

TRANSFORMING THE SCENARIO OF CULINARY EDUCATION IN INDIA



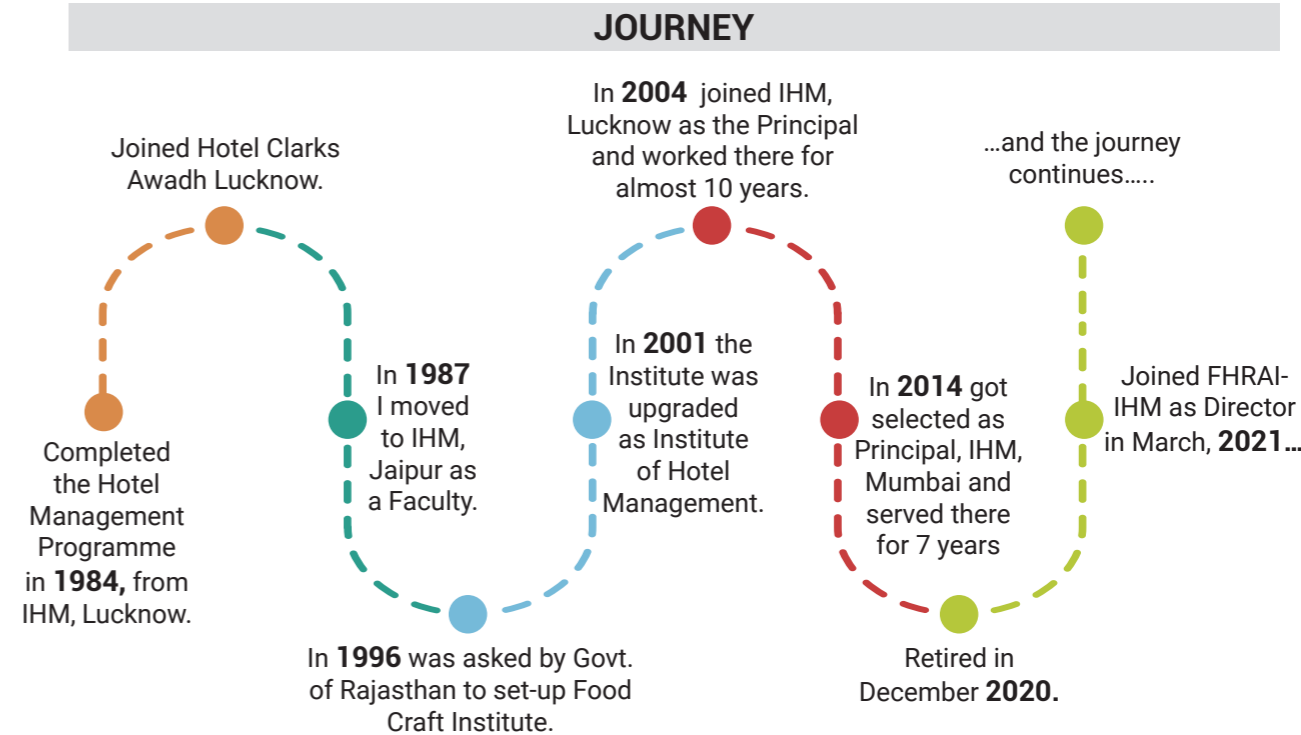
With a successful career spanning over 3 decades, still evolving, and assuming different avatars, **Arun Kumar Singh**, Director, FHRAI-IHM, Noida takes us through his odyssey.

► **Tell us about your current role with the FHRAI Institute? What are the challenges?** FHRAI-IHM, Greater Noida was established in 2005 in collaboration with Lausanne Hospitality Consultant, Switzerland, but thereafter the Institute got an affiliation with IGNOU for 4 years. The Institute was not functional for a few years and now FHRAI has decided to revive the Institute and has decided to offer a Hotel Management and Hotel Operations programme from the current session.

My role will be more challenging and a lot of effort will be needed to establish this Institute as the prime Hotel Management Institute since this Institute has been set up, and will be run by the 3rd largest Hotel and Restaurant Association of the world in years to come.

► **In the given COVID scenario, how has the functioning of the institute been impacted? What steps have been taken for smooth operations and to ensure that the students do not suffer?**

All institutes of Hotel Management are exploring ways to impart online theory and practical input as face to face classes are not feasible in the Covid situation. I am happy to say that IHMs in general have adjusted themselves very well in the present difficult situation and have succeeded in that task. The faculties have moulded themselves for the situation for online input and have successfully achieved the task given to them in the last one year.



► **What according to you are the aspects that the aspiring students need to keep in mind?**

Students willing to carve a career in the field of Hospitality need to develop their personality, communication and attitude to the hospitality industry. Thereafter acquiring knowledge and skill and updating themselves will give them the much needed confidence, and satisfaction.

► **How does your institute ensure that students are equipped with the skills that are needed for this industry?**

FHRAI-IHM will have the best possible training infrastructure, faculty with passion to train and prepare students for the industry. FHRAI-IHM being a part of FHRAI will gather all resources in close association with the trade to fulfil the expectations of students and the industry.

► **Indian Culinary Institute in Noida along with Tirupati Institute are the premier institutes that have been set up to tide over the challenges faced in culinary**

education in the country? How would this help to transform the scenario of culinary education in the country?

In my opinion ICI, Noida and Tirupati Institute are premier institutes set up by the Ministry of Tourism with an aim to work on the history of food and to work with the objective to elevate the culinary standards in India, and we are confident that the path developed by the ICIs will be help other hospitality institutes to improve the content and training techniques for Culinary Art professionals.

► **Getting quality manpower from the institutes has been the biggest challenge that the industry has been reporting. Is there an effort to bridge the gap? What steps are being undertaken?**

Institutes are mainly engaged in attitude transformation, personality and communication of students along with knowledge and skill but the right balance of operational knowledge and skill with the managerial excellence in marketing, finance, revenue etc, is a must and it will

depend on the willingness of the students, their excellence and the readiness to absorb these inputs and grow .

▶ **With the number of hospitality, catering and food craft institutes mushrooming across the country, how does one ensure that the quality of education imparted to the students is not compromised? Your thoughts?**

Every institute should have its USP and should chalk out academic content and teaching methodology in such a way that students, after completing the programme, not only look for jobs but gain that much needed confidence to move towards entrepreneurship .

▶ **Placements for many catering institutes has been a concern. What steps are being taken to ensure that the students do not suffer and are not left scouting for jobs in other industries?**

Placement is a very critical issue in the present academic year and will continue to be so for the 2-3 next academic years due to Covid 19. It is expected that the industry and the institutes must chalk out specific placement plans to give the best possible support to the graduating students. Students must learn, possess the knowledge of at

least one foreign language, and explore one hobby of their choice to have mental satisfaction in life.

▶ **Is there a need to relook at the curriculum and make it more inclusive and relevant to the industry needs? How well do you feel the new NEP tackles that?**

Curriculum always needs to be upgraded specially in dynamic industries like travel and hospitality. It is imperative to have continuous curriculum correction as additions to the existing curriculum all the time is not possible as well as suitable. The new NEP will also have some impact on hospitality management education but time will tell about its effect.

▶ **Any message for the industry colleagues and students?**

Students willing to build a career in the hospitality sector must work on attitude development, personality, communications including one foreign language and keep their eyes and ears open for business environmental changes. We are hopeful that the situation will improve and the travel and hospitality sector will boom again after a short span of time. ❤

