



## AN ANALYSIS OF PUNE'S MARKET WITH RESPECT TO MARKET SEGMENT, ADVANCE SOURCE OF RESERVATION AND MARKETING MEDIA RELATED TO HOTEL INDUSTRY

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study is to examine the market segments and their function in contributing to the Hotel Industry in Pune. Further, it is to analyze the role marketing media plays in grabbing the attention of these segments and the advance reservation strategies available for the customers. The study majorly focuses on the actions of different segments in the duration of nine years to investigate its impact on the hotel industry in Pune.*

*For this purpose, secondary data in the form of HVS report was examined. It was found that the segments, Domestic and Foreign Business traveller have contributed the maximum to the hotel industry as compared to others in all these years. Moreover, print advertising, direct mail and browsing hotel websites is the most utilized marketing media and customers of these segments prefer Direct Enquiry, the oldest method seems, as people still trust direct communication and authenticity of information gained is more in direct contact.*

*Findings from this study are presented with interpretation and suggestions offered to facilitate the services further to allow hotel industry in Pune to fine tune its commercial endorsement to different segments of its market..*

**Key words:** *Hotel Industry, Market Segment, Market media, Advance Reservation Strategies.*

### **Introduction**

With Pune turning into a commercial hub for sectors like Information Technology, Automotive Industry and Education, the hotel industry has flourished due to clients of these different sectors visiting the city. It is necessary to cater to the needs of these clients and make their experience a memorable one. Segmentation helps the industry focus on the needs and desires of the customers most likely to stay here and visit often. It also helps to identify and understand the challenges that marketing department needs to face it.

The function of the marketing department in hotel industry has five -fold – sales, personal relations, advertising getting MICE (meeting, incentive, conference and exhibition) business and market research. All these functions lead to the common goal of selling the product of the hotel – i.e. rooms and the service of the hotel by ‘creating’ customers. Therefore, this paper will help the hotels to target right clientele using correct mode to reach them.

### **Objectives**

The following objectives were kept in mind while conducting this research.

- To analyse the different market segment targeted by Pune Hotel Industry.
- To analyse the effect of marketing media in Pune hotel Industry.
- To study different sources of advance reservation.

### **Research Methodology**

- Approach –Quantitative Approach
- Type of research- Analytical
- Data collection: Present paper is predominantly based on secondary data. Following are the sources of collection of data:HVS International – Indian Hotel Survey report.

### **Scope and Limitation of the Study**

The study focuses only on the market segment of all factors in the hospitality sector. It is carried out in Pune. The findings can be applied for local and similar city settings.

### **Literature Review**

#### **An article ‘High Hopes on Indian Hospitality’**

At present, the global hospitality industry is under the threat of global economic downturn. Nevertheless, the Indian hospitality industry is in buoyant mood and Indian economy is still the second largest growing economy. Travel and Tourism happens to be the second highest foreign exchange earner for India. There is high expectancy of significant increase in



domestic tourists as well as foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) in India, in 2012 and the years ahead. This is promising for the Indian hospitality sector. According to ICRA, the importance and stability the domestic traveler imparts to Indian hotels industry remains intact. In the backdrop of expected growth in tourist arrivals, many international and domestic hotel companies are going for planned expansion programme in India. The chief development and investment officer, Asia Pacific, GauravBhushan asserts, "There is hardly any paucity of investors looking to invest in the Indian hospitality sector. Many investors are very earnest to make forays into the Indian hospitality segment" (p40).

Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Pune are some of the cities that the investors are looking forward to invest. Many hoteliers are tapping on the huge opportunity for the hospitality sector in the tier II and tier III cities of the country as the cost development of properties in major cities are becoming exorbitant. It is expected that hospitality properties in India will be more stringently tested against one another particularly on guest experience, location and value for money.

Despite these challenges, overall, the outlook for the Indian hospitality sector in 2012 and also in the years ahead remains positive. As long as India is able to maintain a healthy economic rate the excess demand would continually absorb new supplies of hotel rooms.

