

FINAL REPORT

Study to Devise International Benchmarking Parameters for Awarding Star Ratings to Hotels



Submitted to
Ministry of Tourism
Government of India



October- 2016



Prepared by

Gwalior

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Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management

(An organization of Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India)

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The report is submitted for the cause of sustainable and responsible tourism in India and for enhanced guest satisfaction.

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Executive Summary

1.1 Background

Vide Work Order No. 8(14)/2012-MRD, dt. 06.01-2015, the Ministry of Tourism, GoI has entrusted IITM to undertake a study titled *“To Devise International Bench-marking for Awarding Star Ratings to Hotels in India”*. The terms of reference for the study were stipulated in the said order and the same placed below. In pursuance, schedule of plan and program of work for timely completion the study has been prepared, details of which are detailed in following sections.

1.2 Terms of Reference for the Study

This study would be carried out in reference to the following objectives/ terms of reference:

- | |
|--|
| I. To examine major systems of classifications in existence globally: <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. For tourist accommodation such as hotels, resorts, time-share properties, spas and health resorts.ii. The sets of parameters being presently used for respective categories.iii. Authorities granting respective classifications. |
| II. To analyse existing classification systems in India for different types of accommodation units, parameters used and awarding agencies. |
| III. To recommend appropriate systems of classification for different tourist accommodations, especially on; <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Suitable methods of classification at national and state levels.ii. Parameters appropriate for different types of accommodation units.iii. Imperative of bringing all forms of accommodation units in the purview of registration. |

1.3 Methodology Scheme

The main approach to methodology was to develop an exploratory-cum-analytical framework. In order to satisfy the objective of examining major systems of classification and the parameters in existence globally, the

approach was to review and document major country-specific and/or region-specific systems and practices including the criteria catalogue. Similarly, authorities awarding/ granting the classification were also examined. Resources available at secondary level formed the main source of data/information.

1.3A. Country-level Schemes

The selection of the country schemes for cross-examination were guided by two key principles. Firstly, to identify the major countries of origin (source markets) of the tourists globally and then matching those with top inbound tourist markets of India. Secondly, selection of the source markets of India must satisfy fair representation of major tourist regions/continents contributing to its inbound tourism pie. Accordingly, for detailed examination of prevailing classification schemes; cases of HotelStar.EU, VisitEngland, the US, Malaysia, Australia, South Africa and Abu Dhabi were selected in this study.

1.3B. Coverage of guests/tourists

For guest feed-backs, a total of 1007 guests (equal proportion of the foreign & domestic) staying in star-category accommodations (1 to 5* Deluxe) in India were interviewed from their respective hotels of stay. The study team also made incognito visit to the hotels, as stayed in some hotels overnight where necessary, so as to gather the information and also to have an assessment of the property features. In order to elicit variation, if any, on account of the location of hotels and types of guests (business, leisure/vacation), selection of hotels for canvassing the guests was made from across the country- Metro, religious/cultural, resort towns.

1.3C. Expert Panel Group Discussion & Stakeholder Survey

With a purpose to gather well-informed views on classification schemes and tendering necessary inputs/advices besides helping the research team in organising the guest interviews, an expert group was formed comprising members of the industry leaders, experts and representatives from professional associations. Further, from a total of 130 respondents covering

the hotels, TAs, TO's & OTA's; responses were gathered against a semi-structured questionnaire.

2. Major Conclusions

2.A Global Trends

2.A.1 UNWTO and IH&RA Joint Study on Hotel Classification-2004

- 1. Existence of official Classification scheme:** It was revealed that 83 countries covered in the study reportedly have official classification schemes for hotels.
- 2. Agencies involved in devising and drafting the classification schemes:** A total of 49 countries have the national tourism administration (NTA's/NTO's) and other government officials undertaking the same, whereas, 36 countries were following the system of another country.
- 3. Applicability of Classification scheme:** In 43 countries, it is mandatory for all establishments to have classification, whereas in 32 countries, establishments could operate without being classified. In 55 countries, hotels needed only permissions to operate.
- 4. Major Rating System Symbols:** 'Star-based' system is most widely used across the world, but in some countries such as USA, a 'Diamond-based' system is in existence.
- 5. Rationale for official Classification scheme:** Major ones are consumer concerns, promoting quality, a marketing tool, help monitoring the development in the sector and to a large extent, promote investment and establish compatibility with classification in other countries.
- 6. Criteria Catalogue:** Assessment is carried out on an exhaustive range of parameters under different areas, though description of areas may vary from country to country. South Africa has around 950 parameters whereas the UK has 468 followed by Germany & Sweden (270), Spain (261). Other countries having 200 parameters or more are Spain, Australia and France.

This study observed that 'tourism must be able to consolidate its diversity, and not to seek uniformity, in order to remain sustainable'.

2.A.2 UNWTO Study on Online Guest Reviews and Hotel Classification Systems- 2014

Recent years have been witnessing the moves towards integration the guest/customer reviews and feedback inputs, especially from on-line platforms, in to the tourist classification schemes gaining momentum. The UNWTO (2014) suggest that there exists an imperative for the countries to incorporate online guest reviews in the hotel classification schemes and to assign it a meaningful place in the bench-marking and standardization process. Further, measurable criteria are proportionately less compared to most qualitative attributes of the hotel.

2.A.3 UNWTO & Norwegian Accreditation Study-2015

This joint study titled 'Hotel Classification: Hotel Classification Systems: Recurrence of criteria in 4 and 5 star hotels' covered a total of 34 national systems. Major findings emerged are as following:

- The 'room' is the top cluster in terms of proportion of criteria across all countries.
- There is little to no difference in the recurrence of criteria catalogues in both 4-star and 5-star categories. In general, criteria in 5 star criteria catalogues are also reflected to some extent in 4 star catalogues in the vast majority of cases.
- Accessibility received scant attention in the classification schemes, particularly for those with reduced mobility, reportedly having low recurrence of 26%.
- While assessment covers a variety of parameters, most prominent ones are related to the room, followed by bathroom/F&B/services/front desk, country-level priorities in later cases vary notwithstanding.

As regards to assessment method, approaches are different and vary across the schemes, so are the agencies for assessment and procedure of assessment. Criteria are also many in numbers and varied, covering the functions and the hotel property itself even though relative significance of these could vary across the schemes.

2.B Assessment Method- Selected Classification Schemes

The Indian scheme awards rating of hotels from 1-Star to 5-Star Deluxe upon the visit of the property by the Hotel and Restaurant Approval and Classification Committee (HRACC). Present scheme in India is voluntary. The method of assessment is verification of the property on an announced date by a team of inspectors (HRACC) who documents the presence/absence of prescribed criteria catalogue for a particular Star-category for which the developer has applied for. Award of a Star rating would depend on fulfilment of the criteria catalogue by the property. At present, the award of rating is valid for a period of five years.

Perhaps the method of assessment appears to be a major limitation of the Indian scheme since mere presence of a service or facility doesn't amount to assurance of stipulated standards. Contrary, all Schemes examined in this study were found following some forms of quality bench-marking for the criteria catalogue by way of either assigning weightage or scores/points as case may be.

Examination of the country-schemes enabled to suggest in general that the main areas of assessment in these schemes are largely similar even though relative importance attached to each area may differ across the Schemes. Further, greater emphasis can be seen accorded to cleanliness, sustainable practices and safety arrangements in some countries, particularly the developed ones. It was also observed that the criteria arranged under different assessment areas vary across the schemes perhaps owing to the way in which respective criteria have been approached in each scheme. In general, India is deficient in certain relevant parameters and those have been identified and recommended for upgrading the Scheme in the country.

2.C Areas of Assessment in the Classification Schemes

The areas of assessment found common across all the schemes are the guest rooms, bathrooms, guest services and the food & beverage services. Of these, guest rooms carries the highest weightage, followed by bathroom, whereas in some schemes like in USA and Australia, about 27% parameters are arranged under the bathroom area. Another common area is guest services, assuming weightage in the range of 9% (Abu Dhabi) to 17% (South Africa) in the total

criteria catalogue. However, it is worth noting that F&B service carries highest weightage in VisitEngland scheme, but in other cases, its numbers are very less.

2.D Assessment of Classification Scheme in India

The matrix-based mapping the best practices and diversities in the parameters provided fresh insights and contributed in meeting the main objective of benchmarking to strengthen the Indian scheme. The findings reveal that unlike other schemes examined, the system in India is merely descriptive and takes in to account only the presence or absence of certain facilities and service provisions for award of star rating. This may not necessarily ensure the required quality standards and meeting the expectations and that makes it imperative to embrace an assessment methodology that will address the quality standards of the criteria under assessment. Upon examination of the schemes, some specific patterns have been observed as per below:

- In India, the criteria catalogue is arranged as ‘necessary’ and ‘desirable’ for awarding the Star. The properties move from 1* to the next by adding certain features. It was also observed that the distinction of a 4* property or a category above, distinctions in terms of the criteria catalogue is marginal. Further, ‘5* Deluxe’ classification was found in India’s case only though the schemes such as HotelStar.EU has two separate grading in each star category, a ‘Superior’ rating for better properties in same category.
- In all schemes examined, properties are awarded a specific Star/Diamond rating on the basis of the stipulated minimum scores/weight on an assigned scale. The assessment methodology is assigning particular score/ weight depending on number of items of the criteria catalogue and quality features of the criteria as determined by the assessment team.
- Except in Indian scheme, each criterion is sufficiently described/explained for clarity so as to assess it more objectively. The criteria catalogues are also more elaborative and more in numbers.
- There are minimum or entry level requirements for each Star category. In some schemes, scores/points are assigned on these, whereas in

other schemes; points/score not assigned. By offering more features in a specific Star category, the property can gain better rating within the same category, instantaneous being that in HotelStar.EU, a 5* property can be assigned 5* 'Superior' award by accruing the points above the optimal limit required for the award of the particular Star. Similarly, VisitEngland scheme also has a system of awarding 'Silver' and 'Gold' rating within a specific Star rating.

- Along with the existing classification scheme in India, star-specific parameters proposed additionally have been incorporated and a new Scheme evolved thereof for the hotels and major supplementary tourist accommodation in India.

3. Perception of Guests on Star Rated Hotels

3.1 Hotel Booking and Information Provision

- The main source of information about present hotel was internet (37%) followed by travel agents (TA's) and tour operators (TO's) for the domestic tourists. For foreign tourists, about 45% reported to have obtained the information from TA's and TO's.
- When probed on whether the respondents stayed in similar kind of accommodation in the past, almost everybody replied in affirmation.
- On provision of information supplied by hotel staff on various services and add-ons, about 90% endorsed as having received such information.

3.2 Assessment of the Guest Room & Bathroom

- About 62% of domestic and 57% of foreign respondents were found to have been highly satisfied on the room and its fixtures like size, bed, mattress, linen, furniture, mirror etc.
- On provision of guest services such as tea maker, drinking water, crockery, glass ware etc. in the room, 56% of domestic and about 52% of foreigners were highly satisfied.
- More than two thirds of both segments found the overall lighting in the room highly satisfactory.

- About 62% of the domestic tourists were highly satisfied on the bathroom fixtures, size, towel, toiletries, mirror, WC toilet etc.
- On shower cabin, bath tub, hot water supply etc., level of satisfaction was comparatively.

3.3 Assessment of Food and Beverage facilities

- Feedback on multi cuisine restaurant, menu and service were not very encouraging as 58% domestic and 51% foreign guests rated it as highly satisfactory.
- Feedback on the quality of utensils, crockery, cutlery etc. was not encouraging.
- As regards to overall upkeep of the restaurant, again, the feedback indicate that less than 46% were felt it highly satisfactory.

3.4 Assessment of Guest Service Facilities

- Encouragingly, nearly three fourths of the respondents were highly satisfied on the hospitality extended by the hotel staff.
- Satisfaction on the Multilanguage capability of the staff emerges was also encouraging, especially among the foreign guests.
- Responses on supply of information by the hotel staff provide to suggest the need for considerable improvement, especially the website.
- The internet service is indeed discouraging, with less than one third are only rating it as highly satisfactory.
- Check-in and check-out procedures as well as the provision of entertainment call for qualified focus.
- Lounge/seating area in the lobby and safety and security arrangement for the guests have also received moderately encouraging response.
- Specific to cleanliness, response in general in of satisfactory in nature.
- However, response on overall experience of staying in the hotel was indeed encouraging. Notably, guest rating bettered with increase in the star rating, particularly 5-Star rated properties.

3.5 Basis of Hotel Selection

- More than three-fourth of respondents confirmed that they were particular about the category of hotel accommodation.
- For around one fourth of both the segments, star-rated hotels of reputed brands is a major consideration, whereas, more than half reported to have star rated hotels with the reasonable price as their major consideration.
- To gather feedback on the hotels, review in the media like Facebook, Twitter and other social media were emerged as main online source, followed by review by hotel booking sites like Tripadvisor, Expedia etc. Interestingly, 37% of domestic and 48% of foreign guests have consulted different online sources available to them for gathering information.
- Whether it is important for a hotel to have official star-rating, more than half of domestic and 43% of foreigners considered it as very important.
- For more than three-fourths of both the segments, guest reviews were important in hotel selection. Again, more than half of the respondents were on strong agreement that the guest review websites must indicate the official rating of the hotels it has reviewed along with the along their assessment.
- It was also strongly agreed that official star rating of the hotel would assure better quality of service standards. Specific to integrating guest reviews with official classification, around 60% considered it very significant.

4 Stakeholders' Perception of Accommodation Classification

4.1 Guests' Selection of Accommodation

- Ranking of a set of parameters stands to suggest that 'price vs. budget' is the major factor accrued either first or second rank in hotel selection. Following was the brand reputation though it was distantly placed, then came the official star rating.

- More than two-thirds of the respondents were of the view that it is very important for the hotel to have official classification as well as display of its official rating, including on the hotel website
- Specific to the role of guest reviews in hotel booking, around 41% considered it as very important and another 53% as somewhat important.
- Around 34% strongly agreed that the hotel review websites must display the official rating of the hotels along with their reviews on their websites for clarity. Another 64% were in agreement on this.

4.2 Rationale for Official Classification of Hotels

- About 25% have strongly agreed that it to help conforming to the benchmarking standards, whereas, another 66% was in agreement on this.
- Over one-third of the respondents strongly agreed upon its role as a good tool to communicate the industry offers and another 57% also agree on this.
- Predominant view that classification is justified on consumer concerns.
- It is considered by majority as a major tool for periodic monitoring of the sector.
- About two-third strongly agreed that classification is a promise on the quality and the standards it offers. Another 31% also agreed on this.
- **Reasons for the hotels opting out of classification:** Official classification as an interference to their freedom to do the business accrued highest ranking. It was followed by 'making hotelier's social obligations mandatory' and use of it as 'means to regulate their activities'.
- It was agreed in general that non-observance of stipulated standard could adversely affect the hotel business by way of reduced customer confidence, degradation of the brand value, sustainability of the hotel business etc.
- About 58% considered Indian classification scheme as comparable with other leading schemes of the world.

- It was invariably felt that it would be highly improper on part of the hotel to claim 'as star classified' when it is actually not.
- About half of them held that classification is used as a tool to monitor and control the sector in India.

4.3 Feedback on Classification Process

- Representation of the industry stakeholders in HRACC in India is viewed as adequate. Further, the classification fees is reportedly reasonable.
- More than three-fourth strongly agreed that classification of tourist accommodation in India has to be made mandatory.
- About three-fourths also held that 'mystery check' by independent (third party inspectors) must be encouraged as part of the official classification scheme.
- As regards to reclassification frequency, 37.8% were in support of every two years and another 31.6% for every year. Only about 17% opined that it could be in every five years.
- On adequacy of existing classification scheme, 37% held that it needs improvement.
- On engaging independent inspectors in addition to HRACC for hotel assessment, about 60% were of the view that it could be considered.
- Predominant view was in support of integrating the guest reviews in the classification scheme.

5. Evaluation of Supplementary Accommodation Schemes

5.1 The Scheme for Classification of Motels

The classification requires improvements on the minimum eligibility and the same is proposed for consideration. It was also a considerate view that the motel facilities fulfilling the star rating parameters can also be brought under the ambit of the hotel classification with suitable modifications to maintain the character of motels. In the USA also, motels are assessed largely within the framework of hotel classification.

5.2 The Scheme for Incredible India Bed & Breakfast/ Homestay Establishment

In countries such as the UK, both of these categories have been clubbed under 'guest accommodation'. The assessment of the facilities is carried out on a Score-scale and the ratings are assigned accordingly. The scheme should also have eco-friendly, environmentally sustainable practices and suggested accordingly.

5.3 The Scheme for Guest-house Accommodation

The Indian scheme has limitation of very few criteria for assessment (13 in numbers). Whereas in UK, not only are the criteria catalogue more elaborate, but the properties are also assigned star ratings upon assessment. Hence, the Scheme in India should be made elaborate by taking into account the needs of the modern-day travelers. The provisions like television, some entertainment items, Wi-Fi/ internet, complimentary toiletries etc. needs to be incorporated, and where possible, provision of breakfast could also be considered. A three-level grading scheme have been proposed: Silver, Gold and Platinum.

5.4 The Scheme for Tented Accommodation

The Indian scheme is elaborate in terms of criteria catalogue and the property is awarded 'Standard/ Deluxe' rating. However, in view a three-tire scheme existing in couple of states, it is proposed for a rating system of Silver, Gold and Platinum.

5.5 The Scheme for Apartment Hotel

As per the Indian scheme, apartment hotels are classified into four categories, from 3 to 5-Star Deluxe. As regards to 3 and 4 star ratings, very few differences in the criteria catalogue can be observed. Similarly, for 5 star and 5 star Deluxe, differences are very few in numbers. Given this, it is suggested for a revised scheme in order to bring clarity and distinction in the property rating. Further, the inventories also need to be given more focus and should be easily describable.

5.5 The Scheme for Time Share Accommodation

The existing rating scheme in India is a 3-Star to 5-Star system. While scrutinizing, it was observed that the distinction between these ratings are negligible and total parameters of assessment are in the range of 48-49 criteria across the categories. The distinction has been attempted with minor variations in number of necessary and desirable features. While existing Scheme can be continued, it is necessary to have a rating system having distinguishable criteria catalogue for the rating purpose. The criteria catalogue must incorporate more features of the room, kitchen and indoor & outdoor activities appropriately to make the system more refined and meaningful.

6 Recommendations

The areas for which the recommendations being advanced are the classification committee and procedure, frequency of classification, mandatory nature of classification, legal requirements and the improvements needed in the existing classification scheme. The area wise recommendation may be seen furnished below:

6.1 The Agency for Classification and the Procedure

6.1.1: The classification scheme and the criteria catalogue is becoming more complex and sophisticated, and therefore, it is proposed to constitute an autonomous body namely 'Tourist Accommodation Classification and Regulatory Authority' (TACRA). The Central Ministry of Tourism shall be the administrative department for TACRA, which would also act as arbitration/appealing authority for all matters related to classification from time to time. Its members may be drawn from the government and specialists from the academia, hotel industry, travel intermediaries, architects and civil engineers. It may be ensured that the members of the committee are domain experts with proven records of specialization in respective fields.

6.1.2: The Establishment Assessment Committee shall comprise of 01 expert each from the hospitality industry, travel intermediary segment (Travel Agents/Tour Operators), Central IHM Principal, Civil Engineer, Architect and Interior Designer.

6.1.3: A panel of Hospitality, Civil Engineer, Architect and Interior Designer experts could be drawn out at the state/regional level. For each inspection, members can be drawn through a computerised random procedure.

6.1.4: The 'Mystery Guest' as well as the 'hotel guests' feedback need to be incorporated in to the classification scheme and suggested accordingly. For 'Mystery Guest' review, a panel could be constituted with the persons of proven expertise and impeccable credentials. A Code of Conduct for them can be evolved and the same signed with TACRA.

6.2 Periodicity of Re Classification

The stakeholder's feedback is clearly in support of frequent property assessment and reclassification. However, considering the complexities involved in the (re)classification, it is recommended for continuance of five-year interval. However, a mid-term evaluation in the third year shall be deemed necessary to have a control on the standards and stipulations and to ensure proper compliances.

6.3 Mandatory Provision for Classification

The studies of UNWTO reveal that a good number of countries in the world, particularly the developing countries, have made classification of tourist accommodation mandatory. The stakeholders' feedback emerging from the study is also largely in support of making classification mandatory in India. In backdrop of this, it is proposed for making the classification and rating of tourist accommodation mandatory in the country. However, to bring under classification ambit, provision of minimum 10 rooms or an investment of Rs. 05 crores (excluding the cost of land), whichever is lowest, should be made as a norm. For those units below this limit, classification can be made voluntary. Further, the expenses towards classification and management of TACRA can be borne by the concerned property itself.

6.4 Law for Classification of the Tourist Accommodation

Presently, India does not have a legislation to specifically cater for the purpose of classification of tourist accommodation. The existing 'Sarais Act-1867' and 'The Delhi Hotels (Control of Accommodation) Act-24, 1949 have been recommended for immediate repeal by the The Law Commission of India (LCI)

as these are viewed as 'obsolete'. Hence, it is recommended for enactment of a legislation of an Act to specifically cater for the purpose of 'Tourist Accommodation Classification'. Further, the said Legislation must also have specific provisions to enforce penalties as deemed appropriate on those establishments violating the mandated provisions of the affidavit submitted thereof for ensuring the quality standards for the Award of Classification.

The Act thus enacted shall have the provisions to make the State Governments follow the Schemes of classification designed and implemented by TACRA from time to time. For such establishments that cannot be brought under the existing schemes of TACRA, the State Governments may be free to develop its own schemes and the classification thereof.

6.5 An Independent E-Portal for Classification

The countries like Abu Dhabi have a comprehensive e-portal for recording the guest-complaints and also for the details pertaining to all classified hotels. A similar system would be helpful for horizontal and vertical integration of processes and information, which in turn, could complement the process of classification and its strengthening in India. Hence, launch of an e-portal system for the hotels to enable and facilitate responsible classification scheme has been proposed. The system would also facilitate on-time guest feedback to make the feed-backing more transparent and reliable.

6.6 A Mobile Application for Live Feedback of Guests

Since the guest-feedback is very significant, a mobile application program tailor-made to gather live feedback of the guests staying in different categories tourist accommodation about their experience of stay recommended. However, while designing, the programming must envisage adequate safeguards against the potential challenge of manipulation by vested interest sections.

6.7 A Mobile Application for Live Feedback of Guests

Since the guest-feedback is very significant, a mobile application specifically programmed to gather live feedback of the hotel guests about their experience of staying at hotels has been recommended. However, while

designing, the programming must envisage adequate safeguards against potential challenge of manipulation by vested interest sections.

6.8 Parameters and Assessment Methodology

The parameters shall comprise of minimum requirements and add-ons, where, minimum ones would be of entry-level requirements in nature for a specific star rating. Add-on features would enable the property to accrue points, and for each star category, a property must gather minimum points as stipulated in aggregate as well as in area-wise, to obtain a particular star-rating. As regards to the system of rating the parameters, the criteria catalogue(parameters) would be subject to rating by an assessment/inspection team as constituted and deputed by TACRA.

6.9 Recommendation for system of classification for hotels

- From present practice of verification of presence/absence of criteria, it is proposed for moving towards a dynamic and rating-based system. This would immensely help proper benchmarking of the hotel facilities thereby enhancing customer satisfaction.
- For rating of criteria, a point-based system is proposed herewith. The Assessors shall assign points as appropriate for each criteria during their visit.
- Like in some leading global classification schemes, it is proposed to have two separate rating within each star rating. Up to 4-Star, a 'Superior' rating for each category is suggested. As regards to 5-Star rating, there already exists a 'Deluxe' rating and that can be followed.

