need the services.

More innovations in the technology will ensure develop better features and services which will add value to the guests even post the pandemic.  
43 responses



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- May be
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Addition of technological interventions will only add value to the guest service. The hospitality sector will gain more advantage of security, safety and control with the advancements of technology. The advancements which are applicable in these testing times, will continue providing better experiences and guest safety even in the post pandemic world as the guests would become habitual to the technology.

Investment in the technology can add service quality and value for the hotel to keep ahead in the market segment.  
43 responses



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- May be
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

The hotels which adapt technology at a faster rate will remain ahead in the market as compared to the ones which do not adapt the technology as the services will become redundant and will need a upgrade.

Technology adds advantage of custom made facilities as they may be chosen by the guest on their own comfortable time and what exactly is required.  
45 responses



Strongly Agree  
Agree  
May be  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

Information can be used to develop better service and deliver satisfaction to the guest.  
45 responses



Strongly Agree  
Agree  
May be  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

The information received by the guests can actually help the hotel to design the services as needed by the guests. It also becomes important that this data is carefully used to share information about the hotel and the upcoming events and offers etc. Providing guest satisfaction by anticipation of the service need would actually be easy through technology.

Technology would be useful for efficient decision making with ease and precision for hotel units  
45 responses



Strongly Agree  
Agree  
May be  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

The technology can be very useful in handling crisis where human beings can do little. Touch less services, sensor lighting, robot concierge, mobile and gadget apps will enable the seamless service and will be able to sail through the crisis situations. Decision making through artificial intelligence would ensure accurate and effective measures are undertaken by the hotel, to assure safety and security for the guests and also for the staff of the hotel in testing times.

The pandemic has had severe impact on the hospitality services. The hospitality has been quick to realise the need for the technological interventions for providing seamless guest service and deliver satisfaction. The technology also helps curb costs and allow the managers to take a better control of the crisis situations as and when they arrive.

## Conclusion

COVID-19 pandemic has certainly affected the world. The Hospitality industry was the worst hit the tourism industry came to stand still and the operations became close to zero. With the hope of the vaccination, the hospitality started the operations with domestic guests. Technology was actually not new to the hospitality industry, but in this crisis situation, it became necessary for the hotel operators to adapt to newer trends in technology with clear intention of bringing the customer confidence back. In the past decade, the technology has evolved and has played a key role in the development of the hospitality and tourism sector. Adaption of technology has become mandatory due to the pandemic

and there have been many innovations and development in the technology. Along with the value addition, technology also adds sense of security and confidence. Technology has proved to be efficient, and accurate to provide guest service. Touch less services were introduced, to ensure reduced human touch. The customers' expectations also increase as the newer technologies evolve and this clearly create a demand for new innovations in the field of technology in hospitality sector. The customer is now dependent on virtual services and requires a higher bandwidth, a simple Wi-Fi system is no more sufficient and the hotel must invest in a good broadband bandwidth to suffice the load it would carry due to the virtual services. The menus are now easily accessible from guest mobiles or tablets enabling them to order directly. The trend will just keep growing with more additions and newer ways of contact less service. This pandemic has changed many things and people will have to now start living with the newer ways of life. The technology not only help tackle crisis but also improve and create new guest experiences that anticipate and meet evolving guest expectations.

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## RISE OF CLOUD KITCHENS AMIDST THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

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### Abstract

With the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic and normal life thus coming to a halt, the concept of cloud kitchen gained momentum. The purpose of this study is to ascertain the preference of cloud kitchens over restaurants during the pandemic. Food delivery globally has been experiencing massive growth, alongside rapid advancement in technology has given a further push to cloud kitchens. Additionally, the factor of hygiene and safety as a priority and changing sales strategy can further establish the vitality of cloud kitchens overall.

**Keywords:** Life in lockdown, cloud kitchens, ghost kitchens.

### Introduction

The concept of cloud kitchen is not a fairly new phenomenon, but has a high amount of investment that has steadily increased over the years. Pre pandemic, food orders and delivery were managed by synchronous modes of communication like over the phone, personal references, advertisements and flyers in local newspaper and online food applications. (Kitchens et al., 2021) As technology took over, the operations were mainly managed online, which provided an opportunity to anyone having a kitchen facility could cater to the demand through websites, online applications and food delivery partners.

The virus that took the globe in its grasp since its inception in early 2020 and the subsequent lockdown measures have seen a substantial shift in demand, from in-restaurant dining towards home-delivered food. Cloud kitchens have been key to facilitating this move.

### Cloud Kitchens:

Cloud kitchens are also referred to as ghost kitchens or virtual kitchens. Cloud kitchens by its virtue could be explained as a restaurant that does not have the capability of dine-in. It denotes a place where food is prepared and delivered at the door step by taking orders via calls and online ordering platforms. They do not primarily cater to dine-in services but are mainly into food preparation and delivery or liaise with food ordering portals such as Swiggy, Zomato, dine-in, in India (*Times of India*). Cloud kitchens offer varied meal plans, ranging from local, Indian specialties to global and even haute cuisine.

### Impacts of the change from restaurants to cloud kitchens

#### Making Hygiene and Safety a Priority

With maintenance costs further reduced, cloud kitchens have been investing more to ensure the hygiene and quality of the food and packaging, since the beginning of the pandemic (*India Today*). Kitchens are equipped with infrastructure and the staff is well trained to follow the guidelines provided by the governing authorities. Daily temperature checks for kitchen staff and delivery staff along with regular cleaning, and sanitization of equipment and workstations is undertaken to ensure that the food is not contaminated in any manner. In order to meet the timely and systematic delivery to the customers, cloud kitchens make use of FSAs or their own employees for a personalised touch. This coupled with the advent of contactless delivery has enhanced the safety not only of customers, but staff as well.

### **Suitable Conditions**

The restrictions on dine-in facilities for restaurants have completely changed in favor of food delivery (Gosai & Palsapure, 2020). Customers are heavily relying on food delivery apps for their needs. This is a growing opportunity for cloud kitchens, which can further expand to combine variations like standalone restaurants, multi-brand kitchens, or kitchens where restaurants can have the whole thing outsourced. The pandemic environment provides for a perfect opening to increase the market share of the Food and Beverage industry by making informed decisions taking into account the choices and needs of the customers. They can easily familiarize to changing customer preferences, which can lead to the rapid growth of cloud kitchens.

### **A Change in the Sales Strategy**

The universal strategy of offering coupons and discount codes is being changed with the assurance of the delivery of hygienic and safe food. In the current Covid-19 fright, customers look for the trust that can be guaranteed by restaurants if they can guarantee them that the food is made in the most hygienic conditions and is delivered to them with no scope for infection. Customers do not falter in paying the extra amount if brands can ascertain to them that their safety needs are the first priority of the restaurants and delivery agents (Jones, 2020).

### **Lower Costs and Better Margins**

The Food and Beverage industry has suffered economic losses like most industries during these troubled times, which is only getting worse with eminent lockdowns. Kitchens have to cut down on staff to maintain operations and are therefore preferring the cloud model since it only requires a minimal back-end staff, which is advantageous for both employers and employees in the present conditions (Chavan, 2020). Besides, operating cloud kitchens in the lockdown period is optimal, rather it has higher margins given the severe cost cuts in infrastructure and other dine-in facilities. With these margins they can redirect investments to increasing menus and offer competitive rates, leading to more revenue.

### **Change in Customer Demands**

Cloud kitchens can adapt to change in demands much faster than restaurants that have been switching to online delivery in the face of this pandemic. Cloud kitchens have an edge in providing facilities like better packaging and contactless delivery. With families spending time together in lockdowns, the ordering pattern has shifted towards cost-effective meals (Choudhary, 2019). Healthy and nutritious food have also seen a swell in demand, with people trying to live a healthier lifestyle. Cloud kitchens find it easier in giving in to such demands as compared to other restaurants that will lose out on income if they don't keep up with the changing demands. Food items that were earlier exclusive to the dine-in menu are now added to home delivery menus to attract more customers.

## Literature Review

Social media has been used most often in all of the cloud kitchen undertakings. This rise in use of social media has delivered an opportunity for the growth of cloud kitchen and the rise in number of potential customers. Cloud kitchens are known to attract customers for its unique dishes, the taste and quality of food, the variety in the number of fast food items offered and the hassle-free availability at the doorstep (Nitesh Chouhan, 2019). The Cloud kitchen concept is cost-effective, no-fuss and the eminent future is for home-delivery food and takeaway with the rise in restrictions put forth by governments for containing the pandemic. Cloud Kitchen enterprises advertise through social media marketing which is less costly as compared to big hoarding and billboards (Kumar, 2019). Cloud Kitchen as a concept is an emerging trend and modern phenomenon accepted around the globe quite readily. Compared to restaurants and fast food outlets CAGR (compound Annual Growth rate) is very noteworthy for cloud kitchen operations. Multi-cuisine restaurants and chains of restaurants have started implementing the concept of cloud kitchen to be in the competition. Takeaway food outlets that don't have the facility of dine-in within the premises, now have an option of setting up cloud kitchens. Cloud kitchen works as a food production team with space for food preparation and delivery at the doorstep of customers or takeaway by customers (H.M.Moyeenudin, 2020).

## Research Methodology

### Objectives

- To apprehend the need of cloud kitchens during the lockdown phases of the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- To explore customer preferences of cloud kitchens over restaurants.
- To identify and analyze the limitations of cloud kitchens.

The research involves both primary and secondary data. Specific procedures and techniques used to identify, select, process and analyze information about the topic.

**Primary data**-The primary data has been collected from people who order food online. A questionnaire was circulated which featured relevant questions for analysis of the topic chosen by me.

**Secondary data**-The primary data has been collected from the internet from journals, websites, pages, blogs, research papers and social media.

**Sample size**-The sample size of this research report involves 69 people who have been selected completely based on convenience and relevant to the study.

### Sampling method

Random sampling method has been used to collect the data through a medium of questionnaire.

## Data Analysis and Data Interpretation/ Findings



Figure 1

83% of the respondents know about cloud kitchens and have responded positively to the question, 17% respondents are unaware about what cloud kitchens are and hence have negatively answered the question.

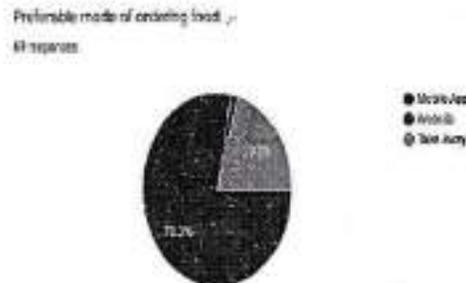


Figure 2

The highest number of participants i.e., 78.3% prefer ordering food through mobile applications. The other 20.3% prefer food take away from their favourite food joints. The remaining 1.4% participants prefer ordering food directly from the restaurants or food joints website.



Figure 3

Majorly participants prefer ordering food from restaurants. According to the data collected 73.9% of the participants order food from restaurants. Participants do order food from cloud kitchens but they are comparatively less in number. From the data there are 26.1% of the participants who order food do so from cloud kitchens.

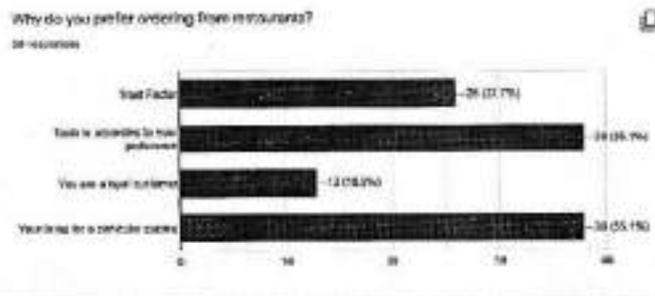


Figure 4

Looking at the responses above 55% of the participants prefer ordering food from restaurants because of their liking for a particular cuisine and because the restaurant food is according to their personal preferences for taste. 37% of the participants order food from restaurants because they trust the brand and the quality, taste and quantity of food they serve. The remaining 19% of the people order food from restaurants because they have been visiting a particular restaurant for quite a long time and are loyal customers.

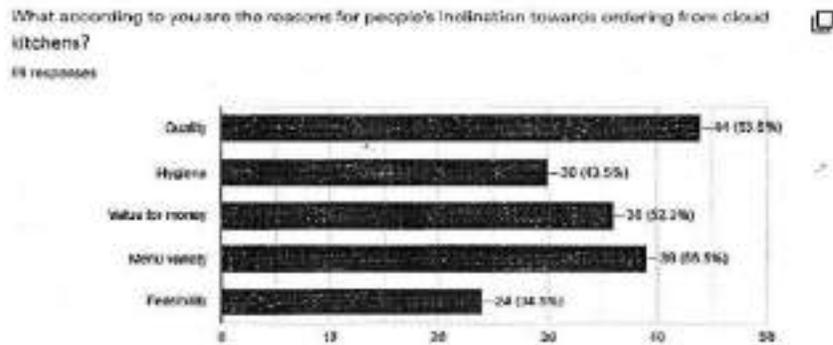


Figure 5

The major reasons why participants order food from cloud kitchens is because of the quality of food they serve, menu variety and value for money. Hygiene and feasibility are other reasons why participants prefer ordering food from cloud kitchens.



Figure 6

From the above data it is analyzed that cloud kitchens have gained popularity over restaurants when it comes to ordering food online. 79% participants agree to the question and responded positively. The remaining 21% participants responded negatively and saying restaurants still overpower cloud kitchens when it comes to ordering food online.

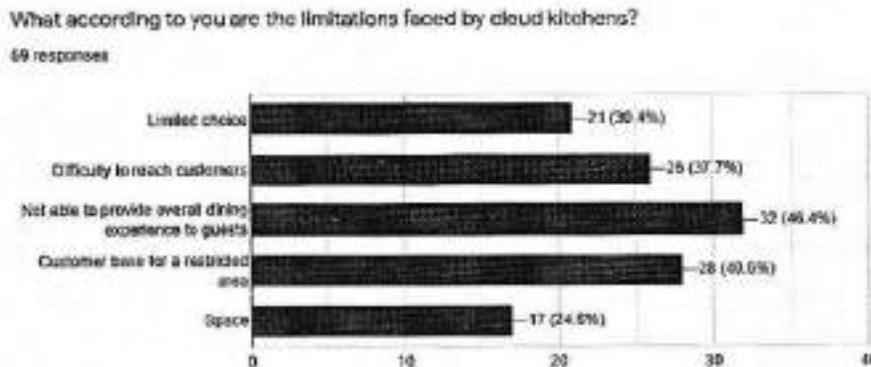


Figure 7

According to the responses received the major limitations for a cloud kitchen are that they are not able

to provide an overall dining experience to guests and they have a customer base for a restricted area. Other limitations according to respondents are that cloud kitchens face difficulty to reach customers, they offer limited choices of menu and it is difficult for them to find a space required to start a cloud kitchen.

Why do we need more cloud kitchens?  
69 responses

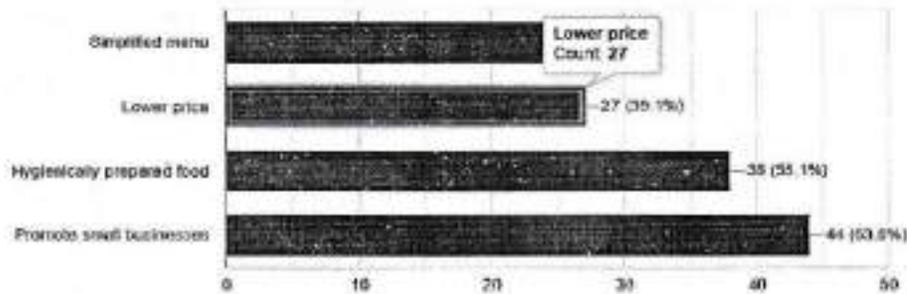


Figure 8

According to the responses there is a need for more cloud kitchens so as to promote small business in the city. 63% people say so 55% people say that cloud kitchens prepare food hygienically hence there is a need for more cloud kitchens. 34% participants say that cloud kitchens serve simplified menus. Simple and wholesome ingredients with no complexity is the main reason we need more cloud kitchens. Cloud kitchens have comparatively lower prices than restaurants as they have low operational costs. 39% participants have responded for lower costs.

### Conclusion

To conclude, cloud kitchens are a new concept which do not have a physical dining area but prepare food and deliver it through online delivery applications to their customers. Cloud kitchens have become popular during the pandemic as people had no dining options available. Cloud kitchens serve food with good quality, taste and that too at a reasonable price. Cloud kitchens have lower operational costs, lesser number of staff required, no restriction of space, no dining area to maintain and hence can offer products of the same quality but at a lower price than that of restaurants.

Setting aside all the odds cloud kitchens have emerged to be a tough competition for the restaurant business in the world and in India. They have made a space for themselves in the market and are serving customers. All this to the extent that restaurants started following their business model during the pandemic to vail away their daily operating expenses and earn minimum profits. This shows that every difficult time gives us an opportunity to upgrade and innovate ourselves and the one who changes with the time is sure to sustain in any given situation.

### Suggestions

- A limited choice of menu is a concern with customers, entrepreneurs can add menu variety for more customer satisfaction

- Since the customers have no access to kitchens there is a concern on the hygiene, entrepreneurs need to give customers the assurance of quality and hygiene, through ways of packaging and use of non-reusable containers, and vacuum packaging as this is need of the pandemic.
- Feedback from customers are important and implementing them gives an assurance to them and increases profitability.

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## THE EMERGENCE OF HOME-BAKERS AND THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BOOSTING SALES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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### Abstract

India is a country of varied culture and traditions, however this is the country which is always ready to accept, adapt and learn new things then let it be food, apparels, technology etc. It was a culture till the post-independence where the men were the head of the house and were responsible to get the earnings for the family, there is a sea change in all these traditions now, the family dynamics have changed over the years. There are a lot of technological advancements along with education what is observed these days, there is no skill or job which is restricted to a particular gender or age everyone is readily following their own passion in some way or the other, sometimes this passion or liking is also becoming a source of Income. This paper is about the emergence of Home-bakers and how the use of social media in the challenging times have helped them boost their sales. Pandemic brought the world to a standstill, but it also gave an opportunity for small time bakers and also budding entrepreneurs, to follow their passion and converting it into a business opportunity, it also saw a lot of use of social media for promotion and sales, but also faced a few challenges as lock down was declared and carrying out the task at times became difficult. This paper highlights how social media was a boon for the home-bakers.

**Keywords:** Home-bakers, Social Media, Pandemic, Challenges.

### Introduction:

The past year was a major destruction to the world in terms of health as well as business. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the lives of people in an immense way. People recognized their skills and talents, made use of the free time and developed their skills by learning more. This situation gave a rise to many small businesses, Home-Baking is one such small start-up which flourished during the lockdown. It all started when people started baking desserts for friends and families during the lockdown period. People started following the videos and tutorials based on baking to learn and master the skill. People from all walks, housewives, students, working professionals and even the experts started a small set up from home either to relieve stress, anxiety, upgrade the skills or to start a small business.

The clientele's preferences have changed to health and hygiene as there is an increased health risk and prefer home-baked products. Home-bakers offer a variety of dessert menu starting from brownies, donuts, cheesecakes, cookies, cupcakes to customized cakes including fancy decor, edible cake toppers, floral and wedding cakes.

The pandemic has given these emerging entrepreneurs an opportunity to reach the close circles, expand their reach to the local region. The social media has played a key role in making these home bakers a success. Social Media has helped them to attract the potential customers. Furthermore, along with the business home-bakers make use of these virtual applications to conduct workshops and showcase their work.

## Objectives:

- To understand the evolution of the Home-Bakers during the pandemic.
- To assess the challenges faced and measures adopted by the Home-Bakers.
- To recognize the use of Social Media for marketing of the baking businesses.

## Hypothesis:

- H<sub>1</sub>: The home baking business have flourished due to the pandemic and lockdown.
- H<sub>0</sub>: The Pandemic has had no significant impact on home baking business.
- H<sub>2</sub>: The home baking business has adversities to grow and has to make necessary adjustments.
- H<sub>3</sub>: The home baking business is easy and can be managed easily without any issues.
- H<sub>4</sub>: The social media is an effective tool for marketing for a home baker.
- H<sub>5</sub>: The social media is only used for socializing and isn't much use for marketing.

## Review of Literature:

Ritika Gupta, in her blog, Why Home Bakers are an edge over Commercial Bakeries (Feb, 2016) mentions that the market for high end cakes in and across the country is increasing at a very high pace. It is observed that people want customization and personalization of cakes and other baked delights as it seems to be out of the box. Home bakers have taken the market to next level for a number of reasons, such as, uncompromising quality. Home bakers ensure that all the products baked in their home-kitchen, is fresh and of good quality.

Home Bakers bake for household consumption and home baking entrepreneurs are the ones who sell their home baked products. (Seshavarthan V, et al, 2020). In a blog posted on *CNBC Make It* (March 28, 2020) titled 'Why everyone is #quarantinebaking their way through the coronavirus pandemic', Ms. Catherine Clifford states how people from all over the world have started home-baking as a stress reliever. Many have started using social media, to share their baked products and conduct a virtual conversation related to baking, with friends and families on a wide range, using the hashtags. *The Economist* (April 08, 2020) posted a blog on the Daily Chart section 'Home baking is on rise, Thanks to coronavirus lockdown' mentioning the increase in the sale of baking raw materials in France, according to Nielsen, a market research company. In an article from *The Print* (April 26, 2020) titled 'Indians in lockdown find a new passion in baking bread, and it's helping them beat the blues' by Ms. Fiza Jha, mentions that, let it be a supply chain issues or the need to overcome anxious energy, quarantined Indians are turning to the culture of baking bread. During the hard times of covid-19 pandemic it was noticed that a trend came into existence amongst the Indians – home baking. In a newspaper article from *Hindustan Times* (May 07, 2020), 'Sweet nothings: Home bakers whip up and deliver delights amid lockdown', Ms. Malika Bhagat has mentioned about the home bakers from Delhi who are facing a tough time to keep the business going on, to cater a high demand with limited resources / raw materials. Home bakers offer a special lockdown menu which consists of healthier or

keto desserts, keeping in mind the health and safety of the customers. The news article from *The Hindu* (September 17, 2020), 'Students around India are turning towards baking business: here's how' written by Ms. Padmaja Jayaram, states about the students who are utilizing the lockdown from balancing their studies and coming up with new experiments to set up a small business. In the blog from *restaurantindia.in* (October 27, 2020, 'How bakery industry is innovating during the Covid-19 pandemic', the director of Bomm Group of Industries, Mr. Amrinder Singh, has revealed about how the pandemic has helped the home bakers to get into focus and attract a number of customers. Offering healthy baked goods and unique products have assisted the home bakers to get business. The newspaper article published in *The New Indian Express* (December 25, 2020), 'Home bakers steal the show' by Ms. Deena Theresa, mentioned about the rise of home bakers and their growing business during lockdown. The home bakers who had their hands in the business even before the pandemic, noticed a great increase in their sale from mid of 2019. The increase in home bakers was also seemed to be a challenge for the ones who were already into this business, as the new home bakers offered products at a lower cost. The news article from *The Times of India* (January 02, 2021) 'Rise of the Home Bakers' stated how the pandemic and use of Social Media became a blessing for the Home Bakers. The social media has become a tool for advertisement. The pandemic had a great effect on several lives, thus to manage the stress and anxiety, people started to get into baking. In an article from *HospitalityWorld.com* from *The Economics Times* (May 17, 2021) 'The rise of home bakers amid pandemic', Ms. Sakshi Singh states about how the lockdown has pushed so many baking enthusiasts to start their own venture and convert their passion into profession. The bakery industry in India, is facing a robust growth of over 9% and was calculated to be USD 7.22 billion in 2018. It is clear that people prefer purchasing from clean, hygienic and trusted baker, for most, this could be a friend, relative or an acquaintance that they trust which automatically improves their market value. With an increase in the spirit of entrepreneurship, the scenario of home bakers in India looks quite promising. Speaking about the digital world, technology has been a big reason for this shift in the trend. A blog posted on *Barry Callebaut website*, 'Why people bake at home – Top 3 Home-baking trends' has mentioned why home baking is getting so much growth during the pandemic. This time, people utilized to bake sweets for their families and watched many baking recipes on the social media platform. The 3 main reasons for this are – Indulgence: Due to the lockdown, people tried their hands on baking. Health is the other reason/trend which has gained importance thus, people preferred home baked delicacies which offered them vegan and eggless options; Convenience is the ultimate reason. People need easy way to get their work done with high quality and quantity.

## Research Methodology:

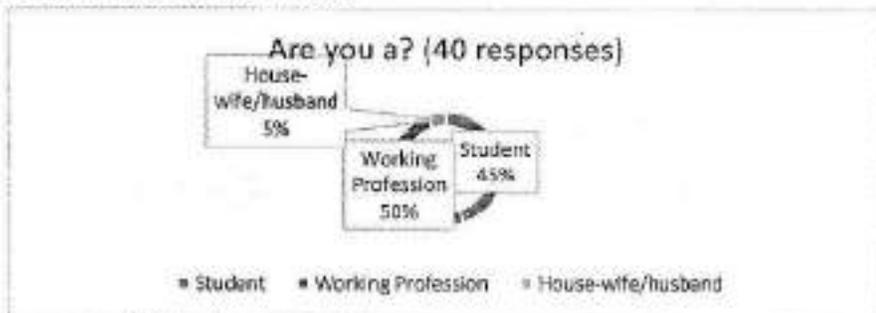
- Primary Data: The primary data was collected by circulating a structured questionnaire and interaction with the home bakers from all over India, majorly Pune and Mumbai. The questionnaire was circulated to 65 home bakers out of which 40 respondents gave their feedback and were able to help in the analysis of the data for the particular topic.
- Secondary Data: The secondary data was collected by referring various printed and published material, which was available in the form of official websites, E-paper, newspaper articles, blogs, etc.

## Analysis

### 1. Are you a?

It was also a very noticeable thing that 50% of the responses (20 numbers) were working

professionals from another field. 45% (18 numbers) were students and 5% (2 numbers) were housewives who had ventured into this are



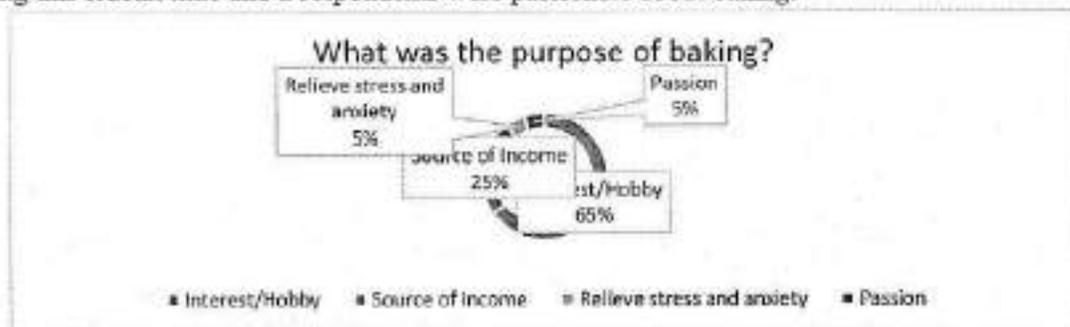
## 2. When did you start baking?

To identify when did the respondents actually start baking or thinking about getting into this business, the analysis for the same was 60% i.e., 24 respondents were already into this business even before the pandemic struck and 40% i.e., 16 respondents only thought or entered into the business during the pandemic.



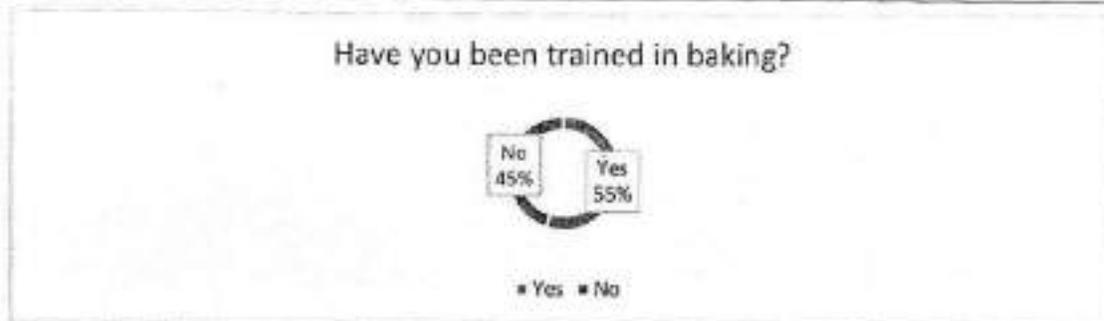
## 3. What was the purpose of baking?

Out of 40 respondents 26 were doing this as this was their hobby and liking, 10 respondents had this as a source of income, 2 respondents also mentioned baking helped them to relieve stress and anxiety during this crucial time and 2 respondents were passionate about baking.



## 4. Have you been trained in baking?

When the part of training for this particular business arises to adapt to the skills of baking, out of 40 respondents 22 had acquired training and 18 were not actual trained in the baking.



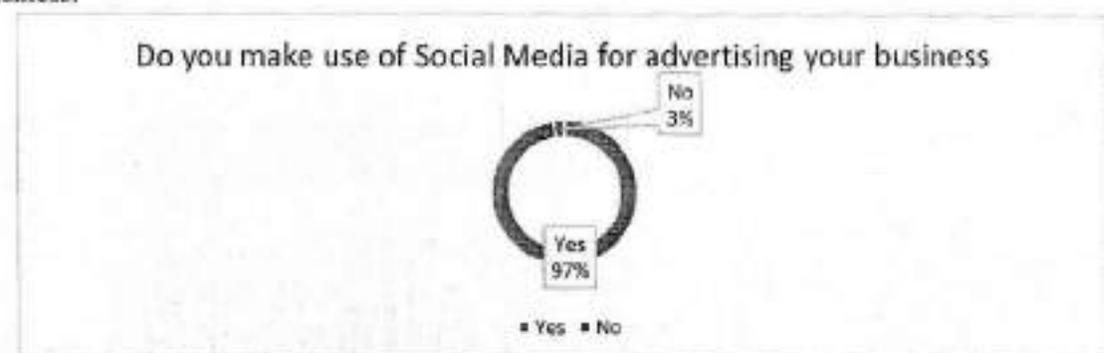
5. How did you come up with the idea of this business?

The graphical representation shows that the generation for this business came in from various sources for the respondents. 13 mentioned that the family was the motivation for them into this field, 14 of them converted their hobby into business, due to pandemic 7 of them started with baking.



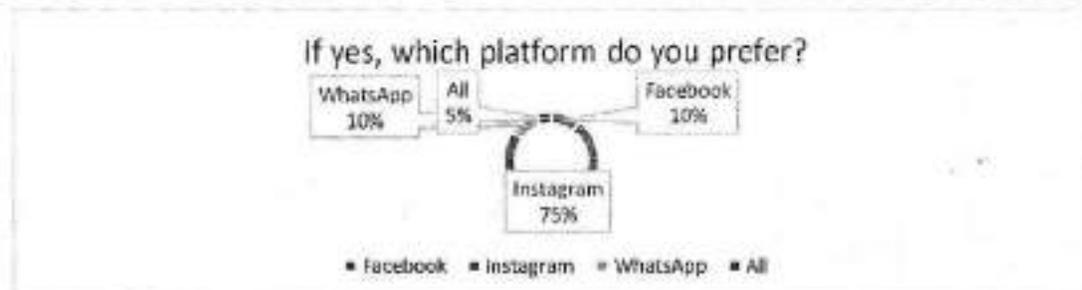
6. Do you make use of Social-Media for advertising your business?

Out of 40 respondents, 39 stated that they do use social media for the purpose of advertisement of their business.

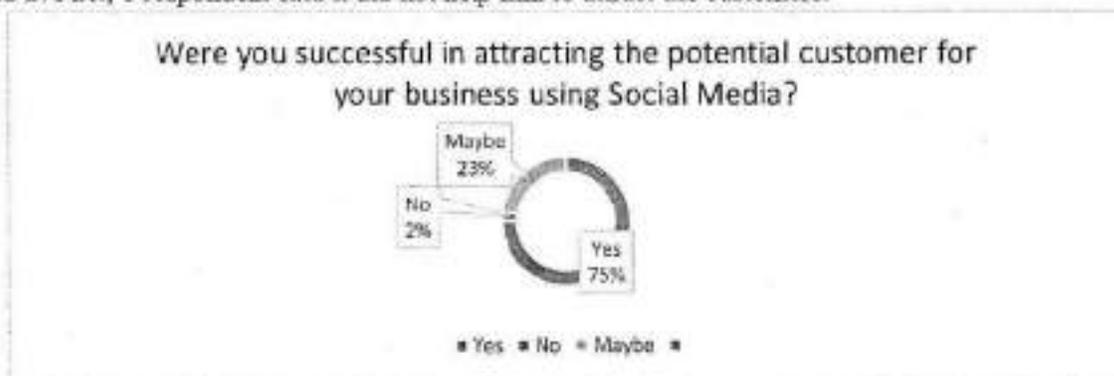


7. If yes, which platform do you prefer?

From the data collected it is seen that the respondents preferred various online platforms to showcase their products. Maximum respondents i.e., 30 numbers chose Instagram, 4 opted for Facebook, other 4 for WhatsApp and 2 of them prefer all the mentioned platforms.