#### **An article 'Evolving Trends of the industry'**

New trends in hotel industry have emerged in India as in the world. Several international chains are promoting their budget brands in country. Extensive use of technology, environment friendly services and the impressive growth of the MICE segment are the other trends prevailing through the Indian hospitality industry. Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) noted that the country needs 100,000 rooms more. India happens to be an undersupplied market in terms of hotel rooms. The report by Research and Markets notes that despite economic woes, emergence of hotels in India has been most lucrative options.

Budget hotels, for instance, are becoming attractive investment options for hoteliers in India or those coming to India. The investment required for building Star budget hotel is almost one tenth of the investment in luxury hotel, whereas the return on investment on budget hotels is generally within four years as compared to eight years for a luxury hotel. Besides, the mid-market hospitality properties not only involve lower real estate and other construction costs but also facilitate the hotel chains to expand their portfolio to new cities and markets in a faster manner as compared to luxury hotels.

According to Shwetank Singh, Operations, Premier Inn, South Asia, there are three major trends in the hotel industry. Firstly, there is growth in terms of emphasis towards mid-segment, 'value-for-money' hotels. Secondly, there has been a rising brand and quality consciousness among hotel guests and thirdly, there is considerable enhancement in discretionary spending towards travel and tourism by Indian consumers. He thinks that due to cost-friendliness and services, even large corporate prefer budget and mid-market hotels (p 46).

*The MICE factor* -The Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions segment (MICE) is being wooed by hotel industry. As a direct consequence of growth, India emerged as one of the most preferred destinations for corporate who want to organize a great number of events here explained Chander Mansharamani (p 48).

*Secured Technology*- Besides the demand for mid-market segment and MICE, the other trend spearheading through the hotel industry include greater emphasis on safety measures and technology. The Hotel Association of India has issued guidelines to be adopted by the hotels for safety of the hotels and hotel guests. The key scanners, Materials Access Control, People Access control and Internal Access Control are some of the measures adopted. Technology is also being used for the convenience of the guests. From enquiries to reservation, payment, to customer database, management to housekeeping, the all-pervasive role of technology is making the perceptible difference in today's hospitality business.

Adoption of environment friendly technologies and other measures are also gaining currency in the Indian hospitality sector. Social media has emerged as an effective technological tool to market a hotel brand. The impressive growth of mid-market hotels, growth of the MICE segment and extensive use of technology in terms of security, environment and conveniences are dominating trends in Indian Hospitality industry.

#### **An Article 'Indian Hospitality Showing Promise'**

The hospitality industry in India is growing. The revenue per room (RevPAR) has seen a significant rise in the recent years, which has proved to be an impetus for the hotel chains and hotel entrepreneurs to invest in Indian hospitality.



It is time to welcome a revived Indian hospitality industry, which in the recent past had fallen into bad days following the global recession. The recovery came in 2010-11. The nationwide hotel occupancy in the 2010-11 fiscal reached a healthy 68 % which matched the occupancy levels of pre-recession 2007-08.

According to ICRA (Investment and Credit Rating Agency of India) the demand or occupancy led recovery that began with the return of domestic travelers in 2010 received an impetus with foreign tourist arrivals FTAs picking up in the subsequent months. The growth momentum for the Indian hospitality overall has been maintained in the current fiscal and one can expect both domestic and international tourists to contribute towards the hospitality business in the coming years. With 740 million domestic traveler and with 6.29 million foreign tourist arrivals in 2011, India is considered as one of the most attractive hotel markets in the globe.

The rise in disposable incomes in India and the growing role of India in the global economy are likely to foster both leisure and business travel to and within India in the future.

The growth of business travel and MICE market are other contributory factors towards the growth of hospitality in India. The Indian hotel industry is expected to grow by 10-15 % during 2012. Moreover, India is a source of cheap and highly skilled IT and BPO manpower has encouraged the global IT and BPO industry to setup their units here which in turn has increased the demand for hotel rooms. Certain measures like VoA (Visa on Arrival) scheme by the government can have long term positive impact on inducing outbound travelers to India and which can fill up to the demand for rooms in the hospitality industry.