6.10 Existing system of classification for Motels

The classification of motels in India requires improvements on the minimum eligibility and the same is suggested herewith. It was also a considerate view that the motel facilities fulfilling the star rating parameters can also be brought under the ambit of the hotel classification, with suitable modifications to maintain the character of motels. In the USA also, the motels are assessed largely within the framework of hotel classification.

6.11 Incredible India Bed & Breakfast/Homestay Establishment Scheme

In terms of assigning specific ratings to guest accommodation, three categories have been proposed– Silver, Gold and Platinum. Here, it is to record that Kerala has already such a system in practice for classification of home stays. This will help grading the facilities more explicitly for the quality standards. The scheme should also have eco-friendly, environmentally sustainable practices and suggested accordingly.

6.12 Guest House Accommodation Scheme

There is an imperative to make the assessment scheme more elaborative by taking into account the needs of the modern day traveler. Therefore, it is proposed to incorporate the provisions like television, some entertainment items, Wi-Fi/ internet, complimentary toiletries etc. and where possible provision of breakfast could also be considered. The system of scoring for assessment may be continued and more areas of assessment incorporated so that the guest houses can be graded as silver, gold and platinum

6.13 Tented Accommodation Scheme

It is considered appropriate to have a more of a uniform scale for grading the supplementary accommodation units in the country. Therefore, it is suggested to have a rating system of – Silver, Gold and Platinum for tented campsites as well.

6.14 Apartment Hotel Scheme

It is suggested to bring the clear distinction of the property rating and suggested accordingly. Further, the inventories also need to be made more focused and easily describable.

6.15 Time Share Accommodation Scheme

It is considered to suggest for continuance of the existing star rating system i.e 3-Star to 5-Star, with detailed and distinguishable criteria catalogue for rating of each star category. The criteria catalogue must incorporate more features of the room, kitchen and indoor & outdoor activities appropriately to make the system more refined and meaningful.

I. Introduction

An effective and responsible working of hospitality functions is crucial to guest satisfaction, longing destination experiences and eventual positive image of destinations. Specifically from the perspective of foreign visitation, internationally comparable features and attributes of the accommodation establishments, particularly the hotels, reported to have been played critical roles in determining the tourist satisfaction. Because, satisfaction is an outcome of the interplay between diverse tangible and intangible components of hospitality functions that, in turn, could be seen as contributing towards forming the guest perceptions.

The international visitors to various countries, especially those availing the conventional accommodation such as hotels, reported to have been embarking comparison of their hotel stay in different international destinations. Particularly, it becomes more of a pattern among the guests staying in formal dwellings such as star categorized hotels. The mismatch in their expectations, actual delivery as well as resultant dissatisfaction and derived perception would needlessly have implications on their future travel decision-making. But, it may also happen that their experience and satisfaction levels would be shared with various sections of the people. This, from the destination's angle, this is significant given that the negative feedback could have the potential of adversely impacting the competitiveness and positioning of destinations especially in a highly competitive and technology-driven global tourism and hospitality business environment.

One of the ways of dealing with such situation is ensuring the qualified standardization and bench-marking, particularly of essential hotel parameters like comfort and standards, perceived as internationally comparable. But, this is fraught with many palpable challenges. Most important of it is that both tourism and hospitality are experience-based functions and hence the products that it emanates are largely intangible. It is equally culture-specific as well as a product in itself. An activity such as tourism that thrives on the people's search for unique and diversified experiences; creating distinct product offerings should ideally follow the principles of differentiation in

order to sustain its attractiveness as well as destination competitiveness. This would mean, even while maintaining the international quality benchmarks and standards, the hotel establishments should be able to maintain its uniqueness and distinct identities in order to position and compete internationally.

By virtue of the diversity and distinctiveness functioning as major points of attraction, the UNWTO and other leading inter-governmental and professional organizations have begun arguing that attempt towards standardization endeavors could be pursued in categorizing accommodation units. But, it should not be at the cost of diversity in hospitality traditions often defined and marked by respective cultural history contexts. It posits that the classification should be approached in a manner that nurtures a 'culture of diversity' within a given standardization scheme rather than its curtailment.

In recent years, imperative for the systems to move towards integrating the guest/customer reviews and feedback inputs, especially from on-line platforms, in to the classification scheme has also been gaining momentum. The UNWTO has already published a report on this in 2014, and one of the findings says: *'75% of the surveyed consumers and hotels indicating that the integration of reviews in to classification system is potentially important... classification systems help the guests filter the hotels, while guest reviews provide a means to help select from a smaller set of acceptable options'*. This means the online guest reviews would assume a meaningful place in the hotel benchmarking and standardization schemes.

As per Tourist Statistics-2014, the country has 79,567 rooms in 1,233 hotel and similar accommodation units in the approved category. Over 95% of this is in the star hotel category whereas the remaining are apartment hotels, time-share resorts, heritage hotels, bed & breakfast units (B&B) or unclassified segments. Interestingly, total rooms in 2008 were to the tune of 95,087 in 1,593 units, indicating a decline of rooms in approved category to the tune of about 16.3% in 2014 (Annexure-I). However, these figures are only aggregate of the approved hotels, and hence, do not provide comprehensive picture of accommodation supply in India. This decline in rooms have been found higher in those states where major international arrival ports are located or major tourist states, excepting Kerala (Annexure-II). Further, the decline was highest

in 2* & 3* hotels respectively probably on account of upgradation in star rating by many hotels.

In contrary, a Federation of Hotels & Restaurants Association of India estimates shows that total rooms available in India were 1.50 lakhs, whereas, the unofficial records suggest the numbers to be over 20 lakhs (FHRAI-2013). It also reported a supply shortage of around 1.5 lakh rooms. The outlook for the hospitality industry in India is promising in India given that the domestic and inbound visitor traffic are poised to record encouraging growth in medium term.

Number of Hotels in India

- ✓ Estimated room capacity is round 1.50 lakhs
- ✓ Unofficially, it is over 20.00 lakh rooms
(FHRAI. Nov. 2013)

The emerging scenario of hotel industry in India is promising with clear sign of global economic stability in sight. The investors poised to put more money in the sector and over 200 new projects spread across 50 brands are expected to be operational in a couple of years and this is going to add another 52,000 rooms by 2015 (4th April 2014, Business Standards, Mumbai). Encouragingly, capacity addition is going to come from both the international and domestic brands though a large chunk of it would be by the earlier, particularly Marriott and Starwood Hotels and Resorts.

Further, a recently released Hotelier Confidence Index (HCI) ranking by the TripAdvisor group reinforces the growing confidence on hotel sector in India. The index was developed to establish a hoteliers' profitability expectation, and the result shows that India ranks second on HCI globally, next to Indonesia which figures on top. About 70% of the hoteliers in Asia-Pacific region are optimistic about their profitability in 2015.

1.1 Background of the study

The domestic and foreign visitor statistics are clear indicators of a fast emerging tourism and travel industry in India. According to Ministry of Tourism, total international visitors to India in 2015 were around 8.02 million against 5.28 million recorded in 2008, accounting an increase of around 52% (Fig-1.1). During this period, domestic numbers grew by 129% from 563 million in 2008 to around 1,290 million in 2015. These burgeoning numbers would also indicate the probable scenario tourist accommodation supply in

India. However, the figures available on the room capacity in the officially classified/approved accommodation categories stand to suggest otherwise that instead of an increase as one would expect, the numbers have actually been decreasing consistently. This could be attributed to the following scenario:

- Many approved hotel units may have been either opting out of the classification scheme or got upgraded its rating or ceased to operate. However, in all probability, the later cannot be the case.
- Registration and/or classification of accommodation units is not mandatory for its operations in India, and hence, majority of hotel units may have opted to remain functional but without classification/approvals.

Fig-1.1: Foreign Tourist Arrivals in India



Source: India Tourism Statistics- 2014

Whereas, huge volumes in the visitation and its consistent increase in the country would mean that the room supply should ideally be increasing even if not in commensurable to increase in total tourist nights. A more insightful scenario can again be delineated from the structure and composition of the visitor segments, especially domestic. Some of the surveys have established that huge chunks of them perhaps hail from the middle or lower middle segments, and ideally hence, they can expected to be catered by the budget or low-budget accommodation units, of which a good proportion is part of the

informal operations. As such, there exist a huge unclassified, unapproved, non-registered and informal sector accommodation sector in India.

Official classification of the tourist accommodations endear many tangible advantages, most notable being direct control on the quality and service standards, which a periodic inspection/audit and subsequent classification could ensure. From the promoters angle, the brand stands to benefit from the assured bench-marked standards, and by virtue of this, the quality of experience of the hotel guests and their eventual satisfaction would expectedly be high. A cumulative effect of this would be reflected in enhanced destination experience and its image. However, in absence of formal classification, exercising meaningful control on the quality and standards of the hotel property may be a challenge since there exists no formal external audit of those.

The tourist accommodation sector in India thus could encounter many palpable challenges in absence of the properties undergoing formal classification process, especially when huge chunks of these are not in the ambit formal classification. Perhaps due this, recent years are also witnessing to growing dissonances of the hotel guests, particularly over-pricing, quality standards and the value for money. Even many classified hotels have reportedly been faring poorly on some of these counts, and therefore, many have been questioning the very basis of classification and assessment methods. The need for this study emerged from the above premises, more particularly, the imperative of bench-marking the parameters for better acceptability and compliances.

Give the above complexities and manifestation in view, the approach to this study has been to juxtapose and synthesize the accommodation classification systems and procedures existing in some major country-destinations in the world to that of the Scheme in India. The pattern thus emerges out of this matrix was expected to contribute towards further strengthening and fine-tuning of the existing accommodation classification schemes in India. It was considered important to gather the feedbacks and inputs from the hotel guests, professional associations and TA's/TO's/OTA's so that the Scheme that eventuate from the analysis would be more holistic. While doing do, adequate care was taken to retain/incorporate India-specific hospitality traditions/attributes that are relevant and meaningful to enhance the

competitiveness of the country. An integrated approach of this nature could suffice proposing a Classification Scheme that is in sync with the internationally perceived standards for various categories of tourist accommodation.

1.2 Terms of Reference for the Study

Vide Work Order No. 8(14)/2012-MRD, dt. 06.01-2015, the Ministry of Tourism, GoI has entrusted Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM) to undertake a study titled “*To Devise International Bench-marking for Awarding Star Ratings to Hotels in India*”. The terms of reference/objectives for the study were stipulated and the same placed below:

Terms of Reference for the Study
<p>IV. To examine major systems of classifications in existence globally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">iv. For tourist accommodation such as hotels, resorts, time-share properties, spas and health resorts.v. The sets of parameters being presently used for respective categories.vi. Authorities granting respective classifications.
<p>V. To analyse existing classification systems in India for different types of accommodation units, parameters used and awarding agencies.</p>
<p>VI. To recommend appropriate systems of classification for different tourist accommodations, especially on;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">iv. Suitable methods of classification at national and state levels.v. Parameters appropriate for different types of accommodation units.vi. Imperative of bringing all forms of accommodation units in the purview of registration.

1.3 Methodology Scheme

Considering the complex nature of the study, the approach was to attempt a comparison of the present scheme in India with that of some major systems of accommodation classification in the world. The selection of the country schemes were made in such a manner that the selected ones represented major country destinations where tourism is an important economic activity. Further, to capture the diversity in the criteria catalogue and the systems and procedures in place for the purpose of classification, the countries were picked up from a wider geography. While doing so, it was also ensured that the countries selected thereof has a robust classification scheme and that is also comparable with the selected ones.

Specifically, the selected country-specific and/or region-specific systems and practices were reviewed and documented first. This included not only those countries being selected for the purpose of this study but also of the reports of UNWTO and other international agencies. Thereafter, the classification parameters listed out in each country-scheme have been transferred on to a matrix and arranged against the comparable parameters of Indian Scheme. Those parameters, either do not match with the Indian scheme or figure in it have been arranged additionally in a matrix format. This formed key basis for cross-matching and the detailed examination of the Criteria catalogue so as to mark the deficiencies and inadequacies of Indian scheme more precisely and in quantifiable ways.

Equally important was examining the widely used assessment/inspection mechanisms and methodologies. Because, the assessment method is expected to have direct bearing on determining the quality standards and stipulations at accommodation offerings. While a comparison of matrices enabled to identify the deficiencies in India's classification criteria scheme, it was considered equally imperative to supplement the findings emerging from the analysis of matrices with the perception and experiences of the hotel guests. Because the hotel guests are of different geographic origins and must have had past experience of staying in similar of different types of accommodation for them to provide specific feedback on their stay in the . With this in view, both the domestic and foreign hotels guests were canvassed from different star-rated hotels situated at different cities, towns and resort areas.

Table-1.1: Sampling Frame

Sampling Domains	Sample description	Data source
Country-level Classification Schemes	<i>HotelStar.EU</i> , the US, VisitEngland, Malaysia, South Africa, Abu Dhabi.	Secondary
India- Central Scheme	MoT Classification Scheme	Secondary
India- State Schemes	Kerala, Odisha and Karnataka	Secondary & Primary
Hotel Guests	Metro-city (Delhi); Business City (Mumbai, Bangalore); Hill station (Shimla, Srinagar); Beach resort- (Goa); Heritage City (Jaipur, Agra); Spiritual: (Gaya); Mid-size city: (Guwahati, Ahmadabad, Lucknow)	Primary survey (Size: 1007- domestic and foreign on equal proportion basis)
Professional Associations	IATO, TAAI, FHRAI, HAI	Primary survey
TA's/TO's/ OTA's/hotels	Delhi/Mumbai/Chennai/Bangalore/ Kolkata/Srinagar/Goa	Primary survey; 130 establishments

1.3.A: Country-level Schemes

The selection of the country schemes was guided by an assumption that studying the systems of classification prevailing in top tourist generating countries of India could help understanding their perceptions and expectations on this crucial supply side, i.e. hotel rooms. Hence, for selection of the countries for cross-examination of the classification schemes to that of India were guided by two key principles. Firstly, to identify the major countries of origin (source markets) of the tourists globally and then matching those with top inbound tourist markets of India. Leading source markets are invariably the developed economies and the travelers from those markets are expected to be mature and experienced enough to provide informed feedbacks on hotel rooms by virtue of their culture of travelling and trans-continental experience.

Secondly, selection of India's source markets must satisfy a fair representation of major tourist regions/continents that contribute to its inbound tourism pie. While developed countries of the West continue to be major contributors, their proportions to the India's total inbound traffic has been observed as declining over the years. This was perhaps due to relatively faster growth in arrivals from some countries of the Asia-Pacific region such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Australia and Japan. More so, arrivals from these are expected to contribute incrementally to India's inbound tourist pie in time to come.

While examining the data, it was observed that some of the major countries of origin globally also happen to be the top contributors of India's inbound tourism traffic, instances being the US, the UK, France and Germany. Further, while majority of India's source markets have its own independent classification schemes, countries like France and Germany are members of *HotelStar.EU* and follow this system for classification purpose. Whereas, the countries such as the US, the UK, Canada, Australia etc. have their own independent schemes. Incidentally, these countries also have the distinction having a robust scheme for tourist accommodation classification.

Country systems examined: For detailed examination of prevailing classification schemes in this study, the region/countries being finally selected are HotelStar.EU, VisitEngland, the US, Malaysia, Australia, South Africa and Abu Dhabi. Though it was initially proposed for coverage of the classification schemes in the countries such as Japan, China, Russia and Brazil; the same could not be undertaken for want of suitable data at secondary level. Though Australia enjoys one of the finest classification schemes, its comparison with the Indian Scheme was considered not feasible as its scheme does not stipulate Star-specific requirements and standards.

1.3.B: Central & State-level Scheme

On a similar matrix as for country-level schemes, prevailing central and state schemes for classification were subject to examination and cross-tabulation. The parameters remained same except the uncommon ones observed in different schemes, and hence were treated as additional. For examining the state-level schemes, mainly of important states for tourism, tourism policies and relevant statutes of respective states were also examined. This was meant

to gauge the depth of the classification schemes as well as to ascertain whether registration of accommodation units was mandatory in those states; and if so, for which types of units. It is expected that the results of such cross-sectional analyses at appropriate levels would enable proposing suitable systems of classification for different accommodation categories at the national and state levels.

1.3.C: Coverage of guests/tourists

Guest feed-backing, especially online, has already assumed prominence in the strategic decision-making of the hotels, especially in their marketing and revenue optimisation decisions. Some of the recent studies are testimony to this growing trend that emphasises the imperative of guest feedbacks for effective management of the accommodation business. For instance,

UNWTO (2014) in its study has underscored the need of incorporating the guest feedbacks in to the classification schemes. In another survey by TripAdvisor results of which are published recently, it was reported that 'online reputation is top priority for majority of hoteliers' and they are planning to increase the investment in online reputation management.

Online Reputation is the Key

About 91% of hoteliers in APAC hold online reputation to be the most important determinant in the future of their business!

(TripAdvisor - 2015)

Hence, given the growing emphasis on the guest feedback in view, a total of 1007 guests staying in different Star-rated accommodations (1 to 5* Deluxe) in India were canvassed to ascertain their expectations and feedbacks on the hotel offerings- especially tangible and intangible attributes. The hotel units known for their positioning viz. general, business, leisure/vacation were accorded due place in the sampling frame in order to capture diverse groups of hotel guests. Similarly, different types of destinations were identified and brought in to the sampling frame for canvassing of the guests, which included metro, business, resort, religious/cultural, hill station and medium cities/towns- to capture the diversity.

As regards to size of respondents of different origin, an equal proportion of the foreign & domestic were maintained in the sample, and while canvassing, a stratified random procedure was adopted. The study team also made

incognito visit of the hotel, and stayed overnight in some cases, to gather first-hand information more objectively for necessary explanation.

1.3.D: Expert Panel Group Discussion

With a purpose to gather well-informed views on the classification schemes and tendering necessary inputs/advices besides helping the research team in organising the guest interviews, an expert group was formed. They comprised of the industry leaders, subject experts and the representatives of leading professional associations such as leading hotels and hotel chains, professional organisations such as IATO, TAAI or Hotel Association of India (HAI), Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) etc. A semi-structured questionnaire was developed and administered to gather the data.

1.3.E: Key Stakeholders

A semi-structured questionnaire was developed and administered among the key stakeholders such as the hotels, travel agents and tour operators segments. A total of 130 responses from these segments were collected. Main thrust was in gathering informed views on the classification system and parameters and to tender suggestions for improvement of the Schemes.

1.3.F: Study Instrument Development

To satisfy some study objectives, a fair amount of data were available through the secondary sources, especially the classification schemes, major parameters in use etc. and that were gathered accordingly. But, certain crucial data such as the feedback/perceptions of the key stakeholders like the hotel guests, professional and core industry associations, TA's & TO's on the (in)adequacies of the perceived and actual delivery of the hospitality services specific to Star categories of hotels were not available at secondary level. Hence, those have been gathered with the support of survey instruments, designed separately for respective stakeholder groups (Sample survey instruments have been annexed). Survey method was respondent-administered wherever feasible, but main mode was interviewing through qualified enumerators.

1.3.G: Collection of Data

The Hotel Classification Schemes of the countries selected, Schemes in India and the State Governments were available online and gathered accordingly. Similarly, study reports of UNWTO and other international agencies were also available online. For the primary survey, a Study Team comprising the faculty members of IITM coordinated/carried-out the same. The service of enumerators from respective locations were availed for the primary survey, and before deploying, they were trained on the schedule, survey population, method of enumeration etc. in order to ensure the quality of data collection.

II. Evolution of Tourist Accommodation Classification Schemes

Accommodation sector is one of the most visible manifestations of tourism development. It is an integral component in the touring cycle serving multiple functions of shelter, safety and security, relaxation, comfort and the like. From traditional inns, sarai and musafir khana of the olden days; it has evolved to represent a variety of meanings and forms. While the 'hotel', 'resort' and 'lodge' are most commonly understood forms of accommodation; a vast array of supplementary provisions like camping, caravanning, bread & breakfast units, spas, apartment hotel (apartel), time-share and many more have also sprung to serve the travellers of different choices and budget provisions.

Evolution of accommodation industry is interesting particularly in Briton. It traces back to the medieval period, where, three distinct forms of board and lodge provisions emerged- alehouse, taverns and Inns- and these acted as 'social centres'. Of these, first category comprised ordinary dwellings where the householder served home-brewed ale and beer. Those sought lodging at best could get nothing more than bedding on the floor in the kitchen, or in a barn. The taverns sold wine, but it was expensive compared to ale and beer. By virtue of being expensive, it catered to richer patrons who could afford it. Inns were generally purpose-built to accommodate travellers, having more bedrooms than the average house and substantial stabling space.

By 18th Century, the larger alehouses were becoming common and came to be known as public houses (www.buildinghistory.org). On the other, taverns transformed in to coffee houses where the wealthy usually gathered. The first English hotel was built in Exeter in 1768, but the term was rarely used before 1800. The arrival of railways has resulted springing up of many hotels around the stations. Similarly, expansion of road transport network and coach services gave rise to the highway provisions came to be called motels. From the beginning of 20th century, socio-economic progress as well as fast advancement in technology created conditions for the expansion and diversification of hospitality offerings across the world.

Concomitant with the socio-economic and technological advancement also emerged the expansion and diversification of the hospitality industry. One of its visible manifestations is the gigantic size and expanse. A recent documentation show that over 197 hotels in the world have 1000 or more number of rooms.

Biggest one being The Venetian and The Palazzo, Las Vegas with 7117 rooms, followed by MGM Grand, Las Vegas (6852 rooms). Other hotels having 5000 rooms or above are First World Hotel, Malaysia (6118), Disney's All-Star Resort, Orlando (5524) and Izmailovo Hotel, Moscow (5000). (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_largest_hotels_in_the_world).

Regional Distribution of Hotel Rooms

- Europe: 36%
- Americas: 35%
- Asia-Pacific: 24%
- Middle East: 2%
- Africa: 2%

(Global Hotel Perspectives- 2012)

The consumer's demand for higher levels of comfort and their expectation for state-of-the-art in-house facility provisions have further accelerated the transformation process within the industry. The modern-day hotel is not just providers of basic functions such as board and lodge but a 'package of total experience'- of eating, stay, entertainment, fun, health and well-being. Some premium-range hotels have pioneered in redefining the very conception of luxury itself, whereby, the suites they offer to its luxury class is over a thousand square meters in area and comes at a premium price of forty thousand US dollars for a night.

In a hugely diverse hospitality environment, quality assumes different meanings and that is seen closely connected to the consumer orientation and perception. Similarly, across geographies, the description and scale of quality stipulations also vary depending on the cultural and other socio-economic attributes and that is often seen leading to misconception of quality by the supplier and the consumers.

By very nature, quality is not simply descriptive and something that can be quantified and measured in absolute terms. But, it is a combination of the tangible and intangible attributes of hospitality service and the way the user perceive of those. Instantaneous being that the lobby, reception, concierge, rooms, breakfast, room service etc. can be viewed as tangible attributes.

However, how these tangibles are viewed or understood by each consumer segment differently and depend to a large extend on their personality traits

and nationality-specific attributes. Further, many intangible indicators are equally related to the service quality, a key consideration of the present-day demand segments. The modern conception of quality has expanded its ambit even embraces hygiene, building security and sustainability of the general management as integral part. But its largely subjective nature makes the assessment relatively more complicated and therefore challenging.

Bench-marking the parameters of hospitality establishments are taken as central to assuring quality stipulations and class categorisation. While there is broader agreement on its imperative, it is a problematic subject and widely argued that a uniform bench-marking scheme for the world as a whole could hamper its very purpose. Disagreement is equally palpable on the range criteria to be deployed- both tangible and intangible- for this purpose and also on the extent of coverage of these in the procedure. Similarly, weightage to be assigned on various parameters of the establishments, range of criteria, its mandatory and/or optional nature for assessment and the like are continued to be discussed. Notwithstanding these, some forms of bench-marking and also assigning of higher weightages to physical attributes of the hospitality units are treated as necessary scales for determining the quality as well as competitiveness of these units in a fast changing business environment.

