

## CONCEPT, CUSTOMER PERCEPTION AND FEASIBILITY TOWARDS POD HOTELS

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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/pod-hotels-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.

LR 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.11466/>

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  
80 responses



● Private Sector  
● Government Employee  
● 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 of 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 published 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?

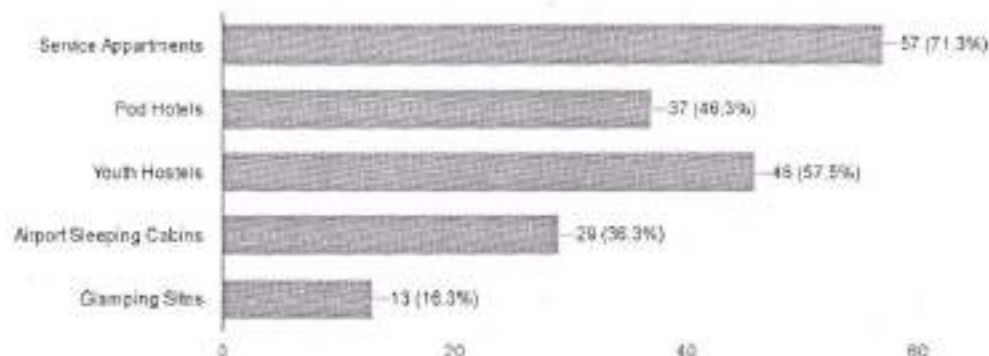
60 responses



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

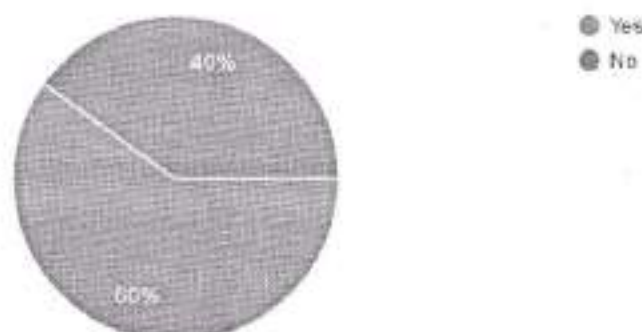


It is important to know that what category or type of alternate accommodation do people prefer or are aware of, hence this question helped in getting insight about the same. Respondents were asked to choose between four different categories of accommodation i.e., Service apartments, Pod Hotels, Youth 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

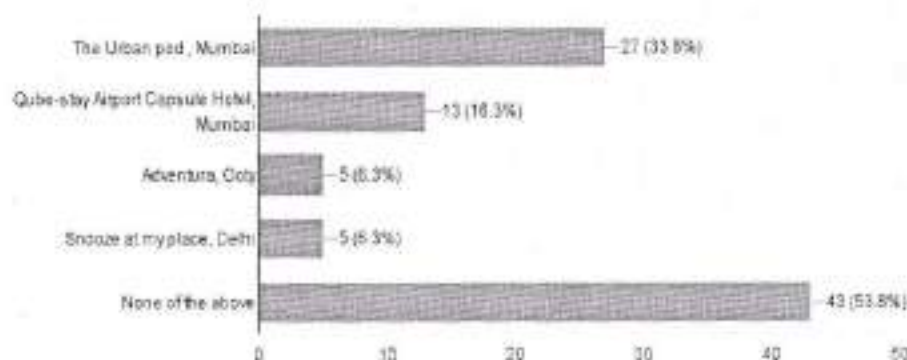


Purpose of this question to gauge the awareness of people towards pod hotels or capsule accommodations. Out of 80 responses 60% people are aware of Pod Hotels as an alternate accommodation, however it is also seen that 40% people are not aware about the concept. They are completely unaware of the capsule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

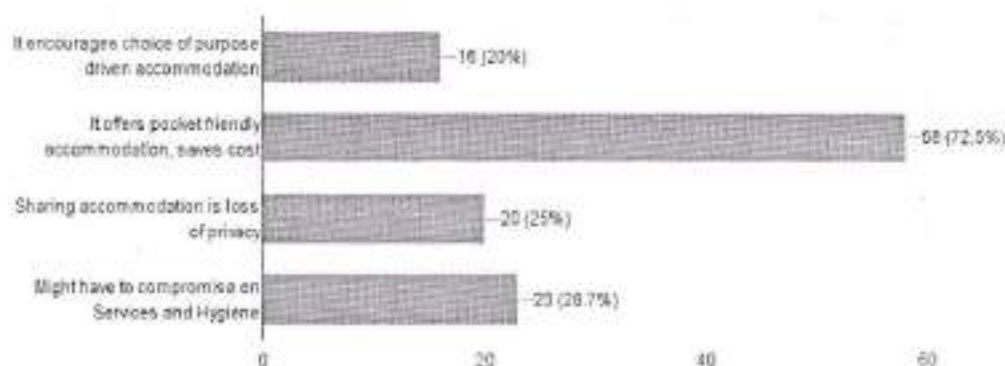
It is important to know the difference between youth hostels and pod hotels. Through this question an attempt to enlighten the difference between both was made. Both categorically fall under shared accommodations however, pod hotels get few more points as they are better in terms of hygiene, safety and 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