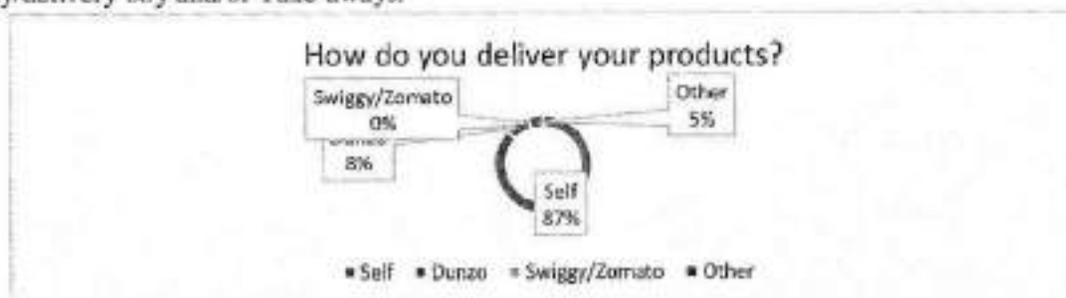


8. Were you successful in attracting the potential customer for your business using social media? 75% of the total respondents (30) found that social media helped them to draw attention of their clients towards the business, 23% (9) were not sure whether it was social media that helped them in the same and 2% i.e., 1 respondent said it did not help him to attract the customers.



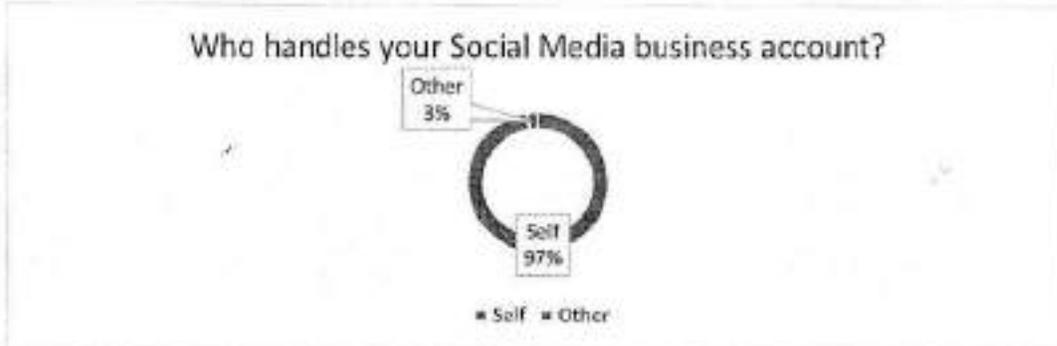
9. How do you deliver your products?

It is clearly observed by the pie chart that most of the home-bakers (21 respondents) self-deliver their products. 2 of them use Dunzo App, 14 respondents mentioned other options such as Faito, Uber, third party/delivery boy and/or Take-aways.



10. Who handles your Social Media business account?

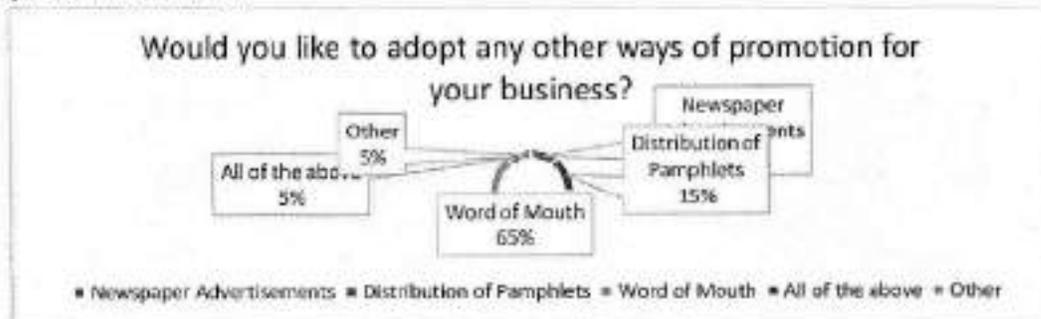
Most of the respondents, i.e., 97% handle their Social Media account by themselves. Only one respondent mentioned that the account was handled by his/her friend.



11. Is your business registered under Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)?  
When it was asked about the registration of the business under Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, maximum respondents (23 numbers) have FSSAI license and 17 respondents do not have any food license or haven't registered for the same.



12. Would you like to adopt any other ways of promotion for your business?  
When it came to different options to be used for the promotion of the business other than Social Media, the respondents chose various options. 4 respondents selected advertisement published in the newspapers, pamphlet distribution was selected by 6 respondents. Most of the respondents (26/40) chose the traditional way i.e., word of mouth as another option to promote their business. 2 respondents chose all the mentioned ways and 2 respondents gave suggestions like to promote the products in stores, cafes and bakeries.



## Findings

Though many of the home bakers were into the baking business, they have seen an increase in sales

during the pandemic. The home baking community consists of people not only from hospitality profession but also from many other fields, with about 75% people being from an age group of 21-30 years. It is observed that, out of the 40 responses received, 75% are female bakers, thus, it can be interpreted as the home baking trend is a female dominated area. The home baking community is mostly people who do not hold any professional certification. In other terms, many of them are self-taught bakers. Home bakers came into the market on a larger scale due to reasons like, market need, rise in demand for healthier products like gluten free, keto diet, sugar free products. The home bakers also faced some challenges in their business, majorly was related to availability of raw material, professionalism and shortcomings of knowledge in using social media as a tool for advertisement. Social media is also used for communication with the clients and to share various recipes and baking tips with the other baking enthusiasts. Few home bakers have a third party or a delivery agencies for the delivery. Majority of the home bakers manage their social media handles on their own, however there are few bakers who outsource social media handlers. Along with social media, some traditional ways of advertisements like newspaper ads, pamphlet distribution, word of mouth and promotion of their products through other established stores is also practiced by the home bakers.

## Conclusion

Home Baking as a business was existing since many decades. During the pandemic, home baking was still very ongoing business by many and welcomed by both the bakers and the consumers. This business has also seen a rise in trends related to styles, menus, presentations, themes, colour combinations, ingredients, etc. According to the NRAI Indian Food Services Report, the share of bakery and desserts in the foodservice market across different formats is 6%. And this number is likely to grow at a great pace, increasing the number of bakery shops in India. This can also be accounted to the fact that technology has enabled many home bakers to showcase their baking talents and run successful home bakeries.

In times of covid-19, many people identified their liking and skills which led them to get into this business. As every store, restaurants, etc. were shut down during this crucial time, the home bakers opened their doors for the customers. There were many reasons recorded by these home bakers to come in business such as – passion into profession, source of income, few also mentioned baking as a meditative therapy to relieve stress. The home-baking market is increasing on a greater pace with the assistance of digital marketing. Social media plays a vital role in the advertisement and promotion of the products to boost sales. The trend has now turned many enthusiasts to take up the baking as a profession for the full time.

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## **Certificate of Publication**



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Professor

Maharashtra State Institute of Hotel Management and Catering  
Technology-Pune

**Has published a paper entitled**

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**“TO UNDERSTAND THE CHALLENGES FACED AND REMEDIES ADOPTED BY  
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### **Introduction**

Maharashtra is one of the states of India which is blessed with a scenic and serene coastal area, very prominent and popular amongst the weekenders and family tourists, it has also observed a lot of infrastructure development in last decade. The locals have always been very hospitable and have adopted various strategies for promoting tourism in the this belt. They have always been showcasing and promoting their local cuisines and culture and the alternative form of tourism i.e. Homestays have been one of the most preferred accommodation facilities amongst tourists both domestic and International. The destinations along coastal belt is well connected by roads and rails. Tourism over here has seen a footfall all round the year but most busy season starts from March.

And Beginning of 2020 was no different until the Pandemic started showing its signs . The alarming spread of the coronavirus infection (COVID-19) has affected the world, especially hitting the tourism and hospitality industry most severely. Unexpected travel restrictions and border closures for most countries across the world have caused millions of livelihood and jobs lost. Because of COVID-19 Homestay business was also affected from February 2020. Bookings were initially suspended via online and travel agencies till the March 2020. The revenues have been so seriously hurt that it was difficult to pay the staff and utility bills. Homestays were trying to create a model that would allow tourists to enjoy the quintessential homestay experience, while also ensuring the safety of both guests and hosts. Both staff and

visitors were put through thermal screening. Few Homestays also created separate entrance for guests.

A Home-Stay, by its combined words (home stay) is staying in some one's home as a paying guest for short time period, guests are provided accommodation and services by individual family and community too. Therefore, the Home- Stay Regulation has accepted it as run (managed) by an individual or community. The Home Stay seeks to draw tourists away from posh and crowded urban areas to the rural locality full of splendid natural surroundings, by providing them with clean, comfortable and budget-friendly accommodation and food. Thus, homestay offers the traveller a unique local experience and possibilities of interaction with the host family. It offers the chance to experience new and untapped places which has enabled the government to popularize new tourist destinations, and provide alternative source of income to the rural folks. In home stay tourism visitors get a chance to spend time with the family observing their customs, values and culture, which gives them the opportunity to feel the taste of rural life.

The main objectives of this research paper, is to provide an overview of the challenges faced and remedies adopted by Homestays operators, pre and post pandemic. Because of pandemic, Homestay revenue were affected , to recover and deal with future challenges homestay had to optimize cleaning strategy, rework with the existing layout, create a mini market for essential to avoiding movements of tourist, take advantages of new marketing channels, seek diversification, improve sanitization, self-care, hygiene standard as per WHO, etc.

#### **1.4 Objectives:**

- To understand the concept of Homestays.
- To identify the change in operations of Homestays.
- To analyse the sustainability of homestays in future market.

#### **Literature Review**

1. Sandeep Kulshreshtha and Ruchika Kulshreshtha (12th August, 2019) author of 'The emerging importance of "homestays" in the Indian hospitality sector' talking about the benefits of homestay tourism from the perspective of homestay stakeholders and the impact on economic, social, and cultural life, as a result of growth in the homestay concept and also the rising trend toward homestays. Author also mentioned about the homestay means they provides travellers a sense of feeling at home, guest will interact with the host family, first-hand relationship with locals, also experience the local culture, and it's a low-cost accommodation so homestay is affordable for everyone.
2. The newspaper article in The Hindu (13th March, 2020) 'Homestays gear up for hard times' written by M. P. Praveen, presents the current scenarios of the homestays in India. "The future hardly looks bright though mixed fortunes appear to be

in store for homestays in the district. Usually, homestays record 70% occupancy during March. But this time it has gone down for majority of homestays with the future bookings not looking that bright," said by the M.P. Sivadattan, He is a director of Kerala Homestay and Tourism Society. Usually the rooms were full till the end of March. But because of COVID-19, business were affected since February 2020. Remaining bookings also got suspended via online booking and travel agencies which was done for the month of March. 'The revenues have been so seriously hurt that it would be hard to pay the staff and utility bills', said by one of the homestay operator. Some homestays also voluntarily chose to block the bookings till March 31 for the safety purpose of family. But at another side one homestay operator chose to take bookings, he have bookings by foreigners till March 15,2020 after that they were mostly expecting domestic tourists till the airports are not get closure.

3. Jiang Yangyang (30th April, 2020) as mentioned in the Shine news that 'How homestay industry survives after COVID-19' and also gave some suggestions for the industry to recover and deal with future challenges like have do optimize cleaning strategy in which he written that safety and health were highly valued by consumers following the outbreak. Specifically, more than 90 percent of potential customers were concerned about hygiene in rooms and the health of service staff. Therefore, homestay businesses should optimize and advertise the cleaning process to reassure customers. For example, they may use multiple media such as websites, WeChat and live streams to show their cleaning and disinfection procedures. In addition, they could also provide a "reassurance card" in rooms which have record of the cleaning times and the temperature of the housekeeping employee. Rework with the existing layout means they may adjust the layout of public areas by increasing the space between chairs and tables, using screens to divide public areas, and allocating or limiting the time public spaces could be used. Create a mini market for essential to avoiding movements of tourist. Take the advantage of new marketing channels i.e. Social media platforms, webcasts and online videos have become popular channels for marketing promotions. Homestay businesses should increase brand awareness by sharing the homestay experience through live broadcasts. Seek diversification because diversification could enable homestay businesses to withstand risks and uncertainties. Specifically, the coronavirus pandemic has made the public adopt healthy lifestyles, which facilitates the development of rural tourism and ecotourism. Therefore, the rural homestay industry should launch experiential products that focus on meditation and returning to nature. For urban homestay businesses, launching long-term rental products might be an option for diversification. They may also share spare rooms and public spaces with other enterprises during the off season, for instance, by jointly creating a wedding venue. Improve sanitization, self-care, and maintain hygiene standard as per WHO in Homestay for safer stay of guest.

4. The newspaper article in The New Indian Express (17th June, 2020) 'Homestays stare at a bleak future' written by Gautham S., presents that the lockdown affected the tourism industry badly. Most of the homestays were run by the elder people. Hence, they were afraid to take in guests due to fear of the pandemic. Though the

government allowed all homestays to open from June 8, it came with conditions like all hotels and homestays should have thermal scanner and should only accommodate one guest per room as per the guidelines. In the current situation, homestay owners cannot even afford the thermal scanners because of no business and less revenue. Ganesh House Homestay, run by Manoj M P, is one of the most popular homestays in Kovalam. Manoj has been awaiting guests from April. He said that the homestay was started by his parents as a source of income during their retirement life. During peak season, they make a profit of 30,000 per month. Though many enquiries have been coming, they were scared to take any bookings. If a guest is infected, the entire family will have to go under quarantine, forcing the homestay to shut down too as per the guidelines by government. Many foreigners who visit Kovalam every year were ready to come back if flight services restart. But if the outbreak was not contained soon, several owners will have to migrate to other businesses. One of the homestay operator, Rita Madhukumar, who runs Rita's Homestay in Varkala, said they get enquiries from tourists within the state. But they also were not taking any bookings because of COVID 19. Another homestay operator, Sivadathan said that homestay owners will have a tough season this year. Even if homestays start taking bookings, neighbours may raise issues due to fear of the pandemic. They can only sustain in this business if the government supports them in this situation. Because almost 10 per cent of the state's total income comes from tourism sector. Hence, the government should act to sustain the tourism business. Even auto rickshaw drivers, cab services and small shops depend on the tourism sector. The government should give long-term interest-free loans to homestay owners to revive their livelihood.

5. The blog was written by the Karan Kaushik on the official website of Outlook Traveller (27th June, 2020), 'While some homestay owners have already hosted guests since they reopened, others are still fickle minded about opening their doors for tourists'. Homestays were trying to create a model that would allow tourists to enjoy the quintessential homestay experience, while also ensuring the safety of both guests and hosts. One homestay operator said that both staff and visitors will be put through thermal screening and every room will have facemasks. Also, they were created separate entrance for guests. They also made changes in cooking style, nowadays guest will self-served their food which create home away from home feeling. They were requesting to their guest to promote their rural tourism business and also guest were supporting them by sending their relatives and friends and some of their regular clients will also be coming to stay at his destination. The operator belongs to a family of traditional weavers and aims to preserve the dying art of interlock weaving through his homestay. They make beautiful durries and their guests love to participate in the weaving process and learn about their art. They also organises village walks, wildlife safaris and sunset treks for their guests. Some homestay have long staying guest so they were provide kitchenette for them and encouraging their guest to cook food for themselves. Some other homestay operator said that homestays were not their only source of income. They also do farming, wool work, and they take people on treks and expeditions. These activities help them to sustain in this situation. They were making short videos and trying to explain the guidelines in a simpler way to other people.

6. 'Emptied by COVID, homestays find the going tough' this article is written in The Hindu Newspaper, by John L. Paul (1<sup>st</sup> August, 2020). He mentioned in the article that the homestay sector, which along with Ayurveda and backwaters played a key role in putting Kerala on the 10<sup>th</sup> best global destinations in all over the world. Pre-COVID figures put the number of homestays in Kerala at over 1,500 and 500 of them were classified by tourism agencies based on the amenities they provide. Most homestays in locals like Wayanad and Idukki managed to weather the COVID-19-induced storm since their owners have at least 50 cents of cultivable land, where they grew vegetables, tapioca and other essentials. But homestays at heritage zones in West Kochi, on the Marari beach, and numerous other spots are severely affected since they were situated in three to five cents of land. Most of the homestays were operated by the elderly couples who invest their life savings in getting their house readied as good lodges for tourists. Foreign tourist also banned in India because of COVID 19 so this also hit them hard and the maids and other staff for cleaning and cooking also not coming since march. Declaration of containment zones also made the situation worst for the homestays. In this situation, homestay have to pay commercial tariff towards fixed charges of power, water, etc. this will be complicated because they have no business as well as less income. Some homestay owners have found a way to sustain in the crisis by trying to rent out their facility to returnees to Kerala who have to be on quarantine. But they are stopped by neighbours. People considered as they were COVID-19 carriers. Few homestay have opened their gates for foreigner tourist who were there in Kerala. Those tourist were helping them in cooking and also played indoor games. They also did the farming in the compound during their stay.

7. The blog was written by Sanna Nalwalla (10th September, 2020) on the official website of whats hot, 'Before You Plan a Holiday Go through These New Homestay Guidelines in Maharashtra'. As per the guidelines issued by the Tourist Department for Homestays, all travellers checking in will be screened at the entry point and only asymptomatic travellers will be allowed to enter. Room service will be contactless by leaving the food outside the room doors and all the communication between the staff and guests should be carried out via an intercom or a phone call. If guests move around on the property, they need to be wearing a mask at all times. CCTV cameras at all accommodation units must be fully functioning to monitor the guests.

8. 'Post Covid-19: Developing a Homestay Business by Adopting a Social Entrepreneurship Approach' this article is written by Mohd Mushin Ismail (13th September, 2020). He mentioned in the article that, to make the homestay industry more competitive after the COVID-19 outbreak, they have to adopt a social entrepreneurship approach. The Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malpaysia (MOTAC) and its agency responsible for developing the home stay industry. The homestay industry have to improve their economy, then they become more competitive in this business.

9. The blog was written by Tania Tarafdar (25 September, 2020) on the official website of Curlytales, 'Indians Prefer Homestays over Hotels as Safer Option amid COVID-19 Pandemic'. She mentioned in the blog that the pandemic has hit the travel and tourism industry so severely that it could take years for the industry to revive.

Tourist prefer homestays over hotels because Homestays were perceived as contactless, cleaner and more isolated where Hotels have a huge turnover of guests. A lot of customers at check-in and check-out in the reception, and hence, people would feel much more safe and comfortable staying at short-term rentals like vacation homes. Homestays were going to be a new normal in the coming times. Apart from the crowd, the location of the property also matters to the guests. Also Homestay Hosts were Marketing Themselves as COVID-Friendly and in this situation sanitisation is most important because of this guest were attracted towards the homestays. The homestays in India were continually adapting by ensuring the public health guidelines which is given by the Health Ministry of the Government of India, as well as provide exceptional experiences to their guest.

10. Binita Chakraborty (2020) mentioned in the Research paper, 'Homestay as a reliable promotional tool for Cultural Tourism and Security in Indian context' that Homestay could be a potential component when cultural tourism were concerned. It adds authentic sociocultural richness to the tourist's experience. A prerequisite for tourism is development of cultural resources which are in abundance in India. Homestays were an attractive alternative tourism product to portray the cultural richness in India. It appeals more often searching for local lifestyle experience, novelty, personalized service, and authentic social interactions.

11. 'Airbnb partners MTDC to promote state's unexplored tourist destinations' this article is written in The Economic Times Newspaper, by Gaurav Laghate (11th November, 2020). He mentioned in the article that, the American tech-hospitality platform Airbnb will promote homestays and bed & breakfast (B&B) tourism, which will help enhance the economic prospects as the benefits of tourism will reach many more communities. Airbnb has partnership with the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) to promote nearby travel-to destinations in the state, which are off the beaten track and offer a unique experience to the travellers.

12. The article was written by Mandeep S. Lamba and Dipti Mohan (28<sup>th</sup> March, 2021) on the official website of HVS, 'Homestays in India are Gaining Popularity in the Post-COVID Era'. They mentioned in the article that the popularity of homestays has increased manifold in the post-COVID era when social distancing, cleanliness, hygiene, and privacy have become the top priorities for travellers. With the advent of the 'work-from-anywhere' environment, homestays at motorable destinations from city centres have been witnessing exponential growth in the past one year driven by long-stay, staycation and workstation packages because Homestay has less touch point and less footfall compared to hotels. In the past few years, an increasing number of international and domestic travellers in the country have been preferring cosy homestays over conventional hotels in their quest for authentic, local travel experience. The homestays segment is still at a nascent stage and is highly unorganized, with the presence of very few branded hospitality players, especially in the luxury segment. The Indian government has over the years provided several incentives such as subsidies and relaxation in licensing rules etc. for homestays as it helps in promoting eco-tourism, rural tourism and improves the socio-economic conditions of the region by creating

alternate income for the local communities. More recently, the Ministry of Tourism also introduced training workshops to enhance the hospitality skills of homestay owners in the country. This initiative is also creating awareness amongst local communities about the benefits of homestays. Developing a good quality homestays network can help in tapping the full potential of leisure tourism in India in the future. A growing number of travellers are seeking 'memorable experiences' at previously unexplored leisure destinations in the post-COVID era. There are several such unexplored and underdeveloped hill stations, wildlife sanctuaries, beaches and heritage sites in India which can be developed into established tourism destinations but are lagging due to lack of quality accommodation. Homestays can help bridge this gap especially at places where developing a hotel can be commercially unviable due to the high land and construction costs and the tedious approval process. Developing a luxury homestay at such locations will be a better value proposition due to lower overhead costs and higher profitability compared to a regular hotel and will also help in the holistic development and growth of the destination itself.

### Concept of Homestay

There is a saying in India, "Athithi Devo Bhava", which means "The Guest is God". Indians consider it a huge honour to have guests in their home, and go out of their way to please them. There's nothing like Indian hospitality. Sadly, most visitors who come to India and stay in hotels never get to experience true Indian hospitality. The good thing is that all this is changing as a result of the growing popularity of homestays in India.

Home Stay refers to book accommodation to anyone's residence outside his own local community that allows the tourist to experience a different lifestyle, authentic culture or even language. Here in the host community offers their furnished accommodation to tourist packaged with a personalized, homely hospitality which is authentic to local habitat. The infrastructure like amenities, living space etc. is shared with the tourist such that they can enjoy a homely hospitality. To make it an experience, the offering is usually packaged with meals, utility items and even allowing them to participate in their local festivals. Homestay packages are highly customizable based on the preference of any individuals based on the length of their stay or even extended or long stays unless specified by the host.

Apart from accommodation, the Home Stay offers various activities for the guests to exclusively experience the cultural nuances of the area. Activities could be different from one home to another, which depends on the position of the geographical area. Instances like at a home stay in Thailand offers tourist to interact with monks, participate in nature tours, learning how to weave silk or cotton cloth, participating in agricultural activities, learn a specialized local skill such as cooking Thai Cuisine. Likewise in Japan one can learn craft of doll-making. Similarly, in India many Homestays in Kerala offers serene experiences of houseboats sailing around backwaters through narrow canals in canoes. In some of the Homestays in Rajasthan offers safaris by jeep or camel rides into the countryside, interact with tribes and to face-off with wildlife. In the hill stations, treks are offered by the host or tourist are engaged for nature

walk to experience flora and fauna of the habitat. Few host family also hosts guests to take them around the sights of their town or village, sharing local history and insights and an experience far removed from the usual tourist trudge.

The home stays are not just a regular holiday which to spend a few days to exploring the local area, they are a holiday destination in themselves. Homestay tourism can occur in any part of worldwide; residents of homestay countries can encourage the host community in order to develop their tourism industry. Also as a concept homestay can brings people from varied backgrounds under a single umbrella, quite literally, and can offers an ideal platform for long lasting sustainable development in society and in tourism business.

The word Home-Stay as a combined words 'home & stay' is replicates that staying or loading in somebody's home as a guest by paying some monetary value or book a room on rent basis for some specific tenure. Guests are offered accommodation with some other necessary services by specific host family and community. Thus, the Home-Stay tourism or business has managed by an individual host or community. The 'Home Stay' gives tourist to experience far away from busy, hectic, and crowded infrastructural urban areas to the peaceful calm locality with full of splendid natural surroundings, by offering them to stay in natural, clean, comfortable and pocket-friendly accommodation and authentic local food. Thus, homestay provides to the tourist an inimitable authentic local experience and the charming interaction to the local host community. It opens the possibilities to understand a new and untapped place which the government enable to promote widely as a new tourist place and arrange for an alternative source of income to the rural host population. In home stay tourism visitors get an ample of chance to spend a quality time with the local family observing their customs, values and culture, which is an excellent opportunity to feel the taste of rural life. India is one of the famous destinations for homestay tourism for its culture, heritage and geographical land. The environments along with culture are inseparable in tourism business. Market value of this homestay business has been grown up with the demand of visitors. This business offers financial reward and monetary help to the local native community for restoring, protecting and conserving the environment and their indigenous culture. We can count tourism as a component wherein development is concerned, giving importance to discover the ways of expanding constructive impacts and reducing damaging impacts. To minimize the-rural poverty and reverse migration homestay tourism can play a significant role. It assimilates many type of activities like trekking, cultural tourism, agro-tourism, health tourism, and ecotourism. Homestay business is known for good source of income generation as well as making foreign currency. It helps to increased tax revenue in the particular country also upsurge to economic development of the nation and creates the employment opportunities and helps to overcome with poverty reduction. It may also stimulate new markets for local community to show case and trade their local products, for example agricultural products, crafts and others. The progression of tourism business can help to increase the literacy rate. Also with the growth of tourism can motivate people to obtain for higher education and look for new jobs and livelihood. This community development can lead to the upcoming generation to feel the hunger for redefine and reclaim their cultural and ethnic identity. But the main concerns are giving training in hospitality and basic skill of local tour guiding to the local so that they could optimized the opportunity of the homestay business. Also provide them the opportunity to

educate about the safety, security, basic hygiene, tourism as a business and conservation of environment techniques.

Homestays offer several advantages such as exposure to everyday life in another location, opportunities for cultural diplomacy, friendship, intercultural competence, and foreign language practice, local advice, and a lower carbon footprint compared to other types of lodging; however, they may have restrictions such as curfews and work requirements and may not have the same level of comfort, amenities, and privacy as other types of lodging. Independent travellers typically arrange homestays via social networking services.

The family provides to the guest a decent room, attached toilet, toiletry kit and breakfast. This is why the facility is also called Bed and Breakfast. The guest may avail of other meals - lunch, dinner, snack- at an extra cost, if the family agrees to provide these. Evidently, the family would expect advance notice for cooking/serving such meals.

#### • **Benefits of Homestays in India**

There are a number of reasons why staying at a homestay can be preferable to staying in a hotel. The benefits include:

1. **Distinctive and Characterful Accommodations** -Homestays offer an unparalleled opportunity to experience the incredibly diversity and delights of India. The options are almost endless and include plantation bungalows, historic havelis (mansions), forts, and remote rural cottages. One on hand, it's possible to stay with a royal family. On the other, a tribal family. There's no better way to interact with Indians from all walks of life!
2. **Personalized Service** -In contrast to a hotel, a homestay usually only has a few rooms. The family who resides there runs it, and acts as host. This guarantees that guests receive plenty of individual attention. You can spend as little or as much time with the host family as you like. Some guests choose only to dine with them, while others spend hours chatting to them. Regardless, staying with an Indian family is the easiest way of finding out about Indian culture. Many guests and hosts find that they bond with each other so much, they keep in touch long after the vacation is over.
3. **Safety** -If you are a solo female traveller who is visiting India for the first time or are simply concerned about staying safe, you will have a family who looks after you at a homestay. They will provide you with advice, and may even pick you up from the airport or provide a car and driver.
4. **Local Knowledge** -The wealth of information that the hosts have about their local area makes deciding what to see and do a breeze. Such local knowledge is extremely helpful in getting the most from your visit. Many hosts are delighted to show their guests around their local area, providing them with invaluable insights that simply aren't available from a guide book. Hosts usually have reputable contacts and can assist in making travel bookings too.

5. Home Cooked Food -There's a huge difference between the Indian food served in restaurants and hotels, and the food that's cooked in an Indian home. By staying at a homestay, you'll be able to taste authentic Indian home cooked food, made to order. It's a lot lighter, and has more variation and flavour than restaurant food. Some homestays even welcome their guests into their kitchen, and let them watch and participate in the cooking process.
6. Unique Activities -As a guest at a homestay, the focus is on you, and your likes and preferences. The hosts are typically very accommodating and will put a great deal of effort into arranging activities that are of interest to you. These activities will vary depending on location. Exploring a coffee plantation, watching a polo match in Rajasthan, herding animals in remote northern India, village visits, picnics, and temple tours are just some of the options. Guests are often invited to attend weddings as well.
7. Celebrating Festivals -The ideal way to celebrate India's many festivals is with an Indian family. You will gain a deep appreciation and understanding of what the festival is about, as well as get to participate in the rituals associated with it. This is particularly the case during Diwali, which is a special family festival.
8. Getting Off the Tourist Trail -Homestays are commonly located in residential neighbourhoods, rather than tourist areas. This means you will be away from all the tourist traps, touts, scams and other hassles.

Staying at a homestay in India is all about immersing yourself in India, rather skimming over it.

- **Government of India Ministry of Tourism Guidelines for Homestays:**

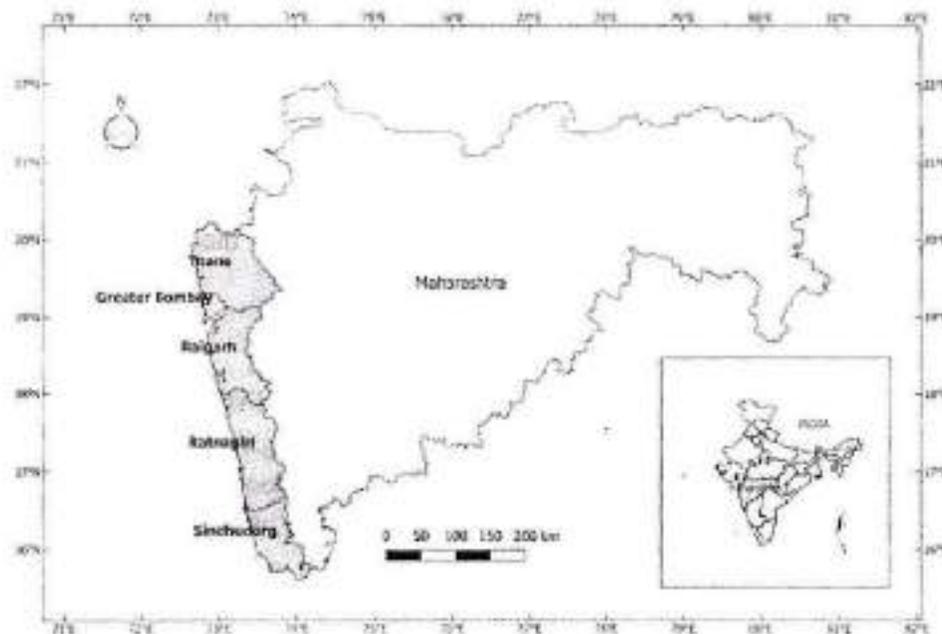
1. The classification for Incredible India Homestay Establishment will be given only in those cases where the owner /promoter of the establishment along with his / her family is physically residing in the same establishment and letting out minimum one room and maximum six rooms (12 beds).
2. The scheme will be on bed and breakfast basis and charges will have to be levied accordingly. The type of breakfast to be offered will have to be specified, the charges will have to be displayed and the visitors will have to be informed in advance so as to avoid unnecessary dispute.
3. The rate of taxes for property, electricity and water to be paid for classified Incredible India Bed & Breakfast Establishments and Homestay Establishments will be those prescribed by the appropriate authorities.
4. An Incredible India Bed & Breakfast Establishments and Homestay Establishment will be classified following two stage procedure.
  - a. The presence of facilities and services will be evaluated against the enclosed Checklist.
  - b. The quality of facilities and Services will be evaluated by the Regional Classification Committee. Due preference will be accorded to the homes, which are able to provide Indian experience by way of Indian

## Coastal Region of Maharashtra

### Geographical Location:

Maharashtra coast is popularly known as 'Konkan'. The Konkan with an approximately 720 km long coastline and a narrow coastal plain stretching from north to south is a distinct physiographic region of Maharashtra (India). The coast lies to the west. On the east, the Konkan is separated from upland Maharashtra by the west facing escarpment of the Sahayadri mountain range. Plateaus and hills dominate the landscape in the narrow stretch of land between the coastal plain on the east and the Sahyadri on the west. It comprises the coastal districts of Thane, Raigad, Greater Bombay, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg. The Shoreline is generally straight. Apart from the beautiful beaches and island forts, the coast is also well known for fruits - mangoes, cashew nuts and kokum-which in turn attracts a lot of tourists and traders. The area is also notable for its unique coastal and marine biodiversity.