2.1 Framework of Accommodation

According to UNWTO, the term accommodation refers to ‘services provided by commercial establishments to visitors’. Section-4 of UNWTO Compendium, short-term accommodation refers to ‘accommodation for visitors in hotel and similar establishments’, principally for short-stay. The class includes the hotels, resort hotels, suite/apartment hotels, motels, motor hotels, guesthouses, pensions, bed & breakfast units, time-share, holiday homes and youth hostels. Further, camping ground, recreational vehicle also perform the function of a hotel. Such proliferation and diversification in the accommodation offerings stand to suggest that the sector has undergone considerable transformation.

Concomitantly, consistent expansion in the ‘touring space’ of individuals transcending different geographies and continents further amplified the confusion with regard to the understanding and perception on specifications and standards of tourist accommodation. Specific to the hotel, there is no

official standard definition available at present. As per the Oxford English Dictionary, 'a hotel is an establishment providing accommodation, meals and other services to travellers and tourists by the night'. Peter John and Andrew Lockwood defines it an 'an operation that provides accommodation and ancillary services to people away from home'. It includes all people who spend time away from home for whatever reasons. Even the hospitals these days can be treated as part it with many hospitals, especially those promoting medical tourism, also having offer most provisions that a hotel offers.

2.2 Modern-day Concept of Hotel

With passage time, the concept of hotel has evolved to embrace varied meanings beyond the core functions of stay and provision of meals. It became diverse with wide range of offering and comforts- both tangible and intangible. Close scrutiny would suggest that the transformation has moved towards bringing the guest/customer to the core of product development and customer strategies. Characteristically, meeting, wellness, multitude of leisure provisions, aesthetics, comfort and above all an enviable level of personalised services emerged as defining parameters. What have come to define the concept are essentially four trends- notion of the comfort/luxury, consumer traits, technology and aesthetics. Toiletries, furnishings, lighting, sound-proofing, health and safety, decor, clientele, location etc., and of late, very hotel architecture have become characteristic features of the hotel.

In recent years, hotels are increasingly focusing on ensuring a sound night sleep of their guests. The range of steps include headboard that help cutting the ambience noise by 30%, aromatherapy in the room, an ambience music playing comforting tunes, sleep-centric lighting, flooring and walls, therapeutic and organic cotton mattresses with lateral rotation, wide range of pillows and many other services. Some hotels reportedly even hire professional sleep researchers to ensure right feather count in the pillows and the thread count in the bed linen. Interestingly enough, many hotels have come up with designated selfie-click spots, where there is ample space for such clicks without disturbing other guests.

2.3 Evolution of Hotel Classification Schemes

Hotel classification is the ranking of hotels, usually by using nomenclature such as stars (or diamonds), with one star denoting basic facilities and standards of comfort and five stars denoting luxury in facilities and services (UNWTO 2015). Its purpose is to inform intending guests in advance on what can be expected in order to reduce the gap between expected and experienced facilities and service delivery. Other terms in use to denote the same are 'grading', 'rating', and 'star rating'.

Globally, classification and bench-marking have been preferred mechanisms to ensure quality of accommodation offerings to expanding international travellers and meeting their expectations. Different studies have shown that process of classification serves many purposes and that benefits not only the hotels and its guests but other important stakeholders like the travel intermediaries, destination management organisations and national governments equally. From guests' angle, it means transparency in the tariff, service quality standards and its assurance, reliability, predictability and comparability that enable them for informed decision-making leading to increased satisfaction.

Hotel Classification System

- Traditional
- Systems with ISO certified inspectors
- Systems including quality assurance
- systems including guest reviews
- Trust based

(UNWTO, 2015)

For the accommodation suppliers, classification is a means to achieving a variety of goals. First and foremost are predictable quality assurance, confidence building, positioning and branding vis-à-vis other suppliers in a highly competitive market. Equally important is its use as a means for direct marketing communication especially with the consumers and travel intermediaries. Often, it can also be seen the hotels taking pride in announcing its star-status besides employee motivation and competitiveness.

When it comes to other stakeholders, classification is viewed as an assurance on the standard and predictable information in transparent ways. Especially for implementing agencies and destination managers, besides many above-listed advantages, it serves the purposes of product simplification, destination positioning and to attracting investments.

The question of classification often surfaces with many oft repeated propositions on its imperative. It can be observed that the views are divergent and there are sections questioning the necessity of classification. Nevertheless, it is necessary to identify the objectives of classification and the same listed below.

Table-2.1: Rationale of Hotel Classification	
Rationale	Description
To inform	In a highly diversified accommodation market place, the consumers seek to know the kind of facility they are going for as per their needs. Classification enables source of confidence as direct information source.
A reference tool for the intermediaries	Help in negotiations with both the supplier and the guest and booking as per the choice
An instrument for marketing and promotion	Standardisation of the units serves the purposes of bench-marking the quality features. This would benefit the customers, marketers and destination managers in setting quality standards
Provides a coherent framework	Enables quality measurement in a manner that is transparent, consistent and objective to simplify the hotel selection process and better value
	It is also reported to assist the government in matters related to policies and promotional initiatives.
<i>Source: UNWTO, Jan. 2013, 'About Hotel Classification Systems'</i>	

Nevertheless, classification is also fraught with some striking disadvantages. From consumers' angle, existence of many systems/ schemes and its implementation may not provide expected standards and value for their money. In recent years, many independent classification initiatives by guest rating and online travel agent (OTA) sites have furthered the complexity and the overall outcome of such initiatives is reportedly biased and not encouraging. Whereas from providers' angle; biggest challenge is meeting the fast evolving consumer expectations that is needlessly complex.

There is growing demand for incorporation of the consumer feedback in to classification scheme, but owing to its largely subjective and complex milieu,

the rating outcome could be affected in adverse ways. Attempts by different institutions and agencies like hotel rating sites and OTA's to classify/categorise the hotels based on their business-driven parameters could compound the matter.

Travel intermediaries are major distribution channels for hotels and they also encounter the issues stemming from divergent schemes and self-classification by individual hotels. This often limits them from matching the prices against stipulated star-categorised hotel units. Challenges of the implementing agencies and destination managers are more compounding. Matching the expectation of well-informed customer segments on a continuous basis is not tenable given their fast changing expectations that demands for constant updating of the criteria. Availability of qualified assessors, developing easily understandable criteria, frequency of re-assessment, integration with OTAs', definition and ways of assessment subjective elements and providing varied accommodation are some other issues worth considering.

Hotel Classification Assessors

- Internal auditor
- Advisor/assessor
- Inspector/Auditor
(UNWTO, 2015)

A great degree of human element is involved in hospitality service and functions and that determines the guest satisfaction to a great extent. Perhaps due to this, many institutions including the UNWTO in recent years have been pitching for bringing the elements of this by way of guest feedback in to the classification scheme. But, largely subjective nature of this component makes the standardisation exercise more challenging. Still, many hotels move towards standardisation of services in order to remain competitive.

Specific to online guest reviews, research has revealed the scope of its manipulation and patterning. Mayzlin et. al (2012) in their study observed that an increase in hotel incentives to manipulate reviews results in an increase in the measures of manipulation. Specifically, independent hotels engage in more review manipulation (both positive and negative), while hotels with multi-unit owners as well as the hotels managed by a multi-unit management companies engage in less review manipulation. The larger organizations also appear to be measurably better at curbing cheating.

It is also useful at the governmental level. You will note in this regard that practically all governments that are reforming their classification systems highlight their desire to bring the quality of their national tourism up to a higher level.

2.4: UNWTO & Hotel Classification

The earliest attempt aimed at hotel classification was in 1952 under the aegis of the International Union of Official Travel Organisation (predecessor to UNWTO) through its Hotel Trade Charter. In 1985, the WTO General Assembly adopted a resolution to include the issue of hotel classification and in its pursuance; the WTO General Assembly adopted a resolution to include the issue of hotel classification. This formed the basis for preparing a report on ‘Interregional Harmonization of Hotel Classification Criteria’ on the Basis of the Classification Standards adopted by the Regional Commissions in 1988.

Table- 2.2: Evolution of Hotel Classification Schemes & UNWTO

Year	UNWTO Initiative	Outcome
1952	International Union of Official Travel Organisation (IUOTO)	Drawn up Hotel Trade Charter- marking the expression of interest in the issue of hotel classification
1971	IUOTO	Acknowledged that in order to be successful, overall system should be evolved at the regional level, in close consultation with hotel industry professionals.
Between 1976- '82	WTO Regional Commissions	Adopted standardized hotel classification systems on a regional basis, using the IUOTO model.
1985	WTO General Assembly	Adopted a resolution to include the issue of hotel classification in its Work Program.
1988	WTO Executive Committee	Report on “Interregional Harmonization of Hotel Classification Criteria on the Basis of the Classification Standards adopted by the Regional Commissions” based on two surveys of member countries in 1986-87.

Year	UNWTO Initiative	Outcome
1989	WTO	'The Standardization of Tourist Signs and Symbols' on tourist attractions, services and facilities were reported, however without any particular reference to hotel facilities.
2001	'WTO Thesaurus on Tourism and Leisure Activities'- French-English-Spanish	Total 8,185 terms, distributed over 20 fields representing tourism activity. Field 08 concerns Accommodation and its main related aspects.
2003	WTO Tourism Legislation Database (LEXTOUR)	Designed to act as a referral system facilitating - through WTO Website- direct access links to external websites, databases and information servers on tourism legislative data produced and distributed by authoritative sources.
2004	UNWTO & IH&RA	A Status Report on Hotel Classification based on survey of National Tourism Administrations by UNWTO (89 nos.) and National Hotel Associations by IH&RA(32 nos.)
2014 (a)	UNWTO	Online Guest Reviews & Hotel Classification System: An Integrated approach
2014 (b)	UNWTO	Hotel Classification System: Recurrence of criteria in 4* & 5* hotels

In a recent report, UNWTO, (2014b) observed that in the accommodation sector, hotel classification systems are widely used as a means to provide information on the standards that can be expected/available at individual hotel establishments. It can also provide useful marketing platforms for individual hotels and the destinations wishing to promote the quality of their offer.

2.5 International Standardisation Organisation (ISO):

In the late 1990's, ISO began its work on the international standards for accommodation services based on ISO 9000 but that was vigorously opposed by the International Hotel & Restaurant Association (IH&RA) and Confederation of Hotels, Restaurants & Cafés in the European Community (HORTEC). Because, a). ISO-9000 only assures consistent provision of the

predetermined standards and it gives no indication of the level of those standards; b). It does not address the consumer expectations on service delivery. This eventually culminated in the publication of the European Standard on Tourism Services– Hotels and other types of tourism accommodation–Terminology by the European Standardisation Committee (CEN) in January 2001.

2.6 Accommodation facilities– Sustainability Management System– Requirements (ISO)

In January 2016, International Organization for Standardization (ISO) began a New Work Item Proposal titled ‘Accommodation facilities– Sustainability Management System – Requirements’, review of which by the member countries including India is progressing. Its main scope is to establish specific minimum performance criteria related to sustainability to enable an accommodation facility to formulate policies and objectives that take into account legal requirements and information concerning environmental impacts, social and economic significance. It applies to the aspects that can be controlled by the accommodation facility or over which it can exert influence viz.: a) implement, maintain and improve sustainable practices in their operations; b) ensure the compliance with its defined policy of sustainability; c) demonstrate such conformance to third parties; d) seek certification under this International Standard by an external organization; or e) conduct a self-assessment of compliance with this standard.

The draft posits that despite increasing interest in sustainability, most of the organizations understand it in a limited and non-integrated form, mainly of its environmental, socio-cultural and economic dimensions. Instead, it is imperative to acknowledge that these are integral to the business strategy of sustainable organizations. Thus, the draft standards envisage the accommodation facility’s strategies to minimize the impacts and thereby sustainability. Specifically;

- A. Environmental requirements:** To prepare and respond to environmental emergencies; natural areas conservation (natural areas, flora and fauna); integration of architecture to the landscape; minimum impact landscaping; manage solid waste, effluents and emissions; conserve and manage water usage.

- B. Social requirements:** To develop/engage in voluntary actions/initiatives enabling local community development; use local people and production; employ/engage the locals to the greatest extent possible; support local people in professional training; ensure that the wages paid at least meet the minimum wage norms; promote knowledge, preservation and respect of local cultures; support local community health programs and; implement measures to ensure to promote and respect habits, rights and traditions of the native population.
- C. Economic requirements:** To plan and implement economic sustainability programs for short, medium and long term; products and services in accordance to consumer profile and expectations as well as those privilege social traditions and local hospitality; establish and maintain procedures for the continuous risk identification, assessment and implementation of necessary control measures.

2.7 Regional Level Initiatives

2.7.1: EU Directorate-General Research (EU-DGR): Upon request of the European Parliament Committee on Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism (RETT) in 2003, EU-DGR carried out a study on hotel classification to revisit the classification schemes in the European Union.

2.7.2: Scheme for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): The UNWTO has been encouraging and supporting the initiatives for harmonisation of classification scheme at the regional level too. In 1984, it drafted a Scheme for ECOWAS, a grouping of 15 member countries, which it took forward and introduced a system of its own suitably amending to the requirement of the region. The new standards thus incorporated in to the UNWTO draft included minimum ceiling standards, billing and payments rules, insurance requirements and services entrances.

2.7.3: The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN): It has also started working on establishment of a common hotel classification scheme in 1973 though that is still to materialize. However, ASEAN Tourism Standards (ATS) are being established for six segments namely Green Hotel, F&B Services, Public Rest-room, Home Stay, Ecotourism and Tourism Heritage. The

ATS Logo can be obtained upon certification of tourism services that meet the criteria and requirements.

2.7.4: European Consumer Centres' Network (ECC): Setting-up of a single European hotel classification scheme may be considered as unfeasible and ill-founded task. The hard and fast quantitative criteria vary from one country to another and even more so from one geographic region to another. The methodology can get further complicated by the cultural differences, duration of existing classification system, necessity of classification and the agency according the same. A question has also been raised whether the classification system will boost overall competitiveness of the hotel industry in the EU region.

2.8 Major Country-level Classification Schemes

Much before the organised classification initiatives were attempted under the aegis of IUOTO/UNWTO, there existed procedure for the standardisation and grading of accommodation units. The oldest is perhaps the UK star rating system dating back to 1912, when the Automobile Association's (AA) secretary Mr. Stenson Cooke hit on the idea. AA in Britain gradually evolved and embarked on a five-star system. After years of confusing tourists and Britons alike, a standardised system was launched in 2007 as a joint venture between the Visit Britain tourist board, and those in Scotland and Wales.

In the US, American Automobile Association (AAA) employed its first inspectors known as field reporters in 1937 to evaluate and report on hotels and restaurants so as to provide better travel information for members. The information thus gathered was offered to members in the three regional *TourBook* guides published at that time. In 1963, it has adopted a formal rating system that categorized *TourBook* listed accommodations- Good, Very Good, Excellent or Outstanding. In 1976, AAA introduced its current Diamond Rating System for hotels, using a diamond in honour of the association's 75th anniversary and, from 1985 to 1990, rolled out the Diamond Ratings for restaurants.

In the USA, neither the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) nor the federal government is involved in hotel classification. This is generally left to automobile or petrochemical-related interests. Reportedly, there are various

classification systems in use in the US and those are meant to ‘help increase reservations and revenue’. For instance, American Automobile Association (AAA) follows Diamond ratings where as Forbe’s Travel Guide (formerly Mobil) uses star ratings.

2.8.A: Forbes Travel Guide- USA

Formerly known as Mobil Guide or Mobil Travel Guide, it claims to have originated the Five Star Rating system. Began in 1958, Mobil Guide is considered as the oldest travel guide in the United States and initially covered the US and Canada. Gradually, properties in other countries and continents have also been incorporated after grading. In 2009, Exxon Mobil licensed the brand to Five Star Ratings Corporation, which then entered in to a licensing agreement with Forbes Media and renamed the Star Awards and Guidebook series as Forbes Travel Guide.

However, its printed series came to an end in 2011 and went online with its *ForbesTravelGuide.com* platform in same year, which covers more than 250 international destinations. Its rating process is exhaustive, wherein the professional inspectors of Forbes’ Travel Guide check into and check out every property that it rates regularly as mystery guests, evaluating the property against over 500 criteria to determine the Star Rating. Currently, its Star Rating list includes 83 Five-Star hotels, 32 Five-Star restaurants and 38 Five-Star spas, plus 264 Four-Star hotels, 154 Four-Star restaurants and 147 Four-Star spas.

2.8.B: The British Standards

After a prolonged process, a standardized system based on five star rating for the hotels in Britain was launched in 2007. This is a joint endeavour of the tourist boards of Visit Britain, Visit Scotland and Visit Wales and Automobile Association (AA). Prior to this, each agency had separate systems and working independently. It is voluntary scheme, where the emphasis is on higher standards of cleanliness, ambience, hospitality, services and food to earn more stars. For exceptional quality, it also has award schemes of Silver & Gold. The establishments covered under the classification are hotels, guest accommodation, serviced apartments, self-catering units, hostel, campus and

budget. A star rating indicates a hotel or guest accommodation unit, which is further categorised as per below:

Category of Hotels and Guest Accommodation in UK	
Hotels	Guest Accommodation
Hotel	Bread & Breakfast
Small hotel	Farmhouse
Country House Hotel	Guest house
Town House Hotel	Restaurants with rooms
Metro Hotel	Inns

2.8.C: European Hotelstars Union

Hotelstars Union classification schemes functions under the patronage of HOTREC- Hospitality Europe (Hotels, Restaurants & Cafés in Europe). It was established at a conference in Prague in September 2009 and comprises of the hotel associations of Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland as members. This system became effective in January 2010. The countries such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Belgium, Denmark, Greece and Liechtenstein have joined the HOTREC system in subsequent years.

This system is largely influenced by the German Hotelstars system that is based on Five Stars and a Superior mark to flag extra features. It works on a catalogue of criteria to cover quality management, wellness and sleeping accommodation. There are 21 qualifications and encompass 270 elements, where some elements are marked mandatory for a specific star and others as optional. Elements are assigned with points and for designation of each Hotelstars level, besides minimal sum of points, fulfilling some obligatory criteria are also required. It also follows the system of mystery guest evaluation for the hotels with three to five stars.

2.8.D: Star Rating in Australia

The Australian Auto Clubs first provided information on accommodation establishments to their members in Australia in 1915. But, from 1963 the Australian Auto Clubs have officially rated accommodation properties under a national system. But, national scheme for STAR Ratings emerged during the 1980s and 1990s for a range of accommodation types, such as Caravan Parks, Hotels, Motels, Serviced Apartments, Bed & Breakfast, and Guesthouses. The Australian STAR Rating Scheme is managed on behalf of the Australian Auto Clubs by AAA Tourism.

The STAR Ratings Australia (an operating unit of AAA Tourism Pty Ltd) is Quality Endorsed and holds ISO 9001:2008 Certification. Any hotel licensed to display an official STAR Rating- from 1 STAR through to 5 STAR- must achieve and maintain very high standards of cleanliness.

2.8.E: World Hotel Rating (WHR)

WHR, incorporated in 2009 in the U.S & EU, is an independent rating initiative with the motto of creating a universal language of the hospitality industry and a direct interface between travellers, hotels and tourism professionals. With over 75,000 hotels located in 25 countries and that include over 500 hotel chains, it claims to be one of the major players in the hospitality industry. WHR assesses the hotels on 10 dimensions and then categorise those as: Grant Resort Hotel, Grant Hotel, Leisure Resort Hotel, Eco-resort Hotel, Holiday Resort Hotel, Boutique Hotel, Hotel with Charm, Eco-lodge Hotel, Apart Hotel and Stop-over Hotel. A further categorisation is made by assigning labels: WHR Hotels- Family, Green Hotels, Historic, Heritage, Seniors and Hotels catering for the disabled.

2.9 Major Classification Symbols

There are different symbols in use for classification of hotel properties but the most common ones are the Star & Diamond ratings. However, Star ratings are the widely used ones and more than 70 countries in the world follow this scheme. Number of Star symbolises the level of facilities, cleanliness, maintenance, quality and condition a guest can expect when staying at a particular property. The common practices may be seen in the Table below.

Table- 2.3: Hotel Rating Symbols and Categories

Category	Classification
Star Rating	1 to 5 Star & 5 star-Deluxe
Diamond Rating	1 to 5
Brand-based: Price tier	Luxury, Upper scale, Mid-market, Economy/Budget
Brand-based: specific target customers	Individual business, , individual leisure, MICE, group leisure travel and the like
Property location	Urban, suburban, airport, leisure destination, gateway city, metropolitan and like

2.10 Seven Star Hotels

The standard classification schemes in the world usually limit rating/ grading of hotels in five defined categories, whereas, some systems following a practice of further breaking down a specific rating category in to further qualifications. While reference to starring can indicate corresponding level of expected quality too, a question often being asked is whether quality can be bench-marked beyond a point. Or, can there be limit to defining quality? With fast emergence of super-rich segments, the definition of quality is assuming newer dimensions and the offer of 7* hotel is one such instance.

Table-2.4: Most Expensive Hotel Suites in the World

Hotel	Features
Royal Villa at Grand Resort Lagonissi, Athens	Heated pool, steam room, private beach, private butler, even personal pianists
Hugh Hefner Sky Villa at the Palms Casino Resort, Las Vegas	930 m ² suite in two floors, 24-hour butler, a rotating bed under a mirrored ceiling and a floating 700,000 USD Jacuzzi
Ty Warner Penthouse at the Four Season, New York	400 sq.ft., great view of New York, balconies made of glass, high vaulted ceilings up to 7.60.

Hotel	Features
Royal Penthouse Suite at the President Wilson Hotel, Geneva	Billiard table, wings and a large flat-screen TV, around 1530 m ² , a clear pool with a fantastic view of Lake Geneva
Bridge Suite at Atlantis, Bahamas	Ceilings, floors and pillars are richly decorated with gold and marble, on a bridge between the Royal Towers, butler and a cook known for stay of Michael Jackson and Oprah Winfrey
Ritz-Carlton Suite at The Ritz Carlton, Moscow	232 m ² equipped with a library and a grand piano, independent telecommunications and energy supply during emergency.
Royal Suite at Burj Al Arab, Dubai	780 m ² , a private theater and a private
Royal Armleder Suite Le Richemond, Geneva	Floor to ceiling, bulletproof glass 03 bedrooms, a dining room, marble bathroom plus excellent view over Lake Geneva.
Royal suite at the Four Seasons Hotel George V, Paris	245 sq. ft., reminiscent of a royal palace, spacious marble bathroom with steam room, a sauna and a separate dressing room
Imperial Suite at Park Hyatt Vendôme, Paris	250 m ² , excellent view of the city, spa tub, a steam room and a private massage table on the square meters of living space.

Source: Author's compilation

While no classification scheme in the world has the practice of exceeding 5* Deluxe level, some developers have set up properties presumably defying the levels of official prescriptions of quality. However, the critics would argue that a seven-star accommodation should afford a level beyond luxury with comforts beyond the wildest dreams of what was possible in a five star. Since there is no such standard system in existence to define/measure what accounts for a 6* or 7* hotel, would it make sense? Then, what can be observed is that such super-luxury claim has been from the developers and people have been responding for variety of reasons.

Some leading properties promoting 7* hotel concept are Burj Al Arab- Dubai, Emirates Palace- Abu Dhabi, Pangu Seven-star hotel, Beijing and SevenStars Galleria, Milan. Interestingly, world's most expensive suits are not in any of these luxury properties as the table below would reveal. The historic former palace with suites 'enriched with oxygen' scoops top spot in the top 10 best-rated luxury hotels in the world.

