

Past, present and future of hospitality EDUCATION

Arun Kumar Singh, Director, FHRAI-IHM, discusses the history, current landscape, and future prospects of hotel management and operations education in India.



The Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition, Mumbai, the first-of-its-kind in South East Asia, was founded in the year 1954 by the All India Women's Central Food Council (AIWCFC) under the leadership of Late Lilavati Munshi. With the help of courageous women like Homi J.H. Taleyarkhan and Leela N. Jog, late Lilavati Munshi founded AIWCFC, which opened a chain of Annapoornas (restaurants) across the country, primarily in metropolises. Hence, IHM Mumbai, was founded.

Even in the West, hotel administration and catering technology were still a young discipline in those days; in fact, Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration bifurcated from the Department of Home Economics as a separate faculty only in 1954. Late P.C. Rajpal, deputed from Tea Board of India, under the sponsorship of FAO became the first Principal of the institute. Later, at the request of Lilavati Munshi through the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Department of food, Late Belfield Smith of the U.K., one of the founder members of Hotel Catering and Institutional Management Association, U.K., was assigned as an expert to India by Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations. In March 1956, Belfield Smith took over as the Principal. Since then there has been no looking back.

There were only six students when classes commenced in 1954 at Bhavan's College Campus, Andheri. The three-year Diploma Programme in Hotel Management & Catering Technology was started in 1958, recognised by the Directorate of Technical Education, Maharashtra. The institute later shifted to its own separate campus in Dadar built on the land leased by the state government. With Thangam E. Philip as its Principal, the growth of the institute was spectacular with funds coming from the state and central government. The central government took over the total financial responsibility in 1979. Three more regional institutes were established in 1963 in New Delhi, Calcutta and Chennai. Hence, the first Food Craft Institute was opened in Kalamassery and, thereafter, more institutes were opened in different states.

This situation persisted until 1980, when Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, launched diploma programmes in hotel management in Panipat and Lucknow, respectively. In 1982, the National Council for Hotel Management was established, and central IHMs were transferred from the Ministry of Tourism to the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Tourism felt that the strength of central IHM and Food Craft Institute was inadequate, so they devised a way of absorbing Food Craft institutes and upgrading them to central IHM. From 1980 to 1990, several Food Craft institutes were upgraded as central IHMs, with two new central IHMs opening in Thiruvananthapuram and Chandigarh, bringing

the total number of central IHMs to 18, and three more central IHMs opening in Gurdaspur, Gwalior, and Shillong, bringing the total number to 21. These institutes offered a Diploma in Hotel Management as well as a Diploma in Hotel Operational areas, thereby training and providing manpower for managerial, supervisory, and entry-level positions in hotels, restaurants, and related industries.

During the globalisation era in the 90s, the Indian government opened the doors for private IHMs by obtaining AICTE approval, and within a few years, several private IHMs with AICTE license and affiliation with state universities began operating. It led to the addition of numerous private IHMs. It improved the quality of training provided in these institutes. With the backing of Taj Group of Hotels, two private institutes, Welcome Group Institute of Hotel Management Manipal and Institute of Hotel Management Aurangabad, established themselves and maintained a higher standard of hospitality education. Since 2000, MoT has launched a centrally-sponsored scheme to provide one-time infrastructural financial support to prospective SIHMs, and there are currently 29 state IHMs and 21 central IHMs in the government sector.



Extra-curricular activities that are absent in online method are a huge concern



We must understand that existing IHMs are not business schools like those in the U.S. or Europe, but rather institutes that impart managerial input with a focus on hotel operations subjects in order to train thousands of students for management training programmes, supervisory positions, and entry-level positions in hotels, restaurants, and related industries solely on the basis of their attitude, personality, communication, knowledge, and skill. All of these institutes were imparting knowledge and skill in physical mode until March 2020, but after the COVID wave, the entire teaching and learning was disrupted. All stakeholders used online teaching and learning tools, with which theoretical knowledge was effectively imparted. But skill imparting was severely harmed, and we are still searching for and implementing the best possible modes. Curriculum, in my opinion, is only one component of education, whereas co-curricular activities like seminars, discussions, peer group learning, and extra-curricular activities, all of which are currently unavailable in the online method, are a huge concern. While designing our curriculum and other learning activities for holistic development of students, not only for the hospitality sector but also for society as a whole, we must seriously consider these components in NEP-2020.



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