### **MAP of Maharashtra (Coastal districts are highlighted)**



(Ref. [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Maharashtra-coastal-districts-are-highlighted\\_fig1\\_326251714](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Maharashtra-coastal-districts-are-highlighted_fig1_326251714))

### **Tourism destination of Konkan Coast:**

The beauty of the Konkan coast doesn't really need many depictions as the beautiful sea beaches, delicious seafood, splendid ruins, and gorgeous waterfalls make it even more stunning. Tourist can never stop admiring the beauty of this place that has plenty of beautiful places they can explore on vacation. Close to the top cities like Mumbai, Pune, Konkan coast is an ideal weekend getaway destination. However, they may find it hard to select places that will be safe after the global pandemic. So here there are 10 beautiful places in Konkan coast tourist can visit for a thrilling experience on next trip.

#### **Alibaug:**

Alibaug is the one of the best places to visit in Konkan because of the mesmerizing beauty the place offers. Tourist can visit Alibaug Fort, Magen Avot Synagogue, there is also Siddheswat Mandir and Kanakeshwar Mandir where thousands of pilgrims come and visit throughout the year. Konkan coast is popular for exotic beaches and find some of them here too, Tourist can take a stroll on those virgin beaches here including Kashid Beach, Nagaon Beach, Akshi Beach, and so on.

Added attractions: There are several homestays in Alibaug that offer the best hospitality and modern amenities, along with delicious seafood cuisine, and for the adventure lovers, there are water sports to enjoy.

#### **Ratnagiri:**

Immensely popular for the delicious Alphonso mangoes that are produced here, this place home to the hilly Western Ghats and the gorgeous Arabian Sea, making Ratnagiri an ideal weekend holiday destination. Apart from the natural aspects, Ratnagiri also offers a lot of water sports and will offer a relaxing holiday in the lap of nature.

Added attractions: Guhagar beach and the Ratnagiri lighthouse are some attractions near the beaches, and also the Marine Biological Research Station, Thibaw Palace, and the birthplace of Bal Gangadhar Tilak are there that have made Ratnagiri one of the beautiful places in Konkan coast.

#### **Sindhudurg:**

Sindhudurg is one of the most popular tourist places in Konkan and is mainly significant for Chhatrapati Shivaji's fort with the same name that is an amalgamation of elegance and antiquity. According to the locals, Chhatrapati Shivaji's hand and footprints are still conserved here. There are some other places worth-visiting like Kunkeshwar, which is a gorgeous temple dedicated to Lord Shiva and Tarkarli, which is a beautiful beach in the region.

Added attractions: This place should be visited during winter to get the best Scuba-diving experience in winter near the fort. Malvani cuisine is extremely famous over here along with the Alphonso mangoes.

**Dapoli:**

Situated on the Sahyadri hills, this hilly town is often called "mini Mahabaleshwar" because of its pleasant climate that stays the same throughout the year. Among other tourist places in Konkan, this place gets attention from history lovers. The history of British settlements before independence is a theme that attracts tourists from all across the country, with so many beautiful beaches around, this is one of the ideal places to visit in Konkan coast.

Added attractions: Ancient temples such as Keshavraj and Vyaghreshwar Temple can be found here which some major attractions in Dapoli are making it one of the beautiful places in Konkan. In addition to this, the forest trekking experience and Dolphin sightings are some fun things tourist can do besides enriching there self with culture.

**Harnai:**

While talking about the best places to visit in Konkan, this place shouldn't be overlooked. Even though it is located in Dapoli, Harnai deserves a special mention because of the splendid sea beaches, the virgin coastline, and magnificent locations it offers. Tourist would get to experience authentic Konkani hospitality, in Harnai. There are some villages that are slightly low-key and hence people can get the opportunity to enjoy the bliss of solitude near the beautiful sea beaches such as Ladghar, Kelshi, and Anjarle.

Added attractions: The warm hospitality of this small town is the major attraction for all the tourists. Also, Parshuram Bhumi and Suvarnadurg are there which offer a wonderful trekking experience.

**Mahad:**

Mahad is home to Buddhist Gumpas and Maratha forts that make this place one of the most ancient places to visit in Konkan coast. The town possesses a touch of ancient history as this city used to be the capital of the Maratha Empire under Shivaji. Because of the frequent floods, the area resembles a triangular peninsula with water on three sides.

Added attractions: Gandhar Pale Buddhist Caves, Raigad, Pratapgad, Birwadi, Warandha Forts, etc in Mahad that will reminds the history of Maratha Empire.

**Kelshi:**

This small village in Dapoli taluka is still untouched by the harshness of city life and famous for the beach it has. Utambar Hill reaching the Arabian Sea at this place, along with plenty of flora and fauna, making Kelshi a picture-perfect landscape.

Added attractions: Apart from the gorgeous beach, tourist will find multiple varieties of the Kingfisher bird in this area, along with mangroves and coconut plantations. If tourist visit Kelshi during winter, they fall in love with the majestic sight with hundreds of migratory birds that can be spotted here making tourist holiday more special.

**Roha:**

Roha, which is located between Kalasgiri hills and the Kundalika River, has become a popular tourist destination over the years. This small town of Ratnagiri district is famous as a haunted place. The village also offers activities like river rafting, etc.

Added attractions: Tourist can take a trekking experience to the Avchitgad Fort ruins, visit famous monuments like The Dhavir Temple and the Bande Ali Shah Dargah and also enjoy the stunning view from the top of Hanuman Tekadi.

**Amboli:**

Located right before the borders of Goa, Amboli is a blissful getaway destination and one of the top tourist places in Konkan coast. The hill station has a variety of flora, fauna, and stunning views. As per some locals, there are supposed to be around 108 Shiva temples, which are still being discovered until recent years.

Added attractions: The beauty of this small hill station gets enhanced during monsoon, with lush green hills and waterfalls around.

**Chiplun:**

This place is the abode of Parshuram and hence a very sacred place among the locals and tourists as well. There are several temples in Chiplun to discover the time of Parshuram. Even though the weather is pleasant throughout the year, the beauty of this place gets enhanced during monsoon.

Added attractions: Apart from temples, also visit The Pandavas cave, Narayan Lake, and Kalwande Dam are some famous spots. Enriched in mythological aspects, tourist will get to spend an eventful holiday in Chiplun.

**Homestay in Coastal region of Maharashtra:**

An ideal destination for the nature lovers, it also entices a large number of visitors who yearns to explore and discover the region's authenticity. Irrespective purpose of visiting, the homestays in Konkan always serve as ideal retreat to all the visitors to this region. Homely ambience, warm hospitality, plenitude of things to do and the other offerings of these homestays make them ideal for the visitors.

Out of the many Home Stays of Maharashtra, the Konkan region is the most understated. And Ratnagiri is its crown jewel. Ratnagiri is that one place that silently invites the tourist and it is also home to one of the most breathtaking home stay near Mumbai.

Sindhudurg in South Konkan is renowned for its authentic homestays that attracts experiential travellers from all over. These homestays offers guests authentic local experiences in culture, cuisine and from where guests can explore beaches around the area.

Ref <https://www.slideshare.net/HolidayIQ/hiq-home-stays-trends-and-patternsfinalv3>

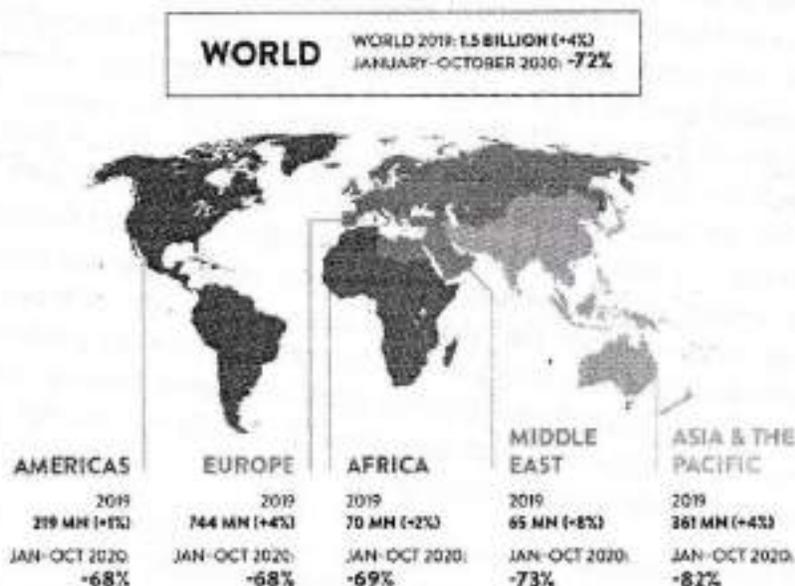
## **Impact of Pandemic on Tourism Industry**

In the past decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and became one of the fastest growing economic sectors globally. The sector witnessed a 59% growth over the decade in international tourists' arrivals from 1.5 billion in 2009 compared to 2.4 billion in 2019. Tourism is also a key driver for socio-economic progress, with tourism specific developments in an increasing number of national and international destinations. Globally, the tourism industry contributed to \$8.9 trillion to the global GDP in 2019 equalling a contribution of 10.3%. It is also to note that 1 in 10 jobs around the world is in tourism, equalling 330 million jobs. However, the strong historical growth has been halted in 2020 amid the global Covid-19 pandemic. With airplanes on the ground, hotels closed and travel restrictions implemented, travel and tourism became one of the most affected sectors since the very start of the virus spread. The pandemic has cut international tourist arrivals in the first quarter of 2020 to a fraction of what they were a year ago. Countries all over the world applied travel restrictions to limit the coronavirus spread. Airport closures, the suspension of incoming and outgoing flights, and nationwide lockdowns are just some of the measures that countries are implementing in an effort to help contain the pandemic. After the spread of the pandemic in the first two quarters of 2020, at least 93 percent of the global population lived in countries with coronavirus-related travel restrictions, with approximately 3 billion people residing in countries enforcing complete border closures to foreigners.

The world is facing an unprecedented global health, social and economic emergency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Travel and tourism is among the most affected sectors with a massive fall of international demand amid global travel restrictions including many borders fully closed, to contain the virus. According to the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, International tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) fell by 72% in January-October 2020 over the same period last year, curbed by slow virus containment, low traveller confidence and important restrictions on travel still in place, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The decline in the first ten months of the year represents 900 million fewer international tourist arrivals compared to the same period in 2019, and translates into a loss of US\$ 935 billion in export revenues from international tourism, more than 10 times the loss in 2009 under the impact of the global economic crisis. Asia and the Pacific saw an 82% decrease in arrivals in January-October 2020. Data on international tourism expenditure continues to reflect very weak demand for outbound travel. While demand for international travel remains subdued, domestic tourism continues to grow in several large markets such as China and Russia, where domestic air travel demand has mostly returned to pre-COVID levels. UNWTO expects international arrivals to decline by 70% to 75% for the whole of 2020. This would mean that international tourism could have returned to levels of 30 years ago. Looking ahead, the announcement and the roll-out of a vaccine are expected to gradually increase consumer confidence and contribute to ease travel restrictions. UNWTO's extended scenarios for 2021-2024 point to a rebound in international tourism by the second half of 2021. Nonetheless, a return to 2019 levels in terms of international arrivals could take 2½ to 4 years.

# 2020 INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ARRIVALS

JANUARY-OCTOBER



SOURCE: WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION SURVEYS, DECEMBER 2019

(Ref. <https://www.unwto.org/impact-assessment-of-the-covid-19-outbreak-on-international-tourism>)

The lockdown due to the pandemic has affected the tourism industry across the globe, and the hotel sector is among the hardest hit. Global hospitality data company STR compared 2020's first quarter status to 2019 figures, hotel occupancy rates dropped as much as 96% in Italy, 68% in China, 67% in UK, 59% in USA and 48% in Singapore. There's no doubt that the hotel industry has witnessed a severe impact by the pandemic and the lockdown status. The hospitality industry is likely to be hit hard. March has borne the brunt of many large-scale cancellations across the corporate, MICE and leisure segments. Tier 2 and tier 3 hotel markets in India continue to witness a small erosion in business. Occupancies in at least the first half of March were only partially lower despite the spread of the virus in some states. Restrictions placed on travel and stay-at-home orders issued by the authorities led to sharp decline in hotel occupancies and revenues. However, the reopening process has slowly begun and authorities have started to ease restrictions, for example, allow dine-in restaurants to reopen at a reduced capacity with strict social distancing guidelines, and gradually reduce restrictions on domestic and international travel.

## Data Analysis

### **4.1 Research Methodology:**

- **Primary Data:** Primary data was collected from respondents by circulating structured questionnaire and interaction with Homestay operators.

Questionnaire circulated to the 30 homestay (coastal region of Maharashtra) out of which 15 respondent gave their feedback and were able to help data analysis for the given topic.

- **Secondary Data:** Secondary data was collected by referring various print and published material, which was available in the form of e-books, official websites, e-journals, e-paper, etc.

**Sampling:** The Coastal region of Maharashtra was considered for the project, and the age group of the respondents was 30-60years. Totally there were 15 responses which were received for the same.

### **4.2 Analysis and Interpretation**

#### **Profile of the Homestay Operators:**

**Sex:** Majority (93.3 percent) of the Homestay operators are male.

**Age:** Regarding the age, majority (86.7 percent) of the homestay operator's age is between 30 and 40 years.

#### **About the Homestay:**

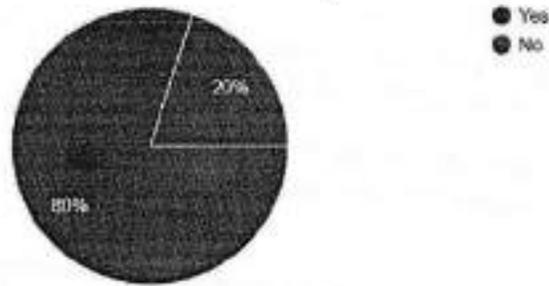
##### **1. How long have you been in this tourism business/ Homestays?**

15 responses



**Analysis and Interpretation:** Out of 15 responses, the question asked for how long have they been in this tourism business of homestays out of which , 33.3% homestay operators mentioned that they are doing this business from 10 to 15 years and 66.7% homestay operators mentioned that they have recently started this business i.e. from 5 to 10 years.

2. Is this your Family Business?  
15 responses



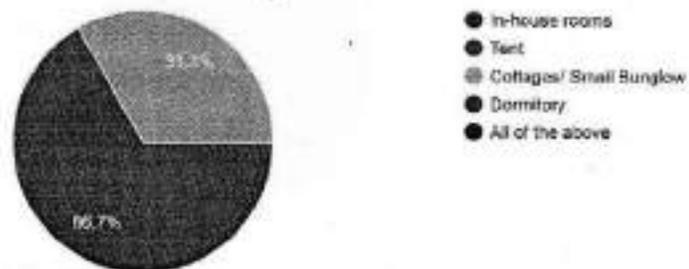
Analysis and Interpretation: This pie chart contains, 20% operators have started this business recently and 80% operators its their family business.

3. Do you personally operate your business or it is outsourced?  
15 responses



Analysis and Interpretation: All the 15 responses, operate their business on their own.

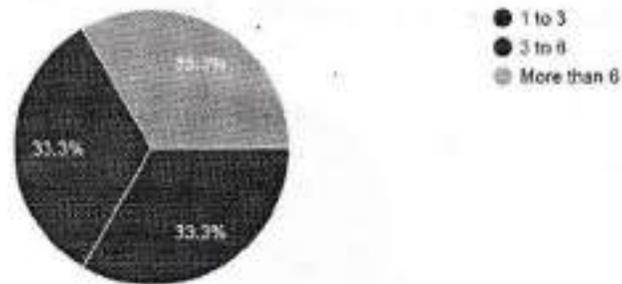
4. What are the various accommodation facilities available at your destination?  
15 responses



Analysis and Interpretation: Various types of accommodation facilities are available at homestays in the Coastal Region. 5 operators have mentioned that cottages along with small individual bungalows are available at their destination. 10 operators have mentioned that accommodation is provided in the extra rooms that are available in their own residences but exclusively let out for homestays business.

**5. The total number of rooms available at your establishment?**

15 responses



**Analysis and Interpretation:**

The availability of rooms at the coastal region was minimum 3 and ranged up to 6 however the bungalows which were available had a provision of minimum 3 rooms within and was preferred by families who like to stay together.

**6. Approximate area of the room?**

15 responses



**Analysis and Interpretation:** As homestay is opted by both families and solo travellers minimum area offer was 70sq.ft. Per room to 200sq.ft. Per room.

**7. Is your home stay accessible for differently abled guest?**

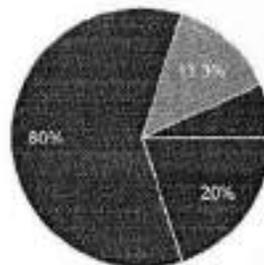
15 responses



Analysis and Interpretation: Out of 15 responses, only 9 operators have made their homestays accessible for differently abled guests

**8. What are the facilities provided for differently abled guest?**

15 responses



- Wheelchair and step free access
- Wheelchair Accessible Room
- No facility for abled guest
- No

Analysis and Interpretation: As we mentioned facilities provided for differently abled guest, 60% has mentioned that rooms are easily accessible by the wheel chair, 20% has mentioned that property has wheelchair and step free access, 6.7% never had facility for differently abled guest.

**9. Has pandemic affected your business?**

15 responses

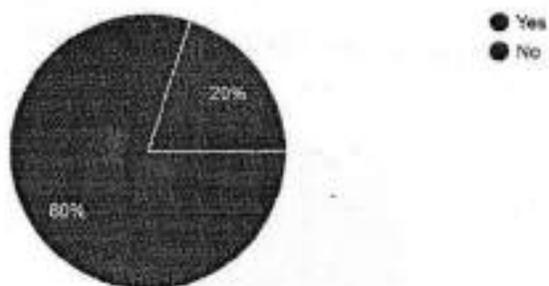


- Yes
- No

Analysis and Interpretation: All respondents mentioned that they have been severely affected due to the pandemic.

**10. Is there a change in the facilities/ amenities due to pandemic?**

15 responses



Analysis and Interpretation: Out of 15 responses, 12 people have said that they have changed their facilities due to pandemic. 3 respondents haven't changed the facilities.

**11. Were you placing any amenities before pandemic?**

15 responses



Analysis and Interpretation: Out of 15 responses, 13 responses have been placing amenities before pandemic.

**12. Amenities/ Facilities which were available/provided at your establishment before pandemic ?**

15 responses



Analysis and Interpretation: The question asked to the respondent regarding type of amenities/facilities provided by their establishment before the pandemic. So Out of 15 responses, maximum respondent said basic toilettries were provided by them to the

guest, 3 people said that they had AC rooms , 5 homestays had the luxury of Swimming pools.

### 13. Facilities provided by your establishment before pandemic are?

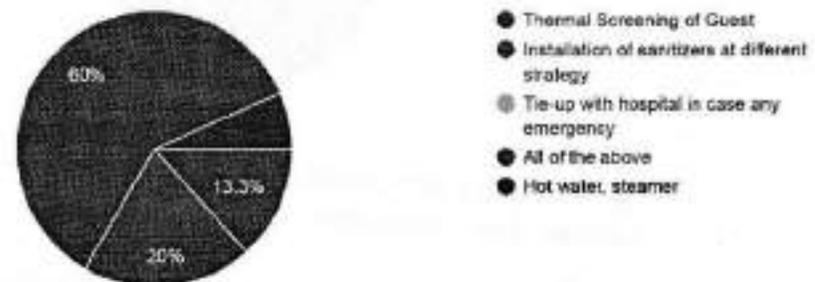
15 responses



Analysis and Interpretation: Facilities provided before pandemic, out of 15 responses, 10 respondents mentioned that their homestays were providing free parking facility to the guest. 2 respondents were providing free Wi-Fi facility, 3 mentioned the homestays had all the facilities above but also included a kitchenette for guests convenience.

### 14. Precautional Facilities provided by your establishment Post pandemic are?

15 responses



Analysis and Interpretation: Out of 15 responses, 9 homestays have said that they were providing all the facilities after the pandemic like thermal screening of guest, Installation of sanitizers at different strategies, Tie-up with local hospitals in case of any emergency, Provision of Hot water, steamer, etc. 3 homestays have mentioned that they have only install sanitizers at different strategies. 2 homestays have mentioned that they have only thermal screening facility. 1 homestay mentioned that they have only provide hot water, steamer and could not provide other.

**15. Do you critically follow the safety and precautionary measures?**

15 responses



- Yes
- No

Analysis and Interpretation: All 15 Homestay operators were aware and following the safety and precautionary measures.

**16. Have you trained your staff regarding safety and precautionary measures taken for COVID-19?**

15 responses

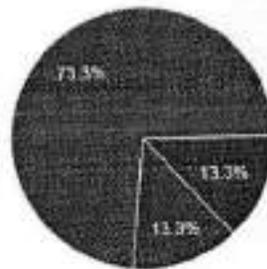


- Yes
- No

Analysis and Interpretation: All 15 respondents have mentioned that they have trained their staff regarding safety and precautionary measures to be taken for COVID-19. Local Grampanchayat helped to train homestay staff for the safety and precautionary measures by providing them guidelines documents and giving them demo for the same.

17. What are the safety and precautionary measures followed in your establishment for COVID-19?

15 responses

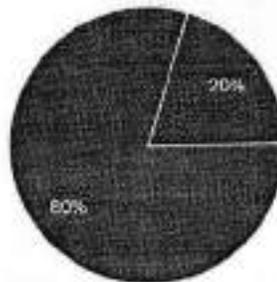


- Social Distancing
- Sanitized Environment
- Temperature Check
- Facial mask and shield
- Safety authorization certificate
- All of the above

Analysis and Interpretation: Out of 15 responses, maximum respondents i.e. 11 of them followed all the safety and precautionary measures for COVID-19 like social distancing, sanitized environment, temperature check, facial mask and shield, safety authorization certificate. 2 of them only sanitized the environment. 2 respondent follows social distancing norm i.e. maintained minimum 6 feet physical distance.

18. Frequency of room cleaning?

15 responses

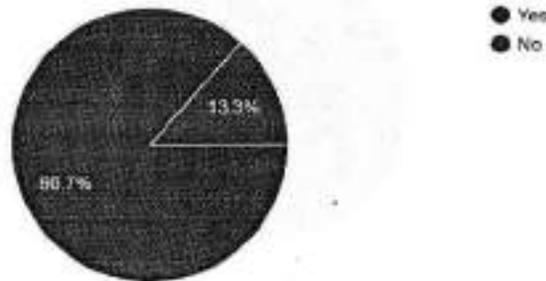


- Once a Day
- Twice a Day
- Thrice a Day

Analysis and Interpretation: Out of 15 responses, 12 people do the room cleaning once a day and 3 of them do it for twice a day.

**19. Do you find any change in the selection of cleaning agent brand for hygiene and safety purpose, pre and post pandemic?**

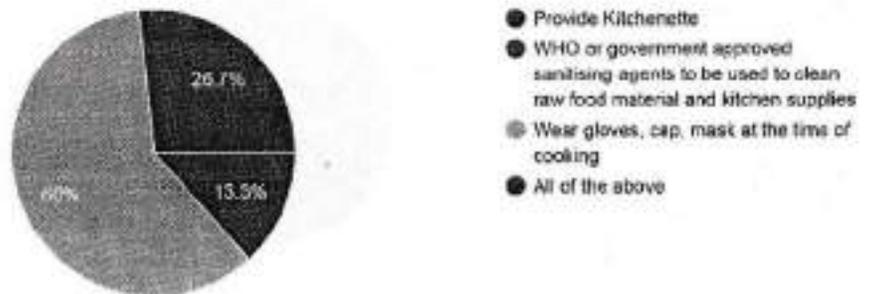
15 responses



Analysis and Interpretation: Out of 15 responses, 13 respondent have mentioned that cleaning agent brand changed because of pandemic. The WHO recommended agents were used as to keep the safety of both operators and guest in mind.

**20. Have you adopted any changes even for kitchen after the pandemic?**

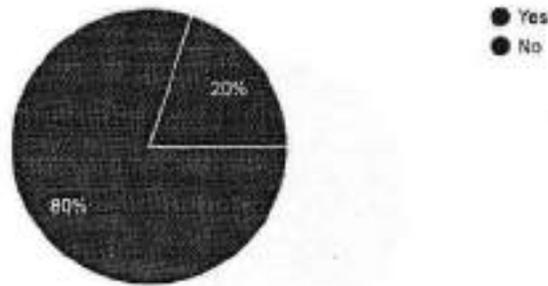
15 responses



Analysis and Interpretation: Out of 15 responses, 9 respondents has said they have adopted the changes for kitchen after the pandemic, while working in the kitchen wear gloves, cap, mask at the time of cooking. 4 operators has said they follows all the norms for kitchen after the pandemic like safety gears, WHO approved sanitizing agents, provide kitchenette. 2 respondents has said they only provide kitchenette. Also raw food was removed from menu.

**21. Do you find any changes in the guests stay duration during this phase?**

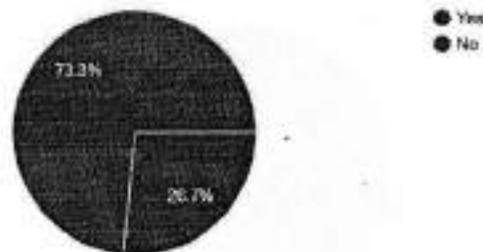
15 responses



Analysis and Interpretation: Out of 15 responses, 12 respondent mentioned that they find the change in the guest stay as in the duration was more compared to earlier as guests liked the concept of workcations and felt better combining the two aspects of leisure and work.

**22. Have you changed the layout/ setup of establishment after pandemic?**

15 responses



Analysis and Interpretation: Out of 15 responses, 11 respondent said they are working in same layout, they didn't change the layout. 4 respondent said they changed the setup of their establishment after the pandemic.

**23. What are the marketing strategies you are using for promoting your establishment, during the pandemic?**

15 responses



Analysis and Interpretation: due to pandemic tourism industry saw a major crisis so , Homestay operators applied various strategies for promoting their establishment. 80% operators were using social media e.g. Facebook, Instagram, etc. 33.3% operators were using digital marketing tools like Websites, Email marketing, etc. 6.7% operators were using traditional newspaper advertisement for promoting the business.

24. Due to pandemic, is there any change in number of employees?

15 responses



Analysis and Interpretation: Question was also asked about the changes in number of employees, where 9 operators said there is change in number of employees and 6 operators said there is no change in the number of employee because they were operating their business with the help of family members.

25. The number of employees working in your organization/ Homestay?

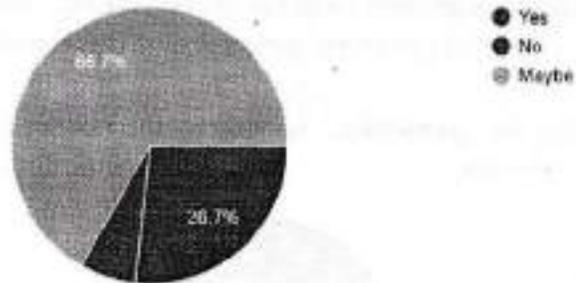
15 responses



Analysis and Interpretation: Minimum number of employees working in homestays were very less and ranged up to or less than 5.

**26. Did you find any stress in maintaining the whole setup of your establishment due to pandemic?**

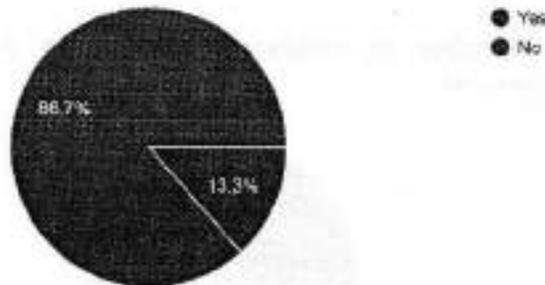
15 responses



Analysis and Interpretation: 10 operators didn't find any stress as it was well managed by the family members but few like 4 operators observed stress while one respondent was neutral.

**27. Have you opted for any alternative business/ job during the pandemic to support you financially?**

15 responses



Analysis and Interpretation: only 2 out of 15 respondents took an alternative source while 13 remained waiting for the situation to change.

**28. did you observe any sales when the curbs were lifted for some time and travel was allowed?**

was

allowed?

15 responses



- 10 to 30%
- 30 to 60%
- 60 to 100%

Analysis and Interpretation:

8 respondents did not find any enquiries even when the travel was allowed as the travellers were still scared and not ready to take any sorts of risks, 7 homestay operators saw some enquiries and sales but not as it used to be earlier.

**29. Were the shopkeepers or vendors able to deliver the recommended (WHO) cleaning agents, kits/safety gears?**

15 responses



- Yes
- No

Analysis and Interpretation: Due to changing norms, the hygiene and precautionary measures were a extremely important and mandatory , homestay operators had to use specific tools/agents preferred by WHO like mask, sanitizer, cleaning agent, etc. for safety of guests and operators. So procuring this for 4 respondent was difficult, for 11 respondent it was possible.

**Subjective question:**

**30. What are the challenges faced by the establishment during pandemic?**

Due to pandemic the cost of operations increased but there was no sale, as the premises had to be well maintained in spite of no business apart from the daily maintenance challenges to cover the cost of overheads was huge.

The electricity, water and taxes still had to be paid, few employees were still within the organisation so the salary component was also to be looked into. The cleaning agents cost had

almost doubled up along with the frequency of cleaning. Some times procurements of things was difficult as they had to travel far to purchase the same. Even if there was any sale reusing was eliminated like earlier so all this contributed to excess expenditure with low or absolute no business.

**31. A part from this the respondents also shared their views in an open question and the information received was ,**

1. Government needs to keep provision of funds for hospitality industry esp. homestay operators in case some likewise situation arises.
2. They are trying everything possible for the safety and precaution guests.
3. They are assuring the provision of homemade hygienic food which is prepared by keeping in mind all the safety and precautionary measures.
4. No support from government regarding the interest on loan, taken for the homestay business from bank even when there is no business at all.

**Findings**

- Majority (93.3 percent) of the Homestay operators are male members.
- Regarding the age, majority (86.7 percent) of the homestay operator's age is between 30 and 40 years. It is inferred that mostly youngsters are interested in doing Homestay Business.
- Majority (66.7 percent) of the Homestay operators started their business recently between 5 to 10 years. It is stated that homestay is the need of future.
- All homestay operators operate this business themselves. No outsourcing is done.
- Majority (66.7 percent) of the homestays let out rooms within their own premises . few of the homestays have Cottages along with the small bungalows.
- (60 percent) of the homestays have basic facility for differently abled guest. Most of them provided wheelchair accessible room for them. Some of the homestays do not provide any facility for differently abled guest.
- All operators are severely affected because of pandemic.
- Due to pandemic, homestays changed their facilities for the safety of guests.
- Before pandemic homestays were providing amenities like Toiletries, Air-conditioner and pool. After pandemic swimming pool were closed because of safety protocol and government norms.
- Before pandemic homestays were providing facilities like Free Wi-Fi, free parking and kitchenette. After pandemic they were providing Thermal Screening of Guest, Installation of sanitizers at different strategic points, Tie-up with local hospitals in case of any emergency. Provision of Hot water, nebulizers, etc. according to guidelines by Government were made available.
- Majority of the homestays follow the safety and precautionary measures critically to ensure safer stay of guest. They also trained there staff regarding safety and

precautionary measures which is taken for COVID-19 through safety videos provided by local Grampanchayat.

- According to Government guidelines homestays followed safety norms and precautionary measures for COVID-19 i.e. Social Distancing, Sanitized Environment, Temperature Check, Facial mask and shield, Safety authorization certificate, etc.
- Majority (80 percent) of the homestays do the room cleaning once a day because of no business and also to minimize contact with the guest.
- homestays find change in the selection of cleaning agent brand because of pandemic and recommendations by WHO. They are following safety and precautionary rules and focusing on hygiene and safety measures for increasing the business.
- Some homestays are providing kitchenette after pandemic and some are giving In-room dining service for the guest following all the safety and precautionary measures like Wearing gloves, cap, mask at the time of cooking;
- Majority of the homestays observed change in the guest stay duration.
- Some of the homestays changed their layout for social distancing purpose.
- Majority of the homestays were promoting their business through social media and digital marketing. Very few of them were still promoting their business through newspaper.
- Majority of the Homestays find it difficult in maintaining their establishment because of pandemic. They have to pay electricity bill, water bill, and payment for the staff, etc. and due to no business, it was a burden.
- Very few of them identified alternative business apart from homestay business due to pandemic.
- Sales were rising to 20-30 % when the norms were a little eased out during pandemic.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

1. An exclusive website has to be designed to create awareness about the home stay facilities and through which reliability has to be built in the minds of tourists for choosing Homestay. Also post some videos on the website containing hygiene, safety and precautionary measures taken for COVID-19.
2. To promote homestays, tourism stakeholders should take the responsibility and also tourism entrepreneurs should take the charge to do marketing campaign for the homestay tourism.
3. Provide appropriate facilities to the differently abled guest, for their convenient stay.
4. Follow all the operational guidelines which is given by the Ministry of Tourism Government of India for COVID-19 even when the situation is under control.
5. Adopt new strategies for maintaining the homestays and also for increasing the revenue after the pandemic.