It raises a different proposition that while some developers may aim to establish the luxury standards largely uniform for the entire property, Burj Al Arab, Dubai being a case in reference, others may be defining hierarchies of luxury standards within the same property. This situation equally poses challenges of a different nature for classification/rating exercise. But, if the evolving trend is of any indication, super-luxury properties would increase many fold in a short to medium term.

2.11 Major Observations/Findings of UNWTO-lead Studies

For the purpose of this study, reports of the UNWTO and IH&RA (2004) and UNWTO 2014 (a) & (b) respectively were reviewed with an objective to map the trends.

2.11.A: UNWTO & IH&RA Joint Study- 2004

This study revolved around two major objectives: a). to achieve transparency on existing hotel classification schemes and policies; b). to bring into focus the implications of the present situation in order to guide governments and industry in any further action they may wish to undertake in this area. Questionnaires were mailed to 145 member countries and 68 national associations (private sector). Major findings the joint study are furnished at Table-2.5.

In another study of UNWTO (2004), it was found that of countries that it has examined, 70 have Official Classification System for Hotels under the aegis of the Public Sector agencies. The bodies involved in devising and drafting classification are also by and large from the public sector.

Table-2.5: Aspects of Hotel Classification (UNWTO-2004)

Aspects of hotel classification	Response Pattern/ Trend
Existence of the scheme	Official scheme: 83 countries
	Official scheme covering hotels, apartment hotels, motels and inns: 23 countries
Purpose of classification	Used to control or monitor accommodation tariffs: 23 countries
	Used as basis for application of government taxes such as VAT: 13 countries
	The private sector considers no link between classification and the social obligations imposed on employers
Bodies most involved in devising & drafting classification scheme	National Tourism Administrations (NTA's) with other government officials: 49 countries
	National hotel associations: 49 countries; but rarely alone and generally when consulted by government authorities
	System based on another country (usually neighboring ones):41 countries
Applicability of Classification	Mandatory for all establishments: 46 countries
	Needed to obtain a license to operate: 55 countries
	Can operate without being classified: 32 countries
On setting up national or regional scheme	Advisable to those with the necessary tools to do so. But for this, it is imperative to devise appropriate methodology taking into account cultural differences as they relate to services and facilities, markets and purpose of travel.
Other forms of classification	Major Tour Operators often rate hotels according to their own criteria
	Electronic distribution channels (CRS, GDS etc.) are typically devised for the benefit of the travel professionals/agents
Major rating systems-symbols	Star-based system is most widely used across the world
	Others are diamonds, crowns etc.
	In some cases, a combination of both

Table- 2.6: Official Classification System in Different Countries- (UNWTO 2004)

		No. of Countries & sector		
		Public sector	Private sector	Total
Type of accommodation	Official Classification System for Hotels	70	26	83
	Classification System for Apartment Hotels	43	17	51
	Classification System for Motels	49	19	56
Bodies involve in devising and drafting classification	An expert NTA/NTO official	33	05	36
	A Team of NTA/NTO and other Government officials	43	14	49
	A Private International Consultant	12	07	16
	On the basis of another country's classification system	36	08	41
	By revising previous system	48	05	49

It was further revealed that in 43 countries, it was mandatory for all establishments to have classification to operate. Further, in 32 countries, establishments can operate without being classified.

Table- 2.7: Applicability of classification in the countries- UNWTO-2004

	No. of Countries
Mandatory for all establishments to have classification to operate	46
Necessary to obtain a license/permission/registration to operate	55
Establishments can operate without being classified	32

Further, the study also reported that:

- Some respondents have reported relationship between classification and room rates, whereas for some others, its relation is with the taxation.
- Rationale for 'classification' are many viz. consumer concerns, promoting quality, a marketing tool, help monitoring the development in the sector and to a large extent, promote investment and establish compatibility with classification in other countries.
- Response pattern suggest that the verification/visit to the property is made on an announced date. It is also becoming a common practice of 'mystery checks'. As regards to frequency of visit/updating, the pattern is mixed and between 01 to 05 years.
- Many respondents reported the national tourism authority as agency mandated with classification.
- In most countries, classification is mandated by the tourism law.

The study recommends that the public sector must ensure minimum standards of safety and hygiene. Role of the private sector must be to meet the consumer's demand for better and more transparent information on both products and destinations. Consistent usage of recognized and harmonized terminologies is key considered as key to some of the fundamental issues of classification. Debate on the imperative of classification is progressing within the sector. What is being put forward is that tourism must be able to consolidate its diversity, and not seek uniformity, in order to remain sustainable. Failing this, any attempt at regional and even global

harmonization of what can only be voluntary systems would, under the guise of clarification, merely end up creating more confusion.

2.11.B: UNWTO & Norwegian Accreditation Study ON Most Recurring Criteria

This joint study published in February 2015 was an attempt to document the recurrence of criteria catalogue in the classification of 4 star and 5 star hotels across the countries in the world. A total of 34 national systems, of which 30 from Europe and four other countries to represent major regions viz. USA, Australia, South Africa and India; were examined. Results emerged thereof reveal that there exists a multitude of official hotel classification systems across the globe, varying in terms of criteria, management and monitoring. But, all these essentially meant serving the same primary and crucial purpose of providing information on a product that is often purchased/listed sight unseen. It also notes that multiplicity of systems can be a challenge to all stakeholder types, especially the consumers/guests.

Specific to the criteria catalogues, it reports more similarities than differences, though differences are more prominent among individual destinations and regions. The 'room' is the top cluster in terms of proportion of criteria across all destinations. When it comes to most recurring criteria in 5 star catalogues, there is little to no difference in their recurrence in 4 star catalogues. In general, criteria in 5 star criteria catalogues are also reflected to some extent in 4 star catalogues in the vast majority of cases.

But, a major area of concern is the little focus on accessibility in the classification schemes, particularly for the guests with reduced mobility, which reportedly has a low recurrence of 26%. The study also reveals that:

- While classification system exists in many leading destination countries, it is largely voluntary and the hotels can operate without being classified.
- While assessment covers a variety of parameters, most prominent ones are connected to the room, followed by bathroom/F&B/ services/front desk.

As regards to assessment method, approaches are different, so are the agencies for assessment as can be seen in the table below. Criteria are also found many in numbers and varied, covering most functions of the hotels though relative significance vary in the assessment procedure.

Table: 2.8: Assessment Method in Some Selected Countries

Countries	Assessment method
India	➤ The assessment concentrates on the presence or absence of the elements
	➤ Self-assessment and assessment by the Hotel and Restaurant Approval and Classification Committee (HRACC)
Australia	➤ Criteria portfolios: Facilities, Services, Cleanliness, Quality and Condition
	➤ Each area is weighted to reflect importance to the guest
	➤ Cleanliness and quality level of the elements are included
	➤ Within same property, Primary, Split and Multiple ratings are allowed subject to meeting of the criteria
	➤ Online reputation scores are presented in parallel to star ratings since 2015
Germany	➤ Criteria portfolios: Quality management, Wellness, Sleeping, Accommodation
	➤ Assessment concentrates on presence or absence of elements
Portugal	➤ Assessment is based on presence or absence of the elements
	➤ Self-assessment, then inspection by the National Tourist Board
South Africa	➤ Self-assessment followed by formal assessment of TGCSA
	➤ Quality level of the elements is included
USA	➤ Criteria portfolios: Those reflecting evolving industry trends and guest expectations

Countries	Assessment method
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ For 4 & 5 diamond ratings:- Reservation, Arrival and Check-in, Evening Housekeeping, Room Service, Departure Services ➤ Quality level of the elements is included ➤ Hotels qualifying for 5 Diamonds are subject to a series of unannounced visits to assess the guest services/ hospitality including an overnight stay
Italy	➤ Implemented by the regional authorities
Spain	➤ Implemented by the regional governments
United Kingdom	➤ The quality level of the elements is included
	➤ In addition to assessing the star rating, Professional assessors provide detailed reports for the operators and offer advice
France	➤ Implemented by the regional prefectures
Poland	➤ Implemented by the national government
Sweden	➤ Implemented by the Hotel Restaurant Association
<p>All the classification systems consist of three basic components: criteria for each rating; the assessment process and the communication of the rating or the nomenclature.</p>	

Source: UNWTO, 2015

Table-2.9: Salient Features of Classification Schemes for Hotels

Country	Implementing agency	Classification Nomenclature	No. of criteria	Inspection Frequency
India	Ministry of Tourism and Hotel Associations	1 to 5 Stars plus Five Star Deluxe	144	05 years
Australia	AA Tourism on behalf of Australian Auto Club	1 to 5 Stars	216	Frequent
Germany	National hotel associations under HotelStars Union	1 to 5 Stars plus a "Superior" award where standards are just short of the next highest rating. A Garni is awarded for hotels only offering breakfast.	270	03 years
Portugal	National Tourist Board	1 to 5 Stars	139	04 years
South Africa	Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA)	1 to 5 Stars	947	Annual
USA	American Automobile Association (AAA)	1 to 5 Diamonds	199	Frequent
Italy	Regional Authorities	1 to 5 Stars plus "5* L" for deluxe	55	Depends on Region
Spain	Regional Governments	1 to 5 Stars and 5 star Deluxe	261	Only initial and when change of ownership
United Kingdom	Quality Tourism on behalf of Visit England System, Visit Scotland, Visit Wales and Visit Northern Ireland	1 to 5 Stars	468	Annual
France	National Govt. registration and Classification implemented through regional prefecture	1 to 5 Stars and Palace for 5 star only	246	05 years

Country	Implementing agency	Classification Nomenclature	No. of criteria	Inspection Frequency
Poland	National Government	1 to 5 Stars	52	02 years
Sweden	An independent branch of the Hotel and Restaurant Association	1 to 5 Stars & superior level for 2-5 stars. Garni 1-4 star hotels only serving breakfast.	270	Annual

Source: UNWTO, 2015

As stated above, around 49 out of 83 countries having official classification that UNWTO examined in one of its studies, reportedly has their respective National Tourism Administrations (NTA's) as the agency entrusted with the hotel inspection and classification. In many advanced countries, the industry/professional associations undertake the inspection and accord classification, wherein, some of those also follow a vigorous misery guest evaluation/assessment. The classification criteria catalogue is also very exhaustive with S. Africa on the top with 941 in numbers though it is more of exceptional. Usually, evaluation of 150 to 300 criteria are commonly followed practice.

As regards to rating symbol, most commonly reported scheme is Star rating, followed by Diamond rating. Highest official rating is 5* Deluxe, which is usually assigned to those hotel properties maintaining a very high quality of the services and provisions. With the expanding diversity in the accommodation offerings, rating of condominiums, apartment hotels, palaces, resorts, camping sites etc. have also become common practices.

2.12 HOTELSTARS.EU Survey on Hotel Customer Needs

In December 2013, HOTELSTARS.EU has published the results of an online guest survey with view of improving the Criteria Catalogue 2015-19 for classification of the hotels. Its thrust was on finding what were guests really satisfied/not satisfied and the 'must-haves' and major attractions. It was concluded that the future of the harmonised classification would depend on mainly two factors: involvement of international tendencies and; involvement of future guest expectations. This would also necessitate harmonisation of the objective and subjective criteria as well as the guest reviews in the classification schemes.

The results suggest that the hotel guests potentially not satisfied are generally on account of in-room connectivity, range and quality of services in hotel restaurants, quality and size of the bed and overall appearance of the sports and spa facilities (if present) in descending order of satisfaction. As regards to the attractions and must-haves' for classification, pattern emerged were furnished at Table-2.10.

What is noticeable is that the features such as adequate complaint handling mechanism, barrier-free access, in-room internet/Wi-Fi recur along with many other 'must-have' provisions from 2-Star hotel and above clearly indicate the requirement of the emerging hotel guests. Guests are also expecting faster check-in and check-out handling especially in higher rated hotels.

Table-2.10: Top Attractions and 'Must-haves' for Hotel Classification- HOTELSTARS.EU Survey, Dec.2013

Sr. No	Top 10 attractions	Top 10 must-haves
1	Bath-tub (incl. shower) in bathroom	Radio programmes in room
2	Bed width is at least 200 cm	Iron facilities in room
3	Guest recognition system	Wired internet in room
4	Information on hotel services in room	Safety
5	Water boiler, tea and coffee in room	Barrier-free accessibility
6	Daily newspaper/magazines	Complaints handled adequately
7	Toilet separated from bath-room	Mini-bar in room
8	Info. about the destination	Telephone in room
9	Vanity mirror in bathroom	Meeting/conf. facilities
10	Spa facilities	Bed width of at least 160 CM

Similarly, digital availability of information on hotel services in the rooms is reported as equally attractive attribute for hotel classification from 2-Star upward also point to the technology-driven guests and their expectations.

2.13 FHRAI on Hotel Classification

There are differing views on hotel classification among major stakeholders in India and that as revealed in the November 2013 issue of FHRAI Magazine. As

far as government position goes, classification brings in the national and international standards and tells the consumer what to expect. However, the system in India is voluntary in nature as the major national and international brands may not require though it but could be crucial for smaller hotel groups. It endeavors to make the system consumer focused and responsive to stakeholders.

Even the members of Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Association of India (FHRAI) maintain divergent views on classification, but in general, it is considered as positive yardstick, relevant and beneficial. Further, the official version is that:

- Some State Governments impose higher property taxes and fixing higher minimum wages for 4- and 5-star hotels, as compared to hotels which are not classified. Thus, the hotels opting classification is put to encounter accrual of diminishing benefits as compared to those establishments not opting for it.
- Ministry of Tourism may work closely with all stakeholders and put in place a streamlined mechanism which can incentivize and encourage the establishments in the unorganized hospitality segment.
- Classification criteria must take into account contemporary trends, best practices, rapid changes in consumer tastes and preferences, etc. instead of a disproportionate focus on physical amenities and infrastructure. Due weightage is to be given to key intangibles such as safety, hygiene, innovation, service excellence and customer feedback.
- Hotels get exposure through the DoT website as a classified hotel worldwide which is a big advantage, i.e., free publicity, besides raising the confidence level.
- Compliance to energy saving methods adopted by the hotels as part of classification would help better savings in the long-run.

Some in the hotel industry holds that classification is a deterrent and a regulation that the industry requires, and that has to be through a nodal agency like the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. Other broad patters that can be observed are:

- ✓ Opting out of classification is not necessary, though many hoteliers do so because they do not want to be regulated or regimented.
- ✓ Classification should be left to the professional bodies like FHRAI and hold that 'in all of Europe and North America, classification is done only by the Associations', though that is not the case. For, countries in those regions follow different mechanisms as reported in this study.
- ✓ At a time when the brands and online distribution channels hold the key, classification does not make sense. Its perceived benefits are almost nil and increasingly being seen as an unnecessary additional expense.
- ✓ The present classification process needs to be further modified on the basis of the hotel's size, location, service levels, guest facilities, comforts, safety, hygiene, luxury and the like.

2.14 Travel Intermediaries on Hotel Classification

Present classification scheme ensures that hotels are reviewed and rated on specific crucial parameters (November 2013 issue of FHRAI Magazine). Further,

- ❖ Classification creates a clear and standardised metric, more so government-approved, is an invaluable tool for us to market hotels in India. This, in turn, also proves to be of value to customers in selection of the type/budget of hotel while assessing the availability of facilities and services they can expect during their stay.
- ❖ Talking about whether classified hotels are up to the standard of the star level that they represent, he said,
- ❖ Almost all luxury hotels are classified. However, most of the unclassified budget hotels, clearly do not meet basic standards of service. This is an area of concern.

Classified hotels have to publish their tariff rates and the luxury tax is charged on this rate card. But, 1, 2 and 3-star hotels, non-classified hotels etc. evade this.

2.15 Major Limitations of Classification Schemes

Review of different hotel classification schemes provide to summarise the major issues and criticisms associated with the classification process and the major ones are furnished below.

- The diversity in the accommodation offerings, especially intermediate/supplementary categories across the world.
- Due to various reasons of cultural and commercial in nature, evolving a uniform global hotel classification scheme is not tenable and that can lead to service delivery gaps and eventual dissatisfaction among the guests.
- In many cases, the services offered in a hotel need not correspond to its star rating and prices which adversely affect the guest expectation. Similarly, many hotel establishments do not properly communicate their offer of services against the price.
- The thrust of classification is quantitative and tangible aspects of the establishments due to ease of measurement and control, whereas, the guest satisfaction is determined largely by the intangible attributes and that is sparsely documented. However, the later has already been brought in to the ambit of assessment scheme by a couple of countries by way of factoring the guest feedback for awarding classification.
- Official star classification schemes across the world have 5* Deluxe as uppermost category. But, some super luxury hotel establishments promote itself as 6-star and 7-star hotels even though no such official classification is in existence at present. This often causes confusion as how these are different from official classification scheme.
- The emerging trend reveals that the established international and national hotel chains often choose to communicate the standards through its brand-image and not depending much based on official classification. The travel intermediaries and distribution channels viz. central reservation systems (CRS) and online travel agents (OTA's) also devise their own schemes based on the price, location, brand etc.

As it emerges, hotel rating and classification is becoming more and more complex especially on account of a fast diversifying consumer universe, their

stretching of expectations and choices, coupled with the rapid technological transformations being underway. Technology has particularly assumed significant roles in defining motivational predispositions and choices. These necessitates the classification schemes to be dynamic and to have a frequent assessment reclassification mechanism in place.

2.16 Top-rated Hotels in India

Around 40% of total classified hotels in India are either 5* or 4* and that indicates the size of luxury hotel segment in the country. An attempt was also made to figure out the top-rated hotels and most expensive ones on the basis of room tariff in India. A recent Conde Nast rating of the hotels based on the guest feedback was used infer the best hotels and it shows that the erstwhile palace-turned hotels are the best ones. When it comes to room tariff also, the top rated luxury hotels also emerged to be the most expensive hotels as well (Annexure-III).

III. An Overview of Major Hotel Classification Schemes

Hotel classification is an intricate exercise encompassing a variety of tangible and intangible elements and process that are subject to scrutiny of varied nature and in different levels. But what makes it challenging are mainly two. Firstly, the fast changing notion of quality as being visualised by both the customers and the suppliers, even though most often, it is the supply-side of

Case Box-3.1: Measurable Criteria for Hotel Classification Reported in Most Regions

- ✓ Room size
- ✓ Bathroom size
- ✓ Bed size
- ✓ Number of power sockets in the room
- ✓ Number of bathroom amenities
- ✓ Number of towels provided and the duration of front-office functioning
- ✓ Room service.

tourism that set the quality standards and prescriptions in motion. Secondly, the diversity in hospitality traditions at the regional level and often those forming it as part of the classification and branding schemes. What is also being observed is that the tangible prescriptions are controllable and easier to evaluate whereas the intangibles pose the biggest challenge owing to its hugely subjective nature.

I. Trends in Classification Schemes and the Process

A plethora of attributes/criteria catalogues in use for the classification of tourist accommodation is a reflection of this complex procedure. Every aspect of the hospitality function viz. room, bathroom, F&B service, hotel services, access, communication and even the building design/aesthetic dimensions is cross-examined as prerequisite for the rating (Table-3.1).

Table-3.1: Nature of Classification and Main Criteria Catalogues for 4 & 5 Star Hotels in Selected Countries

Countries	Nature of classification	Top 3 Criteria catalogues (In order of importance)
India	Voluntary	a). Room; b). F&B; c). Services
South Africa	Voluntary	a). Room; b). F&B; c). Services
United Kingdom	Voluntary	a). Room; b). F&B; c). Services
Australia	Voluntary	a). Room; b). Bathroom; c). Services
Germany	Voluntary	a). Room; b). Bathroom; c). Services
Portugal	Voluntary	a). Room; b). Bathroom; c). F&B
Sweden	Voluntary	a). Room; b). Bathroom; c). Services
USA	Voluntary	a). Room; b). Bathroom; c). Services
Poland	Mandatory	a). Room; b). Bathroom; c). Services
Spain	Mandatory	a). Room; b). Bathroom; c). Services
France	Voluntary	a). Room; b). Front desk; c). Services
Italy	Mandatory	a). Room; b). Front desk; c). Services

Source: UNWTO, 2015

UNWTO reports that among the criteria catalogues, room features are the most recurring aspect in all classification schemes, followed by bathrooms. Other frequently recurring criteria are F&B service and the hotel services. Interestingly, the said study does not mention about availability of swimming pool in the hotel as part of the catalogue. As regards to India, most frequented criteria are the room with F&B and hotel services figuring in descending order. In many other countries like the US, Australia, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Poland and Sweden, bathroom figured next to room category, whereas in France and Italy, it emerges to be front-desk. The measurable criteria reported across the regions are furnished in the case box below (Case Box-3.1).

As regards to measurable dimensions, single-room size stipulations in Europe can be seen comparatively smaller for both 4-Star and 5-Star hotels as compared to global average, whereas, it is almost similar for double room in 5-Star category (Table-3.2). In contrary, double room size in Europe is comparatively bigger.

Table-3.2: Measurable Criteria in 4 & 5 star Hotels

Criteria	4 Star		5 Star	
	In Europe	Global	In Europe	Global
Room size single room	12.5 m ²	14 m ²	14.8 m ²	18 m ²
Room size double room	18 m ²	16 m ²	20.9 m ²	20.5 m ²
Bed size- single bed	92x200 cm	92x200 cm	92x200 cm	92x200 cm
Bed size- double bed	163x200 cm	163x200 cm	177x200 cm	177x200 cm
Number of power sockets in room	1.8	2.8	2.0	2.8
Suite requirement	-	Min. 1	-	Min. 2
Bathroom size	Compulsory	3.4 m ²	Compulsory	4 m ²
Number of bathroom amenities	3.68 units	-	5.21 units	-
Number of towels per person	2.3 towels	2.2 towels	2.3 towels	2.4 towels
Front Office operation	21 hours	19 hours	23.5 hours	24 hours
Language skills front of house	2 languages	2 languages	2.5 languages	2.3 languages
Room service operation	16 hrs.	16 hrs.	23.5 hrs.	24 hrs.
Number of floors before lift is required	1.9 floors	1.8 floors	1.4 floors	1.8 floors

Source: UNWTO, 2014

It was also observed that the requirement of power sockets, bathroom towel, front-office operations, languages skill required room service across the star categories in both regions were also found by and large of comparable in nature.

3.1 Salient Features of Classification Schemes in Selected Countries

When some popular country destinations examined, it was found the classification system operating at different levels. In some countries, it was at the national level whereas in some other countries, it was at regional/provincial levels (Tabel-3.3).

Table- 3.3: Level of Official Classification System in Selected Countries

Country	Official system	Level
Canada	Yes	Provincial ; each province as different practice
France	Yes	National
Germany	Yes	National (operated by DEHOGA)
India	Yes	HRACC
Italy	Yes	Regional/provincial
Malaysia	Yes	Government (Ministry of Culture Arts and Tourism)
South Africa	Yes	National
Spain	Yes	Regional/provincial
Switzerland	Yes	National; (SWISS Hotel Association under Private Law)
UAE	Yes	Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing
The UK	Yes	National
United States	No	NA

Source: UNWTO, 2004

Many countries have the classification scheme for hotels and other supplementary establishments like Apartment hotels, Motels, Inns etc. In many of those, classification authority is the national or provincial level public sector agencies (Table-3.4).

