



Human Resource Practices in Indian Hotels: A Comparative Study of Employees' Perception During COVID and Pre COVID ERA

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Abstract *Purpose: The purpose of this study is to compare the employee perception on different HRM practices followed in hotels prior and during COVID pandemic and identify the changes in their perception level.*

Design/Methodology/Approach: This study initiated as an independent research work before the outbreak of COVID-19 to India and covered the responses of 127 hotel employees to study their perception about Human Resource Practices in Indian Hotels. Further, the breakdown of pandemic COVID -19 impacted the hotel sector along with others largely, thus in present study same hotel employees were contacted and their responses were recorded during the COVID pandemic through a structured questionnaire. The instrument used 28 variables on different aspects of HR practices. The data collected were analysed by mean, standard deviation and independent sample T test to study the difference in perceptions.

Findings: The study clearly showed that although overall there is no significant difference in employee perception on different HR practices, significant difference was recorded for the 7 HR practices related to recruitment, training on new protocols and specifically with the variables related to pay and benefits of employees. The result shows that due to the salary cuts and layoffs that was offered to employees of many hotels during COVID has created a major dent on their perception level.

Practical Implication: The Study provides the insight of employees' perception level, and provide a view to the HR managers to look into the areas like pay and benefits to retain the quality employees during this pandemic.

Theoretical Implication: The finding of the study will add significant contribution to the miniscule existing data related to the Hotel's HR practices and Employee perception during the COVID era.

Keywords: *Employee Perception, Human Resource Management, Indian Hospitality Industry, Hotel, HR Practices, COVID-19*

INTRODUCTION

The world witnessed an unprecedented crisis in the form of COVID-19 which started in late 2019, but shown its full colours in 2020. The pandemic adversely effected all industries around the globe. The virus which was called novel corona virus and later termed as COVID-19 started from China and soon spread its presence across the globe and very soon all major economies were under the attack of this virus. The severity of virus is compared to none down in the memory lane of mankind so far. Looking at the virus outbreak and its severity, WHO issued travel

restriction and advisories, which was followed by many countries including India. The restrict lockdown imposed by countries made hospitality sector vulnerable around the world. The tourism and hospitality sector showed major loss due to the lockdown imposed by several countries as all outbound as well as inbound traffic was stopped. As a result, the tourism and lodging industries saw a significant drop in demand (Chang et al., 2020). The travel restrictions imposed at national and international levels, travel bans, cancellation of railways, border closures, quarantine requirements and events cancellations due to fear of virus spread posed challenge on tourism and hospitality industry

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(Gössling et al., 2020a). The hotel industry experienced sudden sales losses as occupancy rates dropped due to social distancing and the drastic decline in the number of tourists (Sobieralski, 2020). The hotel industry was the first to face the consequences of these restrictions and experienced an employment shock with a sharp drop in the number of employees in hotels and a dramatic rise in the temporary leaves offered to the employees (Jung et al., 2020), and it is assumed that this sector will take time to revive.

Although the immediate impact of COVID-19 in hotel sector have been reflected now in the form of hotels net revenue and employee concerns, the longer term impact are yet to be seen considering the social distancing, hygiene precautions etc that is going to be new norm in near future. The vulnerability of tourism and hospitality sector can make this sector less attractive for occupational point of view (Baum & Hai, 2020). As the hospitality sector is under immense pressure, the employees of hotel sector were badly effected due to non-functioning of hotels during lockdown measures. As the lockdown measures are gradually being lifted up, and domestic tourism is showing early stages of revival, this sector is also trying to be back on track. However the fear of fresh wave of the pandemic in some of the European countries poses a serious threat on revival of this sector. Understanding the challenges Hospitality and tourism sector is facing, Ministry of Tourism, government of India promoted domestic tourism and our own destinations through a series of webinars under the programme “Dekho Apna Desh” that can be instrumental in reviving the hotel sector in the initial phase.