## **Conclusion**

In Maharashtra, Coastal region has got many Homestays and have gained popularity. Home Stay is a good alternative for hotels, cost effective accommodation and also safe and secure for the tourists. Tourists have been opting for homestays even during pandemic where the norms were lifted for a certain period of time. people who had a long term facility to work from home were enquiring on a larger scale for homestays as it would give a combination of both work and relaxation.

Some operators even had enquire for long staying guest. However the Challenges also were big in number meeting day to day expenses and maintaining the norms was a huge expense for these small scale operators.

However they were looking at a better tomorrow, with the situation to come under control and travel norms to be easing out. Homestays operators are keeping the protocols in place and following all safety standards. They have also opted for new tools in marketing and showing their presence on social and digital media for promoting their business. The local authorities also have been joining hands and waiting for the tourism to revive.

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### Glossary of Terms

1. **Amenities:** Amenities are a service or item offered to guests or placed in the guestroom, bathroom, and kitchen etc. for convenience and comfort and at no extra cost.
2. **Carbon Footprint:** The amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere as a result of the activities of a particular individual, organization, or community.
3. **Cultural Diplomacy:** Cultural diplomacy is a type of public diplomacy and soft power that includes the "exchange of ideas, information, art, language, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding."

4. Dormitory: A dormitory is a building primarily providing sleeping and residential quarters for large numbers of people.
5. Digital Marketing: Digital marketing is the component of marketing that utilizes internet and online based digital technologies such as desktop computers, mobile phones and other digital media and platforms to promote products and services.
6. Footfall: Footfall is the number of people entering an area in a given time.
7. Hospitality Industry: The hospitality industry is a broad category of fields within the service industry that includes lodging, food and drink service, event planning, theme parks, travel and tourism.
8. Homestay: Homestay is a popular form of hospitality and lodging whereby visitors share a residence with a local of the city to which they are traveling.
9. Intercultural competence: Intercultural competence, is a continuous and life long journey to increase people's skills in being proficient in intercultural and intra cultural knowledge which can improve the ability to work with people with different culture.
10. Isolate: To keep somebody separate from other people.
11. Kitchenette: A kitchenette is a small cooking area, which usually has a refrigerator, a microwave and sometimes a sink.
12. Loyalty Programme: A loyalty program is a marketing strategy designed to encourage customers to continue to shop at or use the services of a business associated with the program.
13. Motorable: Roads usable by motor vehicles.
14. Nebulizers: A device for producing a fine spray of liquid, used for example for inhaling a medicinal drug.
15. Novelty: The quality of being new and different.
16. Oximeter: An instrument for measuring the proportion of oxygenated haemoglobin in the blood.
17. Pandemic: A pandemic is an epidemic of an infectious disease that has spread across a large region, for instance multiple continents or worldwide, affecting a substantial number of people.
18. Social Media: Social media are interactive technologies that allow the creation or sharing/exchange of information, ideas, and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks.
19. Thermometer: An instrument for measuring temperature.
20. Tourism Industry: The tourism industry is the total of all businesses that directly provide goods or services to facilitate business, pleasure and leisure activities away from the home environment.
21. Vendor: A vendor is a party in the supply chain that makes goods and services available to consumers.



## A STUDY ON "EFFECTIVE HANDLING OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BRANDING OF HOTELS"

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### Abstract

In today's tech savvy world where people trust more on the user generated content on the internet, it becomes necessary for organizations to establish themselves in the virtual world as well. Not only one needs to show online presence but also requires maintaining their reputation to retain their customer base. Social media platforms play an important role in establishing brand image virtually. According to the article "Digital 2020: Global Digital Overview" Worldwide, there are 3.80 billion social media users in January 2020, with this number increasing by more than 9 percent (321 million new users) since this time last year. With the increasing number of users social media platform is useful for establishing brand and maintaining it as well. The study focuses on the use of social media by hotels. It will include their current handling strategies and various ways in which social media could be used for building brand with reference to hotels.

### Introduction

A brand is a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers" (American Marketing Association). Branding is the process of creating an image of the organization and its products in the minds of the customer. It also emphasizes on the quality and service provided by the organization which makes it stand out from others. This process is basically carried out for retention of customers.

Social media is online platform with various communication channels for sharing of information between people. Organizations have started to utilize social media for the benefit of their brand. It has helped to increase brand awareness and keep customers engaged with the brand by posting relevant content. Social media as a means to promote brand awareness and gain consumer attention has its own positive and negative effects. Advertising on Social media is sometimes viewed as an unwanted, and companies have to keep track of consumer responses to their advertisements to understand the value brand-related content.

### Literature Review

"Digital 2020: Global Digital Overview" By Simon Kemp. This article is the summary of the research carried out by Global WebIndex, Statista, GSMA Intelligence, App Annie, Similar Web and Locowise for We Are Social and Hootsuite with DataReportal. According to the research the number of people around the world using the internet has grown to 4.54 billion, an increase of 7 percent (298 million new users) compared to January 2019. Most of the people spend their time on social media platform. Facebook is the most used social media platform around the world with around 1.97 billion audience. Youtube is the second most used platform followed by whatapp. The survey reports that Indians spend an average of 2 hours and 24 minutes per person, per day using social media which is also the average worldwide.

"Role of Social Media in Brand Building" by Emily Pribanic. In this article the author talks about Social media being essential for companies to build their brand, its important role for brands. According to the author it helps companies build connection with the audience for brand and he advises the use of social media as it helps in building brand by creating a platform for the customers to put forth their views.

"The Value of Social Media in the Hospitality Industry" By Jordan Jones, Social Media Manager of Stonebridge Companies. The article talks that even if the hotels believe in the word of mouth publicity it is necessary for them to be active on social media. The author makes a point that it is important that the industry



focuses on the impact of social media as most of the travelers use social media to express pleasure or frustration about their experiences.

**"The Effects of Social media networks in the hospitality industry"** By Wendy Lim. The research talks the use social media platforms in hospitality industry. Talking about hotels the researcher said that to stay competitive in the digital world, the hotel need to be involved with their intended audience by participating in online discussions, hospitality forums, podcasts, RSS feeds, and hotel review commentary while increasing awareness and building relationships with both new and loyal customers. The researcher shares strategies on using of social media platforms along with few real life examples.

**"Social Media a Promotional Tool: Hotel Industry"** By Manish Verma. This research paper focuses on use of social media by business hotels in NCR and customers perspective in context to usage and advantages of social media. The results of the research showed major reasons hotels use social media is to build image and to promote their hotels. Even if social media directly does not benefit in monetary terms it helped hotels to understand customer preference, create brand awareness and also attract people from other regions. The research does state that social media does help in brand building. (Lim, 2010) (Verma, 2018)

**"Social Media Strategy for Hotels: Why These Brands Rise above the Rest"** By Social tables. This online article talks about various international chain hotels that are doing well with social media marketing. These chains have understood to share the content suitable for particular social media platform rather than sharing same content on all the accounts. The article shares the strategies used by these chain hotels.

**"How Starwood Hotels Made \$2m From A Facebook Page"** by Matthew. This case study talks about Starwood hotels using social media platforms to increase their business. The article talks about various strategies adopted by the brand to pull more clientele on social media platforms.

**"The influence of social media on the consumers' hotel decision journey"** by Barbara Neuhofer. This research paper talks about the use and influence of social media on consumer's hotel decision-making. With the increasing use of social media platform the changes that took place and are taking place is explained in this research paper.

**"Hotels need to pay better attention to social media to drive revenue"** by Alicia Hoisington. This article talks about the importance about using social media for generating revenue. The article encourages hoteliers to get involved in the brand conversations that go online. This will not only help them in increasing their customer base but will give first-hand information of customer expectation for helping the brand to grow.

**"Hotel Reputation Management"** By Customer Alliance this article talks about Hotel reputation management is the practice of monitoring and influencing how your property is perceived throughout the web.

#### **Panel Discussion on "Start-Up pe charcha" was held in MSIHMCT on 31st January 2020.**

The panelists were the young alumni of Institute itself, who spoke about the challenges they faced by them. They also discussed importance of social media marketing in today's time. The fact that young generation is more active on the social media platforms and it becomes easier to tap this market. Ms. Mariya Kagalwala of Choccolicious said that posting bakery items on her Instagram account helped her in her business, owing to the instant reviews and her clients' post about the product on her page. She also gets her major orders through social media platforms. She posts everyday a bakery item to engage her followers and retain them. Mr. Abhijeet Titkare owner of Fizzlebuzz Foods admitted that asking food bloggers to try out his products did help in his business. Dry Food Powder Products being new concept in India this idea did help him to show how to use the product and reach large crowd.

#### **Significance of Study**

Social media platforms connect people across the globe. It is a cheapest way to market the company products and create brand awareness. But with the ease of using social media comes a disadvantage. The negative comments



can spread out more faster than positive reviews. This research will help the budding and existing entrepreneurs or hoteliers to make use of social media to its optimal level and few suggestions on making social media page useful for branding.

#### **Objectives of Study**

To present the study related to the Hotel industry in the Pune, researcher will have following objectives:

1. To study handling of social media for branding of Hotels.
2. To identify the effective social media platform for branding of hotel.

#### **Scope of the Study**

1. The research is extended to Residents in Pune.
2. The Guest and hotel survey was conducted in the month of March – April 2020
3. The study is devoted to understand handling of social media.
4. It is been concentrating on branding of a hotel using social media.

#### **Limitations of Study**

1. Secondary sources of data are usually of limited worth for research purpose because of the error incompleteness in basic data. The data which is shared by the researcher may or may not be reliable.
2. The study is based on the responses received from the customers.
3. The Data is collected at a single point in time; it is difficult to measure changes in the population unless two or more surveys are done at different points in time.

#### **Research Methodology**

Applied research aims at finding a solution for an immediate problem facing a society or an industrial/business organization. Research aimed at certain conclusions facing a concrete social or business problem is an example of applied research.

The research is applied because it provides solutions to the problems of poor use of Social media for branding. It will be based on exhaustive data analysis collected from both, primary and secondary sources.

#### **Sources of data**

##### **Primary data**

The research is based on primary data; Survey of a Customer preferences. It also includes the information provided by Sample Hotels through questionnaire. The data is also collected during the panel discussions organized by the college. Some of the data is collected visiting the social media handles of the hotels.

##### **Secondary Data**

Secondary data has been collected from research papers published online and web-sites. Various articles published in online magazines are also reviewed.

#### **Methods of data Analysis**

Collected data is classified, tabulated and arranged in order of objectives. Simple statistical techniques such as ratios and percentages is been used to analyze the data and arrive at inferences. The results of this study can be considered transferable to a wider population of technology-savvy users, who use social media in their daily life and their hotel information search.

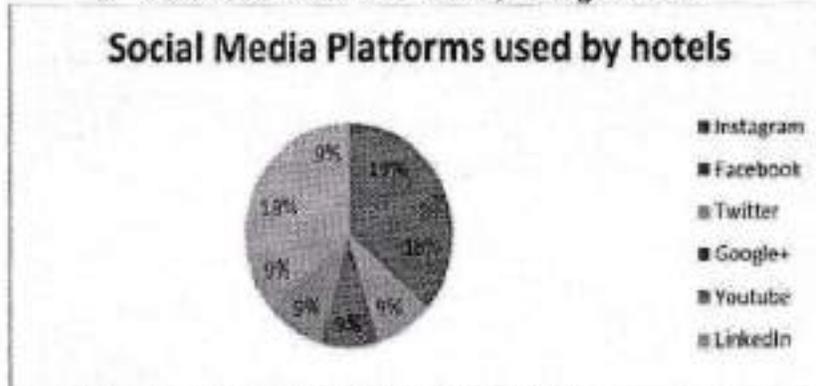
#### **Data Analysis**

The hotels for the study were surveyed in Pune city.



**Questionnaire for hotels:**

**1. Which Social Media Platforms, the organization**



The hotels majorly use Facebook, Instagram and Whatsapp platform.

- 2. Which is the most used Social Media platform by your organization?**  
 The Hotels use Instagram accounts frequently.
- 3. According to you which is the most effective social Media Platform? Why?**  
 The Hotels believe Instagram helps to reach the target audience.
- 4. What Type of content is posted on Social Media generally?**  
 The Hotels use Social Media Platform to post about the new products, Discounts and offers to attract the guest to their hotel. Other than that they also post what their hotel is all about.
- 5. Is there software used by hotel to identify fake accounts and handle Social Media account?**  
 Where reviews play an important role in the age of Social Media there is no software used by the hotels to identify fake reviews.

**Responses from the guest**

Total no. of responses: 32

In order to be a sample the individual have to fit into the following criteria:

- Need to have travelled during the last two years.
- Have stayed in a hotel during their trip.
- Be active users of social media.
- Have used social media for travel related decision-making purposes.
- They should be residents of Pune.

**1. Which Social Media Platforms do you use?**

Social Media Platforms	Platforms used by Guests
Instagram	20
Facebook	28
Twitter	5
Google+	15
YouTube	24
LinkedIn	9
Whatsapp	31
Email	33

The respondents are present almost on all social media platform. Email and whatsapp have more number of accounts as compared to the rest. Facebook is the 3rd highest followed by youtube and Instagram accounts.



## 2. Which the most used Social Media platform do you use?

Whatsapp is the most frequently used platform among the respondents followed by Instagram and then Facebook. We can see the respondents spend most of their time using these three social media platform as compared to others.

## 3. Do you visit the hotel's social media account before booking a room?

Around 63% respondents most of the times visited hotels Social Media page to get information about the hotel which may not be available on various websites. For example, Very few hotels post about various offers or special occasions on their website or they may not be visible at first glance which are generally posted on Social Media by them.

Social Media does affect the decision making of respondents on whether to book a hotel or not. If it does not help them in booking the hotel but definitely helps them to decide not to book the specific hotel.

## Instagram & Facebook account posts of well-known hotels.

Most of the Hotels post something every day or alternate days. They generally post about mouthwatering food with captions, various photos of F&B outlets of the hotel, photos of celebrities visiting the hotel and also about Spa. They also share some posts related to employee appreciation or any awards won by the hotel. Most of the hotels for promoting their banquets can be seen posting about wedding ceremonies taking place in their hotel but very few in numbers. Wishing their followers on special occasions is never missed by these hotels. To show their support against fighting coronavirus most of the hotels in Pune have closed down their doors and using hotel room lights made shapes like heart, smiles to honor people risking their lives to save others. In these times to ensure their guest at home they also provide home delivery through various apps.

## Findings and Suggestion

### Findings

1. This study shows that the guests used the following accounts the most: Whatsapp, Facebook and Instagram, Whatsapp being the preferred one among the others. It was also found that Social Media does affect the decision making of respondents on whether to book a hotel or not.
2. When asked for suggestions from guest for social media posts most of them suggested that information needs to be related to offers and discount, exact room photos, sharing particulars like special menu in the restaurants, public programs in hotels and most importantly sharing their guest feedbacks. A corporate guest also requested to post something about the specific facilities for such clients.
3. As per the analysis, Instagram is the frequently used social media platforms by hotels. Hotels post something every day or alternate day on their social media handles majorly about food items. There were rare posts about the hotel, loyalty programs or offers offered by the hotel. One can hardly spot guest's reviews on hotels social media page stating about the stay or any photos with them.
4. For handling upset clients on social media the hotels generally respond as soon as possible and offer them solutions for their problems with a request to revisit the hotel. And regarding the fake reviews, there is no such strategy shared by the hotels to identify fake reviews. There is no software used by hotel to identify the fake reviews.
5. Only few hotels had computer generated feedback when contacted through Facebook and none actually returned. Thus highlighting the poor use of social media.
6. The hotels believed in keeping their social media handles genuine and simple and posting original pictures to maintain the reputation of the hotel. They also believed in encouraging Guest feedback to help boost business. One of the hotel also shared they do invite Bloggers for promoting the hotel.

### Suggestions

- The independent hotels aspiring to make themselves a well-known brand need to tap the potential of social media in today's tech savvy world, as social media acts as a catalyst in creating a brand by reaching millions of customer within short span of time with minimum expenditure.



- Social Media handles of the hotel need to have uniformity across all platforms with regards to the logo, hotel bio, etc. for customer to recognize it easily. ( Jenn, C)
- It is pertinent to design schedule for posting and follow it to keep up with the customers without overdoing it. Also developing a social media guide similar to an employee guide will be beneficial and should include details like brand character, company catchphrases, brand traits and vocabulary. Example the term hotel uses to address its customers could be either client or customers. It should be specified which word to use to maintain consistency. ( Jenn, C)
- It is important to highlight Uniqueness of hotel in the profile and mention its distinguished features. For example, if the hotel allows pet, it should mention it to attract pet owners. Hotels can share information related to local campaigns & events on social media to create awareness about the same and attract interested customers.( Hart, K)
- To strengthen the social media presence, hotels can encourage customers to post about their stay experience which in turn will attract new customers. Customers may not be aware of hotels loyalty program and its benefit. Sharing content related to loyalty program may be helpful in increasing loyal members for the brand.
- Facebook and Instagram being frequently used accounts; hotels can focus on using these platforms for sharing information related to brand. Hotels can create a page for its guests to use it for sharing their Instagram-worthy personal experiences at its properties.
- Social media branding comes along with its own challenges. It is necessary to keep track on the online responses and be quick to answer as one negative may hamper the whole brand image to some extent. There is online reputation management software available which helps in tracking the brand related communication on web, manage reviews and also find brand position in virtual market.

### Conclusion

A brand is more than a logo or profile it is about making customer's feel comfortable and approachable towards an organisation. To establish as a brand one needs to deliver quality service and product consistently. The organizations need to deliver their promises to win the trust of the customers which will be crucial in the branding process. Branding process is a strategic approach for defining organisation's position in the market and deciding on steps to accomplish it's visions.

Social media is a platform that helps to interact with people across the boundaries. It helps people to build connections and share information with one another. With millions of users, social media has become an engagement, staffing, retention, and branding tool. Social media enables engagement with larger audience at the same time has made it preferred option for organizations to market their product.

Majority of the brands are using social media to the fullest for maintaining and communicating their brand to the customers. The hotel industry in India may not be using social media to its fullest potential. The hotel industry in developed countries has understood the true potential of social media in branding in today's world and is making the most of it. This research provides insight for hotels in Pune to make maximum use of social media. It is also helpful for budding hoteliers to understand the usage of social media to their advantage. Furthermore suggestions could be provided to enhance the use of social media for branding. With the technological advancements and new social networking sites coming up a study of how useful these sites can be for branding along with new strategies can be carried out.

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**AN ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF OTAS ON TRAVEL AGENTS IN  
HOTEL ROOM BOOKINGS**

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**Abstract**

This research activity was conducted to compare various factors of comparison which online channels are providing over the traditional mediums in booking a hotel room. If we look at the glance of the history of hotel bookings, then we would be able to understand that the hotel room reservations were either made directly (telephoning the property/face-to-face) or via a travel agent. Over the past decade, a large offer of booking channels has emerged. Nowadays, hotel distribution channels for transient bookings are grouped into five major categories such as Central Reservation System, Direct Bookings (walk-ins, telephone), Global Distribution System, Hotel's website, and OTAs (Online Travel Agents). With new booking channels rising, conventional channels are slowly however steadily losing market share; whereas new channels, notably those who permit bookings via online channels like OTAs, GDS, and Brand's portal are becoming popular. The DIY (Do-it-Yourself) approach has been introduced in the market due to these OTAs and other online distribution systems. Though there are many advantages to booking through these mediums, today's customer is well aware of threats that could arise by using these platforms. The hotels receive almost 40% - 45% of the occupancy through the Online Travel Agents and the hotel's portal, and the remaining through the offline travel agents. Thus, the study has proved that OTAs and online channels are the most popular and efficient way of booking a hotel room for the customers

**Key Words** – Travel Agents, OTA, Room Booking.

**Introduction**

A travel agent may be an individual /firm or corporation which is commonly known as a travel agency. An agency means the office of travel agent or organization where all travel goods and services are assembled and coordinated for the smooth conduct of travel agency business. Technically, a travel agent is an owner or manager of an agency, but other employees are responsible for advising tourists and selling packages tours/individual components of travel products.

A Travel agent is a person who has full knowledge of tourist products – destinations, modes of travel, climate, accommodation, and other areas of the service



sector. He acts on the behalf of product providers/principles and in return gets a commission.

OTA stands for Online Travel Agency. OTAs are online companies whose websites allow consumers to book various travel related services directly via the Internet. They are the 3rd party agents reselling trips, hotels, cars, flights, vacation packages, etc. provided/organised by others. Travel shopping via online agencies has become very popular nowadays, especially, in the last minute segment and also because of the frequent usage of smartphones. Today, consumers are on-the-go and the advantage of a booking engine and the reservation solutions provided by the OTAs is that it offers instant payment and booking confirmation.

### Literature Review

In his research, "From Travel Agents to OTAs" Timothy Webb has stated the evolution of consumer booking behaviour i.e. travel booking has changed substantially over the past two decades. The traditional approach of utilizing travel agents and booking ahead has evolved into a fast-paced, last-minute booking environment. This evolution has had substantial effects on revenue management (RM) in the areas of forecasting, pricing, and online travel agency inventory allocations. These changes have made understanding the consumer booking process a requirement for success.

As the introduction of the Internet, the tourism and hospitality industry has witnessed sea changes into the trends of booking as well as consumer behaviour. The researcher found that these online travel agents (OTAs) have positively captured the market and the minds of the consumer as it provides last minute, quick, and efficient booking systems. It was also observed during the research activity that many hotels have blocked their rooms for such OTAs, giving them a more profitable business.

Steve Olenski mentioned in his blog, "Are OTAs really killing Travel Agencies" that online booking is easier and leaves travellers spoiled for choice. From aggregators like Kayak.com, which merely assembles inventory from other websites, to travel sites like Flights.com most travellers agree that online booking is just more efficient and cheaper. The blog on the Andaman Holiday's website stated that with everything becoming a DIY (do-it-yourself), why are people still choosing the traditional offline medium for their travel booking? The answer lies simply in one word – trust. A local agent has a clear edge when it comes to providing a good vacation deal and more importantly a better service. The most important of it all is the human factor – a face, a real person who takes full responsibility for crafting a personalized vacation.



In case of Hotels, the art of revenue management and smart distribution has become the secret weapon of every hotel. Caroline Strachan continues in her blog, Hotels have worked out how to release and hold their inventory of rooms based on factors like day of the week, citywide events and onsite meetings. This enables them to fluctuate the price of their bedrooms; a bedroom that hasn't been slept in is a waste, just as out-of-date food is to a supermarket. OTAs spend billions of dollars a year in advertising to win over leisure traffic, for which OTAs charge hotels high commissions. The OTAs tell hotels, "Pay us more commission, and we'll do the advertising for you." However, OTAs are luring business travellers with "lower" rates by distributing and making their rates bookable via travel management company/online booking tool channels.

#### **Significance of the study**

Online Travel Agents are gaining popularity in the market. The trend of booking a room through a travel agent has shifted to a DIY (do-it-yourself) approach where customers have gained access to book their travel plans on their own. Hence, this study will help the new entrants as well as potential players in the market in the form of travel agencies to sustain in the market with the help of research. It will help the travel agencies in determining the ways to survive in such cut-throat competition.

My main objective of this research is to identify the most effective source of room booking from the customer's point of view. The key elements to be explored from this research activity are the concept of OTAs, the role of travel agent in the hotel room booking, advantages & disadvantages of room booking from both sources i.e. OTAs and the travel agencies.

#### **Objectives –**

In order to streamline the present study, related to the Hospitality & Tourism industry in the Pune, the following objectives have been formed:

1. To study the concept of Online Travel Agents (OTAs)
2. To study the concept of Travel Agent & its role in hotel room bookings.
3. To identify the most effective source for room booking from a customer's point of view.

#### **Hypothesis**

Booking a room through an OTAs is the most effective source to book a room.



#### Scope & Limitations of the study

The participants of this research were the customers, travel agents, and hotels. The total sample of 10 questionnaires was designed for the travel agents and 10 responses are recorded by personally visiting their offices (response rate 100%). Hotels were targeted for a sample of 10 and achieved 05 hotels (50% response rate) have filled the questionnaire. For customers, the sample was designed for 50 questionnaires and received 45. The response rate is 90%. Thus, we believe that the answers can be considered reliable. The study is limited to budgeted hotels in the vicinity of Pune City and does not have any relevance to any other types of Hotels in any other locations elsewhere.

1. The travel agents selected for the study are from Pune City only, and does not have any relevance to any other location elsewhere.
2. The Study is limited to the period from August 2019 to November 2019 only. The findings of this research may not apply to any other period even for the same area and the same type of hotels/services.
3. Secondary sources of data are usually of limited worth for research purposes because of the error incompleteness in basic data. The secondary data which is shared by the researcher may or may not be reliable.
4. The sample size is too small as compared to the population of budgeted hotels, travel agents, and even the customers in the selected area. However, a researcher being an individual is capable of handling limited data.

#### Research Methodology

1. Approach – Quantitative
2. Type of research – Analytical
3. Sample – Travel Agents, Hotels (Budgeted Category) and Customers.
4. Method of Sampling – Purposive – Judgmental
5. Data collection – Present paper is based on secondary data and primary data.  
Following are the sources of collection of data:
  - a. Websites
  - b. Travel Market Report
  - c. Various previously published research papers.
  - d. Questionnaires
    - i. Travel Agents – 10
    - ii. Hotels – 05
    - iii. Customers – 45



#### **Role of Online Travel Agents –**

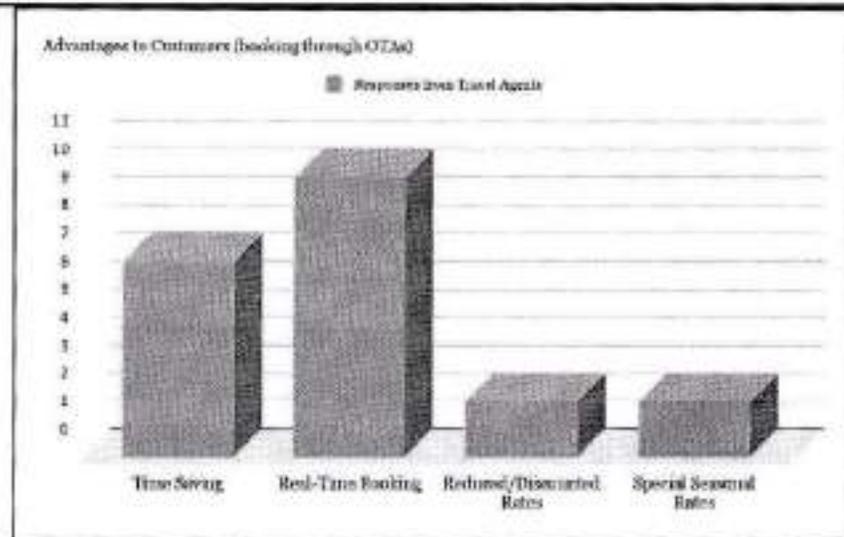
OTAs provide a high level of customer service through mobile applications, responsive websites, email campaigns, and even social media platforms. It has multiple channels of customer outreach to not only promote and offer new products and services but solicit feedback from customers which can be used to alter products and services offered. OTAs that leverage direct communication channels such as mobile chat applications and social media platforms can engage with customers on a one-on-one basis. This level of customer relations management gives travellers the personalized booking experience they desire with increased speed and convenience. OTAs are essentially available on a 24/7 basis, travellers have nearly unlimited access to their bookings. This makes it quick, easy, and simple for travellers to adjust bookings based on cancellations or errors - flight delays, misplaced reservations, overbookings, and more.

#### **Role of Travel Agents (Offline) –**

Whatever the size of a travel agency, it has to provide necessary travel information to tourists. A travel agency must give up-to-date, accurate, and timely information regarding destinations, modes of travel, accommodation, sight-seeing, shopping, immigration, passport, visa, customs clearance and procedure, health and security rules, and about various permits required to travel in a particular area, etc. Airline ticketing and reservation is a major source of revenue. Travel agencies perform a function of airline ticketing and reservation on behalf of various airlines. Travel agencies prepare tour packages and sell them to tourists. The costing and pricing of tour packages depend to a large extent on the ability of the travel agent as to how effectively he can negotiate with the principal suppliers. A travel agency consistently makes linkage with the accommodation sector, transport sector and other entertainment organizations to reserve rooms, and seats in the cultural programmes and transportation. Travel insurance protects the travellers against the personal as well as baggage losses resulting from a wide range of travel-related happenings and problems, again performed by the Travel Agents. Approved travel agency authorized by the government body provides currency exchange services to tourists.

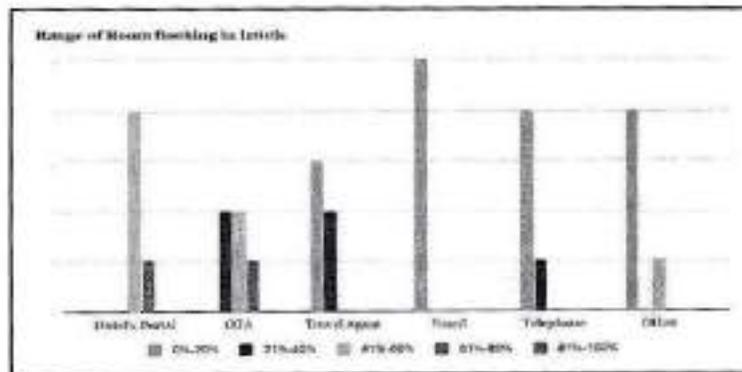
#### **Data Analysis**

In the study, the travel agents (offline) have agreed that booking through an OTA reduces the time as the customer may book a room in the hotel which is convenient to him/her on board or from anywhere using the internet. Also, some of them have stated discounted rates or reduced rates than that of market rate is being offered by the OTAs because of which customers prefer to book through these channels.



Considering this, there is still one advantage of booking through a Travel Agent and that is the human touch. Travel Agents are considering the needs and requirements of the customer. The travel agent is well aware of customer demands, likes, and dislikes, hence the rooms booked through them are more suitable to the needs of the customer. The OTAs are providing what they have for the customers and hence, it may not suit the requirements of the guest who is on the journey of various tourism activities.

Many hotels in the targeted area of research activity have partnership with the OTAs, with "MakeMyTrip" being the most trending partner with the hotels followed by TripAdvisor & Trivago.



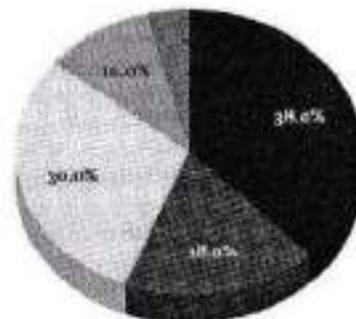


There are mixed responses about the OTAs through which hotels get room bookings. According to the Hotels, 40% - 45% room bookings are through these OTAs, while 45% - 50% from their web portal and remaining from the travel agents, emails, telephone, and other sources. Hence, from the data, OTAs are the second largest contributor to the hotels' room bookings.

For the customers, OTAs are becoming a more favourable way to book a room in their preferred hotel. Booking through an OTA is easier to search and book, it provides real-time booking as mentioned earlier. The location of the hotel room is more convenient to the customer while booking through an OTA as it provides various filters for location, amenities, services, etc. and also the refund is assured in case of cancellation.

Advantages to book through OTA

- Easy to Search & Book
- Convenient Location
- Appropriate Filter
- Real-Time Booking
- Offers (refund, discounts & best services)
- Near



Images of hotel rooms are uploaded on the site of an OTA which helps determine the room booking and very importantly the experience of guests who have stayed in the hotel is provided in the form of review which also provides the authenticity of the details. These are the few advantages that customers get by booking through an OTA.

Besides these advantages, the customers have strongly agreed that the threats of these easy and efficient booking channels always disappoint them. Hidden charges, terms & conditions are the most dissatisfying threats which customers majority face during their booking cycle. Charges such as convenience fees, reservation fees, tax on the online payments are few examples of the Hidden Charges which OTAs apply on the room bookings and which has to be borne by the customers availing the services. Terms & Conditions are very rigid and difficult to interpret which results in an unhappy



customer. Fraudulent offers posted on the websites & apps of the OTAs always mislead the customer and in many cases, the customers are over-charged due to such false offers. The cleanliness shown in the pictures of the hotel room may not be observed by the hotel which is also the reason for the unhappy customers.