According to ICRA study, India has extended the VoA facility to nationals of 13 countries. Since this facility was introduced in January 2011 over 6500 VoAs have been issued in 2010 and over 12000 VoAs in 2011. This has facilitated easy travel to India at short notices for the outbound tourists.

The domestic hospitality sector is also expected to garner investments to the tune of 11 billion USD by 2012 and 40 international h hospitality brands are expected to make their presence in the country in the next few years. And India's revived hospitality sector has room for such increase in rooms and more. According to FHRAI, India currently has over 200000 hotel rooms spread across hotel categories and guest-homes but still facing a shortfall of over 100,000 rooms. Hence, this is the right time to invest in hospitality.

Key regions of growth: the small towns and cities are becoming destinations for many upcoming hospitality properties and this may counter the impediment of real estate costs in metros to some extent.

Future Projections: According to Cygnus Business Consulting and Research report, the Indian hotel industry is expected to attain a figure Rs 230 billion by 2015 exhibiting a healthy CAGR of 12.2% India is expected to invest approximately Rs. 448 billion in the hospitality industry in the next five years from 2011. The development of hotels in India has been an attractive investment for hoteliers with deep pockets.

Overall, the Indian hotel industry holds a huge potential due to the positive impact of demand-supply scenario, growth drivers, investments and government initiatives for the tourism sector.

## Data Analysis

### Fig. – 1- Analysis of Market Segmentation

This table is made from nine years data about Market Segmentation available in HVS international, Indian survey report (2004-2013). Last column of this table contains average of entire nine year data.

(Table no 1 and fig. no.1 – Source- HVS – international –Indian Survey report)

Market Segmentation										
COMPOSITION	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Average
Airline Crew	0.2	0.65	1.15	22.5	0.1	5.4	0.65	1.95	1.95	3.83
Business Traveller - Domestic	40.7	51.65	42.4	43.45	38.5	42.75	43.95	42.95	46.05	43.6
Business Traveller - Foreign	9.5	26.8	29.85	32.55	33.75	30.85	22	21	21.45	25.30
Complimentary Rooms	0.5	0.8	0.8	0.7	1.05	1	1.5	1.7	0.9	0.99



Domestic - Tourists / Leisure FIT	23.8	4.95	10.1	8.95	8.1	7.65	16.8	12.8	10.7	11.53
Foreign - Tourists / Leisure FIT	2.3	1.7	2.5	1.25	4.45	2.3	5	3.75	5	3.13
Meeting Participants (Less than 100 Attendees)	5.8	1.75	2.45	1.5	1.7	2.45	2.65	1.8	3.2	2.58
Meeting Participants (Over 100 Attendees)	7	7.9	6.4	9	7.05	6.6	6.55	8.3	7.4	7.35
Tour Groups - Domestic	9.8	1.45	0.95	0.85	1.75	1.75	4.75	3.15	0.45	2.76
Tour Groups - Foreign	0.3	1.55	1.8	0.65	1.65	0.85	2.2	0.9	0.6	1.16
Other	0	0.9	1.75	0.9	1.65	3.25	5.05	1.7	0.5	1.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	

The above table and the graph indicate the different factions of Market segmentation and the share each faction had from the year 2004-05 to 2013. As shown, the segment, Business Traveller – Domestic, has the maximum share, and the highest average of all other segments, 43.6. In other words, this type of traveller is frequent and brings in more revenue for the hotel. Foreign business travellers are second and this data would help companies or hotels focus on the needs of these segments. Domestic tourists have contributed with the average of 11.53. Only in the year 2004-2005, the segment of Domestic tourists was larger than domestic business traveller as it had 23 and the latter had only 9.5. In all the nine years, the lowest average is that of Complimentary Rooms and Foreign Tour groups as these contributed with average of only 0.99 and 1.16 respectively. Based on these details, the industry can devise better features to attract and make the most of each section. **This table is made from nine years data about Marketing Media available in HVS - international –Indian Survey report (2004-2013). Last column of this table contains average of entire nine year data.**

(Table no 2 and fig. no.2 – Source- HVS – international –Indian Survey report)