In this context, the perception level of hotel employees during the COVID times may be significant to find out the employees perception and to adopt measures that can be implied to retain the employees by hotel industry in the future. This study contributes to practical implications by understanding the job perception as perceived by hotel employees, to select the major areas that needs to be addressed on the industry activation and revival during the post-pandemic era.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The examination of literature gives theoretical foundation as well as helps to contextualise our findings by comparing them to previous work done in a comparable environment. To further comprehend the topic, a review of papers, studies, and research on the impact of Covid-19 on the hospitality sector and HR procedures in hotels and restaurants was conducted.

The Impact of COVID-19 on the Indian Hospitality Industry

On 25th March 2020, Indian govt. took a stern decision of countrywide lockdown seeing the escalating cases of

COVID-19 across the globe and suspended all international and national flights for people's safety. The repercussion of this decision was that the Indian economy, particularly the tourism industry faced the heat. As hospitality and tourism industry is known as a people-oriented industry where employees play a significant role to give the best quality service to the customer. As services are perishable, if the hotel rooms are empty today it, loses forever (Lovelock et al., 2001). The global lockdown continued into what is called Peak season that is the vacation time of spring and summer, many small and independent hotels, budget hotels faced issues related to employee's salary. The pandemic has caused a major setback for the Indian tourism and Hospitality sector (Kumar A., 2020, Kumar V., 2020). Many hotels have done salary cuts across their employees and offered temporary leaves to the staff during the lockdown due to absence of business activity.

Table 1: Timeline of COVID-19

Time Period	Events
December 31, 2019	China alerted WHO to many unusual pneumonia cases in Wuhan
January 7, 2020	WHO officials announced the new virus that spreads via airborne droplets and named 2019-nCoV.
January 11, 2020	China reported first death from COVID
January 30, 2020	India's first Covid-19 patient reported in Kerala's Thrissur district.
February 3, 2020	Kerala government declares coronavirus a state calamity
February 4, 2020	India cancels visas for Chinese and foreigners who had visited China in the last two weeks
February 11, 2020	WHO announces that the disease caused by new virus will be called 'Covid-19'.
March 10, 2020	50 Covid-19 cases reported in India.
March 11, 2020	The WHO declared Covid-19 a pandemic,
March 15, 2020	Total Covid-19 cases touched 100, Maharashtra having highest infections.
March 22, 2020	Prime Minister Narendra Modi, declared a 14-hour voluntary lockdown called 'Janata Curfew'.
March 25, 2020	Lock down 1: Lockdown was imposed till April 14, with only essential services kept out of its purview. India reported 606 cases and 10 deaths.
April 14, 2020	Lockdown 2: PM Modi extends the 21-day lockdown to May 3. 10,000 cases were recorded.
May 1, 2020	Lockdown 3: Home Ministry extends lockdown for two weeks starting May 4 with zone-wise restrictions.

Time Period	Events
May 17, 2020	Lockdown 4: MHA extends lockdown till May 31, allows inter-state movement of passenger vehicles with mutual consent of states.
May 25, 2020	Domestic flight services resumed with only 30% of regular schedules.
June 8, 2020	Unlock 1.0 guidelines coming into force, as India records more than 2,50,000 COVID-19 cases and 7200 deaths. Centre allowed re-opening of malls, hotels, restaurants and places of worship.
July 1, 2020	Unlock 2.0 guidelines come into force, relaxations in night curfew, provision for more domestic flights and trains.
August 1, 2020	Unlock 3.0, govt allowed gymnasiums and yoga centres and revoked the night curfew.
August 29, 2020	Unlock 4.0 guidelines, allowed metro services to start from September 7, larger gatherings with 100 people allowed from September 21.
September 30, 2020	Unlock 5.0 guidelines, allowed cinemas and multiplexes to open with 50 per cent capacity from October 15