Table-3.4: Classification System for Accommodation in Selected Countries

Country	Accommodation Units Covered	Classification Authority	Graphical Symbol
Brazil	Hotels	Embratur, National Consulting and Regional Committees	Stars
Canada	Hotel; Apartment hotels; Motels; Inns	NA	Diamonds
Chile	NA	National Tourism Board	NA
France	Hotels; Apartment hotels; Tourism Residences	DGCCRF	Stars
Germany	Hotel; Apartment hotels; Motels; Inns	DEHOGA in corporation with Regional Tourism Association	Stars
Italy	Hotel; Apartment hotels; Motels; Inns	Provincial Government	Stars
Malaysia	Hotel; Motels; Inns	Ministry of Culture, Arts, Tourism	Stars
South Africa	Hotel; Motels; Inns	Tourism Grading Council of South Africa	Stars
Spain	Hotel; Apartment hotels; Motels; Inns	Regional Government Authority	Stars
Switzerland	Hotel; Apartment hotels; Motels; Inns	5 Regional and 1 National Commission all bodies of SHA	Stars
United Arab Emirates	Hotel; Apartment hotels; Guest Houses	Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing	Stars
United Kingdom	Hotel; Motels; Inns	Tourism England	Stars

Source: UNWTO, 2004

In leading countries like France Germany, UK, Italy, Canada, USA and the like, Classification is not mandatory. Establishments are allowed to function without being classified and also obtaining without necessary permissions/ license/ registration to operate in many of those countries (Table-3.5).

Tabel-3.5: Applicability of Hotel Classification in Selected Countries

Country	Whether Classification is Mandatory	Allow to function without being classified	Necessary to obtain permissions/ license/registration to operate
Brazil	No	Yes	No
Canada	Varies from Province to Province		
Chile	No	Yes	-
France	No	Yes	No
Germany	No	Yes	No
Italy	Yes	No	-
Malaysia	Yes	No	Yes
South Africa	No	Yes	Yes
Spain	Yes	No	Yes
Switzerland	Yes, for SHA Members	No	Yes
UAE	Yes	No	Yes
The UK	No	Yes	No

Source: UNWTO, 2004

In some selected countries, agency verifying compliance of hotel classification system are government agencies, whereas, there are also countries where it is a combination of both the government, industry bodies and/or independent assessors (Tabel-3.6). Many leading country destinations also have the system of independent (Third Party) inspectors.

Tabel-3.6: Agency Verifying Compliance of Hotel Classification System in Selected Countries

Country	Basis of establishing classification scheme	Verification Agency
Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ State Constitution ➤ Tourism Law ➤ Agreement between Government Bodies Concerned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Central Government Inspectors ➤ Local Government Inspectors ➤ Hotel Industry (Second Party) Inspectors ➤ Independent (Third Party) Inspectors ➤ Authorities of Fire and Health Departments
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ State Constitution ➤ Agreement between Government Bodies Concerned ➤ Government Recommendation 	Independent (Third Party) Inspectors
Chile	Tourism Law	NA
France	Tourism Law	Local Government Inspectors
Germany	Decision (ad hoc) decision of a National Hotel Association	Hotel Industry (Second Party) Inspectors
Italy	Tourism Law	Local Government Inspectors
Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tourism Law ➤ State Constitution ➤ Agreement between Government Bodies Concerned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Central Government Inspectors ➤ Local Government Inspectors ➤ Hotel Industry (Second Party) Inspectors ➤ Independent (Third Party) Inspectors <p>(Authorities of Fire and Health Departments)</p>
South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tourism Law ➤ Recommendation in a Governments-Adopted Tourism Development Plan 	Hotel Industry (Second Party) Inspectors

Country	Basis of establishing classification scheme	Verification Agency
Spain	Tourism Law	Local Government Inspectors
Switzerland	Prerogative/Declared objective of a Nat. Hotel Association	Hotel Industry (Second Party) Inspectors
United Arab Emirates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tourism Law ➤ State Constitution ➤ Recommendation in a Governments-Adopted Tourism Development Plan 	Local Government Inspectors
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ NTA Compliance ➤ Government recommendation 	Independent (Third Party) Inspectors

Source: UNWTO, 2004

The verification was found conducted mostly on announced and fixed date, whereas, many countries also have mystery check and reviews. Again, in some countries, cost of verification is born by Hotel Company Concerned and in some others; it is by the government/ verifying authority (Tabel-3.7).

Tabel-3.7: Mode of Verification for Classification/Reclassification in Selected Countries

Country	Announced on fixed date	Mystery Checks	Agency Bearing Verification Cost
Brazil	Yes	-	Hotel Company Concerned
Canada	Yes (Except for 5*)	Yes (Except for 5*)	Hotel Company Concerned
Chile	Yes	NA	National Tourism Administration
France	NA	Yes	Hotel Company Concerned
Germany	Yes	NA	Hotel Company Concerned (Classification Fees)
Italy	Yes	-	Verifying Authority
Malaysia	Yes	Yes	Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism Malaysia
South Africa	Yes	-	Hotel Company Concerned
Spain	-	Yes	Verifying Authority

Country	Announced on fixed date	Mystery Checks	Agency Bearing Verification Cost
Switzerland	Yes	NA	SWISS Hotel Association
United Arab Emirates	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Verifying Authority ➤ Hotel Company Concerned
United Kingdom	NA	Yes	Hotel Company Concerned

Source: UNWTO, 2004

When it comes to frequency of classification system updation and hotel verification, it was largely on a year-on-year basis. Some countries had it on three year intervals and in few countries, it was five years (Tabel-3.8).

Tabel-3.8: Frequency of Hotel Classification System Updation and Hotel Verification in Selected Countries

Country	Frequency of Updating Classification System	Periodicity of Verification
Brazil	-	Every Year
Canada	Every Year	Every Year
Chile	Quarterly (Registered and Classified Establishments)	Once upon registration
France	NA	Occasionally
Germany	After 4-5Years, Criteria are checked and updated to market needs	Every 3 years
Italy	-	When Characteristics change
Malaysia	Every 3 Years	Every 3 Years
South Africa	-	Every Year
Spain	-	Every Year
Switzerland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Information-Every Year ➤ Standards of Class- Every 5 Years 	Every 5 Years
UAE	Every Year/When changes are announced at a hotel	Every Year/When asked by the establishment for classification
United Kingdom	Every Year	Every Year

Source: UNWTO, 2004

Another aspect worth noting was the rationale and use of Government classification. First and foremost was reportedly being its justification on account of consumer concerns but it was not used in those countries as a tool to control accommodation tariff. Some countries also reportedly seek compatibility of Classification schemes with the schemes in other countries (Tabel-3.9).

Tabel-3.9: Rationale and Use of Government Classification for Hotels in Selected Countries

Country	Classif. is Justified by Consumer Concerns?	Does it seek compatibility with schemes in other countries?	A tool to control Accommodation Tariff?	Used as a basis for applying taxes?
Brazil	Yes	Yes	No	No
Canada	Yes	Yes, to certain degree (Mobile & CAA/AAA)	-	-
Chile	Yes	-	No	No
France	Yes	No	No	Yes
Germany	Yes	-	No	-
Italy	Yes	Yes	-	-
Malaysia	Yes	Yes	No	No
South Africa	Yes	Yes	No	No
Spain	Yes	Yes	No	No
Switzerland	Yes	-	Yes	-
United Arab Emirates	Yes	-	No	-
United Kingdom	Yes	-	No	-

Source: UNWTO, 2004

II. Major Observation on the Classification Systems in Countries Selected for this Study

The major classification Schemes in the world considered for detailed examination in the study were the U.S (AAA), VisitEngland, Australia (AAA), Abu Dhabi, South Africa, HotelStar.EU and Malaysia. Of these, the Australian Scheme stipulation are not star category-specific because of which its comparison with Indian scheme was not found methodologically tenable. Hence, Australian case was not dealt star-wise but the broad framework has been attempted here.

3.2.A: AAA System of Classification in the United States

Salient features of USA (AAA) Diamond rating scheme of lodging establishments is furnished as per below.

1. AAA classifies lodging establishments in 1 to 5 Diamond rating which is of basic to outstanding classes.
2. Classification scheme comprises two distinct components, the first is 'Approval Requirements' are uncompromising mandatory standards or criterion; the second component of the scheme is 'Diamond Rating Guidelines' are somewhat flexible parameters but which can help property in getting a particular Diamond rating.
3. *Approval Requirements* are basic necessities in the following areas;
 - a. Cleanliness and condition
 - b. Management and style of operation
 - c. Exterior and public areas
 - d. Guest rooms
 - e. Guest bathrooms
4. *Diamond Rating guidelines*
 - a. One diamond– Budget-oriented, Basic comfort (minimum or maintained good)
 - b. Two diamond – affordable with modestly enhanced facilities (good)

- c. Three diamond– Distinguished, multifaceted with enhanced physical attributes, amenities and guest comforts (Very good)
 - d. Four diamond– redefined, stylish and upscale physical attributes, high degree of hospitality (excellent)
 - e. Five diamond– Ultimate luxury, sophistication and comfort, (outstanding).
5. The Scheme equally weigh the following areas during assessment and the standards increases as the property ascends in the ratings (Indian scheme has less focuses on these parameters)
- a. Building structure, design and exterior appeal
 - b. Landscaping
 - c. Main entrance
6. Even though both the US and Indian schemes have many similarities in terms of criteria employed, AAA rating is more comprehensive and the standard and facilities and services weighed during the assessment.
7. AAA system adequately emphasis on the amenities in guestrooms and guest bathrooms. Points can be gained by offering additional attributes at guest room and bathrooms to enhance the guest comfort.

3.2.B: VisitEngland System

Since 2006, England has shared a “Common Standard” for all with the AA, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. All hotels in the UK are assessed on the same criteria and awarded one to five stars. Visit England, Visit Scotland, Visit Wales and Northern Ireland Tourist Board assess annually against the national Hotel Standard by professional assessors. Salient features of the Scheme are:

- Overall, 09 key areas are assessed and scores awarded within each of the key areas. When the scores are totaled, the assessed property will have an overall percentage score that will place it within one of the five different Star rating bands. However, in order to conform a particular star rating, the scores awarded within each of the key areas also need to fall within that band or higher. Assessors are trained for awarding

scores against national benchmarks in an objective and consistent manner.

- Each of the sub criteria are assigned scores out of maximum 05 points and then the total scores of the key areas are calculated to derive the percentage points for the key areas. Accordingly, all the nine key areas are taken into consideration and the lowest score category shall be the star rating awarded. The key areas and criteria are furnished at Annexure-IV.

3.2.C: AAA System of Australian Classification

The star classification of hotels in Australia is undertaken by STARRATINGS AUSTRALIA, located at Melbourne. It is a standalone standard accreditation division of Australian Motoring Services, a wholly owned subsidiary of Australian Auto Clubs (AAA). The Scheme details are:

- A three-year property review cycle for the award of the star ratings to the hotels.
- Starratings Australia has alliances with peak industry associations and works for the promotion and development of the star classified hotels. It has an Aus. \$ 1 million dollar budget for promotion of star ratings in Australia.
- For ratings, consumer complaints and dispute redresses Starratings Australia has a system of mystery guests. To verify quality standard by qualified specialists also, the mystery guests are used.
- For the delivery of a flexible, relevant and equitable ratings scheme for consumers and accommodation operators; a range of allowances are made to take into account geographical locations, local, state/ territory or Common wealth laws or unique property attributes.
- For the disputes arising out of the rating system, Starratings Australia in consultation with Accommodation Association of Australia (AAoA) have established an independent panel of commercial accommodation sector experts who review star ratings disputes on a quarterly basis.

- For star ratings, a system of scores is adopted in Australia. Star ratings are awarded according to the score earned in three key areas of assessment:

Table-3.10: Areas of Assessment- Australian AAA Scheme

Sr. No	Areas of assessment	Minimum rating	Highest rating
1	Quality and condition	Acceptable- 20%	Excellent- 90%
2	Cleanliness	Good- 75%	Excellent- 95%
3	Facilities and Services	Acceptable- 20%	Excellent- 90%

3.2.C.1: Method of Rating

The peculiarity of the Australian system is that there are no minimum requirements specifically stipulated as mandatory for a particular star rating/award. However, the aggregated scores in each of the stipulated area of assessment are considered first and the star rating is accorded basing on the lowest score that a particular property has accrued against any of the three components of assessment. The table below shows various score requirements for the key areas for the award of different Star ratings in Australia:

Table-3.11: Australian Scheme- Star Rating and Quality Standards

Star Rating	Quality & Condition	Cleanliness	Facilities & Services
*****	Excellent (90-100%)	Excellent (95-100%)	Excellent (85-100%)
****.	Superior (75-89%)	Very good (85-94%)	Superior (70-84%)
****	Very Good (65-74%)		Very Good (60-69%)
***.	Good (55-64%)		Good (50-59%)
***	Reasonable (45-54%)		
**.	Moderate (35-44%)	Good (75-84%)	Moderate (30-49%)
**	Adequate (30-34%)		
*.	Satisfactory (25-29%)		Acceptable (20-29%)
*	Acceptable (20-24%)		

Further,

- The hotels are evaluated on the basis of more than 200 criteria arranged within above-mentioned three key areas of assessment. The overall percentage scores for the assessment is calculated based on “Consumer Importance Weighting Index” developed by Sustainable Tourism CRC, Victoria University. Each of the key assessment area viz. Facilities and Services, Cleanliness and Quality & Condition are applied while assessing a property- bedrooms, bathrooms, recreational facilities, in-rooms facilities and so on.
- Within each of these aspects, the guests could place greater and lesser value on things that make up their experience. So, within the bedroom, guests place most value on the size of the bed/size of the mattress, followed by bedding and window coverings/privacy (Annexure-V).

For the categories, maximum rank and values are assigned and for various sub-categories quality guidelines are also used. Quality guidelines vary between satisfactory, moderate, very good and excellent.

3.2.D: Hotel Classification System Abu Dhabi

In Abu Dhabi, the licensing and classification department under Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA) carries out the assessment and grant the star rating. The classification system is being reviewed and upgraded every two years with the help of the industry. Further,

- All the parameters are classified into mandatory and rating criteria standards.
- It follows the scoring system where a maximum score of 900. The minimum eligibility to grant a 5-Star rating is 800 points, 4-Star is 700 points, 3-Star 600 points, 2-Star is 500 points and for 1-Star 400 points.
- There are mandatory minimum requirements and those do not carry any points.
- Maximum allocation of points is for the accommodation (46%) followed by guest services (23%), infrastructure (22%) and restaurants (9%).

The Classification Scheme

After inspection for classification/renewal, the gathered data will be fed into the e-CS (e-classification system) and the report generated with respect to the gaps found in the establishment assessed, both in mandatory and scoring criteria. The system allows a timeframe for implementation planning depending on the quantum/type of gaps reported so as for the property to improve for being eligible.

- Within mandatory and rating criteria standards, elements are again categorized into essential and necessary so as to decide on the time frame.
- There are different types of inspection conducted by ADTA including spot checks or inspections after getting complaints.
- A well-established customer communication system in force where the guests can register their complaints about their hotel stay through e-CS or mail/writing etc. and normally acknowledged within a day.
- There exist a highly developed IT enabled e-classification system in Abu Dhabi which help in classification. There is also a website providing information for new investors and an intranet for existing hoteliers and ADTA. ADTA gives training in e system to hoteliers.
- As regards to mandatory minimum requirements, very few differences can be observed across the hotel categories when compared to other countries. This enables a 1-Star hotel in Abu Dhabi of a higher standard than same starred hotel in other countries.
- 10% of the rooms are designated as smoking in a separate area while 5% connecting rooms are mandatory from 3-Star to 5-Star properties.
- Hard evidence of undertaking full cleaning and its Schedules are required to be produced for all categories.
- Electronic key card, Concierge service etc. are mandatory for 4 & 5 star.
- The number of elevators are specified based on the number of rooms. (min. 2 for <45 and every 30 or more units is +1).
- Annual training plan for all staff are compulsory and with proof to be produced in support of the claim.

- The rating criteria are: level of cleanliness, quality, material, décor, style, construction, spaciousness, entertainment facility, amenities etc. Scores are specified and assigned based on the level of matching with the requirement. (Eg. Meets all requirements in one criteria- 20% of the score from it)
- Environmental policy of the hotel accrues points.
- Choice of menu, number of restaurants, etc. are taken into account for scoring.
- All signage, menu etc. should have inscriptions in both Arabic and English.

An upgrade of existing system was being planned where a category for exceptional properties which are superior to the normal 5-Star criteria is included and also absorbing the green hotel guidelines into classification system.

3.2.E: Hotel Classification System in South Africa

South Africa follows a system of star rating ranging from 1-Star to 5-Star for the classification of hotel accommodation. The agency awarding the ratings is the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa. The Scheme is developed in such manner that there are certain minimum criteria requirement for applying for the Star ratings, and those are called the 'category entry requirements'. Further,

1. Unique part of classification scheme in South Africa is the facilities/concerns accorded to differently disabled guest. Specification for accessibility has been given against each parameter or inventory from different areas like, public areas (restaurant, dining areas, public toilets, garden, pool) parking, guestroom, bathroom, etc. Clear signage in all the places, ramp, gradient corridors, floorings, roughened surface of floor, height of bed, furniture's, TV, mirror and wash basin, width of doors, has been specifically stated.
2. Each parameter under different areas is assessed on 6-point scale: Unacceptable; Acceptable; Good; Very Good; Excellent; Outstanding. The unacceptable condition of any facility/service carries '0' point,

whereas, outstanding condition of facility/services carries maximum points, which vary depending on the areas of assessment.

The summary of points accrued under different areas of assessment are aggregated, and based the total points thereof, property is assigned particular star category. Details of it may be seen at the following Table-3.12.

Table-3.12: Category Entry Requirements for Star Rating in South Africa

Category of hotel	Category entry requirements
All stars	1. On site availability of representative 24X7
	2. Meals and beverages must be provided from outlets within the boundary walls of the property, outlet may or may not be run by the property
	3. Servicing of rooms, including linen, towel change, removal of rubbish and cleaning to be done all 7 days a week
	4. There should be a formal designated reception area
	5. Bathroom facilities must be en suite
	6. Onsite parking availability with security for guests
	7. Valet service to be availability
	8. Room service must be available
Additional requirements for 4 & 5 Star categories	1. Concierge, portorage and luggage handling
	2. Central business center must be provided
	3. Other miscellaneous services to be provided viz. baby/child minding services, message service, shoe polish, delivery of news papers
	4. Full housekeeping and laundry services provided

The minimum 'category entry requirements' are basic and mandatory in nature for specific hotel categories. But for assigning the Stars, a system of standard grading criteria is adopted, by which, points as admissible are allocated out of a maximum grade-point scale determined for various criteria catalogue. The grades range from outstanding, excellent, very good, good and acceptable but last being unacceptable. Property maintenance is an equally important aspect and enables the property to accrue more points.

The scheme of assessment is very expansive and assessed against ‘standard’ and ‘category specific’ criteria. Total point of assessment is 1000, of which, 53.5% is accounted against ‘standard’ criteria such as building exterior, bedroom, bathroom, public area and general facilities. Remaining weightage is assigned to category-specific criteria like dining facilities, general services and service, housekeeping services, additional facilities and responsible environmental and business practices. Among the category portfolio, bedroom is accorded with highest weightage of 22.8% followed by general service (15.4%), dining facilities (15%) and bathrooms (13.4%).

Table-3.13: Distribution of Weightage for Different Areas of Assessment

Sl. No	Particulars	Criteria weightage (%)	Points
Section 1: Standard Criteria			
1	Building exterior	6.6	___/66
2	Bedrooms	22.8	___/228
3	Bathrooms	13.4	___/134
4	Public areas	8.2	___/82
5	General facilities	2.5	___/25
Final Total Section 1 : Standard Criteria		53.5	___/535
Section 2 : Category specific criteria			
6	Dining facilities	15.0	___/150
7	General services and service	15.4	___/154
8	Housekeeping services	7.0	-___/70
9	Additional facilities	3.2	___/32
10	Responsible environmental and business practices	5.6	___/59
Final Total Section 2 : Category Specific Criteria		46.5	___/465
Final Total Sections 1 & 2 : Standard Criteria		1000	___/1000

Noticeably, South African system has integrated the Universal Accessibility practices adequately for award of star ratings to hotel accommodation.

3.2.F: HotelStar.EU Scheme for Hotel Classification

Hotels, Restaurants & Cafes in Europe (HOTREC), an association of the hotel associations of some European countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Austria etc., has created the *Hotelstars Union*. A common framework for hotel classification in the member countries were established with the objective of moving towards harmonized hotel classification criteria and procedures in the participating countries. It awards the star ratings to the hotels of the member states. Specific features of the Scheme are:

- Hotels are classified from 1 Star to 5 Star and there is a dual criteria system for the star awards:
 1. Certain criteria are mandatory according to the star category and do not carry points and
 2. Certain criteria are non-mandatory but carry points for different star categories.
- In total there are seven broader areas and 270 criteria considered (including mandatory and non-mandatory) for a hotel to be awarded a particular star rating. The seven broader areas of assessment are as under:
 1. General Hotel information
 2. Reception & services
 3. Rooms
 4. Gastronomy
 5. Event facilities (MICE)
 6. Leisure
 7. Quality and online activities
- Apart from the mandatory minimum criteria, a hotel has to score minimum scores in the non-mandatory criteria as well to qualify for an award of a particular Star rating. The minimum mandatory criteria are arranged in 07 broader areas and that vary for different star categories. A broad picture of the rating system may be seen at Annexure-VI.

To qualify for a particular star rating, a property has to acquire minimum points as shown in the Table below. In each star category, a further rating of 'Superior' is given to those properties acquiring higher points within a specific Star category.

Table-3.14: Minimum Points Required for Various Star Categories- HotelStar.EU

Points	1-Star	2-Star	3-Star	4-Star	5-Star
Hotels	90	170	260	400	600
Supplement - Superior	170	260	400	600	700
Minimum point criteria for superior*	45	56	80	101	121
* Over & above the minimum for a particular star rating					

- The accreditation *Superior* indicates excellent hotels having acquired considerable points beyond the threshold points of their category, but that do not comply with the minimum criteria of the next higher category. Such hotels usually offer a higher degree of service. *Superior* is accessible to all hotels and hotel gamis.
- For a *Hotel Gami* – i.e. a hotel with breakfast only, the number of points to be reached is lowered by 20 points in each category and a *hotel gami* cannot obtain a 5-Star rating.
- For quality systems, there exists a system of active and systematic *gathering and evaluation of guest opinions* about the hotels services, analysis of weaknesses, and the realization of improvement.
- Concept of mystery guesting is compulsory criteria for a 4 star superior and above segments.
- Quality management system has to be according to European Hospitality Quality (EHQ), which is the European Hospitality Quality scheme launched by HOTREC, the umbrella association of national trade associations representing hotels, restaurants, cafes and similar establishments in Europe. It serves as a reference model for national and regional quality schemes on European level.

A. Malaysian Scheme for Hotel Classification

Malaysia uses the grading and weightage system to award star ratings to hotels. The hotels are awarded star ratings from 1-Star to 5-Star. There are six key assessment criteria on which the weightages are assigned and a minimum marks prescribed for each category of star hotel, as shown in the tables below:

Table-3.15: Malaysia- Assignment of Weightage and Minimum Requirements for Star Rating of Hotels

Sr. No.	Criteria	No. of questions	Max. points	Weightage (%)	Calculating formula
1	Qualitative & aesthetic requirement	2	20	10	$(PO^*/20) \times 10 =$
2	Common areas	15	150	20	$(PO^*/150) \times 20 =$
3	Bedroom requirement	18	180	20	$(PO^*/180) \times 20 =$
4	Services	13	130	25	$(PO^*/130) \times 25 =$
5	Safety standards & hygiene	8	80	10	$(PO^*/80) \times 10 =$
6	Staff	12	120	15	$(PO^*/120) \times 15 =$

**= points obtained by the hotel in assessment*

Upon assessment, property has to gather the marks, where the one with highest is awarded 5-Star rating, details for which may be seen below (Table-3.16). The key assessment criteria and criteria within the six for the assessment of the property are furnished at Annexure-VII:

Table-3.16: Malaysia- Minimum Requirements for Star Rating of Hotels

Star rating	Marks	Star rating	Marks
5	9-10	2	3-4
4	7-8	1	1-2
3	5-6	-	-

III. Summary

The trend in classification suggests that there exists official classification for tourist accommodation in most countries though it is considered voluntary in many countries, particularly in developed parts of the world. Still, the countries such as Italy, Spain, Poland etc. have made it mandatory for all tourist accommodation establishments. In general, it is mandatory in developing part of the world including in the countries such as Abu Dhabi and Malaysia. As regards to the criteria catalogue, measurable parameters are comparatively less in numbers. The most important criteria catalogue is the guest-room and that carries highest weightage in all schemes, followed by bathrooms/F&B/Front-desk. Major rating symbol is 'Star' and only the US follows 'Diamond' ratings. Further, unlike the Indian scheme, all scheme adopts a methodology of rating the facilities- weightages, point-based or score-based. It is further observed that the cleanliness and hygiene, aesthetics, maintenance, sustainable and environment-friendly practices, staff welfare etc. are also assigned due weightage in the assessment Scheme. Updation of the criteria catalogue and the audit of the properties are also carried out in more frequent intervals ranging between one to three years.