Marketing Media										
COMPOSITION	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Average
Direct mail	76.2	76.05	63.85	83.95	91.65	92.3	90.85	81.25	80.35	81.82
Hotel website	45.2	62.5	75	92.3	87.5	79.8	85.7	89.6	91.65	78.80
Loyalty card program	16.65	47.9	38.85	44.9	58.3	49.05	34.3	50	41.05	42.33
Merchandising	23.8	11.5	17.45	28.2	8.35	28.35	14	25	26.80	20.38
Other internet sites	47.65	37.5	54.45	55.1	68.75	72.1	68.55	68.75	73.2	60.67
Outdoor advertising	61.9	60.4	75	84.6	64.6	72.1	24	70.85	74.1	65.28
Print advertising	78.55	90.65	90.65	100	85.4	84.15	74.55	97.9	81.25	87.01
Promotions	38.1	76.05	70.1	88.45	83.35	80.75	57.45	77.1	51.2	69.17
Radio advertising	0	14.6	13.4	16.05	16.7	17.8	12	20.85	42.3	17.07
Telemarketing	69.05	46.9	34.8	51.95	56.25	51.45	35.15	43.75	20.55	45.53
T.V. Market	14.3	6.25	3.15	7.7	6.25	15.85	4	16.65	8.35	9.16

Different forms of media used by hotels in Pune from the year 2004-05 to 2013 are listed in the above table and the graph. As the average figures point out, Print advertising is the most used medium of corresponding with the customers as compared to other media. The print advertising has seen fluctuations in the span of nine years, with the middle years 2008-2011 showing lesser usage in comparison to use of Direct mail, when Direct mail was the most widely used medium to advertise. Nevertheless, in the following years, 2011-12 and 2012-13 again Print advertising regained its tag as the most widely utilized form of media.

Next, Direct mail too has been the second most used media. In this form of marketing media, the year 2009-10 seemed to have maximum usage with 92.3 being the optimum score. Hotel website is the next most widely used medium. In the year



2012-13, Hotel website is the most utilized form with 91.65. This indicates that the hoteliers are aware of the benefits of the advanced technology, especially computer and the internet and are using it to optimize the communication even with the geographically distanced guests. Outdoor advertising, other internet sites also used by the hotel managers to the customers. Surprisingly, the least used media are television marketing and Radio advertising, which otherwise are regarded as effective mode of marketing products.

**This table is made from nine years data about Sources of Advance Reservation available in HVS International – Indian Survey report (2004-2013). Last column of this table contains average of entire nine year data**

( table no 3 and fig. no.3 – Source- HVS – international –Indian Survey report)

Sources of Advance Reservation										
COMPOSITION	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Average
Chain CRS (Central reservation System)	0	3.3	2.45	32.5	1.05	3.75	1.7	2.75	3.3	5.64
Direct Enquiry/ Hotel Representative	69.8	64.8	77.05	64.55	63	61.45	57.35	56.7	53.15	63.09
Global Distribution System (GDS)	0	3.1	1.1	9.05	6.2	5.15	1.55	3.55	4.7	3.82
Hotel/ Chain Website	2.4	5.75	3.55	3.65	7.9	5.25	9.05	7.45	6.7	5.74
Travel Agent & Tour Operator	10.8	4.85	6.35	5	5.2	6.45	13.6	8.85	10.8	7.98
Other Online reservation System	4	3.3	3.65	5.05	3.8	4.3	0.8	4.25	7.3	4.05
Other Website	1	1	0.25	0.5	3.9	4.15	5.8	7.3	6.25	3.35
Other	12	13.85	5.65	9.9	9	9.5	8.65	9.25	7.85	9.51

The table and the graph above signify the different sources of reservations available to the guests and the use of each source in the span of nine years. Direct Enquiry, the oldest method seems to be still the most-utilized source, as people still trust direct communication and authenticity of information gained is more in direct contact. Moreover, the guests receive first – hand information and get the queries or doubts cleared directly. There is a huge difference in the average between direct enquiry and other sources. The least used source is GDS The bookings done via tour operators or travel agencies is also less with only 7.98 average.