Taking into consideration the advantages and the disadvantages, the advantages supersede over disadvantages due to the long listing characteristics of the OTAs. As it facilitates direct communication and contact with the service provider, it is the most favourable channel to book a hotel room from a customer point of view. OTAs allow customers to book a hotel room across the globe, convenient to him/her. A 24/7 support team of an OTA makes the customer confident about his/her stay and assures assistance during the stay of the customer. It eliminates the dependence on the third party for room booking and promotes DIY (do-it-yourself) approach towards the tourism industry.

### Findings & Suggestions

#### Findings

##### ❖ Major Findings

1. The travel agencies are using hotel's websites and/or portals to book a room on the behalf of the guests.
2. The travel agents in the sample have clearly stated that there is a negative impact on the business of the travel industry – mainly travel agents due to the introduction of these online travel agents.
3. All the travel agents have confirmed that the benefits stated in the questionnaire can be availed if a customer books a room in the hotel through them.
4. The travel agents have also confirmed that OTAs are providing Real-time Booking and it saves time of the consumer.
5. Hotels are receiving room reservations through various channels such as OTAs, travel agents, company's own portal, email, etc.
6. 50% - 60% of room bookings are received from the OTAs while through the travel agents, hotels are receiving 20% - 30% occupancy.
7. 84% of the samples have stated that they book hotel room through an OTA.
8. About 40% of the samples have booked hotel room more than twice till date, 23% of the samples have booked room in the hotel more than seven times and 15 % of the total respondents book hotel room, every time, using OTAs.
9. 'In case the room has been booked through a travel agent then assured booking and discounted rates can be achieved' state 58% respondents of the total sample.
10. Dependability, lack of flexibility, and high mark-ups are some major disadvantages listed by the sample.
11. More than 75% of the samples have stated that OTA is much easier to book over a traditional booking.
12. There are many advantages listed by the sample in case of booking a room through an OTA. Easy to search and book, convenient location, appropriate filters, real-time booking are few to list.



13. In case of OTAs, hidden charges, lack of clearly expressed terms & conditions, fraudulent offers are some of the disadvantages.

❖ **Minor Findings**

1. Most of the travel agents have a contract with the hotel; hence they book the room over an email.
2. All the travel agents are aware of Online Travel Agents and agreed that the introduction of these OTAs have impacted on the business of the travel agents.
3. Many of the hotels are dealing with the local travel agents as well as the online travel agents simultaneously.
4. Makemytrip is popular among the customers and has covered almost 65% market share.
5. People or the potential customers are travelling majorly for leisure purposes.
6. The hotel staff has confirmed that the average room bookings are received through an OTA.

**Suggestions**

This research activity was conducted keeping in mind the three different aspects or concerns of the room booking. Hence, the suggestions are classified in these three aspects –

❖ **Travel Agents –**

1. The travel agents can contract with the hotels for room rates. These contracted rates are much cheaper than the market rates hence can improve the net margins of the firm.
2. Travel agents can act as an OTA by introducing technological advancement into the operations.
3. To win the competition, travel agents can create various strategies to attract the customers and can add value to the service touch-points.
4. One of the major advantages that the travel agency has is the personal touch. This can be used to lower the impact of the OTAs on the potential customers in the market.
5. Differentiation factors should be highlighted while dealing with the customers. Thus, creating a value in the eyes of the customer.

❖ **Hotels –**

1. The hotel can use various strategies to attract the guests directly to the hotel using hotel's portal.
2. Recording guest history, behavioural patterns, trends in the market can help the hotel to tap an opportunity.
3. Increasing the room occupancy by receiving room bookings through the hotel's web portal will automatically reduce the occupancy of rooms through the travel agents or the OTAs. Hence, reducing the high commission rates.



4. Based on the location of the property, the type of the customer can be identified and the potential customers can be targeted.

❖ **Customers**

1. There are times when the OTAs are charging high rates; hence, comparing both, i.e. the travel agent's prices and the OTA's pricing will help to select the best alternative.
2. Negotiations at the front desk while registration may also be beneficial as chances of getting direct discounts by the hotel increases at the time of registration.
3. The terms & conditions given on the OTA's portal need to be carefully understood and then only accepted or rejected.
4. While booking through an OTA, the cancellation fees need to be carefully checked.
5. Offers showing high discounts need to be carefully examined.

The above field data have revealed that the introduction of OTAs in the market have negatively impacted on the business of the travel agents (offline). The travel agents and the customers both have unanimously agreed that real-time booking and time saving are the key features of the OTAs which make them the most effective way of booking hotel rooms. Therefore, the hypothesis has been proved.

Travel agents (offline) may have a contract with the hotels for room rates (which are generally lower than the market rate) which help attract customers. They can also act as an OTA by advancing the organisational technology & systems. Sometimes the OTAs charge higher rates than the travel agents; hence customers should compare both and then choose the appropriate. Offers showing high discounts need to be carefully examined & confirmed by the OTAs support staff to reduce frauds.

**Conclusion**

During this research, it has occurred to the researcher that the customer is the focal point of any service. Today's customer is very conscious, educated, and is using the best possible resources to acquire information about a particular product. They are aware of online travel agents, their benefits, and threats as well. Online Travel Agents have a great impact on the travel agencies as most of the customers are using such channels to book their hotel rooms. Travel agencies need to use various strategies to attract customers back to the travel agency. They should be able to differentiate between the firm's products and services and competitor's products and services. Hence, travel agents must create value for each transaction with the customer to retain them.



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# Impact of COVID 19 on the business of Home Bakers in Pune

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**Mr. Devesh Janvekar\*\***

### Abstract

It is undeniable that coronavirus has severely impacted the world economy, and the victims of this pandemic are from the MSME sector. Home bakers are not an exception to this. 'Home baker' is the widely used term for entrepreneurs who sell bakery products made in their own homes. They serve personalised and unique cakes and other baker's delights as per customers' needs by attending and preparing each order separately, whether it is related to the design of a cake, price, or packaging. Their uncompromising quality, affordable price structure, made-to-order operations, and a wide range of customised products have taken the bakery market to an ultimate level of business. Since it based on word-of-mouth has faced many challenges during the lockdown period. In India, the lockdown was enforced in mid of March 2020 resulted in cancelled orders, unused stock of supplies, and even returned advances. Though the lockdown has created some economic constraints, it has enabled the home bakers to come up with new innovative ideas of business. Hence, this research study will present the challenges faced by the home bakers in the lockdown period as well as new ideas of business when the restrictions enforced in Pune.

### Keywords:

Home baking;  
COVID 19;  
Lockdown;  
Challenges;  
Strategies.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Bakery Business in India

Bakery products are an integral part of the Indian Food Industry. Though the bread and biscuit do not fall under the list of essential commodities, have found great acceptance in India. Bakery items such as cakes and pastries are still part of the upper class. Bakery products in India started developing in the British Era to meet the needs of the British Army. Hence, Kolkata became the first centre of producing bakery products even before Mumbai, to cater to the needs of army personnel. World War II is the crucial factor for the evolving bakery industry in India as supplies from overseas were reduced which helped the industry to experience key-changes. The modern bakery products are consumed along with tea, coffee, or milk as a complementary food. Bakery items are also considered as staple diet as it provides supplementary nutrition in low-cost price. One of the major reasons for gaining popularity in such products among all is that these products are easy, convenient, and ready to eat form. In the food industry of India, bakery plays a vital role in economic development as the abundant use of wheat and other products are involved in the production of bakery items. Capital investment in this business is far lower as compared with other capital intensive industries in India. That's why, there are approximately 75,000 bakery units all over India from MSME sector.

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## 1.2. History of Pune's Bakery Industry

Pune, also known as "Oxford of the East" is widely known as "IT Capital of India" and "Automobile hub of India" has been building modern industry against the backdrop of its traditions, of education and administration. Despite of industrial renaissance the city is considered as educational centre in India, with approximately 50% of the total international students in the country are studying in Pune City. Pune has a great historical significance, too. The earliest reference to Pune is found in 8th century's copper inscriptions. After defeating Yadavas, Pune was under Muslim Regime. In the Muslim Culture, Naans and Roaths are used widely in the months of Ramzan, Moharrum and Safar. Though Muslim regimes ruled Pune for about 350 years there is no evidence that they established Bakery industry in Pune. In the Pune region, there is evidence of the bakery business since the 18th Century.

Post-independence from the British Rule, the bakery business started growing at a pace and Maharashtra State was on the top of the list with a total of 690 bakery units, according to the survey in 1992. There was only one bakery unit serving 46,000 Puneites in the 1740s. And today, the number has crossed 400 bakery units (including small & large) serving 3.5 million Puneites. It has observed from the data that one bakery unit serves almost 8000 residents of Pune City. In Europe, it has considered that for every 1000 population there should be one bakery unit. Considering this ratio, Pune City should have been 3500 bakeries, but since the bread is not an essential commodity in India the number of bakery units is lesser than the European Standard.

## 1.3. Home Bakers: Concept & Demand in Pune

Home bakers in Pune started increasing about a decade ago due to change in the demands and trends of the market. This is due to a change in lifestyle or culture. The birthdays and anniversaries became an event. And to celebrate such events "Cake" happened to be a crucial element. The simple cake began turning into multi-layered ones. There were very few bakeries in Pune providing the bakery delights other than just bread and biscuits. The demands of the market started evolving and coping up with such high demands became difficult for the bakery units in Pune City. That gives birth to the "Home Bakers." Home baker is a concept that is widely used in today's era to an entrepreneur who is a free-lancer, caters to the need of the customers. He/she may not be a professional baker but their hobby and instincts stimulate them to be creative and innovative. The women are leading in this business as they are god gifted with two major abilities that are essential for the business – creativity & imagination. The home bakers majorly serve cakes for various occasions. Along with cakes they also serve cookies, bread, chocolates as per demand. Customisation is the key feature of home bakers. They provide customers with super-customised, sometimes signature cakes and other bakery delights. This business initially was not considered as the main source of income. Amateurs or non-professionals used to do this business for the hobby as well as to earn extra income. Since the demand for bakery products has augmented the professional bakers are turned into home bakers and non-professionals are undergoing training to upgrade their skills required for it. Thus, home baking has turned into main source of income to many in the city.

## 1.4. Objectives

1. To study the various challenges faced by the home bakers during the lockdown.
2. To identify various strategies used by home bakers in the lockdown.

## 1.5. Significance of the study

Home baking, though initially started to cherish hobby and earn additional penny, now has turned into a business. As the name suggests 'Home Baker' is not yet considered as commercial business, but plays an important role in the bakery industry. The business backed by hobby and passion has great scope in the market as cakes, pastries, biscuits & cookies have become every day's food items. The 'Cake' is an integral part of birthdays, anniversaries, farewells and such occasions that has increased demand for it. Not only frosted or decorated cakes, but even small cakes such as muffins & tea cakes are in a demand. Biscuits and cookies are treated as complementary or accompanying food items to tea and coffee which starts the day of most of the Indians. This business is sustaining in the market based on one key principle i.e. customisation. Unlike other commercial bakeries, home bakers are not keeping their inventory on shelves. They produce goods as per order.

The pandemic of coronavirus has a great impact on the business of home bakers. Hence, the main aim of this study is to find out the impact of coronavirus and the lockdown due to pandemic on the business. As well as to identify which strategies did the home bakers used in the lockdown period to deliver safe and hygienic products to their customers. This study also presents the challenges faced by the home bakers during the lockdown and the impact on the sales due to unanticipated lockdown enforced in India.

### 1.6. Scope & Limitations of the study

This study pertains to the impact of COVID 19 and due to which the challenges or obstacles faced by the home bakers in the lockdown period. Researchers have made a sincere effort to identify the impact of the pandemic of coronavirus on the business as well as various strategies and precautions implemented in the operations by the home bakers to provide safe, hygienic, yet delicious bakery products to the customers. This study also present experiences of few home bakers of the business during lockdown period.

This study has some limitations. The participants of the research are the home bakers of Pune. The total sample size was designed for 75 responses out of which 59 have been recorded using Google Forms. This becomes 79% of the total sample, hence can be considered as reliable. The study is limited to the home bakers only and no commercial bakeries were involved in the research study. Home bakers based in Pune were targeted and hence does not have any relevance to any other location elsewhere. The Central Government of India enforced lockdown from mid-March till end of May, thus, findings of this research may not apply to any other period or even same period elsewhere in India, or any other period for the same area and even to the same home bakers. The sample size may be too small as compared with total population of home bakers in Pune. However, researchers have put their best efforts to reach out maximum home bakers during the restriction period.

### 1.7. Research Methodology

The presented study is an applied research. Quantitative approach has been used while conducting this research study. The targeted audience for the research were home bakers from the Pune. Method used for sampling is purposive and judgemental. This research includes Primary & Secondary data. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaire about the impact of COVID 19 on the business of home bakers using Google Forms. These forms were sent using email and other social media channels and the analysis has been done based on the responses. 53 responses were recorded out of 75 i.e. targeted sample size, which is almost 71% response rate. Secondary data was collected through various websites, blogs, news articles and reports.

### 1.8. Literature Review

1. The blog written on the website of Dawn (Mar 2020), "Tips for bakeries in COVID 19 environment" has mentioned the key business strategies to maintain the customers, work smarter and gain more out of less & limited resources to adjust in "new normal" world. Social media, which is economical in cost and has a positive impact on the business, to be used to reach the market on a large scale. Offering delivery (if feasible) within a certain radius of the location should be provided, which increases the revenue. Innovation is the key and using creative, innovative ideas with the help of technology keep revenue coming in.
2. The newspaper article in The Economist (8 April 2020) 'home baking is on the rise' presents the statistics of Nielsen – a market research company – in France, there is a sudden increase in the sale of flour by 160% and soap by 220%. The company has not mentioned the figures for the flour elsewhere, though the journalists for The Economist have reported the scarcity of bakery supplies for homemade bread, cakes & buns.
3. Shambhavi Anand (12 May 2020) mentioned in the column of Economic Times that there is a 60% increase in the sale of bakery related items such as baking soda, cocoa powder, and other ingredients as lockdown has made people to dust off their hidden skills of baking.
4. Aurelia Lambrechts (May 2020) has presented some tips in her blog on 'philosophy-of-yum.' In that, she has specified hints to increase the business of home bakers. Here she quotes that the business of home bakers will be going to get affected as it won't be generating revenue as usual. Hence, home bakers should try doing things differently, which will attract customers. Further, she mentions that the bakers should communicate to their clientele what are the precautions and safety measures they are taking to keep the products safe and hygienic. Alternative income to bakery businesses like conducting bakery classes online will also be a good and innovative idea, so the revenue doesn't stop.
5. Article by Puratos on their web portal (2020) 'Adapt bakery's services in times of COVID-19', there is a list of strategies the bakers should use whilst the lockdown period. In this article, it has mentioned that the consumers' needs and behaviour are changing promptly. Therefore, the approach towards the business should also be changed. Optimising the in-house management such as inventory management, hygiene measures, etc. should be given prime importance. Innovative ideas such as loyalty bonus points, delivery of goods, and being in touch with the customers (maybe through Facebook or YouTube live) is crucial.
6. 'Psychology-backed reason why so many people are baking during the lockdown' - a newspaper article in Times of India (11 May 2020), states various aspects of home baking. In this pandemic, many in the society are facing depression. Making a loaf of bread or maybe a cake has psychological factors behind it. When people are feeling uneasy or stressed, they hasten to comfort food. Bread & Sugar are the comfort

food that act as a soothing agent in stressful situations. Baking and cooking are therapeutic way as it requires a lot of patience, efforts, and skills which balances the anxiety or stress levels.

7. The New Indian Express (18 June 2020) – Hyderabad's home bakers continue to whip delights amid COVID-19 lockdown. In this article, the survey of home bakers in Hyderabad have presented. In spite of lockdown and hurdles in logistics and raw material supply many home bakers have achieved success in their business. New customers were added and the demand for such home-baked items was increased extensively. Innovation in the use of raw material such as using substitutes for scarce items without compromising on the taste and the quality was the crucial factor in the lockdown.
8. Mallika Bhagat (07 May 2020) has stated in the news article of Hindustan Times that 'Sweet nothings: Home bakers whip up and deliver delights amid lockdown' the home bakers in Delhi are facing troubles to meet the higher demands in limited resources. Still, they have not shut down; instead, they are trying to cope-up with the demand in the market by using some new innovative ways to prevent supply from being obsolete. With all the precautions about safety and hygiene, Delhi's home bakers are offering no contact delivery of their delicacies as well as pick-ups from their source locations.

## 2. Data Analysis & Interpretation

### 2.1. Home Bakers of Pune

To collect data about the home bakers in Pune, a structured questionnaire using Google Forms was created and circulated through email and other social media channels. In this questionnaire basic contact information and some general questions regarding their business were also included. In their response, it has proved that the women are leading in the numbers of home bakers in Pune. **Figure 1 (A)**. The age group of 18–25 years that means young adults (Gen Z) are greater in the numbers. **Figure 1 (B)**. The second largest group is 26–35 years of age which can be termed as millennials (Gen Y).

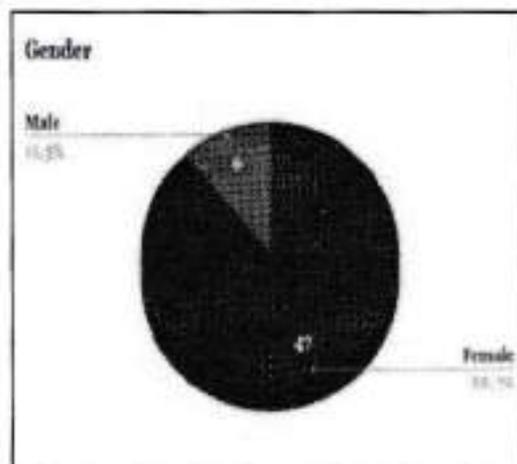


Figure 1 (A)

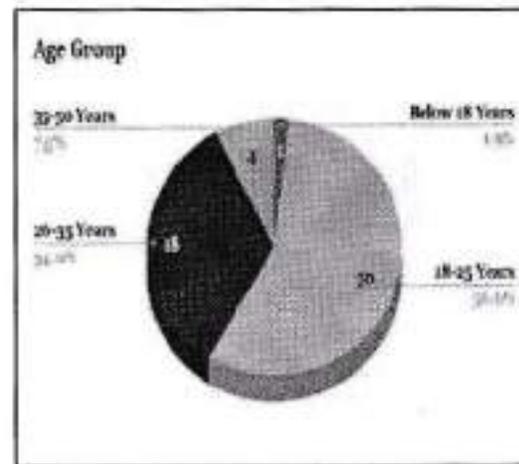


Figure 1 (B)

For this research activity, Pune was divided into five zones (refer to the **Figure 2**) – East, West, Central, North & South – to identify the zone in which there are maximum number of home bakers. Except for North Region, the home bakers are in similar numbers in other four regions. **Figure 3**.

The central region covers the area from *Shivajinagar Railway Station* to the south *Deccan Gymkhana, Tilak Road* till *Sarashang*. And from *Swarigate* to the north *MG Road, GPO* till *Pune Railway Station*. This region also includes all the *Pethas* in Pune. The East Region has two major highways that links prominent cities of Maharashtra – *Ahmednagar & Solapur* – one of it is a National Highway while other is a State Highway. *NH 65* is a highway that connects Pune and Solapur cities while *SH 27* links Pune & Ahmednagar cities. Apart from it, this region also has *Pune International Airport*. Most of the Five Star hotels are in this region. Hence this region is of great importance from the international clients' perspective. In the West region there are basically all the residential complexes. This region includes *Karve Road, Paud Road*, some part of *Sinhgad Road, Kothrud, Warje* in the south part, and towards north, this region includes *Pune University, Pashan, Audh, Baner, Bavdhan* and *Balewadi Stadium*. The west region also covers *Mumbai-Bangalore Bypass Road* from north to south.

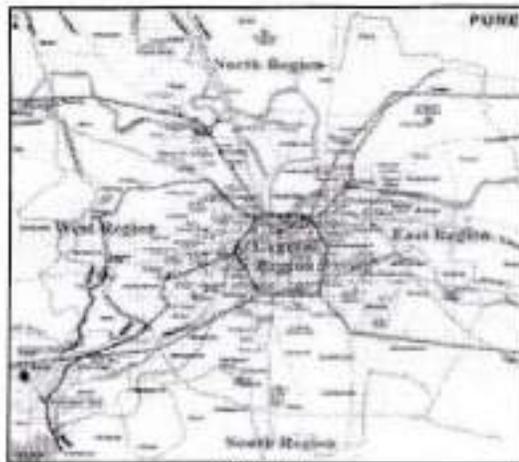


Figure 2

Source: <https://www.istanbul-city-guide.com/map/india/pune-map.aspx>

The north region starts with *Old Mumbai-Pune Highway* and includes *Sangamwadi, Khadaki, Range Hill, Pune Yerawada Jail, Alandi, Vishrantwadi, Dhanori, Dapodi, Chakan*, etc. North-west region has the IT hub i.e. *Hinjewadi Rajiv Gandhi InfoTech Park, Pimpri-Chinchwad*, the sister city of Pune, *Sanghvi*, etc. South region has mostly residential area starting with *Swargate, Parvati, Salisbury Park, Bibwewadi, Padmavati, Kondhwa, Hingane, Wadgaon, Dhayari* and the one of the biggest city/complexes in Pune, '*Nanded City*'. Historical monument like *Sinhgad Fort* is also in the South region of Pune. *The Rajiv Gandhi Zoological Park and Wildlife Research Centre, Katraj* is in south region, too. Pune's lifeline that is *Khadakwasla Dam* is towards south-west of Pune. The India's *National Defence Academy (NDA)* is also at south-west of Pune, on the banks of *Khadakwasla Dam*.

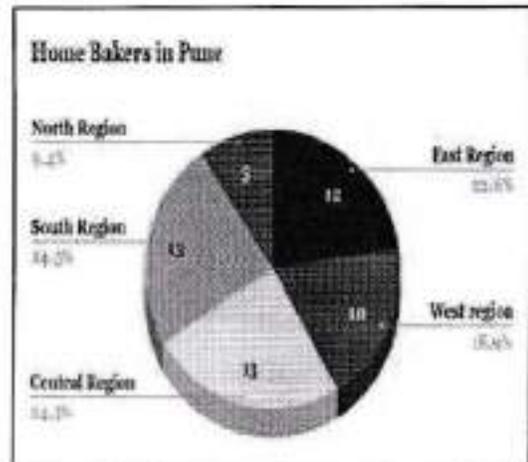


Figure 3

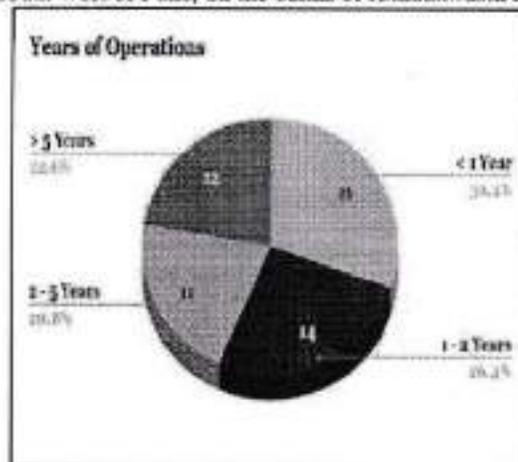


Figure 4 (A)

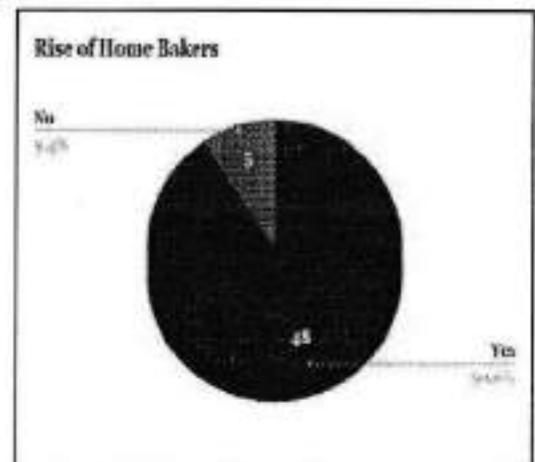


Figure 4 (B)

Most of the home bakers have started the business recently within a span of one year. Almost 47% of the sample have been doing the business more than a year but less than 5 years [refer Figure 4 (A)]. There are few which are in this business for a long while i.e. more than 5 years and most of them are above 25 years of age. Due to the lockdown, the people have started with home baking business as we can see rise of the home bakers in the Figure 4 (B). And hence, the number with less than one year of operations is higher in the statistical presentation.

Stimulus for the business of home baking is to pursue hobby and passion. The lock-down has also helped the individuals to pursue and develop their hobby for baking. 72% of the sample have entered into the business to cultivate the hobby of baking and the passion for fashioned cakes & cookies. Professional education & training is vital in preparing such high skilled desserts. Figure 5 (A) presents the statistics about the stimuli to enter into the business. Earning extra penny is always a motive to start a new business, but since this business requires high set of skills which can be impossible without dedication and passion for it.

Baking or cooking is an art. Hence, making a frosted/iced cake requires patience, dedication and lots of practise. One cannot achieve it in a day. It requires good observation and practise. Patience and dedication are intrinsic factors. One major external factor which is required for the baking is the formal education and

training. Figure 5 (B) exactly explains it. 74% of home bakers have undergone a formal training in which they have learnt the crux of bakery.

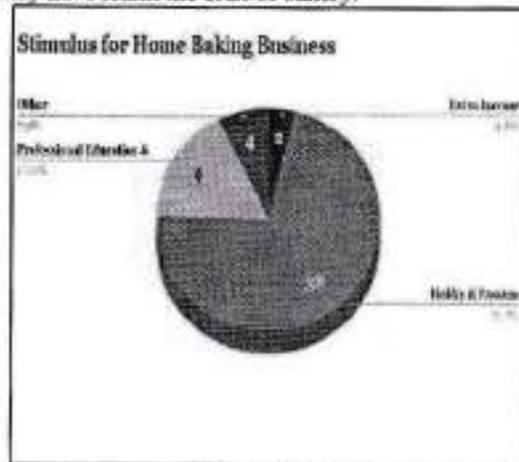


Figure 5 (A)

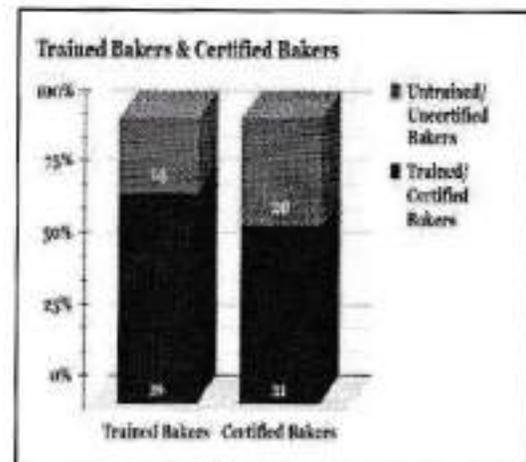


Figure 5 (B)

## 2.2. Psychological-based Reasons

While coronavirus has created fear about the future in the minds of people, it has also made people start entrepreneurial activity like baking at home and thus increasing the number of home bakers that many were not aware of. From a simple muffin to a delicately iced cake, people have invested their free time (due to lockdown) in learning a new skill. There are some psychology-backed reasons why people have turned to produce bakery products at home. Figure 6. Bread and sugar are considered comfort food (refer article – Psychology-backed reasons, *The Times of India*, May 11, 2020). When a human being feels a stressful situation, he/she rushes to comfort food. Hence, the art of bakery has become a way to distress and self-soothe for people. Consuming sugar in a stressed situation, regulates mood, appetite, and social behaviour. People feel happier after consuming sweet delicacies. Likewise, bakery delights also work to fix the body to be “happy” temporarily. The art of baking is a conscious effort and require a lot of patience. When somebody is putting their efforts and time sincerely in the construction of something positive, it reduces stress and anxiety levels. Hence, cooking and baking also act as a therapeutic medium.

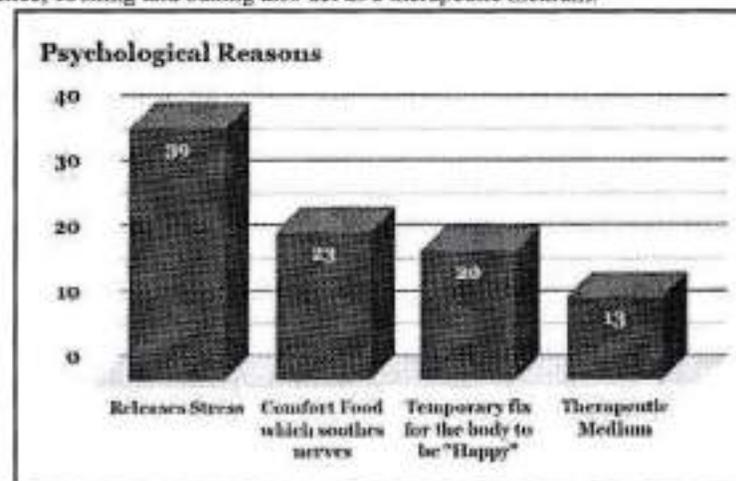


Figure 6

## 2.3. Revenue Generation

The below statistical charts represent the financial probability of the business. As there is larger group of home bakers under the age of 25 years, it provides an extra income opportunity to them. Almost 56% of the total sample [Figure 7 (A)] earns below ₹ 5000 per month that indicates economic potential of the business. However, we cannot overlook the 44% of the sample, too. There are few home bakers who have turned it into their main income source. Some of the home bakers are producing the bakery products as per demand and selling it through a small outlet. To operate an outlet, more manpower is needed. Thus, they have some employees who assists them in their business. Otherwise, all home bakers are solely operating their entire business. [Figure 7 (B)]

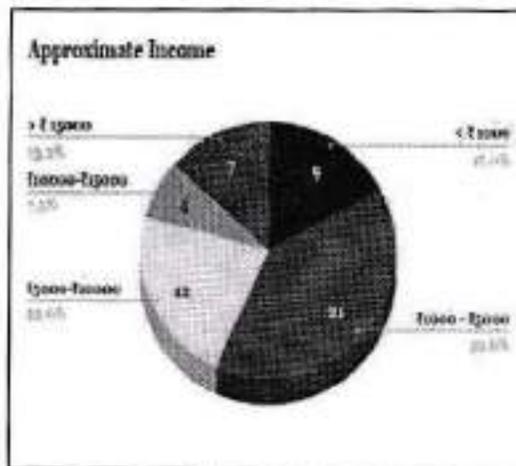


Figure 7 (A)



Figure 7 (B)

#### 2.4. Impact of COVID 19

The worldwide outbreak of coronavirus has severely affected on the business of home bakers. In initial phases of lockdown, the home bakers have faced many challenges and therefore the impact was negative. As people started to cope up with the situation, the business was again on the go and starts flourishing. This was due to curtailment in the production and supply chain of bakery items. The demand for bakery items were at its peak and home bakers got a good opportunity to cover the losses due to lockdown. Hence, we can see a mixed impact of COVID 19 on the business of home bakers [refer Figure 8 (A) & (B)].

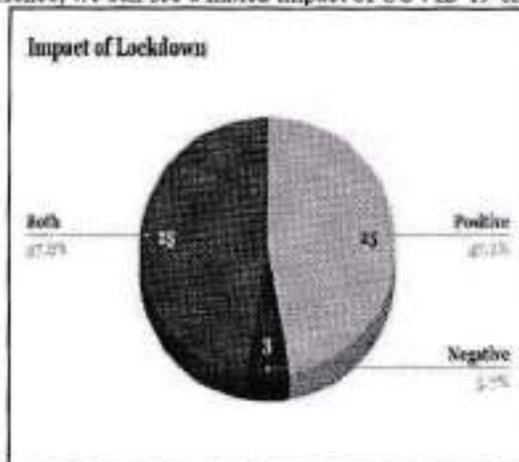


Figure 8 (A)

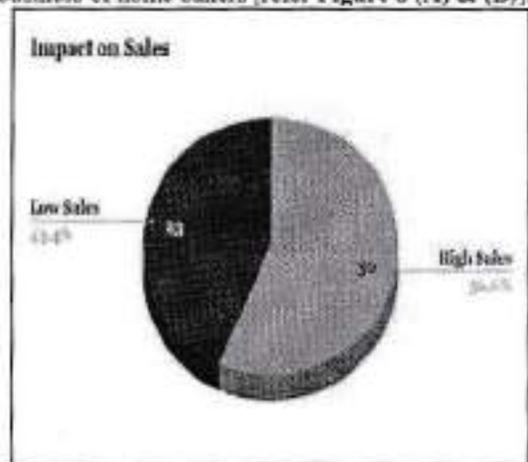


Figure 8 (B)

#### 2.5. Challenges faced by Home Bakers in Pune

The sudden lockdown due to coronavirus has made the home bakers face various challenges (Figure 9). The major challenge was the scarcity of raw material. Bakery products require some special ingredients which are not available at Indian Grocers' Shop. These ingredients are available in supermarket stores & due to COVID 19 fear, all the supermarket stores were closed. This resulted in a shortage of supply & eventually, the cost of raw materials was on rise. Also, the customers were scared of buying food stuffs which were prepared by somebody else. This perception of customers has a huge impact on the business of home bakers in Pune. To change the perception of customers, home bakers had to invest a high amount of cost in the sanitation & other preventive measures. In initial phases of lockdown, the home bakers have faced some logistical challenges, too. As the petroleum fuel was reserved only for the essential services such as police, medical practitioners & staff, press media, administrative personnel & essential food commodities (grocery, dairy, fruits & vegetables), the home bakers couldn't offer delivery of bakery products to the customers. Thus, due to all above mentioned reasons, the sales were affected and home bakers experienced a huge list of cancelled orders.

