



## IMPACT OF COVID – 19 ON HOSPITALITY EDUCATION

**Mr.Preetam Gupte**

*Assistant Professor,*

*Department of Hotel Management,*

*Sahyog College of Management Studies, Thane*

### Abstract

*Hospitality is an age old concept with numerous dimensions. In that line hospitality education has grown and evolved over the years. Considering the history of education and systematic development of educational branches, hospitality is comparatively a much younger form of education. It has been passed on from generations to generations and yet it's documented and frame worked education started just a little more than century back.*

*Covid – 19 pandemic touched every aspect and literal part of human life and education was definitely no exception. Pandemic hit lives directly and indirectly. With education system not completely evolved to go in virtual mode and with vocational education like hospitality which needs greater practical exposure, it definitely is a long term challenge for educators and students. Tourism & hospitality industry is directly affected with pandemic shows effect on the aspirants of this career.*

*The research paper focuses on the challenges faced by the teaching community and the solutions opted to overcome those challenges. The research also attempts to evaluate the outcome of the solutions practiced and whether these solutions are only temporary remedies or can be further evolved as a permanent methodologies. This research reaches to an open end of the outcome since neither the pandemic is yet over nor the hospitality education is going to stop. Hospitality education is ever evolving since this industry itself is ever growing and encompassing every inch of the globe and every aspect of the human culture.*

**Key words:** *Hospitality education, Hospitality industry, Education system, Pandemic, Covid-19.*



Aarhat Publication & Aarhat Journals is licensed Based on a work at <http://www.aarhat.com/erj/>

### Objectives:

- To identify the changes adopted by various hospitality institutions
- To study the advantages and drawbacks of the adopted methodologies
- To recognise the short term implementations
- To forecast the long term impact

### Introduction:

Education is the backbone of any developing society and in today's era it is the mandate for the survival and growth of any individual. The quality of the education reflects on the overall growth of the nation. When we are dealing with the intangibility of the education sector, it is cumbersome to set the parameter of the success of delivery.

Hospitality education, which in particular a niche pursuit, attempts to provide a platform for students to develop and



enhance skills by imparting practical based syllabi to be industry ready. This is exactly where Covid 19 and the restrictions thereby provided a big challenge to already an education field which is associated to an industry which is ever evolving.

### **The concept of Hospitality Education**

Unlike the general perception, hospitality graduates do not necessarily spend their whole career working in the hotels, rather not even working for the same industry. Hospitality students are the most sorted and ideally job ready for any kind of work environment, profiles and challenges. Such is the curriculum found in most of the universities. Apart for its core subjects such as Food Production & Patisserie, Food & Beverage Operations Management, Front Office and Accommodation Management, there are plethora of subjects covered in a given syllabus through 3 or 4 years of course duration. The understanding of the core subjects heavily rely on the practical and practice. While other subjects focus on developing communication skills, managerial acumen, acute sense of leadership and entrepreneurial skills. At any point in time, hospitality student is taking education equivalent to a management post graduate. Such is the potential of this education. Students graduating from hospitality are prepared for taking up jobs at variety of business domains.

### **The existing challenge due to Covid - 19**

Hospitality education provides potentials for numerous professional opportunities, yet there are several underlying issues and challenges, one of the most critical is the delivery of the course work. Since the curriculum and the nature of the industry demands focus on skill development which in turn requires a major practical and practice based approach. Since Covid 19 pandemic forced all the person to person contact to shut down and move to virtual education, the very essence of the hospitality education is rooted out.

As the declaration of Pandemic by World Health Organisation and implementation of nationwide lockdown took place in a very short span of time, it became challenging for all to shift to the vidual mode immediately. Few of the challenges faced at all levels are as follows;

1. All the teaching faculties were not enabled with resources for online lectures from home such as wifi, laptop, desktop etc.
2. Practical related study material such as videos, animations etc were either not available or not organised.
3. Students were not having enough resources to attend online platforms.

Although the situation improved over the period of time, yet the challenge remained with the tangibility of the practical part of the curriculum. For example Food Production i.e. kitchen and bakery subject is carried out by most the colleges via videos and demonstrations. Some created by the institutions while some from online resources. Cooking learned via video can provide education of only one sensory organ i.e. vision. Whereas food and cooking is about all sensory experience including touch, smell and taste. This particularly created a big challenge for educators as well as students.