IV. Evaluation of Hotel Classification Schemes in India

At the outset, it was worth to note that the sheer diversity in the types of tourist accommodation offerings and the approach to its classification across the countries and by the international institutions pose palpable challenges in any attempts aimed at comparison of various schemes. As observed already, there have been attempts at behest of the international agencies towards evolving a global bench-marking framework for the purpose of classification but have been shelved half-way as it was considered not tenable and/or sustainable. It was primarily guided by the understanding that a globally bench-marked scheme would not hold good for the nurturing of diverse hospitality traditions, which in itself are major tourist attractions and source of unique guest experiences. Contrary, there is growing realization that such endeavors could only augment the process of standardization of tourist experiences and the eventual loss of the very novelty the tourists are seeking. Moreover, what is considered as the hospitality standards in one culture need not be viewed in similar way in other cultures.

Hence, while dwelling on a plausible methodology for international bench-marking of tourist accommodation classification schemes in India, a major consideration was to factor in the above concerns so that specific traditions and practices were not missed out. Accordingly, the approach here was to first compare and contrast the Indian standards for each star category of hotels against other leading Schemes as identified for comparison in matrix format. This could help identifying, matching as well as mismatching of the attributes/features with the existing scheme in India. This then enabled advancing qualified refinements and integration of the commonly used and relevant parameters with the Indian Schemes so that the Scheme can be further strengthened and internationally bench-marked to become more compatible with the best schemes in the world. While doing so, adequate care was also taken to ensure that specific hospitality traditions and practices in India was not missed out.

It is also noted here that the leading schemes chosen for this study are distinct in many ways. First and foremost is the Classification Scheme itself. For, the

Indian scheme follows a methodology of assessing the presence/absence of the features/inventories for awarding a particular star category rating; whereas other Schemes adopt either a score-based/ rating-based or point-based scheme. In some cases, mere presence of certain features may not qualify for a property for a specific star rating unless the stipulated standards are not fulfilled and the scores not accrued in respective assessment areas. Similarly, there are minimum entry requirements and that cannot be traded off/compromised. In some cases, the property has to gather minimum scores/points for a specific rating. More points can be accrued by adding different provisions and better the prospects including improvement in the rating.

It was further observed that exact matching of the attributes across the schemes may not be tenable owing to differential treatment/description of the attributes. For instance, certain features as observed in Indian scheme may not even find mention in other schemes. This could be attributed to the fact that those may be part of necessary legal and regulatory stipulations and requirements for the property development and its operation, due to which, it need not be required to treat those as necessary part of standards for the hotel classification purpose.

Specific to the assessment methodology, some schemes necessitate engagement of duly qualified professional inspectors to undertake the property verifications and audits independently since that is considered important to ensure reliability of highest levels. There also exists a system of unannounced/mystery guest reviews are also encouraged in certain schemes. In such cases, the assessment report is examined first and the applicant hotel is informed of those thereafter. The assessee is also allowed to represent its case on the assessment outcome if it is found not in tune with its expectation. Such systems permit the scope for refinements needed for a specific star rating. The schemes like AAA of Australia, the UK and HotelStar.EU also have provisions to grant different ratings within a specific star rating.

In general, the Indian scheme is found in sync with most schemes being analyzed but to certain extent. Notably, the areas of assessment such as room & facility for disabled guests, kitchen /food production area, Staff and their welfare provisions, code of conduct for safe & honorable tourism (CCSHT), safety and security as well as communication provisions find elaborate

coverage in the Indian scheme. These are also treated as separate areas of assessment. However, major drawback with Indian scheme is that it is merely descriptive, thereby, defying to capture the quality dimensions of the attributes, though quality is the most defining aspect of the 'service' standards.

Part of data collection, the study team also made personal visits to some hotels in India. Its outcome enables to suggest that many star-rated hotels do provide certain provisions and services over and above the stipulated standards and criteria catalogue meant for a specific Star Rating. But, these can be seen as very much as part of the stipulations of the Schemes analyzed here. Hence, while revisiting the criteria catalogue of India, care was also taken to incorporate all such features in to the proposed scheme. Further, refining of the existing features of the Indian scheme was also attempted with a view to assess those more objectively.

The patterns emerged from the analysis of the matrices, wherein, the criteria catalogue of the Indian scheme was juxtaposed to the selected schemes, have been first delineated and then summarized. The outcomes of this have been discussed in the following section for all five Star rating categories separately to gain better clarity. However, it is also to note here that the parameters furnished are only those which did not figure in the existing Indian scheme and such parameters wanting clarity/elaboration.

4.A Areas of Assessment in the Classification Schemes

In all schemes examined in the study, the areas of assessment found common across all the schemes are the guest rooms, bathrooms, guest services and the food & beverage services. Of these, guest rooms carries the highest weightage, followed by is bathroom, whereas in some schemes like in USA and Australia, about 27% parameters are arranged under the bathroom area. Another common area is guest services, assuming weightage in the range of 9% (Abu Dhabi) to 17% (South Africa) in the total criteria catalogue. However, it is worth noting that F&B service carries highest weightage in VisitEngland scheme, but in other cases, its numbers are very less. Other assessment criteria are arranged under different area heads in different schemes and carry different weightages. The pattern thus emerged can be summarized as below:

Table-4.1: Major Area of Assessment in Classification Schemes

Sr. No.	Area of assessment	Schemes
1	Guest rooms	All
2	Bathroom	All
3	Guest services	All
4	Kitchen/ food production	India, Malaysia
5	Public area	All except in HotelStar.EU; some schemes covered it elaborately
6	Staff	India, Malaysia, Abu Dhabi & Australia; but overall weightage is not significant.
7	Safety and security	India, Malaysia, Abu Dhabi & Australia
8	Communication facilities	India, HotelStar.EU, South Africa and Australia
9	Building exterior	USA, South Africa and Australia
10	Building safety and security	South Africa and Abu Dhabi
11	MICE/ event management	HotelStar.EU
12	Quality and online activities	HotelStar.EU
13	Leisure	HotelStar.EU
14	Quality and online activities	Malaysia
15	Management	Malaysia
16	Minimum room rate	Malaysia
17	House Keeping Services	South Africa
18	Room and facilities for the disabled guests, Code of conduct for safe and honorable tourism, Staff welfare, Eco-friendly practices	India

4.B 1-Star Hotel Schemes Compared

B.1: General Requirements

Following standards were found mention in some of the leading classification schemes and considered relevant to bring it as part of the Indian scheme. Instantaneous being the necessity of registering all hotel guests, making the guest clear on all components of pricing, additional services, cancellation policy and taxes etc. These are needlessly good practices and found in some schemes or the other as per below (Table-4.2):

Table-4.2: General Standards of 1-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	Standards- General	Scheme
Minimum	Annual deep cleaning schedule including mattresses should be there	Abu Dhabi
Minimum	Qualitative aesthetics & suitably placed sign board visible at night	Malaysia & Abu Dhabi
Minimum	Provision of basic information on Hotel's classification/ rating	HotelStar.EU & VisitEngland
Minimum	Clear explanation of charges for addnl. services /cancellation etc.	VisitEngland
Minimum	Landscaping and gardening in a suitable manner	South Africa, Abu Dhabi
Minimum	Qualitative and aesthetic requirement- safe, functional, standard quality and well-maintained	South Africa & Abu Dhabi

B.2: Guest Rooms

The guest rooms are most comprehensively assessed component in all classification schemes. There are many tangible and intangible components forming part of the assessment. While cross-matching the Indian scheme, many inconsistencies were observed, some of which were strikingly noticeable. For instance, for 1-star rating in India, proportion of A/c rooms in a property should be a minimum of 25%, whereas in other countries, air conditioning of all rooms in the property is a compulsory requirement. Specific

to bed size, it varies marginally across the Schemes, whereas, stipulations in India appears to be in sync others. Adequate noise/intrusion protection with double/triple glazing for noise protection especially in noisy areas, provision of information in room on meal time & menu, hotel service & facilities are also minimum standards. Details are furnished at Table-4.2.

Table-4.3: Minimum Standards for Guest Room in 1-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	Standards: Guest Rooms			Scheme	
Minimum- Room size	India: 120 sq. ft (Bathroom excluded)	HoteslStar.EU: 150.7 sqm. incl. bathroom	Malaysia: Single -86 sq.ft. Double- 107.6	Abu Dhabi: Single- 215.3 sq.ft. Double-236.8 sq.ft.	
Minimum- Shelves (Necessary in India)	Open area (shelving/credenza) or limited drawer space			US-AAA	
	Linen shelves			HotelStar.EU	
	A minimum of 2 drawers or shelves			South Africa	
	Shelf with minimum 02 drawers			South Africa	
	Shelves/drawer space min. 60 cm depth Built in draws /shelf space, 2 draws/bed			Abu Dhabi	
Minimum- Wardrobe (India-Wardrobe with 4 cloth hangers/ bed)	Adequate wardrobe, hangers, clothing hooks			HotelStar.EU	
	Wardrobe or cloth hanging space; Sufficient hangers			VisitEngland	
	Open wall-mounted clothes rack; Basic wire, plastic/non-degradable hangers			USA (AAA)	
	Adequate hanging space to accommodate full length clothing, good no. of hangers; This should also accommodate for additional pillows, blankets, etc.			S. Africa	
	Wardrobe with hangers			Malaysia	
Minimum- Lamp shade	Shade/cover provided for all bulbs unless decorative			VisitEngland	

Nature of Requirement	Standards: Guest Rooms	Scheme
	All lighting with shade	Abu Dhabi
Minimum (India-Sufficient lighting, 1/bed)	Plus, One bedside light per sleeping position	S. Africa
	Bedside reading light/person (Central one for twin-share)	VisitEngland & Abu Dhabi
	- Three lighting fixtures reflect basic materials, design and/ functionality - Good level of Overall illumination	USA (AAA)
	At least 01 light controlled from the door	VisitEngland & S. Africa
Minimum- TV (Not in India)	Provision of TV with remote with free to air channels	Except VisitEngland
Minimum	Window covering properly fitted/hung	VisitEngland, U.S (AAA) and S. Africa
Minimum- Flooring	All flooring, carpets, rugs, hard wood flooring etc. fitted properly and of good quality	VisitEngland, U.S (AAA), S. Africa and Abu Dhabi
Minimum- Room locking('Desirable' in India)	Means of securing the room from inside & outside, a key or key-card, peep-hole and internal securing device	All
Minimum- Bed access	Accessibility of the Double-bed from both sides	HotelStar.EU & the U.S (AAA)
Minimum	Headboard, bed-base and mattress or no headboard as part of the design	VisitEngland
	Heating provided at no extra cost; Heated before check-in & early eve.	VisitEngland, U.S (AAA), S. Africa
Minimum	Iron and iron-board	VisitEngland
Minimum	Multi-lingual emergency procedure	VisitEngland
Minimum	Spare pillow & blanket available on request at no extra cost	VisitEngland and Abu Dhabi
Minimum	Adequate space or rack to put suitcase/ luggage	Abu Dhabi
Minimum (Desirable in India)	Mattress protector/bed cover	HotelStar.EU, VisitEngland, U.S (AAA) and S. Africa

Nature of Requirement	Standards: Guest Rooms	Scheme
Minimum (Desirable in India)	Hairdryer	VisitEngland
Minimum (Desirable in India)	Mini bar	Abu Dhabi

As stated in earlier sections, some schemes encourage the hotels to enhance the visitor experiences through different guest services and offerings. Thus, even same star-rated properties can try differentiation by such offers and in turn help the property to accrue additional points and bench-marking. Such features specific to HotelStar.EU are furnished at table below.

Table-4.4: Additional Guest Room Features Accrue Points for 1-Star Properties (As in HotelStar.EU scheme)

Additional crib	Additional blanket on demand	Washable bedside carpet
Ergonomically adjustable bedding	Annual laundry or thorough cleaning of mattresses	01 addnl. Comfortable upholstered chair or loveseat in D.B or suites
Bigger bed size accrue more points proportionately	Allergy-friendly sleeping alternative available on demand	01 Upholstered chair/ touch with side table
Wall coverings, wall hangings/decorative enhancements	Annual laundry of pillow or new acquisition max. 01 yr. ago (cleaning)	Bedside table tray
Hygienic mattress & pillow covers	Heat or air-conditioning available on a seasonal basis	Accessible power-socket in the college
New acquisition of mattresses in max. 03 yrs.	Choice of pillow	Central light switch for night complete night room
Reading light next to the bed	International power adapter plug on demand	Laundry & ironing service
Adequate space or rack to put suitcase/luggage	National and international channels	Internet device in the Room
Room with individually and centrally adjustable A/c	Shoe polishing kit on demand	Addnl. Locking mechanism at room's door

Additional crib	Additional blanket on demand	Washable bedside carpet
Fixed electronic media in the bathroom	Radio broadcast device	Chemical cleaning/dry cleaning
Audio/multi-media player	Modern TV in a size appropriate to the size of room with remote control, channel list and programs	

B.3: Bathroom

In some schemes, especially in Europe and America, bathroom emerges next to Guestrooms as important assessment area. Specific to room-size, minimum stipulation as per HotelStar.EU is 53.4 sq. ft. and that is higher than Indian standard, wherein in other schemes, size is not stipulated. Similarly, shower cabin finds mention in Indian scheme but other schemes make it more specific in terms of shower with curtain/screen or sliding doors and the like. Provision of bath mat, preferably washable, is also a stipulated standard in some schemes. General deficiencies observed as worth considering are as per below:

Table-4.5: Minimum Standards for Bathrooms in 1-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	Bathrooms Standards		Scheme
Minimum	India: 30 sq.ft	HotelStar.EU: Min. 53.4 sq. ft.	Proportionate to guest room size in others
Minimum (25% in India)	Western style W`C in all rooms		All
Minimum (India's scheme silent on this)	Wash-basin & provisions: dimension (36x24 cm as per VisitEngland), hot & cold water supply with indicating taps, adequate lighting, and power socket nearby		All
Minimum- (India-bath towel & hand towel)	Lightweight, Rough to touch, low absorbency, displayed on caddies		USA (AAA)
	Daily change of bath towel		VisitEngland
	Clean, absorbent		S. Africa

Nature of Requirement	Bathrooms Standards	Scheme
Minimum (India- 01 new soap)	Provision of guest toiletries: soap and body wash to good quality shampoo	All
Minimum	Adequate ventilation and extraction, security fitting etc.	VisitEngland and Abu Dhabi
Minimum	Bath-tub	HotelStar.EU & Abu Dhabi
Minimum	Tooth-brush tumbler	HotelStar.EU
Minimum	Towel rails/ tower hooks, Shelf, Tooth-brush tumbler, Soap/body wash at the wash basin, Toilet paper in reserve and Washable waste bin are minimum	HotelStar.EU
Minimum	Towel rails/tower hooks, Toilet paper in reserve, A well-lit mirror situated above or adjacent to the hand basin and Washable waste bin are minimum	South Africa
Addnl. Pts.	Vanity mirror/ Flexible vanity mirror	HotelStar.EU
Addnl. Pts.	Ceiling, Hair-dryer, Makeup Mirror, Nightlight, Scale, Telephone, Vanity Seating and Television	U.S (AAA)

B.4: Public Area

The following are not stipulated standards as per Indian scheme:

- Lighting appropriately positioned for safety & comfort (Stair-case, landing etc.)
- Décor of could be of the works of local artists- landscape etc.
- Clear directional signage to bedroom, reception, all facilities of the hotel
- Landscaping with minimal quantity, variety of plants/landscaping and visual interest, covered entry door (US- AAA)

- Adequate Dustbins in common area with lids and plastic bag lining for ease of disposal, separate bins for different waste for recycling (Malaysia)
- 24 hrs Illuminated corridors wide enough, fireproof, equipped with communication system (Malaysia).

B.5: Room & Facility for Differently Abled Guest

Specific to rooms and facilities figured in the classification scheme, stipulations in India can be seen adequate. However, some other good practices also need to be considered to strengthen the commitment towards accessible tourism practices.

HotelStar.EU: To enable barrier-free and accessible environment, provision for the blind or visually impaired, deaf or hearing impaired and motor disability accrue additional points. Provision of electronic wheelchair is highly encouraged.

VisitEngland: Vibrating alarm for hearing impaired guests, Provide hotel information on a range of formats (large print/Braille/MP3 downloads/ photographs and a familiarization tour of the hotel to disabled guests are minimum requirements.

The above are common standards for all types of star-rated properties in those schemes. This in a way also suggests the significance being attached to making the properties accessible and inclusive.

B.6: Food & Beverage Services

Room service is not minimum requirement but encouraged in other schemes. Other specific features, either minimum/essential or accruing additional points in respective country schemes are as per below:

Table-4.6: Minimum Standards for F&B Services in 1-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	Food & Beverage Services	Scheme
Minimum	Extended breakfast time	HotelStare.EU
To accrue Addnl. points	Banquet room, Conf. room & Conf. service, Business center, Sufficient power sockets adapted to no. of seats and Maxibar on each floor	HotelStare.EU
Essential	Individual table available for each guest, Tables of appropriate height, Sufficient staff for prompt service, Staff having acceptable level of knowledge about Menu and dishes, Professional presentation of the menu	South Africa
Minimum	Provision to charge food bill on guests' hotel A/c, Individual table available for each guest, Tables of appropriate height, Sufficient staff for prompt service, Staff having acceptable level of knowledge about Menu and dishes, Breakfast served at an appropriate time for the market of hotel, Provision of chairs with & without arm-chair, To ensure that juice is chilled, toast crispy and coffee/tea freshly made, Self-service buffet-style breakfast and hot beverage, Dinner served at least 01 hr., Some snacks or cold meal arrangement for late arrivals, Two course meal-main course should be a substantial hot dish, Menu with accurate description and clearly defined prices & taxes & All meal freshly cooked/prepared.	VisitEngland
Good practice	Flexible time to help diabetic people & Crockery contrasts table linen/surface to assist visually impaired	

B.7: Guest Services

The attributes arranged under this area are distinct services offerings. Those minimum standards for India are also found common in other schemes as well viz. tea/ coffee making facility in room on complementary basis (desirable service in India) but it is a minimum requirement for VisitEngland scheme. The later could have this facility in public as well, but for South Africa, a vending machine in a common area is acceptable. Another instance is provision of iron

& iron board facility (desirable for India) but minimum for HotelStar.EU & VisitEngland. In other cases, it is to be made available on request. Properties could also offer many provisions and accrue additional points, a list of which is furnished at Table Table.4.6 below:

Table-4.7: Additional Guest Service Standards for 1-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	Guest Services	Scheme
Addnl. points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Adequate own recreation facility on site (indoor & outdoor) ✓ Rental of sports equipments ✓ Gym with at least 04 different exercise machines ✓ Spa/wellness- massages (Cabin with min. 100 sq cm. ✓ Separate relaxation room ✓ Separate reading & writing room ✓ Library (separate location) ✓ In-house Child care ✓ Children area ✓ Host/animation program ✓ Express check-out ✓ Accompanying guest to room at arrival ✓ Accompanying guest to room at arrival (Also min. for VisitEngland) ✓ Sauna (with min. size of 06 seats) 	HotelStare.EU

B.8: Quality & Online Activities

The Indian scheme stipulates that ‘it is mandatory for the hotels to show the classification status on its website under a separate icon on the opening page, which on the click will display the order of classification issued by the Ministry of Tourism’. But, it was observed that many hotels do not follow this practice. In contrary, stipulations on property websites are more elaborate in some schemes may be seen below:

Table-4.8: Minimum Standards for Websites of 1-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	Standards- Quality & Online Activities	Scheme
Minimum	Website with updated information and realistic pictures together with the location of the hotel	HotelStare.EU; Abu Dhabi
Accrue Addnl. points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Systematic complaint mgt. system ✓ Systematic analysis of guest reviews ✓ Quality control by mystery guesting ✓ Website with direct booking option ✓ Eco-labels 	HotelStare.EU

4.C 2-Star Hotel Schemes Compared

In general, stipulations for this rating are largely similar to the standards required for 1-Star rating on many areas and attributes. Hence, instead of repeating the 1-Star standards again, those attributes distinguishing 2-Star from 1-Star rating has been delineated and only those are listed as under.

C.1: General Requirements: Stipulations are largely conforming in nature with the standards for 1-Star category.

C.2: Guest Rooms

While room size shows some increase in case of Abu Dhabi, the stipulations remains for India and Malaysia. Similarly, the features such as wardrobe, shelves and provision of entertainments assume more focus as specified at Table-4.8.

Table-4.9: Minimum Standards for Guestrooms of 2-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	Standards in addition to 1-Star		Scheme	
Minimum- Room size	India: 120 sq. ft (Bathroom excluded)	HoteslStar.EU: 150.7 sqm. incl. bathroom	Malaysia: Single -86 sq.ft. Double- 107.6	Abu Dhabi: Single- 236.8 sq.ft.; Double-258 sq.ft.
Minimum (Min. 25% in India)	All a/c rooms		VisitEngland, USA, S. Africa & Abu Dhabi	
Minimum-Shelves (Necessary in India)	Multiple enclosed drawers, accommodates the unpacked contents of two large suitcases, collapsible metal luggage rack		US-AAA	
Minimum-Wardrobe	Recessed area, Detachable wood, heavy metal/ plastic hangers		USA (AAA)	
Minimum (India-Sufficient lighting, 1/bed)	Bedside reading light/person		Malaysia	
Minimum- (Not in India)	Provision of TV with remote with free to air channels (controllable by guest)		Except VisitEngland	
	Not less than 32 inch flat panel, channel directory, one additional feature		USA	
	Radio central music system controllable by guest (Abu Dhabi- Only radio)		Malaysia & Abu Dhabi	
Minimum (India- At least half length (03 ft.)	Mirror		VisitEngland, U.S (AAA), S. Africa, Abu Dhabi	

In addition to above minimum standards, provision of additional guestroom features listed at Table-4.3 could also be included so that the property could accrue additional points and improve its overall rating.

C. 3: Bathroom

Minimum size stipulation for bathroom remain same as in case of 1-Star. Other areas of assessment figured over and above 1-Star are stipulations as per below (Table-4.9):

Table-4.10: Minimum Standards for Bathrooms of 2-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	Standards in addition to 1-Star	Scheme
Minimum	Two medium bars of soap	USA
Minimum	Washable bath mat	HotelStar.EU & S. Africa
Minimum	Toilet paper in reserve	HotelStar.EU & S. Africa
Minimum	Shelf	USA also

C.4: Public Area

Modest enhancements of the materials, designs, increased functions/coordination and enhanced level of comfort are expected when a property moves on to 2-Star level. This would also include the furniture and other provisions in the lounge or seating area in the lobby. Besides, the following are not stipulated standards as per existing Indian scheme:

- Wi-Fi is recommended in public area (VisitEngland), whereas, Internet connection, along with Wi-Fi is a desirable condition in India (subject to availability).