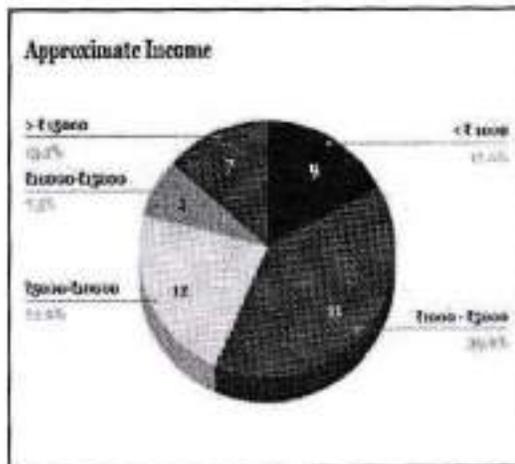


Figure 7 (A)

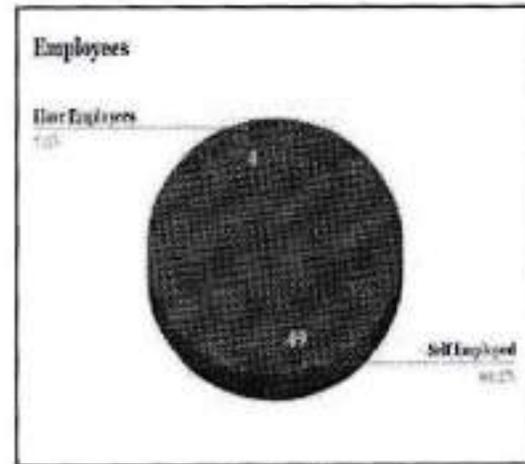


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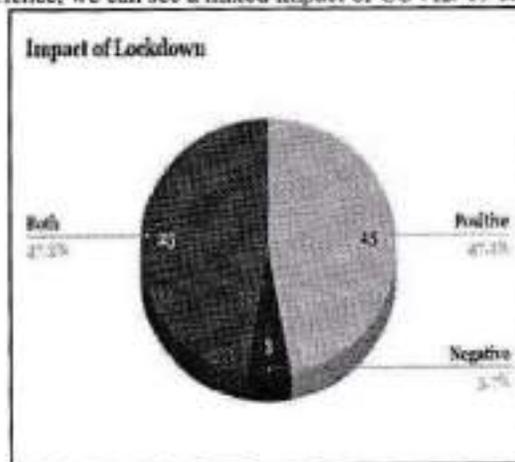


Figure 8 (A)

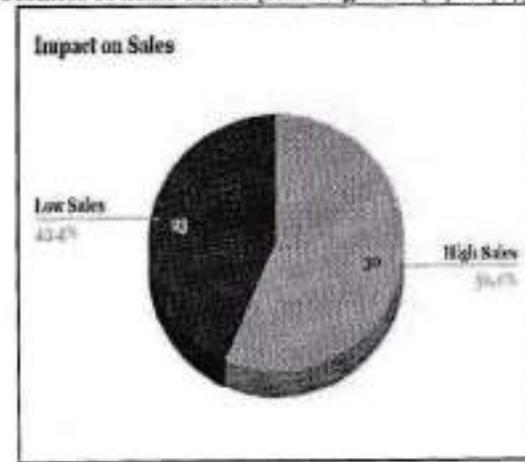


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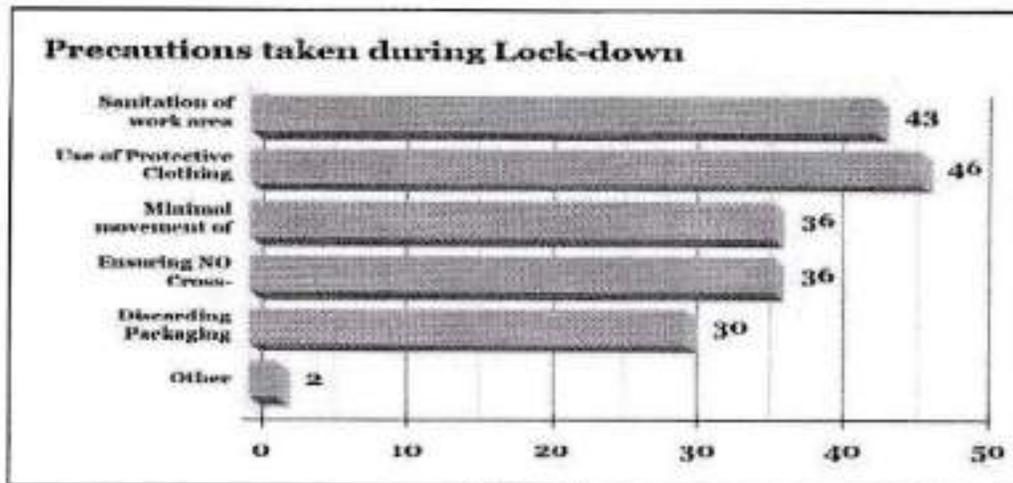


Figure 11

### 2.8. Various Strategies implemented in Lock-down

The strategy is a plan of action to achieve organisational goals. As the nationwide lockdown enforced, pause all the business operations. Hence, the home baking business, too. When the market started to cope up with the situation, home bakers have implemented some strategies to regain customers and so business to cover the backlog of income; these various implemented strategies presented in Figure 12. Though the lockdown has not lifted entirely in Pune, some restrictions have been relaxed in certain areas to allow business operations to take place. The home bakers were following strict hygiene and sanitation practices. These were communicated through various channels to create trust in the minds of customers. Contact-less pick-ups & deliveries were also offered by the home bakers to effectuate "new-normal" norms. The list of products was revised to start the operations after the lockdown period, to present a variety of products that will suit the "new-normal" demand of the market.

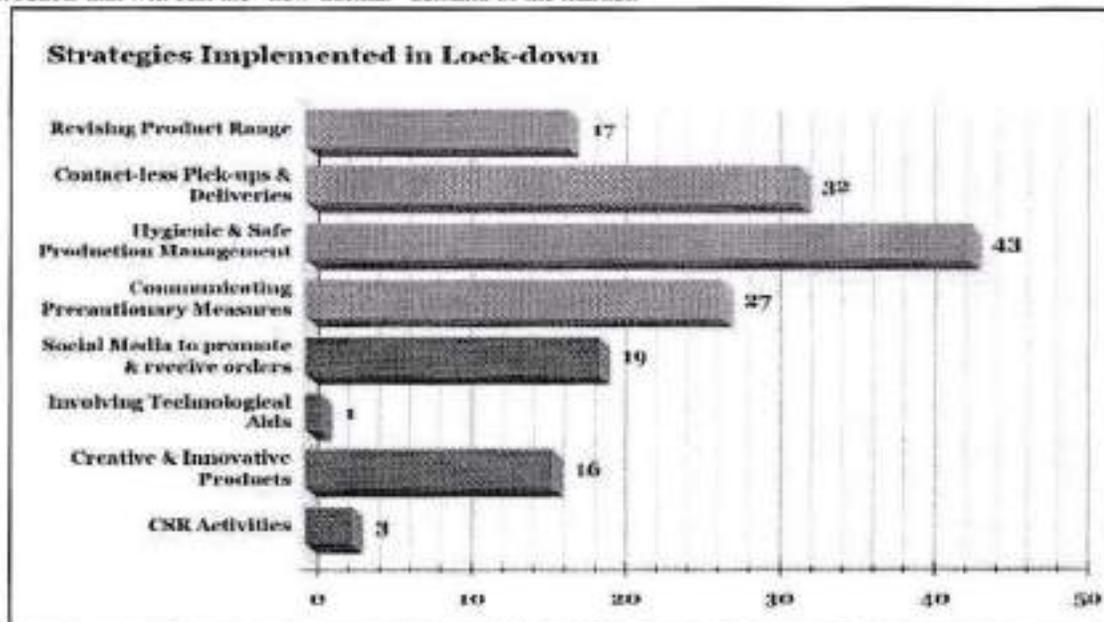


Figure 12

There were some unique strategies carried out by the home bakers to attract customers; these presented in pink-coloured bar charts. The most effective platform of this era, to promote the business is Social Media. Home bakers have used this platform to advertise as well as to receive orders from the customers. By revising product range, they have also included some creative, innovative, and attractive, mouth-watering delicacies in the menu to attract more customers. Few of them have also worked socially to perform their duty towards the country & man-kind.

### 3. Results & Recommendations

The above research study has proved that the home baking business has great significance from an economic perspective. Maximum home bakers are women in society and from the age group of 18-25 years. The pandemic of coronavirus has resulted in the rise of home bakers. Most of the home bakers have started the business within one year (due to lockdown). And almost 47% are into this business ranging from one year to five years. Though the stimulus for this business is hobby and passion, most of the home bakers have completed formal training, and 62% of the sample are certified. Lockdown caused by COVID 19 has helped the people to pursue their hobby and passion for baking. During the lockdown period, many have invested their free time in learning a new skill. Since the bakery is an art, it requires passion, dedication, and patience. And when somebody is putting their efforts into creating something positive, it works as a therapeutic medium. Hence, the art of baking has become a way to release stress, regulate mood, and social behaviour. That is why it has some psychology-based reasons. This business may not be financially sound to operate, but if backed by passion and dedication, one can earn ₹ 5000 to ₹ 15000 per month or even more. However, current statistics reveal that 56% of the population is grossing up to ₹ 5000 per month.

Home baking business is not an exception to the severely affected businesses due to COVID 19. The nation-wide lockdown enforced in India had resulted in many restrictions and challenges to the home bakers. But the demand for the bakery products was at its peak home bakers turned this opportunity in their favour. Thus, the impact of lockdown on the business is mixed. The sales were down in initial phases of lockdown, nevertheless as demand was on its rise, the sales figures were thriving as home bakers could manage to earn the revenue lost due to the lockdown. One of the crucial challenges, due to the lockdown, is the scarcity of raw materials. The supermarket stores were closed during the lockdown as a preventive measure from spreading the virus, which resulted in a shortage of supply of bakery related ingredients. Although, many of the home bakers had already stocked-up their inventory that ensured the smooth operations. The deficiency of supply in the market of bakery related ingredients and supplies led to a rise in the price of commodities. Also, the perception of customers affected sales in the early stages of lockdown. The cancellation of orders has created stress within the home bakers, as they had to return the advances, while some offered a credit note to save future sales. Home bakers had to invest a high amount of funds in sanitation that has helped them to change the perception of the customers.

There are various strategies implemented in the operations by the home bakers. Observing the strict hygiene and sanitation practices in the production and communicating the safety measures taken while producing the bakery items was the widely used strategy by the home bakers. This strategy was not only to attract customers but also to create "trust" in them. Contact-less pick-ups & deliveries were also offered by the home bakers to effectuate "new-normal" norms. The existing menu had revised with the affordable and suitable for the "new-normal" demand of the market. This menu has an ample variety of bakery products. Some home bakers have also used a few very unique strategies such as using social media platforms to advertise the business that helps reach the greater geographical region and to receive orders as well. The new, revised menu had included certain creative and attractive, mouth-watering bakery delicacies to attract customers. Very few home bakers have worked socially to perform their duty towards the country and have helped the needy people with essentials to sustain in such hard situations.

Today, the home baking business is not considered a commercial business; but it has the potential to be one as the baking is one of the professional arts. Though the business stimulus is hobby and passion, the potential, as well as existing home bakers, should seek professional training and courses which will advance their skills and knowledge. Also, it helps to widen the scope of business. Revenue from the business can be improved by exercising unique strategies and novel products. Cancellations need to be handled in such a way to secure sales. Various innovative tactics must be implemented to avoid cancellation. In this advertising world, home bakers should take their business online that helps to operate and promote the business functions. Social media and similar online channels should be used at its best. Also, various technological advancements such as apps, cloud-based systems, inventory management systems should be used to monitor the business operations. The guest database needs to be maintained which helps generate leads. Business strategies should be flexible that can be executed in miserable situations, too. The seasonal offers or limited-period offers if implemented may help to boost sales. In short, the home baking business has a tremendous scope and demand in the near future, if operated in the best possible manner. The primary motive of the business must be, supply unique, quality products in the market to comply with the demand in a professional manner.

### 4. Conclusion

After completing this research activity, the researcher has drawn some conclusions. Bakery products play a significant role in the Indian food industry. The home baking business has immense potential in the market; hence, one who has a passion for baking should pursue professional education in the field of the bakery before commencing the business. Due to the lockdown of COVID 19, the business of home bakers

has severely affected. The primary phase of lockdown had resulted in low sales and cancelled orders; however, the demand for bakery products in the market boomed in the later stages. The increased demand has helped the home bakers to cover the backlog of sales. When the restrictions were lifted, home bakers have used various strategies to attract customers back to their businesses. These strategies are in association with government norms and regulations. They have also implemented some unique strategies to attract more customers, thereby increasing sales.

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## The Challenges faced by Travel Agents due to Price Transparency in the Travel Industry (reference to the Pune City).

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### Abstract

India, one of the developing countries, is observing a lot of demand for outbound travel in recent years. It is attracting a lot of tourists majoring from the mid-income segments and they are also preferring the unexplored destinations. The travel agents and tour operators are in a continuous search and promotion of such unexplored destinations. The traveller of today is well-versed and has prior knowledge regarding tourism products and they are smart enough in comparing the prices by various tools due to abundance use of the internet. Online-Travel agents, Apps, Websites, Social Media platforms enable an individual to do the price analysis of individual travel components and services offered by the third parties. High usage of the internet has impacted on the margins or mark-ups, commissions of hotels, airlines, even on the local transport and accommodation services. This is termed as Price Transparency where the prices are open for all, irrespective of the status of the person (i.e. wholesaler, retailer or the end-user) using or consuming the products or services. Hence the price transparency enables the customers to efficiently search, compare and book their travel plans also they can calculate the mark-ups, commissions which the travel agents or tour operators are charging and can bargain for it. This is resulting in cutthroat competition for the wholesalers & retailers in the market. Hence getting the contracted or discounted rates for various components at the tourist destination has become crucial for travel agents, tour operators as well as the b2b sector in the travel industry. They are losing the business due to very less margin and raising the intense competition in the industry. Though the positive aspect of price transparency is that the customers can compare more substitutes offering the same services at lower prices.

**Keywords:** Price transparency, travel agent, online travel agents (OTAs), competition

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Travel Agent

A travel agent is a person who assists tourists in planning, selecting & organising their tour to a destination. For this, he should have a thorough knowledge of the destination, transportation, accommodation and other tourism related facilities. The travel agent generally bridges the gap between product or service manufacturer/provider and its consumer and receives a commission. A travel agent is an owner or a manager of the firm commonly known as a travel agency. A travel agency is a firm or a corporation or an organisation which has a representative office where travel related products or services are assembled and sold to its ultimate customers i.e. tourists. It is one of the most important facets of the tourism industry as it contributes a larger stake in the country's

\* Corresponding Author

economy by promoting and selling tourism products and services. Hence, it is also known as the 'image builder' of the country.

A travel agent performs a wide range of functions to fulfil the demand of its customers. They do not just plan and organise the tour for its customers but even they advise their clientele on where to go, local attractions, events, traditions, adventures, and so on. Apart from its basic functions, travel agents also perform following tasks in an event to satisfy the needs and demands of the tourists:

- They provide essential travel information to their customers. An accurate and timely information about the customers' journey, destinations, attractions, passport, VISA and other procedures such as immigration, customs clearance, travel and health insurance, etc. must be provided by the travel agent.
- Travel agent is also responsible for booking the airline tickets as well as the accommodation on behalf of the tourists. Service providers such as airline companies and hotels pay off good commission to the travel agents on the basis of business given.
- They also assemble or club various individual tourism products and services into one product commonly known as tour package. While assembling the tour package, travel agents must give emphasis on the leisure activities and needs and demands of the tourists. Traditional norms and customs of the tourist's religion must also be kept in mind while formulating such packages.
- They also help the tourists to avail currency exchange facilities. There is a government body who approves travel agencies as an authorised organisation to provide currency exchange facilities to the tourists. It helps the tourists to transact in foreign country without any hassle.

#### **Role of travel agents in country's economy -**

- Promote the tourism business in the market.
- Create employment in the society.
- Creation of budget for the organisation.
- Attract local capital along with the foreign capital.
- Provide business to the allied industries such as airline, hotel, IT, commerce, etc.

### **1.2. Indian Tourism Overview**

India is one in all the highest countries that has several tourist attractions that might be natural or man-made. Also, the tourism business in India is contributing a major stake to the country's economy and its growing space. "Unity in Diversity" is the key feature of India that continuously fascinates foreign nationals in addition to its residents to discover varied ethnicities and conducts that it has to offer to the world. In the year 2018, The World Travel & Tourism Council calculated the revenue generated by the tourism industry in India ₹16.91 lakh crore which was then equivalent to the US \$240 billion and contributed to India's 9.2% GDP. It supported 42.673 million jobs which are 8.1% of its total employment. The tourism sector in India is expected to grow at an annual rate of 6.9% to 32.05 lakh crore by 2028 contributing to the nation's GDP to 9.9%. Several reports also present the growing rate of inbound tourism in India, medical tourism is playing a vital role in it. Globally, the capital city of India, Delhi is ranked 11th for the foreign tourist visits, followed by Mumbai 14th, Agra 26th, Chennai 36th, Jaipur 39th, Kolkata 76th, and Bangalore 100th according to the Euroonitor's report in the year 2019. Pune is ranked 91st according to Mastercard's Report 2018.

### **1.3. Pricing in Tourism Industry**

Pricing is one of the most vital factors within the tourism business mix. Tourists rate the product by its price and without which there is no guideline of quality. Determination of Price to particular product or service is thus indispensable for the success of the

tourism establishment, because it has a remarkable effect on demand and turnover. Price usually reflects an indication of quality. The "right" price must satisfy both the tourists and meet the end objective, that is profit, of the tourist firm. Perception of tourists carries the ultimate significance in the various decisions made by tourists - the selection of a destination, the consumption of commodities whereas on vacation, and also the decision to come back. Tourists are experienced travellers, older and very price sensible. It is essential in influencing travel behaviour. To sustain in such a competitive climate, the tourist product or service should be perceived as of a high quality which is similar or higher to different competitors, and its price should be perceived as irresistible. Hence, the facts on tourists' opinions of cost and benefit plays in tourist behaviour is of the highest importance.

#### 1.4. Concept of Price Transparency

Price transparency is that ability to recognise all of the bid costs, ask prices, and merchandising quantities for a given stock, good, or service at a given time. In the economy, price transparency promotes competition. In the tourism industry, for instance, tourists usually have no or little idea of what a particular tourist product or service really costs, keeping them almost in the dark and no power to negotiate for higher prices. If tourists don't seem to be able to negotiate for prices or research effectively, competition is suppressed. Knowing what everybody else is bidding, asking, and trading helps identify the real supply and demand for a security, good, or service that is, its true worth. Once this data is unobtainable or unavailable, the market is by definition less economical.

#### 1.5. Objectives

1. To study the impacts of price transparency on the tourism industry.
2. To understand favourable and unfavourable aspects of price transparency to travel agents.
3. To study various factors which influence price transparency (such as the internet, social media, etc.)

#### 1.6. Hypotheses

1. Price transparency has an impact on the travel industry.
2. Prices, internet and social media influences the travel plans of the tourists.

#### 1.7. Significance of the study

Price Transparency is a term used where the prices are open to all. This means that any individual in the market can access the price of a certain commodity, service or so. Such easily accessible prices create intense competition in the market. Also, the Online Distribution Channels disclose such pricing on their websites which makes customers easy to compare between the service provider or manufacturer. Today, in the tourism industry, the price of any tourism product or service is available on the internet. The customers of the tourism industry, commonly known as tourists, are aware of prices. Hence, the business of the travel agents is suffering and they have to face such immense competition created in the market, just because of Price Transparency. There are some advantages of Price Transparency if we look at it from the customers' point of view and even from the travel agents' perspective. But its disadvantages make the travel agents lower its margin of gain and even some of the times to lose the business.

My main objective of this research is to identify the impact of price transparency on the business of the travel agents. The key elements to be explored from this research activity are the concept of Price Transparency, the role of it in the tourism industry,

advantages & disadvantages of the price transparency to the travel agents, the key factors which influence price transparency. Also, provide them (the travel agents) with the solution to this problem.

### 1.8. Scope & Limitations of study

This study pertains to the impact of price transparency and due to which the various challenges or obstacles travel agents are facing in the tourism industry. The researcher has made sincere efforts to find out the impact of price transparency on the business of the travel agent. Also, the factors which influence price transparency are identified in this research activity. The study presents the advantages as well as the disadvantages of Price Transparency.

The participants of this research were the travel agents in the vicinity of Pune City. The total sample of 20 questionnaires was designed for the travel agents and 16 responses are recorded by personally visiting their offices as well as through an email, which becomes 80% of the total sample. Thus, the responses can be considered as reliable. The study is limited to the travel agents in the vicinity of Pune city and does not have any relevance to any other location elsewhere. Also, the timeframe for the research activity is limited to the period of August 2019 to November 2019, hence the findings of this research may not apply to any other period even in the same area and same travel agents of the research activity.

### 1.9. Research Methodology Adopted

The present study is an Applied Research. The targeted audience for this research is the travel agents which are facing the challenges due to price transparency. Method used for sampling is purposive and judgemental. The methodology used for the research for this paper includes Primary and Secondary data. Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire about the price transparency and its impact on the business of travel agents. Secondary data was collected by reading available material on the internet from online journals, websites and articles.

## 2. Literature Review

- In his research paper (2006), "Price Transparency on the Internet Requirements of revenue management for the development of an online strategy in the hospitality industry" Dr. Egger has stated that the rapid growth of information and communication technology has greatly impacted on the tourism industry. Through these distribution channels, customers can access a wide range of information about tourism products. This results in hard-fought competition in the tourism market and price transparency play a vital role in it.
- Li Miao & Anna Mattila have mentioned in their research paper (July 2006), "*How & How much to reveal? The effects of Price Transparency on the consumers' price perception*" a large amount of data available on the internet makes it a bit confusing for the consumers to make an optimal decision. Also, the marketers purposely reveal or hide information from the consumer in an attempt to manipulate the choice of the consumer. These practices influence the price evaluation and perception of consumers in the market.
- In February 2008, The Economic Times published an article written by Nandita da Cunha, "International Tour Package is Opaque" in which the author mentioned that tour package demand has increased in the last few years due to reduced cost, convenience, and customisation. The tour operators in the country are observing the price transparency in their operations or encounters with the consumers and results in creating a brand value in the minds of the consumers. She also mentioned in the article

that the new age customers are interested in the straight offers rather than virtual discounts in which the price is impossible to evaluate.

- According to the ACM (Authority of Consumers & Markets), Netherlands, 2013 report many businesses in the travel industry along with its processes have become more transparent to the consumers. ACM is also keeping a close observation on the businesses in the travel industry those who add costs at the total price late in the booking and assures the consumers that firm action will be taken against such practices as it reduces the transparency in the market.
- Shanon Lee in May 2014, stated in the blog on HIT Consultant, "*Medical Tourism Close to Home: Price Transparency is key*" that in the 20th century, the medical tourism can witness a shift from developing country's patients travelling to developed countries to completely opposite such as patients from the USA are travelling to the Asian countries to receive treatment as the cost of treatment and the quality is as same as developed countries but the cost in developing countries is much lesser than their own country.
- Christopher Elliott defines price transparency as '*price you see is the price you pay*'. He further quoted in his newspaper article on 25th September 2016 in USA Today newspaper that while booking an airline seat the prices are not transparent. He had stated that 71% of travellers, according to TripAdvisor's survey, get annoyed by baggage fees and seat selection fees, which otherwise included in the airfare.
- Alisha Voitika stated in her blog (2018), "*Price Transparency: why hotels need to become choice architects*" that price-savvy generation of customers is the result of the internet which provides them with a lot of data. When it comes to the service industry, where two identical or the same services or products are being offered, price plays a crucial role in the purchase decision. And hence, whether it's a hotel or a travel agency, selling their products and services to the most price-sensitive audience, price transparency plays a key role.
- '*Indulge in Price Transparency – Don't drive the medical tourists away!*' (October, 2018) a blog written by Mr. Pradipta Das on Placid Solution's website, in which he mentioned the sense of interpretation of price transparency for both, the service provider and the consumer will be different. When it comes to the consumers it includes the cost of service and other costs which are associated with the product or service, and also that are essential to perform service's characteristic functions. While to the provider it means the covering of all the total cost of sales and a percentage of gain to the cost of sales. The consumers (i.e. patients) on the medical trip are not interested in searching for the best alternatives, what they need is just a comfortable stay, treatment, and transportation facility at the best possible price.

### 3. Data Analysis

As this is the quantitative research activity, the primary data or first-hand data is collected using structured questionnaires to the travel agents. The questionnaire was designed using Google Forms and were circulated to the travel agents through an email and some of the responses were collected by visiting the travel agents' office in-person.

In their responses, most of the travel agents have agreed that the Price Transparency has impacted on the business in recent years and this is one of the important aspects which creates an intense competition in the market (refer **Figure 1**). Also, the impact on the business is not so favourable for the travel agents as it gives rise to the online distribution channels and DIY (do-it-yourself) approach.



Figure 1. Intense Competition

When the question was asked to the travel agents that which are those factors that influence the costing of packaged tours, 69% of the respondents have mentioned Online Travel Agent's pricing greatly affects the costing (Figure 2). Also 62% of the population stated the availability of prices of individual tourism components influences the costing of packaged tours. 31% stated that above two variables along with seasonal discounts and government policies affects the pricing of such tours.

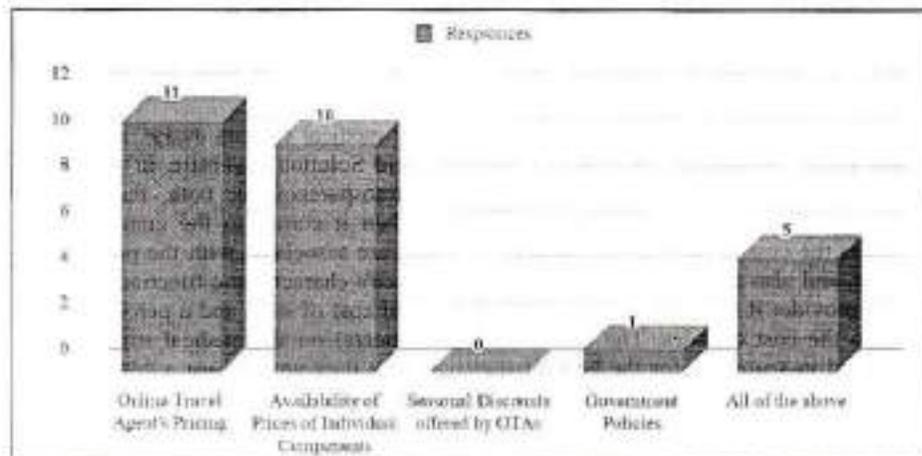


Figure 2. Factors influencing costing of Packaged Tours

Let's discuss now the advantages of price transparency to the travel agents (refer Figure 3). Major group of the population have voted that price transparency builds knowledge about the prices and costs offered by various competitors and hence can revise the pricing strategies. It also aids in decision-making. 7 respondents mentioned that it not only builds knowledge and decision making but also reduces uncertainty & emphasises value by providing their clientele an experience of transparent prices. the travel agents are creating brand value in the minds of the consumer.

Coming to the darker part of the price transparency i.e. the disadvantages (Figure 4) of it, 88% of the population have strongly agreed that the biggest disadvantage of the price transparency is it affects the rate of conversion which means the conversion rate of an enquiry into the business. Many of the respondents have also stated that it reduces net profit margins. As the key characteristic of price transparency, the prices are open to all,

this enables the customers to bargain for prices. Also, 62% of the total sample have responded for the Lack of uniqueness in the pricing because the competition in the market has become intense that there is no unique point of value which differentiates it from other competitors. Only 44% votes for the common bid-pricing, as mentioned earlier, if there is no differentiating factor then the prices of such tourism product and services will not be different, which resulted in same or similar pricing strategy.

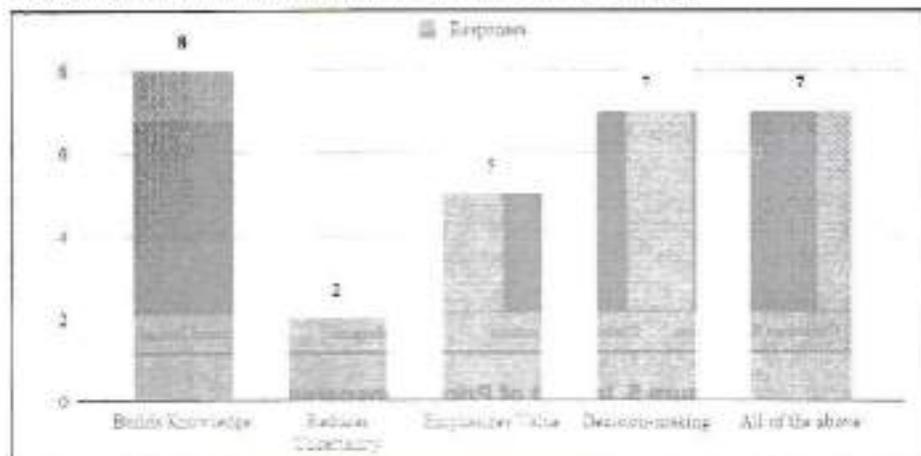


Figure 3. Advantages of Price Transparency to Travel Agents

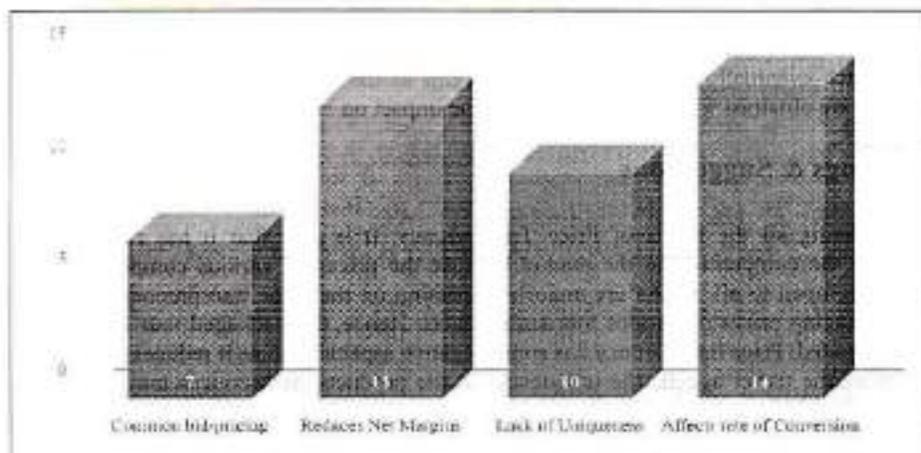
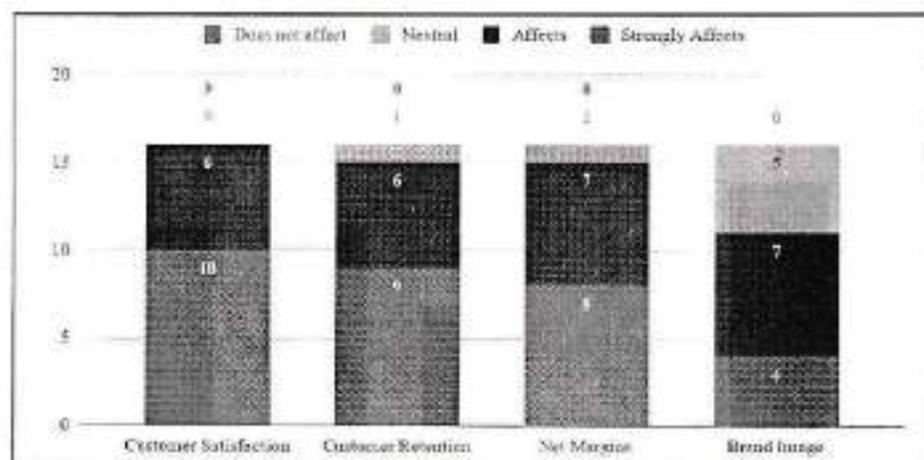


Figure 4. Disadvantages of Price Transparency to Travel Agents

The most influential factor of price transparency is the Online Travel Agents as all the travel agents have voted for it. Followed by the prices that are open on the social media platforms greatly influences the price transparency. The internet, E-WoM (electronic word-of-mouth) and offline advertisements such as newspaper, magazines, pamphlets and hoardings are also contributor to the price transparency. Out of these five influential factors, four are supported by internet i.e. online travel agents, social media, E-WoM and internet itself. The three concepts are widely used and known. But E-WoM is relatively new concept. Electronic Word-of-Mouth is a concept where people talk to each other using electronic devices such as smartphones, computers, tablets, etc. The messenger applications are the medium of such E-WoM activities. People promote or demote the

products, services, or even firms while chatting with others. It is very effective way of communication and spreads like a grapevine.