HRM Practices in Hospitality Industry and Its Impact on Employee Satisfaction

Rao (1987) proposed in his study that little expenditures in HRD may go a long way toward strengthening staff capabilities and a healthy and dynamic organisational culture inside the firm. The hotel industry should essentially encourage progressive human resource policies and practices, as these will have positive impact on attraction, employee retention, development and motivation of competent employees (Cheng & Brown, 1998). Riley et al. (2000) asserted that economics is the most important determinant of HRM policies and practices in tourism and hospitality. Though this factor is likely to be true for any industry, but due to the nature of the industry, they discovered that it had a special resonance in tourism and hospitality sector. Therefore the organizations and HR managers often seen in handling “traditional problems”, which are underpinned by fundamental labour economic imperatives. Still, human resource management methods have an impact on an organization’s overall effectiveness, and good human resource utilisation may provide an organisation with a competitive edge (Richard & Johnson, 2001). The reduced employee satisfaction in an organization is an important factor for high turnover intention and low commitment. Hence employee satisfaction is necessary for their intent to stay with the organization can be increased for long (George, 2002). According to Delahay (2003), the traditional management assumption that only two fundamental assets existed in an organisation - money and time- is no longer valid. Knowledge has evolved into an unchangingly critical resource in the form

of Human Resource. Hence Human resource development has progressively developed importance. Although Human Resources has advanced significantly in sophistication and strategic planning in organisations in recent years (Gubman, 2004), many researchers have found that the hospitality industry still has room for growth and professionalism when compared to other industries (Lucas & Deery, 2004, Singh et al., 2007). The Human resource management and practises are inextricably related to organization success.. The human resource management and practices directly linked with organizational performance. As a result, establishing standard procedures for Human Resource Management is critical for any organization. According to Alleyne et al. (2006), the hotel sector is inherently labour intensive, which makes HRM practises especially vital, and it should create strong human resource practises and policies to achieve competitive success. If the employees are not satisfied with their jobs and organizations do have not trust in their employees, then employees’ intentions to quit the organisation will be greater, their employment length will be shorter, and they may leave the organisation sooner (Jeffrey, 2007). Human resource development techniques, according to Macky and Boxall (2007), communicate to workers that the business supports their long-term growth and values their contribution to the firm. In their study Ford et al. (2012) also emphasized on relevance of Human resource when dealing with labour-intensive service industries, especially, the hospitality industry, where the accomplishment of the business is completely dependent on the success of the employee interaction with guests. Gbolaham (2012) suggested that training and development programmes be regularly altered and updated in order to enable workers to be more adaptable and effective. In their article, Sachar and Chomplay (2017) examined how the majority of hotels in Delhi (NCR) recognise the value of human resource management strategies in improving performance but are unable to implement these practises due to high turnover rates and firm demographic characteristics. The findings support the notion that human resource management methods have an impact on performance and quality improvement. Gupta and Raj (2018) in their study to measure job satisfaction of hotel employees in Bundelkhand suggested a positive correlation between employees job satisfaction & employee retention. Romero et al. (2018) in their paper to analyse hotel and restaurant employee satisfaction in European Union, found that the level of satisfaction expressed by the workers on the working conditions was significantly lower in the hotel sector. Hewagama et al. (2019) in their research in Sri Lankan hotels, revealed that the HR practices and management styles helped to develop job competence, and job competence was related to job satisfaction. Norbu and Wetprasisit (2020), identified that factors like reward and recognition, and work environment significantly influenced the employees’ job satisfaction in their study in the Hotels

of Bhutan. Filimonau et al. (2020) in their study in Spanish hotels' employees, found that COVID has reduced the attractiveness of hospitality jobs, and to retain employees senior management must reinforce their organizational resilience and invest in corporate social responsibility. Bajrami et al. (2020), in their study on hotel employees of Serbia found negative impact on the motivation and turnover intention of employees due to the job insecurity during COVID 19, They also found that age and marital status had significant impact on job motivation and turnover intentions. Jung et al. (2020) studied the effect of Job security due to COVID on hotels employees of seoul and found that job insecurity had negative effects on the engagement of hotel employees and it can decrease their turnover intent. He also concluded that that the negative impact of job insecurity is higher on Generation Y than Generation X employees.

OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

The present research work was conducted:

To compare the Hotel employees' perception level related to various HR practices pre- COVID and during COVID era.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

On the basis of objective no.1 following hypothesis was framed which will be tested with the help of statistical tools.

H1: Overall, there is no significant difference between the Employees perception related to HR practices during Pre COVID and during COVID era.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A structured questionnaire was developed to measure employees' perception through various HR practices adopted by Hotels. The variables for these practices were chosen from the existing literature. Different variables related to the recruitment and selection, induction, training, performance appraisal, Pay and benefits, reward system etc are chosen from available literature.

Questionnaire Development

The current study employs a structured questionnaire that was created with the help of an exhaustive examination of relevant literature. The questionnaire was divided into two segments for the study. The 1st segment deals with the demographic profile of the respondents and asks 9 questions. The second segment has 28 variables of HRM practices related to various HR activities like selection of employees, training and induction, performance appraisal, Pay and benefits, rewards etc, on the basis of available literature. All

of the assertions were evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating Strongly disagree, 2 indicating Disagree, 3 indicating Neutral, 4 indicating Agree, and 5 indicating Strongly agree.

Sample Type

The study's population consisted of hotels of various classifications throughout India. To prevent bias in the results, employees from various hotel categories were chosen at random. The sampling unit consisted of the employees from selected hotels of Delhi NCR, staff were selected by random convenient sampling method for this study.

Data Collection

The data collection was done in two stages. In first stage data was collected in the month of January- February, 2020. Total 127 respondents recorded their responses. In the month of March, 2020 when all of a sudden lock down imposed in the country and Hotel industry came to a halt, data collection stopped too. As in the early stages there was no surety of opening of hotels, but later on it became clear that the pandemic had hit the hotel sector in hard way and will take time to recover. Some respondents were contacted again in September, 2020 to record their views again in the present scenario. All respondents agreed and provided the data required during the pandemic. Fresh data provided by all 127 respondents were used for the comparison test.

DATA INTERPRETATION

The interpretation of collected data was done after analysing it using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 20.0 version. To get the results various statistical techniques were applied. As the objective of the research was to find out the difference between the Employee perception Pre COVID and during COVID era, therefore, independent sample t-test was applied to find out the significant difference between the two groups. Further, to know whether this perception level is in the positive side or in the negative side mean and standard deviation was used.

DATA ANALYSIS

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

A total of 127 replies were gathered and judged to be full and legitimate, and they were utilised in the study. Table 2 gives the demographic profile of the respondents. 85.8 % male respondents and 14.2 % female respondents participated in the study. Majority of them (84.3%) were from age group below 25 years and are young hoteliers, as

only 9.4% respondents were married and rest were single. Qualification of most of the employees (81.1%) were found graduate. Over 90 % data was collected from employees of 5 star and 5 star deluxe hotels. The nature of Job was found to be regular for 92.9% staff. The data was gathered from each main department of the hotel, with 37.8 percent of respondents from the Food Production department, 29.1

percent from the Front Office, and 20.5 percent from the FnB Service department. As far as the working experience was concerned 89% of them were having less than 5 years of experience. It's evident from the age group too, most of the staff (65.4 %) were from operational level Job profile while only 7.9% were from managerial positions. Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Employees

Demographic Profile	Distribution	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	109	85.8
	Female	18	14.2
Age group	25 years or younger	107	84.3
	26-35 years	16	12.6
	36-45 years	4	3.1
Marital status	Single	115	90.6
	Married	12	9.4
Educational Qualification	Upto 10+2	15	11.8
	Diploma	2	1.6
	Graduation	103	81.1
	Post Graduation	7	5.5
Type of Property	4 Star	4	3.1
	5 Star	54	42.5
	5 Star deluxe	62	48.8
	Others	7	5.5
Nature of Appointment	Regular	118	92.9
	Contractual	9	7.1
Department	Food Production	48	37.8
	F & B service	26	20.5
	House keeping	2	1.6
	Front Office	37	29.1
	HR and Training	4	3.1
	Others	10	7.9
Working experience	Below 5 years	113	89.0
	5-15 years	14	11.0
Level of Job Profile	Operational	83	65.4
	Supervisory	34	26.8
	Managerial	10	7.9

Difference in Employees Perception Level Pre COVID and during COVID:

It was interesting to note that out of 28 variables 19 variables showed higher mean value during pre COVID times than

during COVID times (Table 2). Variables related to pay and benefits showed major downgrade in employee's perception level during COVID times.