## Result and Discussion

### 1) Market Segment

- **Airline Crew:** This segment remained pretty low with market segmentation. But in year 2007-08 it grew tremendously because of Commonwealth Youth Games hosted by Pune. But immediately, in the following year, a huge drop can be seen because of 26/11 attack that occurred in Mumbai. It reduced air-travel to a great extent. And in 2009-10, again there was more demand due to some of Indian Premier League Matches held in Pune; yet, after that again the segmentation remain fairly constant.
- **Business Traveller– Domestic:** This category remains constant throughout except for year 2008-09 due to 26/11 attack that occurred in Mumbai.
- **Business Traveller – Foreign:** There was a huge demand from this category till the year 2009-10, but only after that it reduced due to security issues after Mumbai attacks. After that, it remained constant again.
- **Complimentary Rooms:** This is a very balanced segments compare to other categories.
- **Domestic - Tourists / Leisure FIT:** Because of many newly launched hotels in Pune there is a huge demand can be seen in year 2004-05. But it went down in next four to five years. And it grew in, last few years.
- **Foreign - Tourists / Leisure FIT:** There are many ups and downs can be seen in this category due to many conditions.
- **Meeting Participants (Less than 100 Attendees):** In this section, there is a growth in last year( 2012-13). And it remained constant and low in 2007-09.
- **Meeting Participants (Over 100 Attendees):** There is no huge fluctuation seen in this except for the year 2007-08 due to Commonwealth Youth Games held in Pune.
- **Tour Groups – Domestic:** There is huge business that can be observed in the year 2004-05 due to Tsunami in South East Asia. But after that it remained nearly constant in next eight years.



- **Tour Groups – Foreign:** In year 2010-11, due to the Cricket World Cup 2011 held in India, more demand was seen.

Domestic and Foreign Business traveller have dominated the market as compare to others, and domestic still remains the topmost. Following that Domestic- Tourists/ Leisure FIT and Meeting Participants (over 100 attendants) have also left a positive impact on Pune market. Moreover, other categories seem to be contributing very less as compared to second and third.

## 2) Marketing Media

- **Direct mail:** Direct mailing seems to be playing a very important role for marketing. From the figures, it can be observed that it was not that used till year 2007, but rise in its usage after that can be seen. It is due to evolution of smart phones in the market. It became very easy to reach up to guests.
- **Hotel website:** There is a positive growth seen here and popularity of World Wide Web i.e. WWW or internet is one of the main reasons.
- **Loyalty card program:** As indicated in the table, this segment has many ups and downs. Nevertheless, in the year 2008-09, it grew due to terrorist attack in Mumbai. So to gain confidence of guests, hotels were more dependent on this.
- **Merchandising:** It is any practice which contributes to the sale of hotel. There are ups and downs seem repetitive, here because of same reasons of previously mentioned category.
- **Other internet sites:** There is a constant growth which can be seen here. Average results are pretty good for marketing team.
- **Outdoor advertising:** It is been used quiet in a large amount every year, except for years 2010-11, because of the flowing business due to Cricket World Cup in India, followed by Indian Premier League (Domestic Cricket).
- **Print advertising:** In early three years it only grew and in year2007-08 due to Commonwealth Games hosted by Pune, they were able to get maximum business through this. But after that again it dropped by almost 15% and only rose in year 2011-12 due to Cricket World Cup.
- **Promotions:** Tsunami being the reason in year2004-05 there were very less promotions done. After that it grew with great extent in next 5-6years and after that again in fluctuated in last few years.
- **Radio advertising:** It is less used marketing tool due to availability and use of other resources. But a huge growth is seen in the year2012-13.
- **Telemarketing:** This remained fairly constant throughout except for the year2012-13 where it decreased due to boom in other forms of social media.
- **T.V. Marketing:** It is the most unstable source as per figures. Fluctuations in alternate years are seen. Years with big events have decreased those figures because of flowing business. When event is in the next year; most advertisement is done in previous year.
- Direct mail, Hotel Website, Print advertising; surprisingly doing more business as compared to technology sources like internet sites, merchandising, T.V. Advertising, radio advertising. On the other hand Telemarketing, promotions, Loyalty card program; are in the middle of both mentioned above.