C.5: Room & Facility for Differently Abled Guest: Similar to 1-Star stipulations.

C.6: Food & Beverage Services

Room service is not minimum requirement but encouraged in other schemes. Other specific features, either minimum/essential or accruing additional points in respective country schemes are as per below (Table-4.10):

Table-4.11: Minimum Standards for Food & Beverage of 2-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	Standards in addition to 1-Star	Scheme
Minimum	Room service	VisitEngland, S. Africa, Malaysia
Minimum	Table of suitable height	VisitEngland, S. Africa
Minimum	Sufficient staff for prompt service	VisitEngland, S. Africa
Minimum	Staff having acceptable level of knowledge about Menu and dishes	VisitEngland
Minimum	To ensure that juice is chilled, toast crispy and coffee/tea freshly made	VisitEngland
Minimum	Some snacks or cold meal arrangement for late arrivals	VisitEngland

C.7: Guest Services: By and large in conformity to 1-Star provisions.

C.8: Quality & Online Activities: By and large in sync with 1-Star provisions.

4.D: 3-Star Hotel Schemes Compared

As the property progresses to 3-Star facility, clearer stipulations on the standards and facilities must begin to appear and that was evident in the cases examined here. The emphasis gradually turns to quality, comfort and aesthetics of the property along with the addition of some more core features supplemented by sets of such features that could accrue additional points.

D.1: General Requirements: Stipulations in some schemes start assigning weightage to aesthetics component of the property as per below.

Nature of Requirement	3-Star Standards: Requirement (In addition to 2-star)- General	Scheme
Minimum	Aesthetic requirement: Overall visual effects in most areas, local and appropriate decoration in common areas	USA, S.Africa, HotelStar.EU
Minimum	Landscaping and gardening: healthy, attractive plants at all locations, in a manner suitable to environment (Abu Dhabi)	USA, Abu Dhabi

D.2: Guest Rooms

The standards and stipulations delineated and placed below are in addition to and revised from 2-Star level, which are found either lacking or not specified in the Indian scheme. In general, room size increases in all schemes where there exist specific stipulations. Quality of bedding, linen, lighting, writing table and stationary, wardrobe improves, whereas, entertainment and overall room décor and appeal enhances quality orientation (Table-4.12).

Table-4.12: Minimum Standards for Guest Rooms of 3-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	Standards in addition to 2-Star			Scheme
Minimum	India: 130 sq. ft (Bathroom excluded)	HotelesStar.EU: 150.7 sqm. incl. bathroom	Malaysia: Single -108 sq.ft. Double- 129	Abu Dhabi: Single- 258 sq.ft.; Double-280 sq.ft.
Minimum (Min. 50% rooms in India)	All a/c rooms			All
Minimum	Significantly enhanced cleanliness as mandatory			USA
Minimum (India: Min.02 bedding sheets of good quality/bed)	Bedding of good quality and comfort (HotelStar.EU - Bed system consisting of an elastic system in combination of a modern & well-kept mattress with an overall height of min. 18cm)			All
	2 sheets , 2 blankets, a bed spread or 1 or 2 sheet sand duvet with cover per bed			VisitEngland
	Triple sheeting overstuffed duvet, skirting, bed throw, scarf			USA
	2 sheets (additional bedding on request)			
Minimum: pillow & case (India: 02 nos/person)	Additional usable, non- decorative pillow on demand			All
	Multiple pillows, accent pillow/ shams			USA
Minimum (01/person)	Blanket- 02/person			VisitEngland
	Spare blanket on request			HotelesStar.EU, Malaysia, Abu Dhabi

Nature of Requirement	Standards in addition to 2-Star	Scheme
Minimum-Shelves (Necessary in India)	Sufficient space for one piece of luggage, collapsible wood luggage rack/ decorative bench	USA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Linen shelves - Possibility to hang up a suit bag - Adequate space to put suit case/ luggage 	HoteslStar.EU
	A minimum of one drawer or shelve per guest + fit for use luggage stand	S. Africa
	Min. 60cm depth; Built in draws /shelf space; 2 draws/bed	Abu Dhabi
Minimum-Wardrobe	Fully enclosed area, closet depth is > or = 22 inches and can enclose full-length apparel, matching, open- hook/ sculptured plastic hangers heavy gauge wire or metal hangers	USA (AAA)
Minimum (India-Sufficient lighting, 1/bed)	> Or = 4 lighting fixtures reflect decorative materials, design; Well positioned from multiple sources; Good illumination in all key areas	USA
	Good room lighting to gel with the ambience and a range of lighting options	VisitEngland
Minimum (India-A 5 amp power socket; Provide at least 2 multi-purpose sockets)	Power with one near the desk top and accessible power socket near the bed	HoteslStar.EU
Minimum (India-A bed-side table & drawer (1/two twin & 2/two twin))	Writing table/ substantial flat surface/ lighting specially provided to illuminate writing desk	HoteslStar.EU, VisitEngland
Minimum- (TV with cable in India) (* National & intl. Channels)	Plus, Pay-TV, movie channels or video games with the possibility of adult lock (extra points)	HoteslStar.EU*
	Digital TV; Comfortable to watch from chair and bed, radio in every room	VisitEngland*
	Not less than 32 inch flat panel, channel directory, multiple viewing angles, two additional features	USA
	A television with remote with free to air multi channels of min. 32 inches, may or may not be wall mounted, may be LCD, LED or plasma, listing of	S. Africa*

Nature of Requirement	Standards in addition to 2-Star	Scheme
	channels to be provided	
Minimum (India- (1 Chairs/bed preferred))	01 seating arrangement; 1 Chair	HoteslStar.EU
	02, plus upholstered stool. All furniture, soft furnishings and fittings providing good ease of use and of a good quality and condition	VisitEngland
	2D + desk chairs with arms, one fully upholstered chair positioned for television viewing	USA
	01 arm chair in single, 2 in double bed room	Abu Dhabi
Minimum (India has no stipulation)	All flooring, carpets, rugs, hard wood flooring etc.	All
	Plus, residential style, significant enhancements to material, design, obvious degree of comfort, wood/ceramic tile/ carpet base board, well-coordinated decorative enhancements	USA
	Good quality flooring of room with carpet or acceptable alternate like wood, parquet, marble	Abu Dhabi
Minimum (India-desirable)	Safe keeping/in-room safe	S. Africa, Abu Dhabi
Minimum (India-desirable)	In-room Internet/W-fi service	HoteslStar.EU; VisitEngland
Minimum (India-desirable)	W-fi service in public area	HoteslStar.EU; VisitEngland
Minimum (India-desirable)	Shoe polishing kit on demand	HoteslStar.EU; VisitEngland, S. Africa
Addnl. points	Ergonomically adjustable bedding, Bigger bed size, New acquisition of mattresses in max. 03 yrs., Allergy-friendly sleeping alternative available on demand, Choice of pillow	HoteslStar.EU
Addnl. points	Annual laundry or thorough cleaning of mattresses	HoteslStar.EU, USA, Abu Dhabi

D. 3: Bathroom

Additional features, coupled with comfort enhancing features over the 2-Star stipulations to make bathrooms better and appealing (Table-4.13).

Table-4.13: Minimum Standards for Bathrooms of 3-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	Standards in addition to 2-Star		Scheme
Minimum size	India: 36 sq.ft	HotelStar.EU: Min. 53.4 sq. ft. (larger size accrue more points)	Others: Proportionate to guest room size
Minimum A/c (25% in India)	Western style WC in all rooms (USA- With decorative enhancements)		All
Minimum- Washbasin	Plus, Full size wash basin		VisitEngland
	Decorative materials, design e.g. under mounted, pedestal, vessel etc.		USA
Minimum- Bath & hand towel	2-Star + medium weight, soft to touch, medium absorbency		USA
Guest toiletries- India- min. 01 new soap; bottled toiletries desirable)	Soap, body wash, shower gel, shampoo/ conditioner, body lotion, facial tissues etc. of good quality		All
	Good quality soap, bath/shower gel; Additional toiletries available on charge		VisitEngland
Minimum-Shower Cabin	2-Star + decorative materials/ design, double curtain, light weight glass doors with aluminum frames; > 9 sqft		USA
Minimum- Bath-tub	All rooms with bath-tub/WC or shower/ WC		HoteslStar.EU, Malaysia, Abu Dhabi
Minimum (India- wash mat)	Washable bath mat		HoteslStar.EU, VisitEngland, S. Africa
Minimum (India- not stated)	Towel rails/ tower hooks		All
Minimum (India- not stated)	Shelf		Except S. Africa
Minimum (India- not stated)	Soap/body wash at the wash basin		HoteslStar.EU, VisitEngland, Malaysia, Abu Dhabi

Nature of Requirement	Standards in addition to 2-Star	Scheme
Minimum (India- not stated)	Shampoo	All
Minimum (India- not stated)	Lighting and ventilation	Except Malaysia

D.4: Public Area

Modest enhancements of the materials, designs, increased functions/coordination and enhanced level of comfort are expected when a property moves on to 3-Star level. This would also include the furniture, furnishings and other provisions in the lounge or seating area in the lobby. Besides, the following are not stipulated standards as per Indian scheme:

Table-4.14: Minimum Standards for Bathrooms of 3-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	Standards in addition to 2-Star	Scheme
Minimum- Lighting appropriately positioned for safety & comfort (Stair-case, landing etc.)	2-Star + well positioned, decorative & well-coordinated design/ materials/ or function, good level of overall illumination in all key areas	USA
	lighting appropriately positioned for safety & comfort in all public areas , including sufficient lighting on stairways & landings at night	S. Africa, Malaysia, Abu Dhabi
Minimum	Valet Parking	S. Africa, Malaysia
Minimum- Clear directional signage	To bedroom, reception, all facilities Decorative designs enhancements, materials., Ample locations (USA)	All
Minimum- Flooring & ceiling, skirting & cornices	Decorative materials and design with patterns, textures and inlays, hard surfaced floors have decorative rea rugs in seating and other locations as appropriate	USA
Minimum- Flooring & ceiling, skirting & cornices	Of acceptable quality & condition throughout, no threadbare or fraying sections of carpet or rugs	S. Africa

D.5: Room & Facility for Differently Abled Guest: Similar to 1-Star stipulations.

D.6: Food & Beverage Services

Room service is not minimum requirement but encouraged in the schemes under study. Other specific features, either minimum/essential/to accruing additional points were found as per below:

Nature of Requirement	3-Star Standards: Food & Beverage Services (In addition to 2-Star)	Scheme
Minimum	Self-service buffet-style breakfast and hot beverage	VisitEngland, S. Africa
Minimum	Crockery contrasts table linen/surface to assist visually impaired	VisitEngland, S. Africa

D.7: Guest Services: Largely in conformity to 1&2 Star provisions.

D.8: Quality & Online Activities: Largely in sync with 1&2-Star provisions.

4.E: 4-Star Hotel Schemes Compared

For a property to progress to 4-Star facility, the stipulations on the standards and facilities begins to thrust on the quality both in terms of service and facility provisions as well as delivery standards. This pattern has been sufficiently manifested in all classifications being examined in this study. Area-wise stipulations for this category, over and above 3-Star attributes, have been collated and furnished below.

E.1: General Requirements: Stipulations in some schemes also start attributing weightage to aesthetics component. However, the elements such as aesthetic requirement, landscaping and gardening etc. do not find specific mention in Indian scheme even though these would equally explain the status of a property of quality verticals.

Table-4.15: Minimum Standards- General Requirements of 4-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	4-Star Standards: General Requirement (in addition to 3-Star)	Scheme
Minimum-Aesthetic requirement	Furnishing and equipment are consistent in form & color; High quality with first class comfort	HotelStar.EU
	Buildings, furniture, fixtures, furnishings, exterior and interior décor maintained in a superior condition	VisitEngland
	3-Star + the entire grounds are professionally planned and manicured	USA
	Very good appearance, maintenance, condition with no obvious maintenance issues	S. Africa
	Safe functional, standard quality and well maintained, local and appropriate decoration in public areas and bedrooms	Malaysia
Minimum-Landscaping and gardening	Extensive use of appropriate mature plants and landscaping material; cohesive upscale design to with stand all weather condition Plants should be used to enhance an upscale theme throughout the property	USA
	Landscaping and gardening if done in a manner suitable to environment	Abu Dhabi
	Grounds & gardens well maintained; excellent quality garden furniture provided for guest use	S. Africa

E.2: Guest Rooms

The delineated standards and stipulations are in addition to and upgraded from 3-Star level, which are either found lacking or not specified in Indian context. Still, one of the major distinguishing attributes is that the room size increases across the schemes, and other details may be seen below (Table-4.15).

Table-4.16: Minimum Standards- Guestroom Requirements of 4-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	Guestrooms Standards (In addition to 3-Star)			Scheme
Minimum- room size	India: 140 sq. ft (Bathroom excluded)	HoteslStar.EU: 150.7 sqm. incl. bathroom	Malaysia: Single -129 sq.ft.; Double-151sq.ft.	Abu Dhabi: Single- 323 sq.ft. Double-344 sq.ft.
Minimum- Mattress	Bed consisting of an elastic system; overall height of min. 18cm. 22 cm accrues additional points			HotelStar.EU
	Bedding of superior quality and condition (eg. pocket sprung mattress). The presentation of the bed enhances the overall impression of the room			VisitEngland
Minimum- Bed linen	Min. bedding sheets of good quality/bed-02/bed			VisitEngland, India
Minimum-Bed linen	Bed linen soft to touch and tightly woven			USA
Minimum- Pillow & case	Pillow & case -02 nos./guest			VisitEngland, India
	3-Star + upscale bed pillows eg. down, natural memory fiber, hypoallergenic etc.			USA
	Choice of pillow to the guest			HotelStar.EU
	Choice of two variety of pillows			VisitEngland
	One extra pillow and blanket in room			Malaysia
	Spare pillow and blanket available on request			All
Minimum- Robes	Robes/guest			USA
Minimum- Shelves/drawer	3-Star + sufficient space for two pieces of luggage, upgraded wooden racks/ designer style benches, accommodate the unpacked contents of three large suitcases			USA
Minimum- Wardrobe	3-Star + upscale quality enclosure, two door width, one or more additional feature eg. illumination, drawers, dresser top, shoe rack,			USA

Nature of Requirement	Guestrooms Standards (In addition to 3-Star)	Scheme
	walk-in capability, two or more shelves	
Minimum-Sufficient Minimum-lighting	Superior levels of lighting with good positioning and ease of use, and specifically for the lobby area, Wardrobe area, dining area and easy seating	VisitEngland
	3-Star + upscale materials, design, excellent level of illumination, superior functionality like dimmers, point lighting, multiple switches, remote control etc.	USA
	Direct lighting at dressing table	S. Africa
	Bed-side reading light/person, controllable from bed (Central one for twin-share)	All
Minimum-Power socket	In the room with one near the desk top and accessible power socket near the bed	HoteslStar.EU, Malaysia
	Conveniently located power socket and 13 amp socket at suitable location	VisitEngland
Minimum-(TV with cable in India)	3-Star + cables and cords are hidden from view; Three additional features	USA
	Digital TV with generously sized screen, extensive range of channels, a range of radio channels, additional AV viz. in house channels, CD player , DVD library, satellite, cable, play station, IPOD etc.	VisitEngland*
	A television with remote with multi channels(min 12 channels) of min. 32 inches, may or may not be wall mounted, may be LCD, LED or plasma, listing of channels to be provided	S. Africa
Minimum (India-Chairs (1/bed preferred)	Of very good quality	All
	3-Star + seating for three guests eg. Loveseat, sofa or two chairs, in addition to desk chair; One additional furniture piece	USA
Minimum-(India- Opaque curtains/screening at all windows)	3-Star + overall treatments are upscale and provide a significant visual interest	USA
	Very good quality and opaque	S. Africa

E.3: Bathroom

Like guestroom, the quality and additional features gain prominence at 4-star stage. Particularly, unlike in India, the features can be distinguished and stipulations becomes quality-specific and describable (Table-4.17).

Table-4.17: Minimum Standards- Bathroom Requirements of 4-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	Bathrooms Standards (In addition to 3-Star)		Scheme
Minimum	India: 36 sq.ft	HotelStar.EU: Min. 53.4 sq. ft. (larger size accrue more points)	Others: Proportionate to guest room size
Minimum- Easily washable	Well-fitted, easily washable floors, thermostatically controlled showers		VisitEngland
	Upscale materials, design and/or function.; Exceptional degree of comfort		USA
	3-Star + Upscale materials, e.g. glass, stainless steel, colored vitreous China brass, nickel etc.		USA
Minimum- Bath & hand towel	3-Star + heavy, plush, firm, premium. weight, plush to touch, Firm, self-supporting feel, premium cotton with high absorbency		USA, S. Africa
Minimum- Bathrobe	Bathrobe on demand		HoteslStar.EU, India, S. Africa
Minimum- Slippers	Slippers on demand		All
Minimum- cabinetry	3-Star + Upscale furniture finished skirting. Enclosed cabinetry, multiple shelving, drawers		USA
Minimum- Guest toiletries- (India-min. 01 new soap; bottled toiletries necessary but not specified)	Good quality sanitary products viz. soap, body wash, shower gel, shampoo/conditioner, body lotion, facial tissues. Additional cosmetics like bath essence, shower cap, nail file, etc.		HoteslStar.EU
	Superior quality guest toiletries, soap, shampoo, bath/shower gel etc.		VisitEngland, S. Africa

Nature of Requirement	Bathrooms Standards (In addition to 3-Star)	Scheme
	3-Star + fragrance enhance, natural supplement, packaging etc. multi piece personal care package with 2 large & 2 medium bars of soap, 3 bottled items, 2 additional items, upscale presentation	USA
Minimum- WC western toilet with lid & toilet paper	Upscale design, recessed area	USA
Minimum-Shower Cabin	Upscale materials/ design, solid surface of upscale material; > 12 sqft; Shower curtain of upscale material-linen texture, nylon hemp, cotton or glass door	USA
Minimum- Shelf	Shelf in bathroom	All
Addnl. points- Floor covering	Highest grade –marble, granite, upscale stones, hard surfaced floor have area rugs.	USA

E.4: Public Area

Substantial enhancements in the materials, designs, increased functions/ coordination and enhanced level of comfort levels can be observed. Following table portrays stipulated standards in addition to 3-Star requirement (Table-4.18).

Table-4.18: Minimum Standards- Public Area Requirements of 4-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	Standards: Public Area in addition to 3-Star	Scheme
Minimum- Lighting appropriately positioned for safety & comfort (Stair-case, landing etc.)	3-Star + well positioned, decorative & well-coordinated design/ materials/ or function, good level of overall illumination in all key areas	USA
	lighting appropriately positioned for safety & comfort in all public areas , including sufficient lighting on stairways & landings at night	S. Africa, Malaysia, Abu Dhabi
Minimum	Valet Parking	S. Africa, Malaysia

Nature of Requirement	Standards: Public Area in addition to 3-Star	Scheme
Minimum- Clear directional signage	To bedroom, reception, all facilities Decorative designs enhancements, materials., Ample locations (USA)	All
Minimum- Flooring & ceiling, skirting & cornices	Decorative materials and design with patterns, textures and inlays, hard surfaced floors have decorative rea rugs in seating and other locations as appropriate	USA
Minimum- Flooring & ceiling, skirting & cornices	Of acceptable quality & condition throughout, no threadbare or fraying sections of carpet or rugs	S. Africa

E.5: Room & Facility for Differently Abled Guest: Similar to 1-Star stipulations.

E.6: Food & Beverage Services

Though room service was not minimum requirement for certain schemes, it was encouraged by providing additional points. Other specific features, either minimum/essential or accruing additional points in respective country schemes are as per below:

Nature of Requirement	4-Star Standards: Food & Beverage Services	Scheme
Minimum/ Essential	Self-service buffet-style breakfast and hot beverage	VisitEngland, S. Africa
Minimum	Crockery contrasts table linen/surface to assist visually impaired	VisitEngland, S. Africa

E.7: Guest Services: Largely in conformity to 1&2 Star provisions.

E.8: Quality & Online Activities: Largely in sync with 1&2-Star provisions.

4.F: 5-Star Hotel Schemes Compared

In all Schemes across the world, 5-Star rating is found to be the highest for the hospitality properties while some schemes have further rating within it including in India. However, 6-Star or 7-Star rating promotion by some ultra-luxury hotel properties does not hold any official status in any scheme,

because of which, such ratings are often argued as marketing and positioning strategy by its developers. Given this, a 5-star ratings would ideally stand to represent comparably the best service qualities and standards in any official classification mechanisms. Accordingly, thrust here has been to delineate those attributes and standards, particularly those distinct ones, from across the schemes and its outcome have been elaborated in the following section.

It was noticed that though India accords 5-Star & 5-Star Deluxe ratings separately to the hotels, existing schemes suggest for very few distinctions, especially the 5-Star Deluxe ratings to have following additional requirements:

- 50% rooms having bathtubs provision as against 25% rooms for 5-Star rating
- In-house laundry is necessary
- X-Ray machine is necessary
- Air-conditioned porch and heated swimming pool desirable.

In general, it is worth stating that while the sets of parameters remained largely similar for 4-Star and 5-Star ratings across all schemes being examined, distinguishing elements have been the quality standards, both in terms of facility provisions and service delivery as well as enhanced aesthetics.

F.1: General Requirements: Stipulations are observed to be in conformity to 4-Star rating but the emphasis is on the design and its appeal which are expected to be of very high standards. Instantaneous being, USA Scheme specifically states that the landscaping should be such that in addition to 4-Star stipulations, there should be luxuriant landscape materials, leading edge design, multiple accent features meticulously integrated by design.

F.2: Guest Rooms

The delineated standards and stipulations are in addition to and upgraded from 4-Star level requirements, which are found either lacking or specified in India's context (Table-4.19).

Table-4.19: Minimum Standards- Guestrooms Requirements of 4-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	Standards: Guest Rooms (In addition to 4-Star)			Scheme
Minimum	India: 200 sq. ft (Bathroom excluded)	HotelesStar.EU: 150.7 sqm. incl. bathroom	Malaysia: Single -140 sq.ft.; Double- 172 sq.ft.	Abu Dhabi: Single- 377 sq.ft. Double-498 sq.ft.
Minimum- Bedding	Bedding presented to be of excellent standard; All bedding of the highest quality and immaculately laundered			VisitEngland
Minimum- Air-conditioning	4D+ central system of air conditioning, quiet and inconspicuous form and function.			USA
	Daily cleaning of bed, walls, fittings, bed-linen changed daily; to keep these in excellent condition			VisitEngland
	Turndown service			HotelStar.EU
Bedding sheet	4D+, luxurious materials, leading edge effect			USA
Minimum- Pillow & case	4-Star + embroidered pillow cases/shams, luxuriously soft, silk like feel			USA
Minimum- Robes	Robes/guest			USA
Minimum- Wardrobe	4-Star + + closet is illuminated, selection of hangers for >3 guests, atleast two satin hangers, two or more additional features.			USA
	A fully fitted or free-standing wardrobe, with wide range of excellent quality hangers provided with illumination inside the wardrobe			VisitEngland
	3-Star + space driven by unique style/design Upscale materials; distinctive design and/or function; Exceptional degree of comfort			USA
Minimum- Sufficient lighting	Excellent levels of lighting with a range of separately controllable options.			VisitEngland

Nature of Requirement	Standards: Guest Rooms (In addition to 4-Star)	Scheme
Minimum (India-Chairs (1/bed preferred))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Single: one substantial easy chair plus an additional chair providing comfortable use at the writing table; ✓ Double/twin: two substantial easy chair and an additional chair providing comfortable use of the writing table. All furniture, soft furnishings and fittings providing good ease of use and of an excellent quality and condition 	VisitEngland
	4-Star + seating designed for small groupings, two additional furniture piece	USA
Minimum- (India- Opaque curtains/ screening at all windows)	4-Star + overall treatments are luxurious and provide a significant visual 3D interest	USA
Minimum- Flooring	4-Star + custom inlays or textured enhancements, leading edge design and effect, area rugs are luxurious.	