A survey carried out based on effectiveness of online education following observations and conclusions were drawn. The survey was carried out on the Effectiveness of Teaching Learning Mechanism in Higher Education in hospitality considering online teaching methodology.

**Objective:** To identify the effectiveness of the teaching-learning mechanism in online hospitality teaching thereby identifying benefits, limitations, and scope for improvement.

Survey tools used: The survey was carried by creating an online questionnaire, collecting data, and creating statistics



based on the data using online software.

**Audience:** The audience for the survey is hospitality graduation students.

The survey is based on quantitative analysis by collecting data from 141 student responses with multiple choice questionnaires. There are 11 questions about online education in the questionnaire. The questions are provided with unbiased and multi-view perspective options. The survey attempts to find the student experience and opinion with technology, education, and teacher – student relation. Following is the statistical observation of the survey:

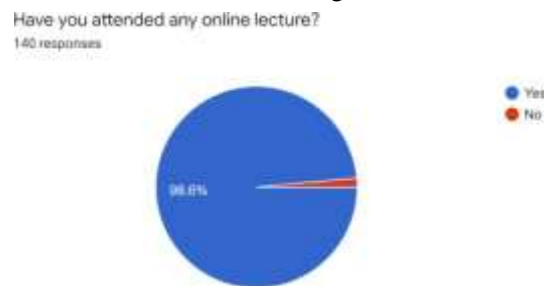


Chart 1.0

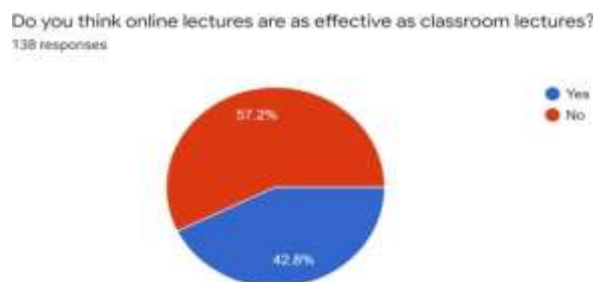


Chart 2.0

57.2 % of students feel that online education is not as effective as offline whereas 42.8% are now comfortable with its effectiveness. If the conclusion is drawn only based on the majority then the effectiveness of online education is questionable.

In the current scenario, it can be observed that 92.9% of students are using the Zoom platform, which obviously looks like the choice of the students. 78.4% of students do not consider online education difficult due to internet connectivity while 21.6% of students find this as a hindrance. 69.3% of students attend online classes using cellular data while 30.7% have access to the high-speed internet via wifi. 85.7% of students are connecting using mobile phones whereas 14.3% have access to the desktop or laptop. 61.4% of the students are comfortable with physical notes while 32.9% of students are unbiased with both online as well as physical notes.

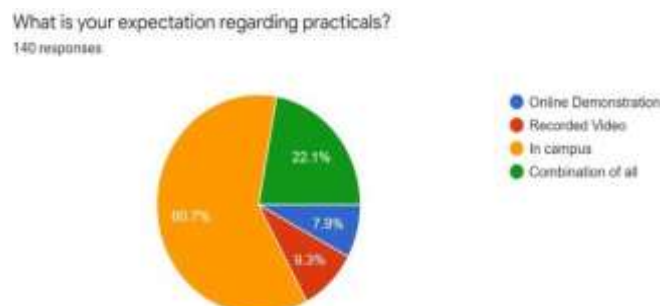




Chart 3.0

Regarding practical based subject the opinions are mixed. 60.7% of the majority believe that campus practical are important and must be conducted that way only while 22.1% have an opinion that it can be an in a mixed pattern. 9.3% think that recorded videos are also useful while 7.9% think online demonstrations are useful. 77.4% of students think that teachers can teach the concepts effectively online while 22.6% think that topics or concepts are not that effectively taught. 42.1% of the majority of students have a minimum of 2 members of the family dependent on the internet due to online learning or work from home whereas 30.7% are those who have all access to themselves. 27.2% have more than 2 members dependent on the internet. 50% of the students are unsure if the online exam pattern is justifying their academic performance whereas 29.3% believe it does and 20.3% believe it could be better with an offline mode of examination or assessment.