Table 2: Variables Where the Total Mean Score Pre COVID was Recorded Higher than during COVID, (N=127)

Variables	Duration	Mean
The staff selection is done through interview panels during selection process in the hotel.	PRE-COVID01	4.55
	DURING-COVID01	4.19
All appointments in the organization are based on merit.	PRE-COVID02	3.98
	DURING-COVID02	3.70
The hotel pays attention to the way it recruits staff.	PRE-COVID04	4.23
	DURING-COVID04	4.12
The hotel provides good opportunities to the employees to learn general skills and knowledge in the hotel for their future career.	PRE-COVID06	4.25
	DURING-COVID06	4.20
The Hotel provides opportunities to undertake general training programs and seminars outside of the organization to its employees.	PRE-COVID08	3.80
	DURING-COVID08	3.69
The hotel provides a good environment for new recruits to learn job specific skills and knowledge.	PRE-COVID09	4.21
	DURING-COVID09	4.09
The hotel provides opportunities to undertake in house job-specific training programs regularly to all staff.	PRE-COVID10	4.16
	DURING-COVID10	4.11
The feedback received from the supervisor/senior agrees with the staff achievements.	PRE-COVID13	4.17
	DURING-COVID13	4.00
I get feedback on my performance in proper way in the hotel	PRE-COVID14	4.13
	DURING-COVID14	3.95
The pay policy of the organization is consistent.	PRE-COVID15	3.90
	DURING-COVID15	3.18
The pay structure of the organization is appropriate.	PRE-COVID16	3.72
	DURING-COVID16	3.61
The raises/increments are determined in the organization in proper way.	PRE-COVID17	3.88
	DURING-COVID17	3.17
The amount the organization pays towards the benefits (other than salary) is appropriate.	PRE-COVID18	3.77
	DURING-COVID18	3.05
Pay and benefits are associated with employee's performance.	PRE-COVID19	3.91
	DURING-COVID19	3.28
Supervisor/senior often encourage juniors while doing the job in the organization.	BHRN21	4.13
	DURING-COVID21	4.09
Supervisor/senior give proper recognition to their juniors for doing the Job.	BHRN22	4.12
	DURING-COVID22	3.93
I often get a word of thanks from the supervisor/senior.	PRE-COVID23	4.09
	DURING-COVID23	3.98
The organization considers the qualification and experience of employees in promotions.	PRE-COVID24	4.11
	DURING-COVID24	3.94
There is enough staffing /manpower in the department with respect to the work.	PRE-COVID25	3.81
	DURING-COVID25	3.68

The data related to the responses collected pre COVID and during COVID pandemic has been summarised in Table 3 and Table 4 with the mean value of each variable for both pre

COVID and during COVID era, the standard deviation with the result of T test and its significance.

Table 3: Variables Where no Significant Difference is Found between the Employees Perception Level Pre COVID and during COVID era. (N=127)