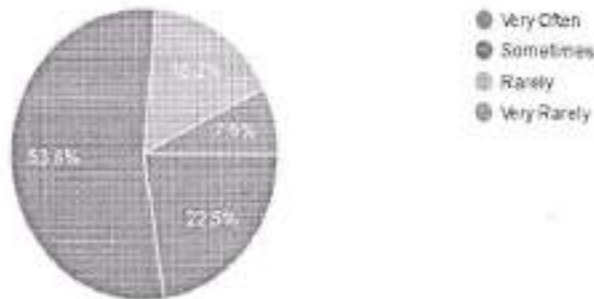
This question was put forth to determine consumer perception towards shared accommodation in terms of safety, security, hygiene and cost and privacy as basic and essential needs. It is been observed that 72.5% i.e., majority of the respondents feel that shared accommodations offer pocket friendly staying 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

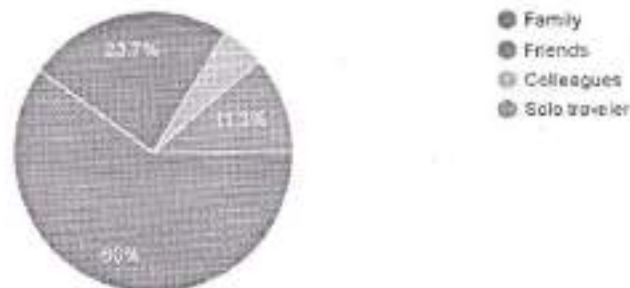


The pie diagram illustrates the frequency of travelling of the respondents. As per the parameters the – Very often means weekly travel, sometimes means Monthly travel. Rarely means travelling six months and very rarely means travelling once or twice a year. Hence, it is observed that majority people 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 perceptive 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.

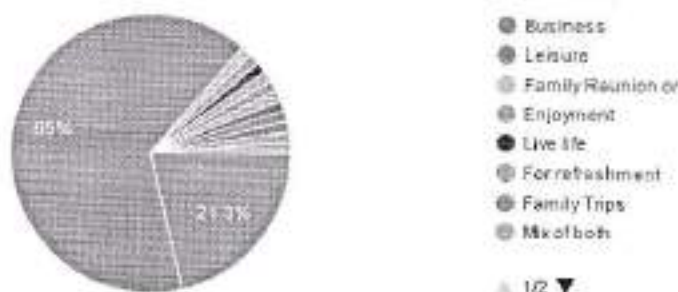
With whom do you travel most often?

80 responses



What is your purpose of travelling

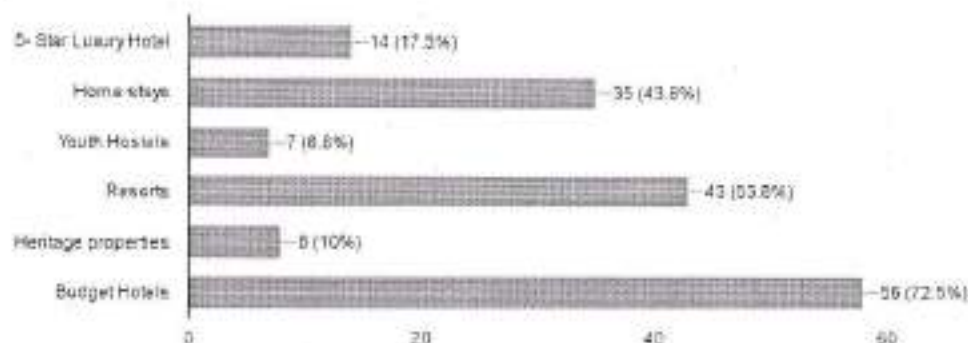
80 responses



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?