**Figure 5. Impact of Price Transparency**

The major impacts of the price transparency are: reduced customer satisfaction, customer retention, net margins are lowered and brand image is affected (Figure 5). Almost 63% of the population of this research has stated that customer satisfaction levels are greatly impacted due to price transparency. 56% voted for customer retention as it is the most difficult event or situation to retain the potential customers to the organisation. Net profit margins get hampered due to price transparency as customers bargain for lower prices which eventually reduces the profit margins as most of the costs are fixed. Very few votes are obtained who strongly agree for the impact on brand image.

#### 4. Findings & Suggestions

Considering all the facets of Price Transparency, it is sure that it has resulted in increasing the competition in the market because the prices of various components of tourism are open to all. OTAs are majorly impacting on the price transparency and are also influencing prices of various tourism products. Hence, the packaged tour costing is getting affected. Price transparency has some negative aspects such as it reduces net profit margins of the travel agents, the uniqueness in the products and services may also get affected. The biggest challenge for travel agents is that the rate of conversion of an enquiry into the business. Lower customer satisfaction levels and customer retention are some of the great impacts of the price transparency on the business of travel agents. The bright side of price transparency is, it aids the travel agent and his team to build knowledge of various pricing strategies that are used by the competitors in the tourism market. And also helps in decision making, creating value as well as in reducing uncertainty.

To sustain in such cut-throat competition, travel agents must create evidence of services which add value to the brand image of the company. Sales person appointed by the travel agent is the first point of contact in the organisation, and hence, he/she should be able to distinguish between the firm's own products and services from others in the market. And should not only confidently but effectively, too, convey these differentiation factors to the customer and convince him by applying all the possible selling skills. For this, the salesperson should have an up-to-date knowledge of the market conditions. He/she should be aware of various strategies and pricings of the competitors. Price Transparency should be perceived in the positive sense as there are many advantages of it.

It helps travel agents to be optimistic at all times in the operations while the management of such companies may anticipate the shift in demand more efficiently. Thus, improves decision-making.

## 5. Conclusion

After completing this study, the researcher has concluded as the price is the key factor in the tourism industry. Due to transparent pricing, the business of the travel agents is greatly affected. Though there are many advantages for booking through online distribution channels, such as OTAs, it is not profitable every time. Many-a-times, hidden charges, lack of clearly expressed terms & conditions make the tourists pay higher prices than what is initially showcased. Price transparency has definitely hit the market, but it helps the customer to be aware of actual prices and prevents it from being cheated or overcharged. In case of travel agents, price transparency has mixed impacts on the business. It makes the travel agent introduce new, unique and affordable pricing strategies for its customers which sometimes affects the net profit margins. Hence, '*hypothesis 1: Price Transparency has an impact on the travel industry*' has been proved.

In today's techno-savvy world, tourism is evolving with the introduction of new technology. The internet is the base of all the technological advancements. Today, the internet has become a crucial part of human life. Anything that a human wants to know about, he/she searches for, through an immense use of the internet. In the tourism industry, too, the internet has proved its significance. It is the internet which creates a want or a desire, through social media, to visit a particular destination in the mind of a tourist. This desire, if backed by economic conditions of an individual tourist, gets converted into the demand. These economic conditions are nothing but the cost of the tour. The cost of tour also known as price is searched by the tourist, again the use of internet and social media where the tourist will try to fetch up more information about the prices and destination. When the prices of a particular tourism product or service matches with the expectations, the customer is satisfied. Hence, '*hypothesis 2: Price, Internet and social media influences the price transparency*' has been proved.

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## Do guests prefer Tech Savvy Rooms? A perspective from hotel guests

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### ABSTRACT

More than ever before, technology today is having a substantial impact on business spheres, and the hotel industry is no exception. It has turned out to be a critical element with regards to guest satisfaction. The purpose of this study was dual: to understand the most common reasons for choosing a hotel to stay in and measure and document the guest satisfaction with the existing technologies offered in hotel guest rooms. A random sample of Indian travellers was taken into consideration for the study; a questionnaire was developed for hotel guests, generating a sample of 158 valid responses.

The results of the study revealed that Seamless unlimited Wi-Fi was the most important technology for both leisure and business travellers. The majority of respondents would prefer to experience new technologies in order to improve their experience.

**Keywords:** *guestroom technology, technological amenities, guest experience, in room technology*

### INTRODUCTION

Technology has had a big impact on society all around and its importance has grown substantially during the past few decades. Keeping this view in mind, hotels need to follow the evolution of technology to attract guests and provide them with a unique experience. Some technology trends in industry are leading to great improvements and savings for the hospitality industry; while some are changing how hotel establishments plan their buildings, infrastructure, management structure and staffing requirements.

Technology already is an intrinsic and invaluable element of the total travel lifecycle, ranging from travellers using an assortment of devices to book hotels to connecting to Wi-Fi instantly upon arrival in the hotel.

It is extremely important for hotels to continue advancing in technology to enhance the guest experience. Outstanding hotel experiences are important not just to keep guests happy during their stay in the premises of the hotel, but also to influence their behaviour post-stay as well. Comments on social media are now the trend and are surely bound to rise, especially with the millennial travellers accounting for a greater share of travel activity.

Business guests and leisure travellers are on the constant look out for new experiences. As a matter of fact expectations of having access to the newest technology in hotels continue to increase. The growing level of technological acceptance by guests combined with the shorter life cycles of technology creates a major challenge for hotels. In the past, hotel guestrooms provided access to varied experiences with technology that potential hotel guests could not get in their homes a few years earlier. At the present time, this has changed completely wherein, in most cases, what guests have in their homes today is at times far more superior to anything that is available in hotel rooms (Homer, 2012). Therefore, it is necessary to provide in-room technology that reflects what is on the market now and what people are currently experiencing. Hotel guests expect to have access to the internet seamlessly and without any

interruptions, leading hotels to invest in better, faster Wi-Fi infrastructure so that guests can conduct business and use their technology devices with ease during their stay.

In order to meet the rising demand of hotel guests, hotels today have incorporated modern technological trends in guestrooms such as Food tray trackers, Dash buttons, Video phones in rooms, In room interactive television, iPad, LCD Mirror television, Smart showers and Keyless room entry, to name a few.

#### The purpose of this study was:

1. To identify the main reasons for guests choosing a hotel to stay in.
2. To analyse the importance of technology with respect to guest experiences in hotels.
3. To ascertain whether the latest technologies in hotel guest experiences varies according to age group and purpose of travel.

#### Literature Review:

1. Ana carina freire margarido (2015) in her study mention that upmarket hotels operate in a very competitive market and therefore place a high amount of importance on emphasis providing quality service through the latest technological amenities. Of late hotel organisations are paying heed to the customers' desires in an effort to offer them a unique experience. Nevertheless, given the number of options available with respect to technologies in the market today, hoteliers have a very limited understanding of their guests' expectations and of which technological amenities will help achieve guest satisfaction. As technological items change rapidly over time, the study was carried out to analyse the impact of current technologies available as well as to assess the potential of the latest technologies on guest experience.

2. Chee Wah Peter Too (2010) in his research paper mentions the various types of technology and facility enhancement devices adopted by hoteliers for their guestrooms in order to meet the constantly increasing demand and expectation from the guests. The author also explores the technologies and devices that hotel operation heads use to influence business sustainability for daily operations. As a part of the corporate social responsibility, hotel owners are exploring the opportunities to increase certain activities through the use of modern technology to reduce damage to the environment by using energy

saving devices in their properties. This paper as also provides a better understanding on the technologies adopted by hoteliers that have a positive impact on the environment without compromising the service level they deliver.

3. Cihan Cobanoglu (2011) states that technology is a vital determinant with regards to satisfaction of hotel guests. Hotels often make use of technology as a value-added amenity to help promote a sense of uniqueness and enhance guest satisfaction. This study to measures the level of guest satisfaction with the existing technology-based amenities in hotels, and examines the scope of impact of these amenities on overall hotel guest satisfaction.

4. SoYeon Jung (2014) This paper mentions the importance of hotel operators recognise in-room technology trends and as an effect the impact of in-room technology on business performance. The study also determines that setting up particular in-room technologies that have a significant effect on enhancing the customer experience and increasing hotel revenue. The study also mentions the most commonly installed in-room technologies that hoteliers plan to install in the near future

#### Data Analysis and Interpretation

##### Age of the respondents

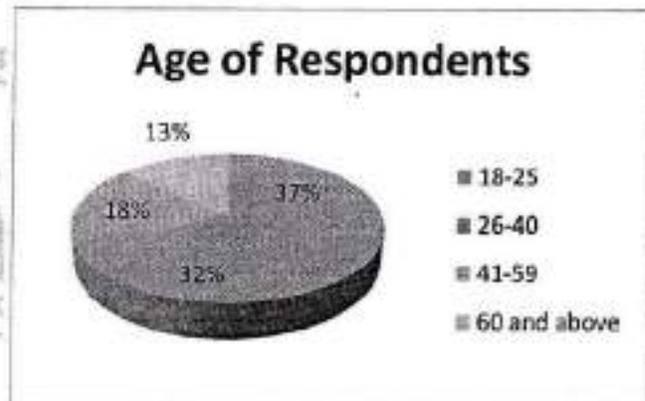


Figure 1

The above data is categorised by age of the respondents who travel. The data reflects that 37% of the respondents were between the age of 18-25 years, 32% respondents were between the age of 26-40 years. A few respondents, 18%, were between the age of 41-59 and only 13% were older than 60 years.

### Gender of Respondents

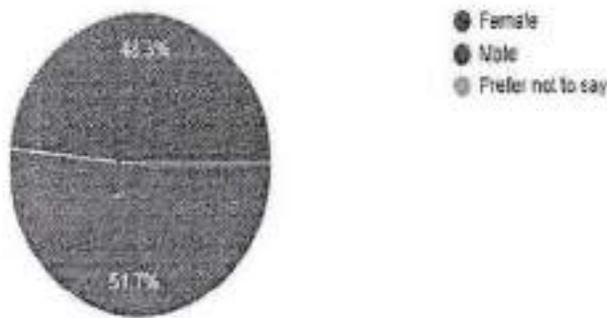


Figure 2

The questionnaire was distributed among 158 respondents out of which 51.7% were Female and 48.3% were Male.

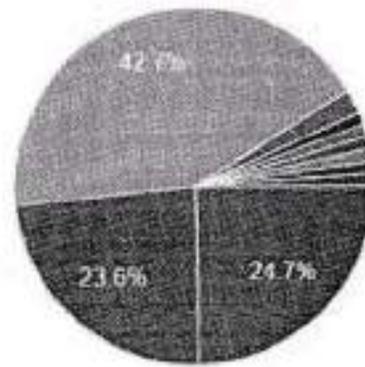
### Marital Status of Respondents



Figure 3

In terms of marital status, almost half of the respondents were single (46%), and 36% were married or were cohabitating. The remainder of the respondents were married with children, 16% and just 1% were in a relationship.

### Educational qualification of Respondents



- Undergraduate
- Graduate
- Post Graduate
- Doctorate
- HSC passed
- PhD
- Ph D
- Diploma in Nautical sciences

Figure 4

With respect to the Educational Qualification of the respondents who filled out the questionnaire, the results show that 42.7% were had Post Graduate Degree, while 24.7% were Under Graduates and 23.6% were Graduates. The remaining respondents were varied such as, Doctorates, Ph.D holders, and from the Nautical Sciences background to name a few.

### Purpose of Travel

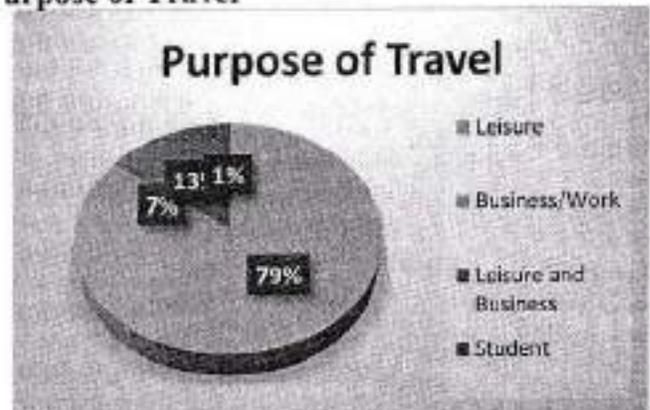


Figure 5

When examining the purpose of travel of the respondents', the vast majority of respondents 79% were leisure guests, while 13% were travelling for both, Business and Leisure. A small portion of the sample 7% were travelling for Business. Almost 1% of the respondents said they travelled as a Student.

Typically the most common reason for guests to choose a hotel would be the location of the property, but the data collected suggests that Location comes a close second, (47%), whereby making Technological Amenities prevailing in hotels (52%) the top choice of hotel guests. The price and quality of the hotel room (30%) and other guest room service and amenities (19%), and choosing a hotel on the basis of website reviews is 24%. Discount vouchers and Chosen by company is rated by 6% and 3% of hotel guests.

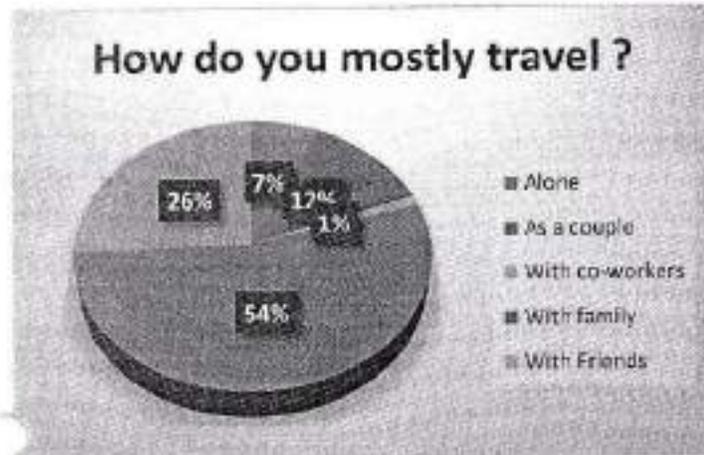


Figure 6

Another finding of this study indicates that almost 54% of respondents that stayed in hotels had travelled with Family. While 26% of the respondents travelled with Friends and 12% travelled as a couple. Just 7% travelled Alone and 1% with co-workers for the purpose of attending meetings or conferences.

Number of devices that a Hotel Guest travels with.

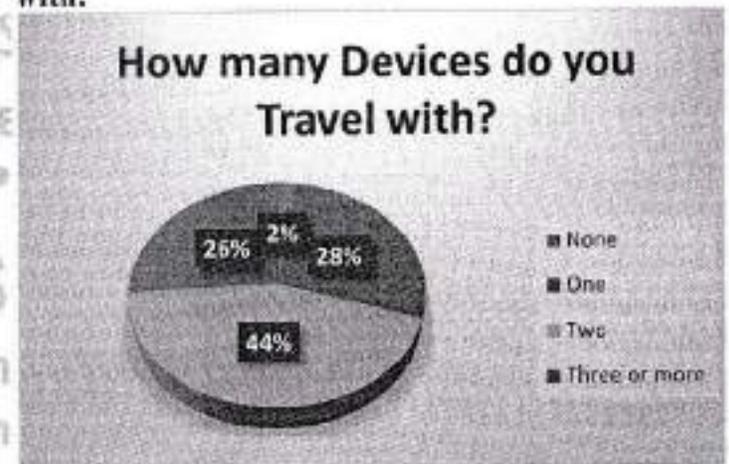


Figure 8

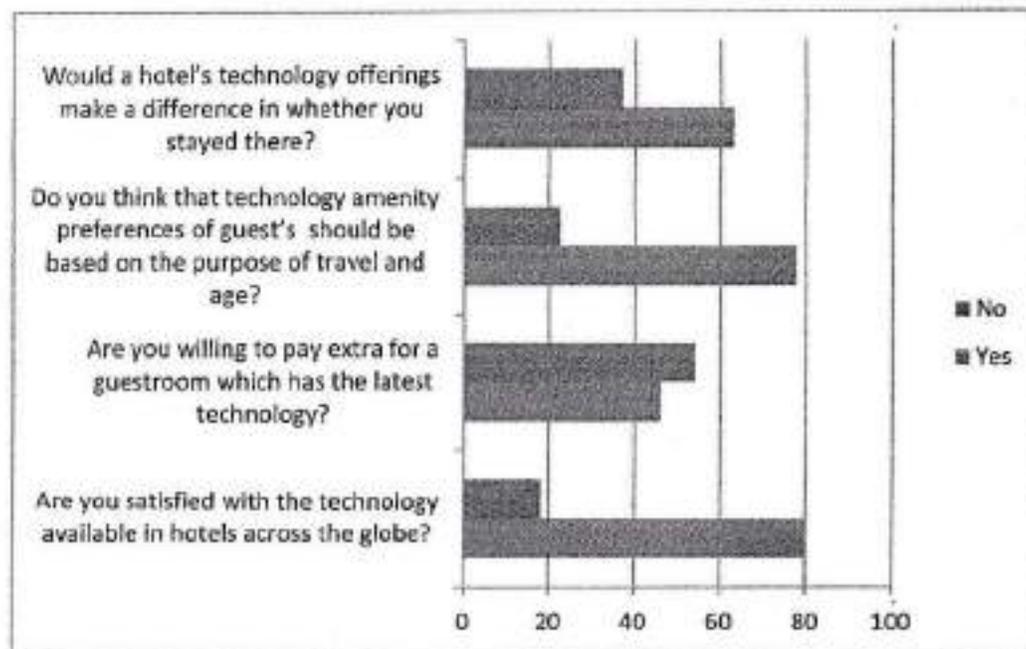
Apart from just travelling with their smartphones and laptops, more and more guests today travel with devices such as iPod, iPad, Tablets and other streaming devices. Of late many guests are bringing their own content when they stay in a hotel, which they can access through Smart Televisions in the guestrooms. The data collected states that 44% of hotel guests travel with at least two devices, 26% tend to travel with three or more devices whereas 28% with one device and a relatively low amount of hotel guests, 2% travel with no device.

Vital Reasons for choosing a hotel to stay in.



Figure 7

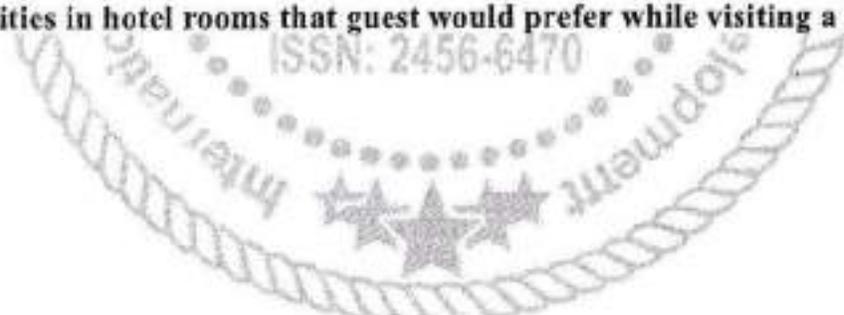
Guests acknowledgement of Hotel Technological Amenities



**Figure 9**

Data collected to understand the acknowledgement of hotel guest with respect to certain aspects of technology in hotel rooms, displayed the following results. 80% of of mentioned that they are satisfied with the various technologies available in hotels across the globe while 18% state that it could be better improved or newer technologies introduced. 46% guests say that they are willing to pay extra for a hotel room which provides them with the latest technology. 78% agree that technological amenity preferences of guests should be based on the purpose of travel and age of the potential traveller as compared to 22% who did not agree with the above. 63% of hotel guests mention that there would be a definite difference in the choice of hotel to reside in, depending upon the hotels technology offerings, while 37% state that technology offerings of a hotel would not make a difference while choosing a hotel to reside in.

**Technological amenities in hotel rooms that guest would prefer while visiting a hotel.**



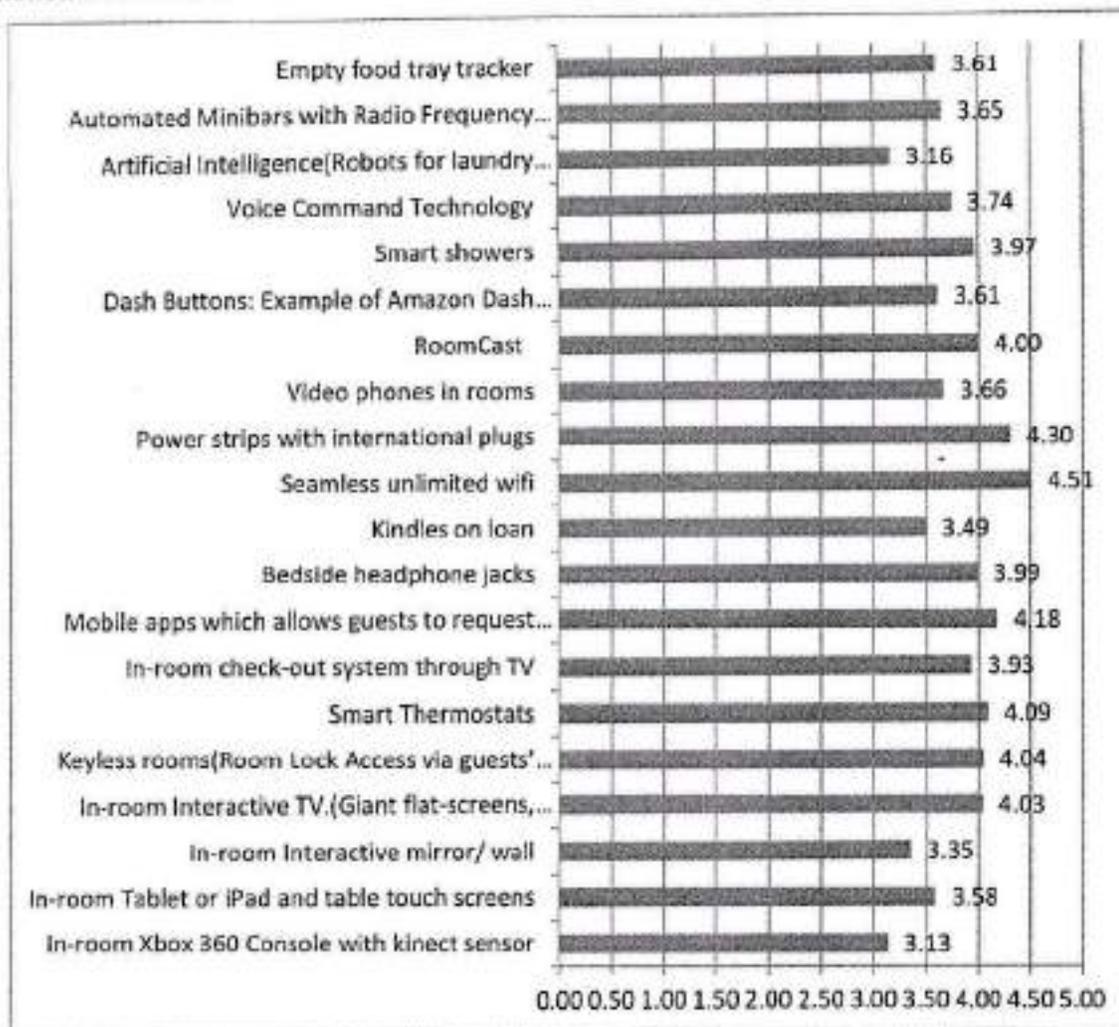


Figure 10

Respondents were asked to state their preference from a scale of 1 to 5 on the 20 listed technological amenities in hotel guest rooms that would enhance your stay. Likert's Scale was used for the rating whereby, 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree.

Mentioned below is the list of latest Technological Amenities that help enhance the Guest their stay in a hotel.

Sr. No	Technological amenity in Hotel Guest rooms
1	In-room Xbox 360 Console with kinect sensor
2	In-room Tablet or iPad and table touch screens.
3	In-room Interactive mirror/ wall
4	In-room Interactive TV (Giant flat-screens, HD, 3D and 4K TV)
5	Keyless rooms (Room Lock Access via guests' mobile phone)
6	Smart Thermostats (technology that will allow guests to adjust the temperature in their rooms with a smartphone, even if they aren't on the premises)
7	In-room check-out system through TV
8	Mobile apps which allows guests to request everything from fresh towels to a turndown service
9	Bedside headphone jacks

10	Kindles on loan
11	Seamless unlimited Wi-Fi
12	Power strips with international plugs
13	Video phones in rooms
14	Room Cast (a mobile streaming service for the hospitality industry from TeleAdapt) allows guests to watch their own content on the hotel TV from thousands of Cast-enabled apps, including Netflix, YouTube, HBO and Spotify
15	Dash Buttons: Example of Amazon Dash button. Push to order new toilette paper
16	Smart showers: Smart showers automatically control the temperature and power of your water with pre-set preferences. Shower stalls that turn the glass from clear to frosted with the touch of a button
17	Voice Command Technology (placed by the bedside console and equipped to understand voice commands)
18	Artificial Intelligence (Robots for laundry valet, newspaper delivery etc.)
19	Automated Minibars with Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)
20	Empty food tray tracker

The study revealed that Seamless Unlimited Wi-Fi (Internet access) was the most important technology for hotel travellers with the highest Mean of 4.51. This reflects that as most guests' today travel with multiple devices, having a high speed internet or Wi-Fi connection is vital. Power strips with international plugs (4.30) ranks a close second, and Mobile apps which allows guests to request everything from fresh towels to a turndown service (4.18) ranks third primarily due to the need for guests wanting to be empowered when they stay in hotels. Smart Thermostats (technology that will allow guests to adjust the temperature in their rooms with a smartphone, even if they aren't on the premises) has a Mean of 4.09 and ranks fourth in the technological amenities desired by hotel guests. Keyless rooms (Room Lock Access via guests' mobile phone) with a mean of 4.04 was also considered to be important.

Technological amenities that have been rated lower on the overall spectrum include In-room Xbox 360 Console with kinect sensor 3.13, Artificial Intelligence (Robots for laundry valet, newspaper delivery etc.) 3.16, In-room Interactive mirror/ wall is 3.35, Dash Buttons: Example of Amazon Dash button, 3.61, Empty food tray tracker 3.61, Automated Minibars with Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) rated at 3.65 Mean.

## Conclusion

With technology progressing in such a fast pace, the key requirement for every hotel in enhancing the guest experience and increasing repeat business, is staying ahead of changes. The challenge here is in keeping up with the guest, who are already tech savvy and desire technology at every step of the way, especially while they travel to keep them connect with Business and acquaintances.

Incidentally, technology is being taken out of the hands of the hotelier and put into the hands of the guest allowing them greater control over their individual experience by also empowering them to make decisions that directly concern them during their stay.

The study also states that most of the travellers today who stay in hotels are millennials who travel with family for leisure purposes and who have a tendency to choose a hotel for the type and amount of Technological amenities it provides, irrespective if the amenity is charged or complimentary. Among all the Technological amenities provided to the hotel guest the most favoured is Seamless Unlimited Wi-Fi (Internet access), due to the number of devices they travel with and the need to have access to products and services at the touch of a button.

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**“Eco-Purchasing”: A Study of the Solid Waste Prevention  
Methods adopted by Hotels and Restaurants of Pune City**

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Technology, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, India**ABSTRACT**

*Eco- Purchasing is a key activity in eliminating waste and helps in increasing in profit and reduces cost (Amemba, 2013). It is one of the essential steps in waste reduction method. If systematically implemented the Eco-Purchasing can be the most effective solution in fighting against the growing problem of solid waste disposal. In India around 75% of the total Hotel accounts for unorganized/ small budget hotels, which normally faces financial constraints to invest in environmentally friendly technology and products (Dwivedi, 2016 ). Depending on the type of organisation the eco-purchasing practices can be drafted which will suite the need of the organisation Eco- Purchasing can contributes in lowering the negative impact on environment by minimizing waste, since it works on the principle of dissimilation of products in advance so that it can be recycled after use (Sloan et al ,2008).*

*The current study finds out the Eco- Purchasing practices followed by the Hotels and Restaurants of Pune city. The Data is collected by circulating a well-structured questionnaire to all the Purchasing Managers of the hotel and Restaurants. The study reveals that lot has to be done in this eco-purchasing practices and the employees need to be made aware about its importance and should be trained to practice those in day to day work, as though the awareness percent about solid waste and solid waste management is 96.1% and 78.9% respectively but they are still do not understand the importance of Purchasing policy, Eco- Purchasing concept, role of Suppliers etc. This could work if the management frames effective purchasing policy covering all aspects of Eco- purchasing.*

**Keywords:** Eco-Purchasing, Solid Waste Management, Purchasing Practices, Waste Reduction, Recycling, Purchasing Policy

**INTRODUCTION**

Hospitality industry is one of the most important sectors in world's economy, which is pouring in millions of dollars in the pockets of developing as well as developed countries. But as the industry is expanding its roots it is also uprooting the sustainability of the land; creating threat for fertility of soil as well as global warming and environmental pollution leading to health hazards and problems (Alexander 2002,).

The major problem which every industry is facing today is about solid waste disposal. Tons and tons of solid waste is getting accumulated on the landfills leading to pollution of land water and air. As per Times of India article 2012 under sustainability outlook issue, Pune city generates 1300 metric tons of

solid waste per day and the amount is growing day by day as population is increasing. Disposal of the solid waste is also becoming a burning issue as the dumping area is not available and currently the garbage is disposed off in place call Urali Devachi and Phursungi and there is lot of unrest among the local residents due to rising environmental issue and health problems.

Even hospitality industry is also facing the heat of being the 'Bulk Generator' of Solid Waste as this industry majorly uses the paper, plastic, metal, glass, packaging material and disposables made out of thermocol. The use of all this material in their day to day activity leads to the piling up of garbage in the form of wet and dry solid waste which is mostly mixed together. This mixed nature of solid waste when dumped on the landfills gives off poisonous gases and leachates which results in the pollution of environment. In last two decades the awareness and realization in adverse effect of solid waste and its growing problem has made this industry to deal with it in a scientific manner. Many researches has shown that this problem of waste needs to be systematically solved by following the major 5 R Concepts namely: Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Reassess. This concept if systematically implemented can be an effective way of dealing with the problem. Out of the above the first 'Rethink' concept deals guide us to think before we actually purchase a particular item. Keeping in view our requirement, its need, and ultimately the disposal, it is very important to understand whether a particular item need to be purchased. Here is where the role of 'Purchasing comes into the picture. The importance of sensible or eco- friendly purchasing which assures the environmental concern can be practiced to deal with the increasing problem of solid waste disposal. Even hospitality sector can be the one who can be a lead in such activity wherein they can adopt the effective Eco-purchasing practices to deal with the problem. The attempts are being done by the hospitality industry.

The best example is of the first Ecotel in Asia. Deb & Welling (2011), critically reviews the linkage of sustainability into business as an emerging phenomenon of The Orchid Hotel, Mumbai holds five-globe Ecotel certified status. In its attempt to become 'Zero Garbage' Hotel, The Orchid hotel, Mumbai, apart from vermiculture composting of kitchen waste, it has successfully reduced 30% of incoming packaging material and purchase all paper products with at least 50% recycled content. This has been achieved through regularly coordinating and screening of suppliers to ensure fulfillment of hotel's stringent environmental policies.

Purchasing is a key activity in eliminating waste. Green purchasing can improve a firm's economic position by reducing disposal and liability costs, conserving resources and improving organizations public image. It has been observed that many of the hospitality sectors has already adapting eco-purchasing methods. The only issues they face and are two most highly rated obstacles to effective implementing green purchasing is cost and revenue. It is believed that most of the products which are environmentally friendly are little costlier as compared to the other products and this is what is the major concern of most of the hotels and restaurants, as it is affecting their balance between cost and revenue. Amemba (2013). Apart from this consumer's acceptance to the services and staff approach towards providing such services is also a major issue where it mostly depends on their awareness towards ecofriendly purchasing.

The researcher has gone through the literature based on topic dealing with eco-purchasing. Pune city is growing not only for its population but to serve the needs of the growing population, hospitality sector is also in boom. City has a combination of various hospitality sectors like Hotels, restaurants, Pubs, café's, bars, night clubs etc. to serve to the need of all type of clientele. The researcher aims to understand the role of purchasing personnel in adapting to the eco-friendly purchasing practices.

#### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

After reviewing the various literatures and finding the gap the researcher aims to study

1. To Study the general awareness about Solid Waste and Solid Waste Management of Purchasing Personnel of Hotels and Restaurants.
2. To Study the Purchasing Practices adopted by Hotels and Restaurants of Pune City.

3. To Study Waste Reduction Methods followed by the Purchasing Department of Hotels and Restaurants of Pune city.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

##### **DEFINING ECO- PURCHASING**

"Prevention" is the best way of reducing the waste. Even purchasing cost can be reduced if we plan out our operations effectively and reduce waste during actual operations Duursma et al (2016). This has been a key word in solid waste reduction. As many researches has proved that rather than sticking to the 3 R concept of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, there is a need for 'Rethinking'. This will make sure the future of the material purchased by an organization. The need of that material will result in the possible cause of waste cycle.

(Sloan et al ,2008), opined that eco-procurement or eco-purchasing can contributes in lowering the negative impact on environment by minimizing waste. To meet eco-procurement standards, all products and services should analytically pass through the environmental impact right from origin of the product to its end utility. This eco-purchasing activity should not only stick to its original role of quality, price, delivery, availability, convenience etc, but should also take into consideration its disposal and after use.

Eco- procurement normally works on the principal of dissimilation of the products in advance, so that it can be recycled after use. The best example is by replacing biodegradable 'agrifibers' or 'bioplastic' products with normal disposable products made up of plastic and Styrofoam. Some of these are not only dishwasher but microwave safe.

Author also suggests some principles of eco- procurement food services like:

1. Using local produce of same quality, quantity and price, instead of importing foodstuffs and should give more value to seasonality of products.
2. Avoid purchasing foods which are known to damage human health or environment.
3. Support producers which use organic or responsible farm products.
4. Avoid using products containing chemical additives, salt and sugar.
5. Using food products produced by using resource efficient methods.

(Remoulador ,2011), discussed various strategies for green purchasing. Green purchasing is a powerful strategy for reducing environmental foot print and increase the operational sustainability of hotels. Green purchasing also known as environmentally preferable product purchasing or EPP, is defined as the purchase of products and services that have less or reduced effect on human health and environment as compared to the competitive products and services that serve the same purpose.

##### **PURCHASING PRACTICES**

(Walter Jamieson, 2003), Discussed in the manual, the techniques to be used to avoid waste and that can be by Purchasing materials or services with careful consideration. This method of responsible purchasing can be a major step of source reduction along with saving facilities money and environment. Purchasing guidelines can have established to encourage the purchase of equipment, linen and table ware with durable, reusable and high quality properties.

The Purchasing Policies should focus on three main factors namely:

1. The environmental quality of products
2. The recycling and reuse qualities of products
3. Products that use minimum packaging

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Though there are advantages of implementing Green Purchasing still there are certain hurdles in implementing the same those challenges are:

1. Lack of choice of products
2. Cost of products as compared to other
3. Information of products on the labels are confusing and contradicting
4. Lack of awareness in staff regarding products, especially in purchasing department

(Garci & Dodds ,2008), synthesizes various literature and best practices to illustrate some practical and tactical reasons for going green in hotel industry. One of the reasons for opting green concept by the hotel can influence guest's choice of a facility. This can be expected from a guest whose level of environmental awareness increases and can support in recycling activities. From last 20 years there has been lot of changes taken place when it comes to expectations and demands from consumer. It is obvious from a sophisticated hotel guest that they will be concern about the environmental issues such as recycling bottles, cans and paper at home or they may have a view of making greener 'lifestyle' purchases like organic vegetables or fuel efficient cars.

(Sloan et al,2008), Management to work with suppliers in processing products which will help reduce / prevent waste. They may be requested to alter their products packaging and delivery system to reduce waste. They also support the view of purchasing in bulk, using recycled products and buying products from supplier who follows proper environmental policy which can be a major step in reducing waste generation. It is advantageous to reduce pollution and save natural resources by either creating less waste or reduce waste before it is being created. Outsourcing of some services can also help reduce hotel waste and to cut costs

(Zein et al ,2008), guide provides you with practical tools that can be implemented to overcome the problems of waste issues. This guide highlights the important factor of purchasing, which is carried out to keeping in view the needs of satisfying guest's expectation of quality service. It is the estimated that around 50% of hotel's solid wastes consists of packaging and containers of consumed products. It is extremely important to reduce this quantity by following effective purchasing policy. The purchasing of products should be considered keeping in view the product life cycle right from its manufacturing process till the end of product life cycle. The purchasing of 'green' products can help reduce the impact of waste creation. These are the products which can be recycled, reused effectively and can reduce the influx of waste to the waste stream. The use of 'green' products can be encouraged by creating awareness amongst staff, suppliers and guests. The guide suggests some aspects to be considered by following steps like conducting self-assessment; which gives the exact status of current conditions of purchasing practices.

(Mufeed Sharholy, 2008), shows regret on gap found between Municipal Solid Waste Management Policies and Implementation process. It is dire responsibility of the producer to avoid introducing products in the market which will add to the waste creation without any systematic disposal methods.

(Remoulador, 2011), suggested various steps to carry on green purchasing program. Firstly, it is essential to create a policy statement for developing purchasing policy; so that the staffs of the hotel are informed about the purchasing preferences, to track future purchasing decisions. This will also create awareness amongst the customer about the hotel purchasing practices. Second step involves reviewing current purchasing practices and products, this includes taking inventory of current product purchased keeping in view the various aspect of reduce, recycle and reuse; so that the same can be discussed with the supplier to make the purchasing greener. After discussing with the supplier the next step can be the testing of products by demanding samples and testing them to assure that it satisfies the hotel requirement. Documenting the green purchases along with its cost and saving done due to use of product is the next important step. This will help in future purchasing and help promoting continuous EPP practices. Evaluating the program and measuring its environmental impact on regular basis is an essential step, as it will help to review results and current practices and make necessary changes for

improving program. These steps help management and staff to understand the benefits of purchasing choice and their effect on the environment and its budget.

(Chen & Chen,2012), analyses on various aspects of green hotel, in which green purchasing is being listed as the first step towards building and managing green hotel. Purchases being the greatest power in protecting environment and human existence, the principal of 3R 3E is being proposed as key to purchase policy which includes reduce, reuse, recycle, economic, ecological and equitable. For managing hotels supply chain it is essential to find suitable suppliers which can meet hotel's policies of environmental protection. It will be a challenge for managers to make purchasing decision based on reused and recycled products as they will not be sure whether these products can satisfy customer's needs. Another challenge will be of higher prices and less of options of products available. But still these policies if developed can be best use of energy, reduce pollution and reduce cost. Another benefit could be in good health conditions of customer and staff and business reputation can be promoted.

(Kaufmann et al ,2012), assess different variable approach of consumers for green purchasing. It is found that the general purchasing behavior of the consumer is driven by assessing its benefits and costs, whereas, if consumer is knowledgeable about the environment can have positive effect on its inclination towards green purchasing. This again depends on the depth of the knowledge about environment which an individual consumer possesses. This can have a significant impact on consumer's behavior to buy green products. Apart from environmental awareness other aspects which can have significant impact on consumer's behavior to purchase green products are awareness, concern and attitude towards environment, belief about product safety, its availability, perceived consumer effectiveness and other trade practices.

(Anemba ,2013), apart from major issues of concern like green manufacturing, green packing, green distribution and marketing, the approach for green purchasing/ procurement is being highlighted to eliminate or minimize waste in the form of energy, emission, hazardous, chemical and solid waste. The importance of Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM), is getting escalated due to deterioration of environment e.g diminishing raw material resources, overflowing waste sites and increasing level of pollution. GSCM is not only environment friendly but it is also a good business value driver and high profit earner. The conceptual frame work presented in study gives importance to green procurement as best practices for GSCM in hospitality industry. Key factors for green purchasing includes providing design specification to suppliers, specifying environmental requirements for purchased items, cooperating with suppliers for environmental objectives, environmental audits for supplier's internal management and suppliers ISO 4001 certification.

Green procurement will help in increase in investment and reduced cost. Initiating green procurement practices has to be a continuous process and this needs to be incorporated in strategic planning of the firm. The priorities of the customers can influence the environmental management and environmental purchasing

(Pirani & Arafat ,2014) suggests applying green purchasing in the Hospitality sector for products like office supplies and cleaning products, so that it can lead to reduction in waste generation as these products are not packaging intensive and packaging they do can be recyclable. It is also advisable to buy products with a minimum of 20% post- consumer content.

(Fukey & Issac ,2014) suggests purchasing less packaged food to reduce package waste and thus saving resources and expanding recycling beyond paper glass and aluminum. Hotels can buy products in bulk and can influence supplier to provide supplies in less packaging and environmental friendly materials. Due to awareness amongst the managers, they are insisting on purchasing of eco- friendly products. Priority to be given in purchasing green products like recycled paper while purchasing stationary. Decomposition of plastic is difficult so, care should be taken for purchasing less plastic products.

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(Ellis, 2015), It is being observed that in hospitality industry 10% of the purchased food gets wastes as pre-consumer waste before it is being served on to the table. The main challenge faced by the food purchaser is reducing this pre-consumer waste and subsequently loose chance in reducing cost. Therefore, it is essential that there has to be proper policies and system should be established to minimize or avoid waste. This can be achieved by proper forecasting of the material requirement, purchasing goods and material as per requirement, controlling stock, proper storage of the material, planning of menu and portioning to reduce waste, and processing of the food as per order.

It is very essential that we should keep communicating our policies, amendments done, create awareness about the waste reducing and minimizing policies of the organization, understand the values and priorities of the suppliers since they are one of the stakeholder in this activity of making purchasing eco-friendlier.

(Rajiv Kumar et al, 2016), suggests that by simplifying their cost effective green practices, Indian Budget hotels can save optimum operating cost. It has been observed that unorganized/small budget hotels accounts for around 75% of the total hotels in India. These are the hotels which normally face financial constraints and therefore they are not able to invest in environmentally friendly technology and products. Thus operating cost saved through the cost effective green practices can be utilized to purchase environmental friendly technology and products.

(Ranjitsinh Pawar, 2016), identifies the present trends in Green Marketing and also explores how it is going to help in facing future challenges of shifting consumer's behaviour and attitude towards more environmentally friendly lifestyle. Green Marketing helps in understanding the Holistica way of understanding the Production of product, Marketing , its consumption , disposal of the product and services so that the same can lessen the burden on environment

(Bisnoi, 2017), in their interview by Anupriya Bisnoi, the Purchase Managers discussed about the need for going eco-friendly when it comes to purchasing for hotels. They not only stressed on the need and importance of eco-friendly purchases but also insisted on:

1. Procuring eco-friendly products
2. Use of recycled materials
3. Ascertaining the need for technical knowledge of products, its manufacturing details, the disposal factors after use, employing the products which can be recycled
4. Taking decision related to purchases keeping in mind the carbon footprint reduction.
5. While purchasing green product keeping in mind not to sacrifice the cost involved, quality and performance standards.
6. Keep enhancing the knowledge about eco-friendly products available in market.
7. Understanding the cost effectiveness of eco-friendly products as they not only reduce and prevent wastage it also helps in reducing the material, waste disposal, operations and maintenance cost and protect environment.
8. Understanding the effect of adapting eco-friendly purchases as it not only enhances the organization image but also improves the employee's health.

### **RESEARCH GAP**

After exploring through the various literature reviewed on the purchasing practices being followed by the hospitality sector it is identified by the researcher that various aspects are discussed like contribution of eco-procurement or eco-purchasing can help in lowering the negative impact on environment by waste minimization, green purchasing can help reduce waste by minimizing packaging, creating awareness amongst the staff and customers can lift hotel image as sustainable property, practical tools are also suggested for effective implementation of waste management, even

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3R concept is being discussed for being an effective methods for waste management etc. but it is being observed that there has been lack of research on actual waste management practices being followed by the Purchasing department as this is the first step towards solid waste minimization. For that giving importance to the Purchasing can be a major step.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To obtain data related to above research problem, both primary and secondary data collection methods were used. The following instruments will be used for data collection:

#### 1. Primary data

Primary data will be collected with the help of structured questionnaire for the Purchasing Personnel, Owner of Hotels and Restaurants or in some cases by filling up questionnaire from other department employees who looks after the purchasing procedure as some Hotels and Restaurants do not have full time Purchasing personnel.

- **Interview:** Few Hotel and restaurant owners or Purchasing personnel were interviewed to get the questionnaire filled and to understand more in-depth in their purchasing practices.
- **Questionnaire:** Literatures on solid waste management practices were reviewed. Based on which a questionnaire was drafted which included 16 questions based on following categories like:

1. General Profile: which consisted of information about the Name of Hotel/ Restaurant, address, contact details, Name of the Purchasing Personnel, Designation, Qualification, Categories of the organization, Methods of purchasing adopted, Number of suppliers etc.
2. Awareness Regarding Solid Waste and Solid Waste management.
3. Purchasing Practices adopted by the Hotels and Restaurants
4. Waste reduction practices adopted by the Hotels and Restaurants
5. Eco friendly Practices followed by the Hotel and Restaurants.

Around 100 questionnaires were distributed to Different Hotels and Restaurant through email, by google forms and by personally handing over the hard copy. Around 85 responses were received out of which 76 questionnaires were usable.

#### 2. Secondary data

The secondary data was collected from different newspapers articles, Magazines, journals, published papers on this particular topic, magazines and by searching relevant websites on the internet.

The above instruments were used as per their suitability for different situations. Primary data has been collected from employees working in various Hotels and Restaurants. This is the current data relevant to the topic of the research.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

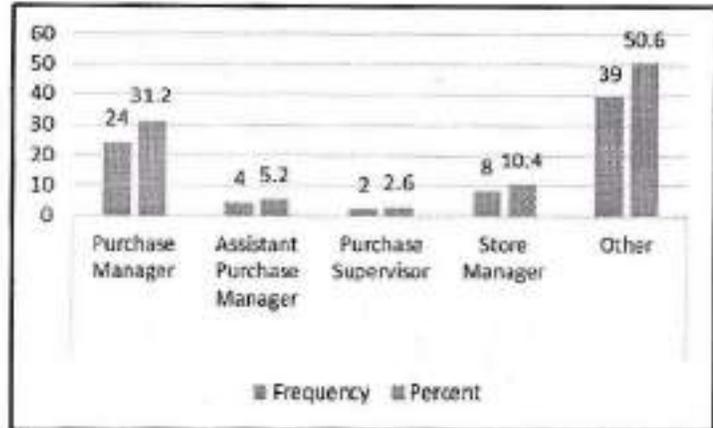
As discussed in Research Methodology, the data was collected from the Purchase Manager or in case of some Hotels and Restaurant where this particular activity of Purchasing is being looked after by other departmental Heads or Personnel.

The data is entered, tabulated and analyzed for all the respondents. First of all, the General profile of the Hotels and Restaurant is presented. The information with reference to Awareness, Purchasing practices and Waste reduction practices followed by all the hotel and restaurant are discussed and interpreted in tabular and graphical form.

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**Table 1: Designation of the Respondents      Graph 1: Designation of the Respondents**

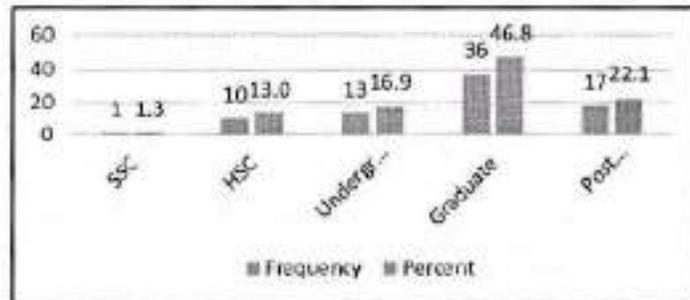
Designation	Frequency	Percent
Purchase Manager	24	31.2
Assistant Purchase Manager	4	5.2
Purchase Supervisor	2	2.6
Store Manager	8	10.4
Other	39	50.6
Total	77	100.0



Above graph and table shows the distribution of purchasing personnel as per their designation. The maximum respondent was from other category (50.6%), like Owner of the Restaurant, General Manager of the Hotel, Chefs and Food & Beverage Manager, Front Office or Executive.

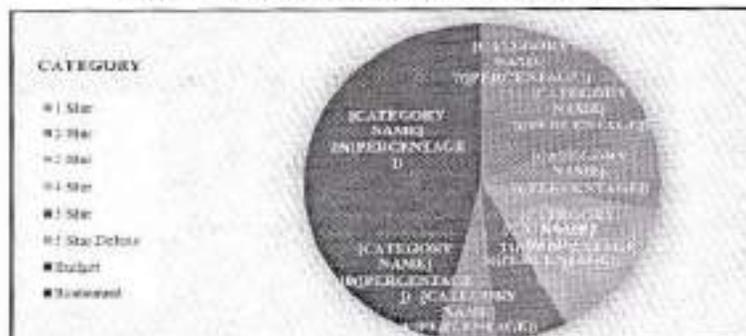
**Table 2: Qualification of the Respondent      Graph 2: Qualification of the Respondent**

Qualification	Frequency	Percent
SSC	1	1.3
HSC	10	13.0
Undergraduate	13	16.9
Graduate	36	46.8
Post Graduate	17	22.1
Total	77	100.0



Above graph and table shows the Qualification of the Purchasing personnel those who were taken as sample. The highest qualification range was graduate (46.8%) and the least was SSC (1.3%).

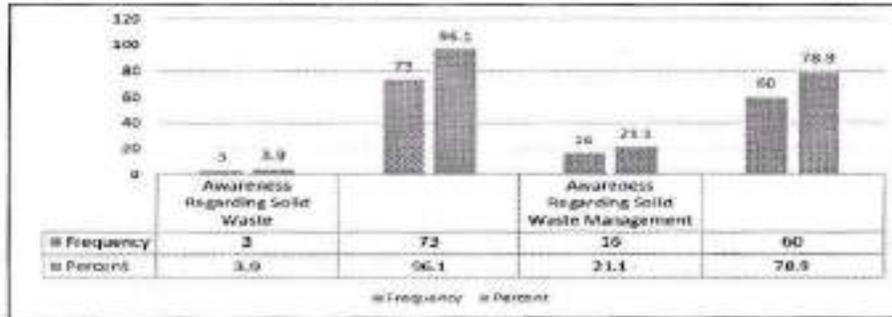
**Graph 3: Number Of Hotels and Restaurants**



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The above Table and Graph explains the Number of various category of the Hotels and Restaurants participated in this study. As the study mostly aims at knowing the Eco purchasing practices followed by both Hotels and Restaurants, so the mix of all categories of Hotels and Restaurants were included in the study. The above table and graph shows that maximum respondents are from Restaurants which is 33% (25) and the lowest being the 5 Star deluxe Hotels which is 5 % (4).

**Graph 4: Awareness Regarding the Solid Waste and Solid Waste Management**



The above graph clearly shows the percentage of awareness amongst the respondent regarding the term, 'Solid Waste' and 'Solid Waste Management'.

1. The researcher found that maximum respondent i.e. 96.6% are aware about the term 'Solid Waste' but when the question about Solid Waste Management was asked it was found that around 78.9% were aware about the same.
2. Though they are aware about the term Solid Waste but quite a few of them were not able to exactly differentiate between dry and wet garbage. They were also unable to understand what exactly is the term Solid Waste Management.
3. They do understand the importance of managing waste, but in many cases it was found there has been no formal training given to them when it come to the matter of managing waste.

**Table 3: Methods Of Purchasing Adopted By Hotels and Restaurants**

Methods Of Purchasing	Responses	Frequency	Percent	Methods Of Purchasing	Responses	Frequency	Percent
Contract Purchasing	No	22	28.9	Purchasing by Daily Quotation	No	57	75.0
	Yes	54	71.1		Yes	19	25.0
	Total	76	100.0		Total	76	100.0
Cash Purchasing	No	47	61.8	Group Purchasing	No	68	89.5
	Yes	29	38.2		Yes	8	10.5
	Total	76	100.0		Total	76	100.0
Periodic Purchasing	No	52	68.4	Any Other	No	74	97.4
	Yes	24	31.6		Yes	2	2.6
	Total	76	100.0		Total	76	100.0

Table number 3 shows the consolidated information about the Purchasing methods adopted by the Hotels and restaurants. Following points are being observed by the researchers:

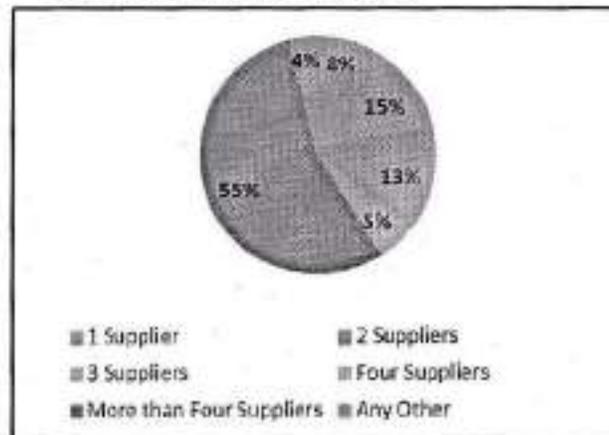
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1. From the above data it can be inferred that is mixed option preferred by the respondent when it comes to the purchasing of various types of material. The methods chosen by the respondent mostly depends on what kind of material has to be purchased.
2. Maximum respondent prefers the option of contract purchasing which is 71%. The reason which researcher found in common is that it is easy for an outlet to get continuous supply of raw material once they enter into the contract with the supplier for supplies of material as knowing the fact that this industry being a service industry and customer mostly prefers to visit the property only for their need of food and services.
3. Also there are respondent who prefer to opt for other services like Online purchasing which is being opted by 2.6%, this method is opted by the restaurants. The reason being the latest trends of purchasing through online system gives flexibility to the buyers to choose from the range of products at a very competitive rates also since the payment is direct and the services also includes free delivery cuts cost for transportation of the goods to the premises. Also this method can be opted in case of emergency requirement without any botheration of availability.
4. Other Purchasing methods like Cash Purchasing, Daily Purchasing and Periodic Purchasing is less preferred option ranging to the percentage of 38.2%, 31.6% and 25% and this is mostly opted when they to purchase any perishable or when they have buy any furniture for the property.
5. There are certain Hotels and restaurants who have their chain in Pune or in other places opt for Group Purchasing option as this assures the standard quality and supply of material to all the outlets.
6. Overall it can be summed that whatever method they opt, they can coordinate with the supplier in waste reduction by mutually drafting the policy.

**Table 4: Number of Suppliers**

Number of Suppliers	Frequency	Percent
1 Supplier	6	7.9
2 Suppliers	11	14.5
3 Suppliers	10	13.2
Four Suppliers	4	5.3
More than Four Suppliers	42	55.3
Any Other	3	3.9
Total	76	100.0

**Graph 5: Number of Suppliers**



Number of suppliers decided by each hotel and Restaurant depends upon the methods of purchasing adopted by them for various types of material. It has been observed that maximum respondents choose more than four suppliers (55.3%) the reason being that they prefer to give contract for different type of supplies like perishable, groceries, meat and meat products, dairy and dairy products only to the specific supplier who normally deal with a kind of product in wholesale, as it give them option to choose from variety and in quantity at reasonable price.

**Graph 6: Purchasing Practices Adopted by the Hotels and Restaurant**



It is essential for a food and beverage sector to follow certain purchasing practices to reduce waste. Based on the literature review certain Purchasing practices were identified and those practices were included in the questionnaire to find out that how many of the purchasing personnel from Hotel and Restaurant of Pune city were really following those practices to reduce waste.

The data collected from the respondent showed that the purchasing policy which is a standard operating document of the purchasing department, only 46.15 were having purchasing policy were as it was surprising to know that around 9.2 % of the purchasing personnel were actually not aware about the purchasing policy and 44.7% clearly responded that they don't have purchasing policy.

When it comes to awareness about whether the staff working in purchasing department is aware about the Purchasing policy, maximum purchasing personnel (55.3%) commented that the staff is not made aware about the policy, where as 10.5% of the purchasing personnel were not aware whether their employees are aware and 34.2% of the purchasing department staff is aware about the purchasing policy drafted by their organization and the same is being strictly adhered to.

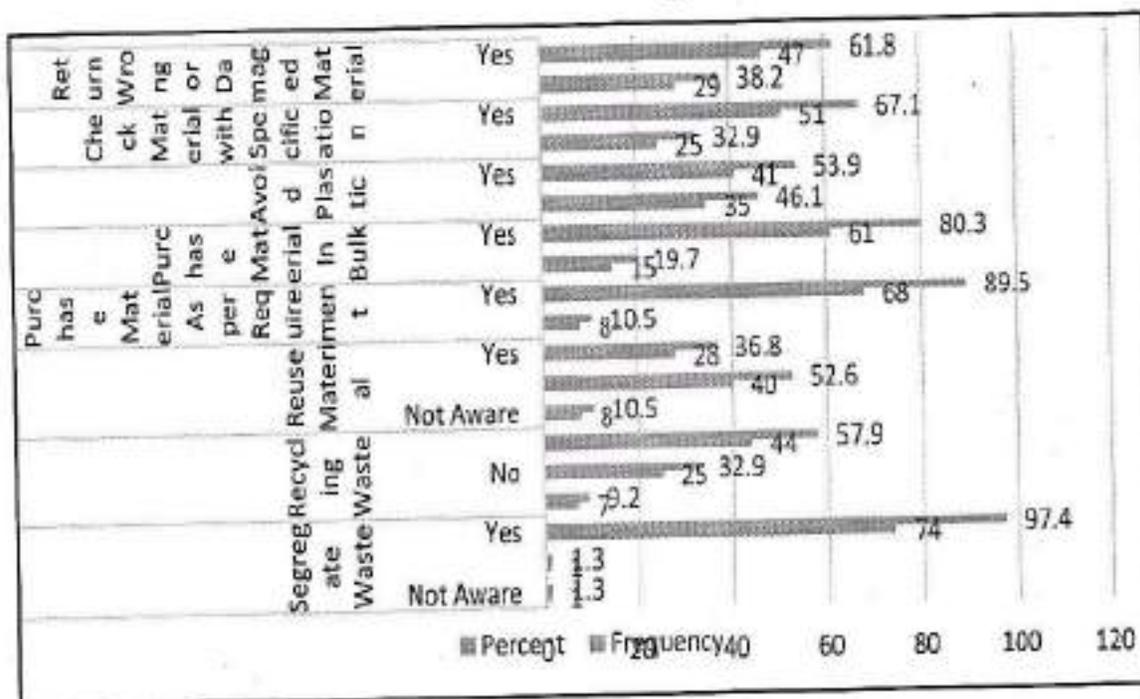
Supplier's Audit which is an essential activity was carried out by 51.3% of the purchasing personnel. Around 6.6% of the personnel was not aware that it is important to carry regular audit for supplier.

Training staff to get acquainted with the various practices of department was carried out only by 35.5%, where as in about 57.9% places the employees are not trained about the practices to follow while purchasing material to reduce waste. Around 6.6% were not aware that such kind of training needs to be carried out by an organization and whether it need to be practiced.

Researcher found out that though few of the organizations claims to be having the purchasing policy but only 32.9% of the respondent have made their supplier aware about their purchasing policy.

Purchasing of the ecofriendly products by purchasing personnel is not being done by about 60.5%. the reason given for the same was that the cost of the product is more as compared to the normal product and they have a challenge of maintaining balance between the quantum of supplies and their cost.

**Graph 7: Solid Waste Reduction Practices Adopted By the Hotels and Restaurant Purchasing Department**



Certain Solid Waste Reduction methods which can be easily practiced in day to day work were listed and the question was asked to the purchasing personnel to ascertain whether those practices are adopted by the Hotel and restaurant to reduce waste.

Certain practices like Segregating waste, Recycling waste and reusing practices are followed by 97.4%, 57.9% and 36.8% respondents respectively. The main reason being the enforcement of law 'Health and Sanitation by Law 2014'. Which clearly instruct the waste generator to follow waste reduction methods by implementing practices like waste segregation, recycling and reusing.

There are few respondents who are not aware about the practices like Segregating waste 1.3%, Recycling waste 9.2% and reusing waste 10.5%. This is due to the reason as there are certain Hotels and Restaurants which doesn't have separate purchasing department or personnel specifically appointed to carry on the purchasing procedure. Either this job is being looked after by the other department personnel or the supplies are being transferred from main branch to other outlets.

Maximum respondents follow practices like purchasing material as per requirement (89.5%), Purchasing material in bulk (80.3%), Avoid purchasing plastic (53.9%), check material with specification while receiving (67.1%) and returning material to the supplier back if it is found wrong or damaged (61.8%). The main reason for the same is due to the cost involved in the above activity leading to reduction in profit.

**\*Responses received for the question: List few Eco –Purchasing Practices followed by your department to reduce amount of Solid Waste. The responses received are as below:**

1. Staff are trained to handle the Solid waste in appropriate manner through a PowerPoint shown where some techniques are projected to reduce solid waste.
2. Process solid waste in house and use in their own premises and ensure all waste get converted into reusable, or they recycled and reduced.
3. No Plastic Bottles are purchased. The suppliers are instructed to collect any plastic material transported by them during the supply of material.

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4. Reduction of Paper usage in Kitchen and other department as no paper is purchased unless it is essentially required for a specific job. Strict controlled is kept on purchasing of Paper.
5. We buy wine bottles in wrapped packaging instead of card board boxes.
6. Segregation of all solid waste at pickup point.
7. 20 litres water Jars are use and buy to avoid solid waste of plastic bottles.
8. Educate all perishable material vendors to use reusable crates and containers instead of card board boxes and packing.
9. Separate Garbage Areas
10. Separate colour coded garbage bags and bins
11. Reusing all possible items, Recycle, try to reduce waste
12. Take Monthly inventory to maintain low stock.
13. Documentation maintained by department to record wastage.
14. Disciplinary rules for wastage.
15. Purchase cycles are being changed to weekly to avoid big storage.
16. Strongly insist on First in and First out for every product purchased.
17. Wet garbage composting machine.
18. Do not use printed menu cards, use black board for menu display.
19. Separate bins for plastic products.
20. Avoid Plastic.
21. Purchasing of Vegetable & fruits free of Chemical
22. The waste material or vegetable is given for cattle feed without throwing it.
23. Disposing garbage at appropriate place.

**RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTIONS**

After analyzing the data collected from various Hotels and Restaurant the researcher would like to give some recommendation, so that the same can be followed to make the purchasing eco-friendlier and to achieve the goal of waste reduction.

1. First and foremost, the organization should frame Purchasing policy as per the operations of the organization. That should include the norms for eco-friendly purchasing adaptable for the organization.
2. It is important for the organization to give a formal training to all their employees in understanding the importance of reducing waste. They should be made aware about the eco-friendly practices followed while purchasing material.
3. Whatever method of purchasing is to be decided it is important the suppliers are made aware about the purchasing policy and eco- friendly approach of the organization.
4. Regular audit of the supplier should be made compulsory, as this is going to affect the purchasing activity drastically.
5. Practices like Reduce, Reuse, Recycle should be inculcated in every individual working in purchasing department.

6. The organization where separated purchasing department is not in hierarchy, should make sure that the person handling purchasing should be aware about purchasing policy.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Eco- Purchasing is one of the major and first step in reducing waste. It has been noticed that with the hue and cry on the generation of waste by the hospitality industry, many of the sectors has started adopting green or sustainable approach when it comes to the solid waste management. Many of the researches has consistently highlighted that it is always better to reduce waste rather than creating and then planning strategies to deal with the disposal. Being first in the process of waste creation, it is important for the hospitality industry in general to start working towards reducing waste. This could be achieved through preparing purchasing policy which includes all the possible practices which can be contributed in reducing waste. The above study shows that though some of the Hotels and restaurants are following some practices of Eco-Purchasing, but their percentage is very low. Still that awareness in following Eco-Purchasing practices has block in their mind that these practices are very costly and may result in reducing their profits. But a systematic approach to the purchasing can make this activity more sustainable and cost effective. There are chances that they will be more benefitted if the policy is systematically planned keeping in view all the aspects of an organization.

### **LIMITATIONS**

While conducting this study there were certain limitations faced those are:

1. This study was limited to Pune City.
2. Only two sectors of Hospitality namely: Hotels and Restaurants were taken into consideration.
3. Number of respondent were limited due to time and financial constraints.
4. The places where separate purchasing department was not there it was difficult to collect data as the person handling the purchasing was not available, so the researcher has to depend on other department personnel to collect data.
5. Some of the personnel was not very keen on sharing data due to privacy issue.

### **SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Following topics could be considered for future research:

1. The study could be done by taking every individual sector of hospitality industry like Fast food, Bars, Pubs, Night clubs etc.
2. Comparison of purchasing practices can be done between two identical sectors.
3. Case studies based on Good Purchasing practices followed by any hospitality sector can be considered, so that the same can be an example for other sector of same entity.

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