Variables	Duration	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Difference
Favouritism/Partiality/Preference is not shown in the Hotel's recruitment.	PRE-COVID03	3.6850	1.23892	-.894	.373	NSD*
	DURING-COVID03	3.82	1.158			
The hotel pays attention to the way it recruits staff.	PRE-COVID04	4.2283	.84693	1.016	.312	NSD*
	DURING-COVID04	4.12	.869			
Induction is carried out to help new recruits to know the organization.	PRE-COVID05	4.1890	1.04450	-.499	.619	NSD*
	DURING-COVID05	4.25	.845			
The hotel provides good opportunities to the employees to learn general skills and knowledge in the hotel for their future career.	PRE-COVID06	4.2520	.90824	.483	.630	NSD*
	DURING-COVID06	4.20	.807			
The hotel provides assistance to the employees to take management training and development courses externally at educational institutions.	PRE-COVID07	3.7323	1.17817	-1.446	.151	NSD*
	DURING-COVID07	3.92	1.059			
The Hotel provides opportunities to undertake general training programs and seminars outside of the organization to its employees.	PRE-COVID08	3.7953	1.12925	.800	.425	NSD*
	DURING-COVID08	3.69	1.102			
The hotel provides a good environment for new recruits to learn job specific skills and knowledge.	PRE-COVID09	4.2126	.93120	.970	.334	NSD*
	DURING-COVID09	4.09	.930			
The hotel provides opportunities to undertake in house job-specific training programs regularly to all staff.	PRE-COVID10	4.1575	.87673	.443	.658	NSD*
	DURING-COVID10	4.11	.893			
The hotel conducts performance appraisal of staff in the best possible way.	PRE-COVID11	4.0630	.96566	-1.074	.285	NSD*
	DURING-COVID11	4.17	.874			
The organization aims in providing positive feedback for good performance than criticizing poor performance.	PRE-COVID12	3.9449	1.10056	-.120	.904	NSD*
	DURING-COVID12	3.96	1.072			
The feedback received from the supervisor/senior agrees with the staff achievements.	PRE-COVID13	4.1654	.88876	1.466	.145	NSD*
	DURING-COVID13	4.00	.943			
I get feedback on my performance in proper way in the hotel	PRE-COVID14	4.1260	1.08373	1.369	.173	NSD*
	DURING-COVID14	3.95	.958			
The pay structure of the organization is appropriate.	PRE-COVID16	3.7165	1.04576	.756	.451	NSD*
	DURING-COVID16	3.61	1.196			
Supervisor/senior compliments their subordinates for their job/ work.	PRE-COVID20	4.0079	.97993	0.000	1.000	NSD*
	DURING-COVID20	4.01	.972			
Supervisor/senior often encourage juniors while doing the job in the organization.	BHRN21	4.1339	.92034	.451	.653	NSD*
	DURING-COVID21	4.09	.836			
Supervisor/senior give proper recognition to their juniors for doing the Job.	BHRN22	4.1181	.98088	1.660	.099	NSD*
	DURING-COVID22	3.93	.910			
I often get a word of thanks from the supervisor/senior.	PRE-COVID23	4.0945	1.06483	.932	.353	NSD*
	DURING-COVID23	3.98	.938			
The organization considers the qualification and experience of employees in promotions.	PRE-COVID24	4.1102	.88397	1.352	.179	NSD*
	DURING-COVID24	3.94	1.079			
There is enough staffing /manpower in the department with respect to the work.	PRE-COVID25	3.8110	1.15286	.904	.368	NSD*
	DURING-COVID25	3.68	1.208			
The Working hours for staff is appropriate most of the time.	PRE-COVID26	3.6535	1.31763	.051	.959	NSD*
	DURING-COVID26	3.65	1.185			
Weekly offs and other leaves are sanctioned as per the requirements.	PRE-COVID27	3.8819	1.23194	-.427	.670	NSD*
	DURING-COVID27	3.94	.843			

*No significant difference.