Based on the survey above we can draw a few of the conclusions in different parameters as follows:

#### **Availability of the technology:**

From the pure technology point of view, the majority of students are using the Zoom platform, which can also be concluded as the majority of institutions are preferring Zoom over Google Meet or any other platform. Student's majority is making use of cellular data over Wi-Fi which also explains why the majority of the students are using a mobile phone rather than a computer or laptop. Exactly, on the contrary, lesser students have PC or laptop options and Wi-Fi access. Although over a period of time students have their own access to the internet all for themselves or only a couple of family members sharing the devices.

#### **Ease of learning:**

Online education surely is a new thing for the teaching generation but not for the learning generation. Hence, we are observing from the report that almost all the students are attending online lectures, they do not feel the internet is a hindrance nor they have a problem with online course material. Also, it is observed that teachers are effectively conveying lectures and students can understand the topics.

#### **The limitations:**

Despite all the positivity observed whether this mechanism is effective or not is not clear by any large majority. Also, when it comes to practical, students are looking for in campus or at least combination but purely online is not an option. Students are unclear if the examination patters are justifying in assessing the academic performance.

#### **Overall conclusion of the survey**

The participants of the survey are all urban students hence as far as positive technology feedbacks are received are expected due to ease in the availability of resources. The student generation is used to handle mobile phones, gadgets, apps, etc. since childhood and they used to fiddle around with the same, which shows to result in handling online lectures. Yet, technology is merely a tool for education, and still, some majority think real education is in the classroom through learning theoretical concepts is not much of an issue. And that is why for practical based learning online education is not a complete choice. It may take more research to find out if the online assessment mechanisms are effective or not.

As a conclusion online education mechanism is effective in theoretical subjects but for practical and wholesome learning classroom presence is important.



Hospitality education is about in person interaction, guest communication and real life situation handling. One of the biggest learning platform of hospitality in Industrial Training, which any university student would undergo between 4 to 6 months in the entire course of graduation. With an absolute halt to this part of the curriculum, there is a major gap created between student and the industry.

#### **Adaptability required for the future**

Now that it is imminent that what challenges we are facing have a long term impact, time is also here to find the ways to cope up the changing scenario. The industry is showing adaptive steps towards changing customer behaviour, safety and hygiene concerns, changing service trends etc. Hence it is important to inculcate these changes in the hospitality education as well.

Although practical and hands on skill remains the challenge and the solution may not be in the scope of this research paper but now is the time for more involvement of industry experts and operations managers in the curriculum development.

Organising more webinars of industry experts and demonstrations by professionals can be the new opportunity, since logistics of organising these resources are now within reach with the advent of ICT facilities.

#### **Conclusion**

Amid the crisis which is most severely faced by hospitality and tourism industry, it is bound to see impact on its education and the mind frame of current and future students. Since pandemic is still far from over and long definite study or module is unavailable to predict the long term implication, based on current scenario. Teaching will have to continue in online mode but with more focus on developing intensified customer service approach, creating real life scenario, and adding virtual resources.

#### **Reference:**

EHL Lassaune Report

[https://info.ehl.edu/hospitality-industry-trends?\\_ga=2.27992891.688522430.1623653159-159247330.1623653159](https://info.ehl.edu/hospitality-industry-trends?_ga=2.27992891.688522430.1623653159-159247330.1623653159)

Shrivasta Siddharth and Kaushal Vikrant, Hospitality and tourism industry amid COVID-19 pandemic: Perspectives on challenges and learnings from India *Published online 2020 Oct 1. doi: 10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102707*

Bharwani S., Mathews D. Risk identification and analysis in the hospitality industry: Practitioners' perspectives from India. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism*

*Themes*. 2012;4(5):410–427. [Google Scholar]

Choudhary Roop Prasad, Challenges in times of Covid-19: Owner-driven hotels and independent chains face market crisis, <https://hospitality.economictimes.indiatimes.com/> Apr 13, 2020