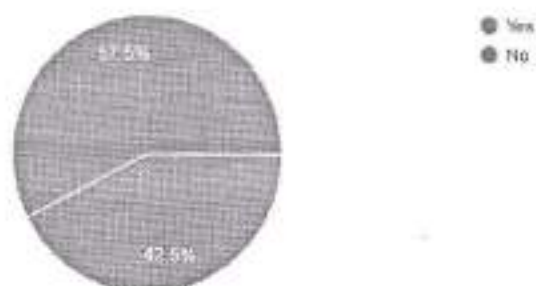
80 responses



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 has 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

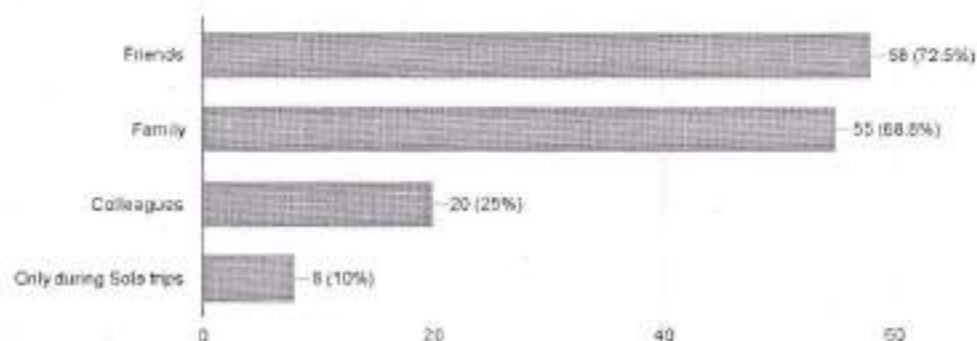


Since respondent's perception towards share accommodation is part of study it is also important to know whether they are willing to opt for any shared accommodation during their tour. Number of people that might opt for an option of shared accommodation is less than the number of people not opting for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

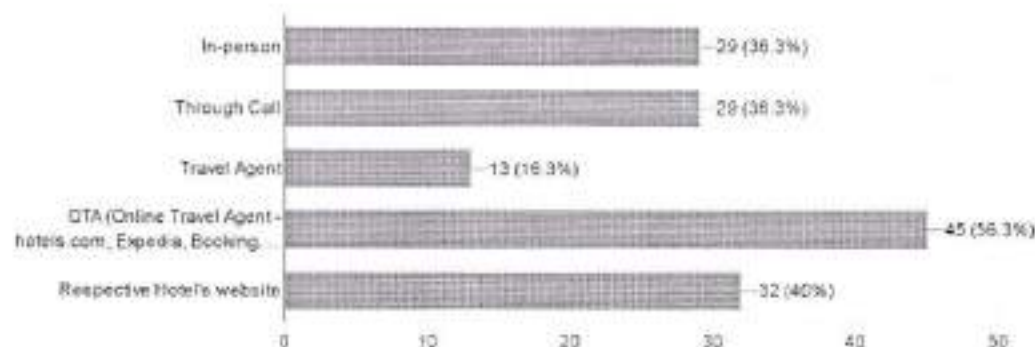


opt for shared accommodation when they travel with family. Only 25% responses were in favor of sharing accommodation with colleagues. The least preference to shared accommodation was given by solo travelers as only 10% of them has opted for shared accommodation.



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

80 responses

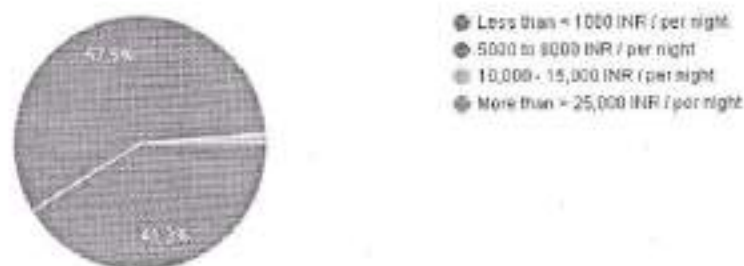


In order to determine the most preferred mode of booking hotel used by consumers, this question was included and responses were recorded for in-person, through call, travel agent, OTA, Respective hotels website ways of booking a room. Maximum people book through OTAs (online travel agent) as the percentage 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

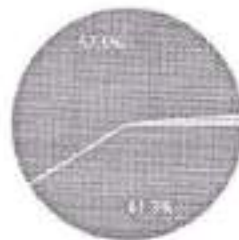


After determining the mode of booking it is extremely important for the hotelier to be aware of the spending power of the customer, hence with the same motive this particular question was added. It is observed that people tend to spend between the range of 5000-8000 rupees per night, as 57.5% have responded 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

89 responses

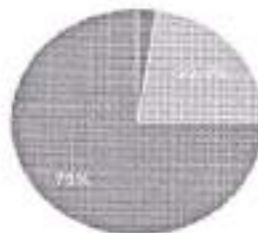


- Less than = 1000 INR / per night
- 5000 to 3000 INR / per night
- 10,000 - 15,000 INR / per night
- More than = 25,000 INR / per night

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 your in relating with the concept of Pod Hotel or made you aware of Pod Hotels ?

90 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?

89 responses



- Yes
- No

Have you ever heard of any Pod/Capsule Hotel?

89 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.

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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 planned 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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