Table 4: Variables where there was significant difference recorded between the Employees perception level Pre COVID and during COVID era. (N=127)

Variables	Duration	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Difference
The staff selection is done through interview panels during selection process in the hotel.	PRE-COVID01	4.5512	.68671	3.421	.001	SD*
	DURING-COVID01	4.19	.906			
All appointments in the organization are based on merit.	PRE-COVID02	3.9887	1.15546	2.205	.028	SD*
	DURING-COVID02	3.70	.917			
Hotel Provides training to its employees on safety and New protocols.	PRE-COVID02	3.1046	.85462	-3.729	.000	SD*
	DURING-COVID02	3.57	1.117			
The pay policy of the organization is consistent.	PRE-COVID15	3.9014	.94142	5.4816	.000	SD*
	DURING-COVID15	3.18	1.146			
The raises/increments are determined in the organization in proper way.	PRE-COVID17	3.8805	.91386	6.5426	.000	SD*
	DURING-COVID17	3.17	.814			
The amount the organization pays towards the benefits (other than salary) is appropriate.	PRE-COVID18	3.7725	1.06301	5.802	.000	SD*
	DURING-COVID18	3.05	.916			
Pay and benefits are associated with employee's performance.	PRE-COVID19	3.9126	1.01593	5.244	.000	SD*
	DURING-COVID19	3.28	.903			

*Significant difference.

The results of t test on paired samples showed that out of 28 variables, 21 variables have not shown any significance difference between the pre COVID and during COVID employee perception, although their mean score for pre COVID and during COVID is showing difference. The data revealed that the variables related to induction, training, performance appraisal and reward system didn't show any significant difference. However as shown in Table 3, two variables from recruitment- "Staff selection is done through interviews" and "All appointments are based on merit" from recruitment and selection part has shown significant difference in the employees' perception. Similarly one variable of training which asks "Hotel Provides training to its employees on safety and New protocols" also shows significant difference positively, that shows that during COVID hotels provided training to the staff to tackle the

upcoming challenges due to social distancing and hygiene norms. In addition to this all the variables related to pay and benefits also recorded significant difference in negative side, which explains the salary cuts offered by hotels to keep their cost in control.

POSITION OF HYPOTHESIS

To analyse whether there is a significant difference exists between the employee perception on Hotels HR practices Pre COVID and During COVID era, T test was applied and the results are shown in the Table 5. The result shows the mean value for overall perception per COVID was 3.971, which decreased to 3.83 during COVID era. Although there is a negative gap, but the T test score confirms that the difference is not significant. Hence the null hypothesis framed earlier is accepted.

Table 5: Position of Hypothesis

Variable	Duration	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Difference
Overall Perception	PRE-COVID19	3.9710	0.2641	1.7760	.0814	NSD
	DURING-COVID19	3.83	0.3267			

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

There are limited research paper related to employee perception of hospitality sector during COVID times, as

most of the studied are on the effect of COVID on hospitality industry, issues of hospitality sector, meeting customer requirements, post pandemic agenda etc. Very few studies have tried to find out the employee dimension in this sector. In Indian context we found no such studies that can bring out

the hotels employee perception. The present study revealed that although the employees' perception level of hotels have reduced to some extent as shown by the mean scores of most of the variables, there is no overall significant difference for most of the variables chosen between pre COVID level and during the COVID. However the variables which detected the significant difference are the important ones. It has been already studied that the pay and reward system boost the employee satisfaction and strengthen his commitment towards the organization. But due to several cost cutting measures like salary deduction and leaves without pay that was offered to employees of many hotels, it created a negative impact on employees' perception towards the hospitality jobs. At the same time the non-significant overall perception level of employees shows that the worst time for hospitality is over. As the other sectors are coming back to their pre COVID level business, with opening of domestic airlines and railways the domestic tourism will also redeem gradually and employees seems positive about it. Hotels must prepare themselves now to meet the future demand of customers and invest in adopting technology and procedures to strengthen the hygiene and sanitation procedures along with the social distancing norms.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of study can be stated in the context of two dimensions. For scholastic reason the investigation will serve to include new bits of knowledge in the area of Employee perception during COVID era in Hospitality sector. Secondly the findings of the study can serve to HR managers in Hotels to plan their strategies in coordination with the employees' expectations to retain them during these turbulent times for Hospitality sector. The loss of key employees in this period of COVID will affect this sector badly as low level of satisfaction will lead to loss of commitment and employees' turnover and that will affect the service quality of the hotels in long run.

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