## 3) Source of Advance reservation

- **Chain CRS (Central reservation System):** Online booking is surprisingly not much user-friendly for Pune guests. Hence, it has a very limited share. Only in year 2007-08, due to Commonwealth Games in Pune made a huge difference, due to more online bookings.
- **Direct Enquiry/ Hotel Representative:** Decreasing consistently, but still the most preferred old way in Pune. It can be said that Pune guests are still not that handy with technology, but tending towards it rapidly.
- **Global Distribution System (GDS):** Mostly it has ups and downs due to obvious reasons mentioned above. But it is contributing fairly well.
- **Hotel/ Chain Website:** As compared to early years, it is now preferred more and this is a positive sign for most of hotels.
- **Travel Agent & Tour Operator:** Due to easy access and less expensive packages offered by travel agents and tour operators, preference given to them is more as compared to other sources.
- **Other Online reservation System:** Being a new concept in Pune market, it is able to convince more and more guests. But still it has to go through more advancement to simplify the use of it.
- **Other Website:** Rapid growth in smart phone users and internet there are more and more options available with them to access to hotel information and booking. Bookings.com, agoda.com, hotels.com are some of the most preferred sites by the guests. And there is a very positive growth observed in this category.



- **Other Sources of Advance reservation:** There is a constant decrease in this category is observed, and some of the old ways are becoming the history as per the data.

Direct enquiry is the most preferred tool by Pune guests. It may be because the market is still developing and not developed. But the changes in the market are rapidly taking place and hence there will be change which can be expected very soon; and it can be observed through last few years' statistics.

### Suggestion

- 1) Pune is the next Meetings, Incentive, Convention, & Exhibitions ( MICE) destination after Mumbai. But from the record of the years 2004 to 2013, it is observed that Pune has still not been utilized with all its capabilities; because of the climatic conditions, unavailability of resources that are required for potential development of MICE destination. Hence, hoteliers should focus on this segment
- 2) There are many ups and downs that can be seen due to different calamities. But if we consider year 2007-08; it was a year when Commonwealth Games were hosted by Pune. And in that year almost every sector of hotel industry benefitted very well.
- 3) Being the education hub of India, Pune is still not completely able to utilise new technology, and other available resources. But there is a positive growth can be seen in recent years in the same which should be continued.
- 4) If more and more such events like Commonwealth Games, IPL (Indian Premier League), ISL (Indian Super League) are conducted, it will definitely give a huge opportunity to Pune market to know their strengths and work on their weaknesses.
- 5) **Making CRS (online booking) user-friendly are needed**

It has been tested that the Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) has been an important aspect when it comes to marketing one's company online. There are a few tips which can benefit companies while trying to achieve a strong online approach.

- a) **Higher Visibility:** Generating strategic but relevant meta titles, Meta tags and Meta description is a time tested SEO strategy. Including the hotel name in the Meta title is an important way of getting higher visibility. When the hotel name is clubbed with the city name in the Meta title, it will throw the web-page in searches that are city-specific. Meta descriptions are not relevant for page ranking, but they are visible to the reader, with the key words in bold. These increases the chances that readers will pick on and greater is the number of clicks on the website, the better will be the page ranking in search engine results.
- b) **Key Word Density:** Inclusion of key words on the Hotel home page and in meta titles of each page may be a safe and rewarding exercise. 301 redirects, comes handy when some changes have been made in URL structure. Determining important keywords by analysing visitor search patterns is another rewarding strategy for successful SEO, though it requires special software's. Downloading speed could be another important determinant of the page rank... Freshness and uniqueness of the uploaded content also ensure better ranking.

Integrating your web page with social media sites, and getting more likes and positive response about the hotel also improves ranking.

### Conclusion

Hence to survive in the cut throat competition where the hotel's marketing team not only target the various marketing segment but also need to create the cliental or market segment and retain them. But with this their also need to focus on guest experience, location and value for money.

This study will assist the hotel industry not only to identify the potential market and correct medium to reach but also , the ways to attract these neglected cliental through the proper marketing tools.

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