F. 3: Bathroom

The bathroom features are mostly in conformity to 4-Star stipulations but are of very high quality and standards. Among the countries examined, USA has some additional features for 5-Star rating as furnished below (Table-4.20).

Table-4.20: Minimum Standards- Bathrooms Requirements of 4-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	Standards: Bathrooms (In addition to 4-star)	Scheme
Minimum- size	India: 45 sq.ft HotelStar.EU: Min. 53.4 sq. ft. (larger size accrue more points)	Others: Proportionate to guest room size
Minimum- Shower Cabin	4-Star + custom treatment, separate shower and tub; Fixed door enclosure for shower, etched, frosted, embossed, tinted etc.	USA
Minimum-	4-Star +, leading edge effect, two person	USA

Nature of Requirement	Standards: Bathrooms (In addition to 4-star)	Scheme
Bathtub	capability, European soaking style, contoured back, built in lumbar back support etc.	
Addnl. points- In bathroom	television, defogger, built in lighting etc.	USA

F.4: Public Area

In order for a property moves on to 4-Star level, there has to be substantial enhancements in the materials, designs, increased functions/ coordination and enhanced level of comfort. Following Table-4.21 portrays stipulated standards in addition to 3-Star requirement.

Table-4.21: Minimum Standards- Guestrooms Requirements of 4-Star Properties

Nature of Requirement	5-Star Standards: Public Area	Scheme
Minimum- Lounge or seating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Furnishing, fittings of excellent quality and condition, providing an overall luxurious standard; ✓ A choice of environments of sufficient size to provide generous personal space; ✓ Additional facilities like secondary dining, leisure, business centre, spa 	VisitEngland
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 4-Star + Multiple semi-private area in the lounge; ✓ Area size and placement of appointments provide an obvious degree of spaciousness allowing increased ease of movement for guests; ✓ Furniture to be of upscale materials, distinctive design and function; and ✓ Exceptional degree of comfort 	USA
Minimum- Chair/armchair, Sofa, tables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The environment of a sitting areas of excellent quality and condition and of sufficient size and with well-designed layout to provide generous personal space & 	VisitEngland

Nature of Requirement	5-Star Standards: Public Area	Scheme
	privacy for guests; ✓ A variety of seating styles expected.	
	✓ Furniture to be of upscale materials, distinctive design and function; ✓ Exceptional degree of comfort	USA & S. Africa
Minimum-Lighting appropriately positioned for safety & comfort	4-Star + custom fixtures of outstanding quality, leading edge illumination effect	USA
Reception	Concierge, Paging and Limousine services available	HotelStar.EU
	Sufficient area for guests arriving with luggage, all guests offered escorts to the bedroom by staff member with excellent skills, full concierge available	VisitEngland
	Multiple guest service areas like front desk, bell stand, concierge, video kiosk etc.	USA
	24 hrs, message delivery to guests	S. Africa, Malaysia
	Shuttle services using NGV, limousine service, bellboy service, concierge available	Malaysia
	Concierge service	All
Parking	Valet parking	All

F.5: Room & Facility for Differently Abled Guest: Similar to 1-Star stipulations.

F.6: Food & Beverage Services

The specific features, either minimum/essential or accruing additional points in respective country schemes over and above 4-Star rating are as per below:

Nature of Requirement	4-Star Standards: Food & Beverage Services	Scheme
Minimum/ Essential	Room service- 24 hrs. (HoterStar.EU- 14 hrs.)	All except HoterStar.EU
Minimum- Bar service	A bar or lounge area with a Liquor License, excellent quality appearance and furniture with good space; Alcoholic drinks served 24 hours; a comprehensive range of drinks including wines and cocktails; table service provided	VisitEngland

F.7: Guest Services: Largely in conformity to 4-Star level provisions.

F.8: Quality & Online Activities: Largely in conformity to 4-Star level provisions.

G. Summary

There exists certain visible deficiencies in the Criteria catalogue used for hotel classification in India. These can be seen as either in treatment of the parameters (essential/desirable) or absence of certain crucial ones even though some of those are being already offered by the hotels. Another pattern emerged is related to bringing clear distinction across different star categories, where, while minimum/necessary/entry-level requirements may not vary much but a clear gradation in those can still be observed. However, the add-on features assessed by way of point/score accruals play an important role in determining the star-rating. Similarly, as star-rating increases, qualitative parameters assume prominence where each one is adequately described to enable best of the objective assessment of those by the inspectors/assessors.

V. Tourist Accommodation and Perception of Hotel Guests

There are many factors of determining in nature when it comes to the tourists forming their perception towards the accommodation facilities. Hence, an attempt was made in this study to gather details of those factors, specifically focusing on various attributes of the accommodation units like the room and its fixtures and provisions, bathroom, F&B services, various guest services, ambience and décor. While doing so, it was also acknowledged that a variety of attributes pertaining to the hotel are usually incorporated in the classification scheme and it will not be feasible to solicit the views of the guests on each one of those. Hence, the approach has been to gather the perception on certain defined sets of parameters of general in nature. However, the respondents were also encouraged in providing the details on their expectation from chosen hotel, especially various provisions in the room, menu variety etc. and what eventually have been made available to them.

A well-structured questionnaire was developed to gather details from the respondents and they were canvassed from different types of hotels/accommodation units they were staying. The places of survey included the metropolitan cities, business cities, resort locations (beach and mountain), major tourist cities and pilgrimage centers. A total of 1007 tourists were canvassed from these places through a stratified random procedure, of which, 504 and 503 were domestic and foreign origin respectively. These data were analyzed thereafter and the results are elaborated in the following section.

A. Booking of the Hotel Room

India has various types of accommodation ranging from luxury hotels to different supplementary provisions like the lodges, bread & breakfast facilities, camps/tents and so on. The category of accommodation where the guests have been canvassed as part of this study has been compiled and placed at Table-5.1. It can be seen that nearly three-fourth of the accommodation can be seen as falling in the category of 3-Star or above type of hotels. Here, it is worth noting that a pattern of this nature could mainly be on account of the emphasis being accorded to these accommodation types.

As regards to the main source of information on the accommodation where the guests were presently staying, internet emerged to be the main source (37.1%) for the domestic tourists followed by travel agents and tour operators (TA's & TO's) and friends and relatives (Table-5.2). But in case of foreign tourists, TA's & TO's accounted for 45.5% followed by the internet, which could be due to coverage of more respondents who arrived India as part of package tour arrangements.

Table-5.1: Category of Accommodation Guests were Staying

Category of Accommodation Guest Was staying		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Category	1-2 Star hotels	87 (17.3)	81 (16.7)
	3-Star hotels	172 (34.1)	148 (31.7)
	4- Star hotels	102 (20.2)	121 (22.1)
	5- Star & above	98 (19.4)	104 (20.2)
	Others	45 (8.9)	49 (9.3)
	Total	504	503

Source: Primary Data

Table-5.2: Main Source of Information on Present Accommodation

Main Source of Information on Present Accommodation		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Source	Internet	187 (37.1)	138 (27.7)
	Travel agent/tour operator	121 (24.0)	227 (45.5)
	Hotel website	48 (9.5)	42 (8.4)
	Relatives/friends	76 (15.1)	38 (7.6)
	Travel trade fair	3 (0.6)	14 (2.8)
	Tourism depts.	14 (2.8)	2 (0.4)
	Print media	17 (3.4)	2 (0.4)
	T.V	14 (2.8)	4 (0.8)
	Others	24 (4.8)	32 (6.4)
	Total	504	503

Source: Primary Data

When the mode of booking for the present hotel was examined, around 31% of the domestic respondents booked directly with the hotel after seeing the hotel website. Those booked through the travel agent was around 25% followed by the arrangements made by the office/company (Table-5.3).

About 43% of foreign tourists were found booking their hotel through the travel agents and another 25% saw hotel website then booked the same. The office/company also booked hotel for about 15% of the guests. When the duration of stay was examined, 45% of them reportedly stay 03 days & more whereas nearly 44% stay for a minimum 02 days in the present hotel (Table-5.3). A good chunk of domestic tourists (83.4%) stayed either 02 days or more in the same hotel.

Table-5.3: Mode of Booking for Present Hotel & Duration of stay

Booking for Present Hotel		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Mode of booking	Booked by the office/company	100 (20.0)	77 (15.3)
	Booked by the travel agent	126 (25.1)	215 (42.8)
	Saw hotel website then booked	155 (30.9)	127 (25.3)
	Based on online guest review	30 (6.0)	27 (5.4)
	Relative/friend recommended	70 (14.0)	35 (7.0)
	Others	20 (4.0)	21 (4.2)
	Total	504	503
Duration of stay	01 day	83 (16.6)	54 (10.8)
	02 days	260 (52.1)	220 (43.9)
	03 days & more	156 (31.3)	227 (45.3)
	Total	499	501

Source: Primary Data

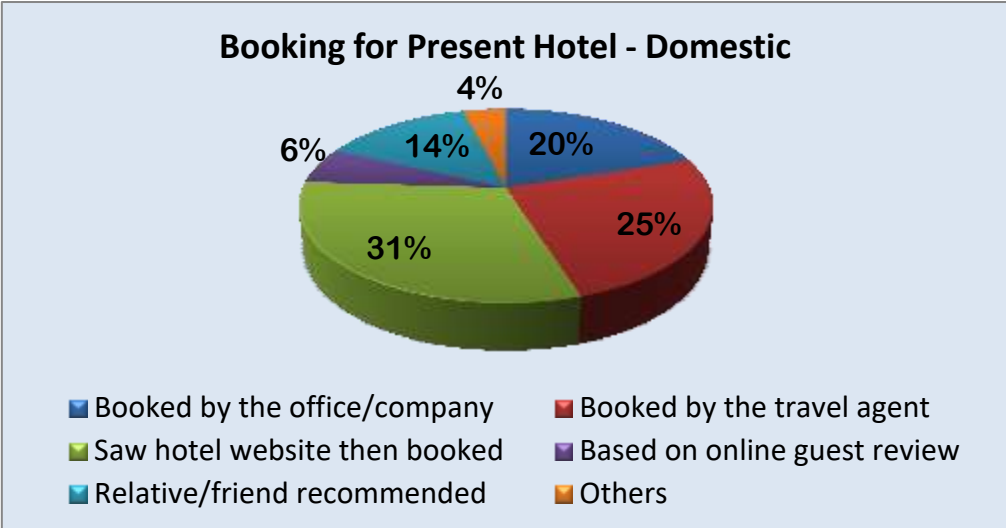


Fig.5.1: Booking for Present Hotel- Domestic

While gathering the feedback of the guests, it was considered worth to seek information on the type of the hotels they have availed in the past since it could also provide insight on their holiday travel patterns. When the results were examined, about 91% of foreign tourists were reported to have stayed in the similar kind of accommodation they were staying at present (Table-5.4). Proportion of such tourists among domestic categories was to the tune of 94%.

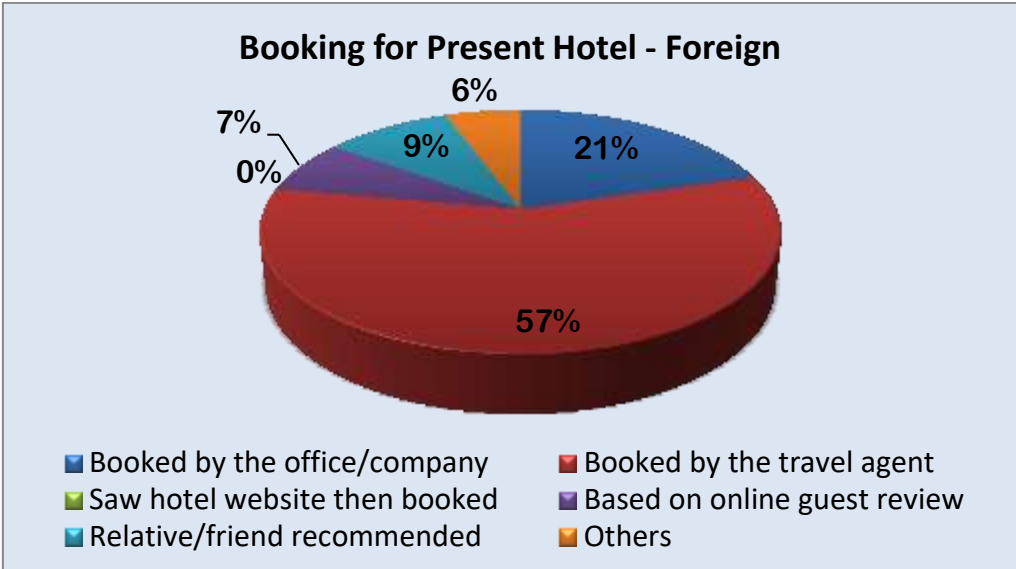


Fig.5.2: Booking for Present Hotel- Foreign

Table-5.4: Feedback on Provision of Information on Various Services and Add-ons Offered by Hotels

Details of hotel stay		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Whether stayed in a similar category hotel in the past	Yes	468 (93.8)	451 (91.3)
	No	31 (6.2)	43 (8.7)
	Total	499	494
Whether the hotel staff provided information about provision of various services and add-ons	Yes	445 (91.0)	436 (89.2)
	No	44 (9.0)	53 (10.7)
	Total	489	489
Did you cross check if hotels not provided	Yes	20 (45.5)	17 (32.1)
	No	24 (54.5)	36 (67.9)
	Total	44	53

Source: Primary Data

The hotels usually offer various services and add-ons to their guests during promotional campaigns but there have been reports of many hotels not adhering to the commitments when the guest arrived the hotel upon the booking. It was also reported that some hotels would even refrain from sharing those information to the guests at the time check-in. However, the results emerge from this study stand to suggest that the hotels usually provide the information on various services and add-ons that it offers to their guests and that is found common to both foreign and domestic tourists (over 90% each). When further probed with those reported to have not received information on the same from the hotel at the time check-in, it was also learned that majority of them did not consider to check such details from the hotel.

B. Assessment of Guestroom by Respondents

The studies including those by the UNWTO have established that most important aspects determining the hotel guest's satisfaction would be the type of rooms and various facilities provided within it. By virtue of this, the

room also figures most prominently in the hotel classification systems across the world. With this in view, efforts were made to gather perception of the guests on the room and its fixtures, various other provisions, lighting, information and overall upkeep of the room. Due to reasons stated above, main room attributes were only placed for soliciting the views of the guests.

The room and the fixtures in it like size, bed, mattress, lines, furniture, mirror etc. are central to the guest satisfaction. When the same was examined about 62% of domestic and 57% of foreign respondents were found to have highly satisfied on these counts. Contrary, only a very negligible proportion of guests were found dissatisfied (Table 5.5).

Table-5.5: Rating of Hotel Room Fixtures and Provisions by Respondents

Rating of hotel room facilities		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Room and its fixtures – size, bed, mattress, lines, furniture, mirror etc.	Highly satisfied	312 (62.0)	284 (56.5)
	Somewhat satisfied	182 (36.2)	187 (37.1)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	07 (1.4)	22 (4.4)
	Highly dissatisfied	02 (0.4)	10 (1.9)
	Total	503	503
Provision of tea-maker, drinking water, crockery, glassware etc. in the room	Highly satisfied	279 (56.1)	251 (51.8)
	Somewhat satisfied	186 (37.4)	211 (43.5)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	27 (5.4)	22 (4.5)
	Highly dissatisfied	05 (1.0)	01 (0.2)
	Total	497	485

Source: Primary Data

The level of satisfaction with regard to the provision of tea-maker, drinking water, crockery, glassware etc. in the room, a little over half of the respondents were found highly satisfied. Further, the proportion of

respondents found to have dissatisfied on these provisions were indeed negligible, and this trend was similar for both segments of tourists.

Another aspect being examined was the adequacy of lighting in the room and the results show that it is in the zone of predominantly highly satisfied or satisfied limits. Specific to the overall upkeep of the room, again the respondents of both the domestic and foreign origin were found to be adequately satisfied (Table 5.6).

Table-5.6: Rating of Hotel Room Lighting and Overall Upkeep by Respondents

Rating of hotel room facilities		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Overall lighting in the room	Highly satisfied	337 (66.9)	320 (63.6)
	Somewhat satisfied	152 (30.2)	157 (31.2)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	09 (1.8)	17 (3.4)
	Highly dissatisfied	02 (0.4)	03 (0.6)
	No Comments	04 (0.7)	06 (1.2)
	Total	504	503
Overall upkeep of the room	Highly satisfied	302 (59.9)	287 (57.1)
	Somewhat satisfied	184 (36.5)	194 (38.6)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	10 (2.0)	12 (2.4)
	Highly dissatisfied	02 (0.4)	01 (0.2)
	No Comments	06 (0.8)	9 (1.8)
	Total	504	503

Source: Primary Data

An often reported shortcoming on part of the hoteliers is the provision of information about various services and facilities offered by the hotels. However, when the specific aspect was examined, more than half of the respondents were reportedly highly satisfied. Again, the proportion of guests reportedly dissatisfied on this count was not significant and that is common across both the tourist segments (Table 5.7).

Table-5.7: Rating of Information Availability in the Hotel Room

Provision of information on hotel services inside room		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Information Availability	Highly satisfied	269 (53.4)	252 (50.1)
	Somewhat satisfied	202 (40.1)	209 (41.6)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	20 (4.0)	26 (5.2)
	Highly dissatisfied	10 (2.0)	02 (0.4)
	No Comments	03 (0.5)	14 (2.8)
	Total	504	503

Source: Primary Data

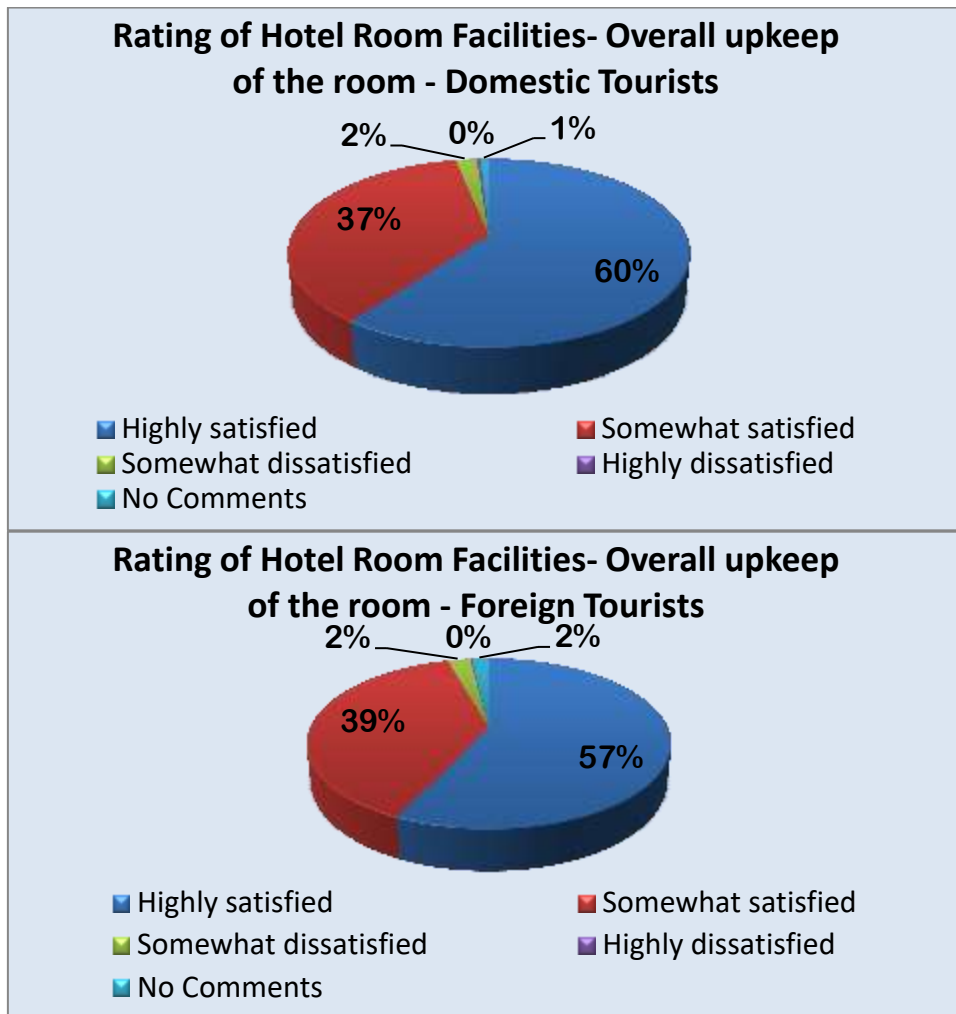


Fig.5.3: Rating of Hotel Room Facilities- Overall upkeep of the room - Domestic & Foreign Tourists

C. Guests' Assessment of Bathroom

In some of the countries, the bathroom features of the hotel room assume prominence and figure as the next important assessment criteria to the guest room features in the classification schemes. When this was examined in the Indian context, nearly two-third of the domestic and half of foreign respondents were observed to have been highly satisfied on the bathroom and fixtures. Again, those dissatisfied with this were minuscule in its proportion (Table 5.8).

Table-5.8: Rating of Bathroom Facilities by Respondents

Rating of bathroom facilities		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Room and its fixtures – size, towel, toiletries, mirror WC toilet, mirror, fixtures etc.	Highly satisfied	312 (61.9)	260 (51.7)
	Somewhat satisfied	172 (34.1)	198 (39.4)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	11 (2.2)	33 (6.6)
	Highly dissatisfied	01 (0.2)	01 (0.2)
	No Comments	08 (1.6)	11 (2.2)
	Total	504	503
Shower & cabin, bath-tub, hot water supply etc.	Highly satisfied	268 (53.2)	229 (45.6)
	Somewhat satisfied	179 (35.6)	212 (42.1)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	43 (8.5)	46 (9.1)
	Highly dissatisfied	03(0.5)	05 (1.0)
	No Comments	11 (2.2)	11 (2.2)
	Total	504	503

Source: Primary Data

Other bathroom features like shower cabins, bathtub, hot water supply etc. equally gain weightage in the assessment scheme. While examining, it was observed that more than half of the respondents were highly satisfied, where as those reported as not satisfied constitute only a minor segment. This trend is common across both visitor segments.

D. Guests' Assessment of Food & Beverage Facilities

In some of the countries, the F & B facilities and services figure next to the guest rooms in the classification assessment schemes. In addition to the menu and services, other domains like utensils, crockery, cutleries etc., bar service, overall upkeep of restaurant and the like are also assessed adequately. The perception of hotel guests assessed in the study revealed that the multi-cuisine offers in the hotel are indeed not encouraging with a little over half of the respondents in both categories were only reported to have found it as highly satisfactory (Table 5.9).

The utensils, crockery, cutleries etc. are again major attributes of restaurants contributing to the satisfaction of the diners. Examination of this emerges with discouraging results; for, it suggests that this is an important area warranting focused attention by both hoteliers and the hotel classification committee. For, only just about one-third of both the visitor segments reported to have been highly satisfied when this question was put to them (Table- 5.10).

The proportion of respondents reported to have availed the bar services is about half of the domestic and about 71% of foreign origin. When their level of satisfaction was ascertained, the trend is one of not encouraging in nature since roughly one-third of the found to have been highly satisfied. This trend could also be attributed to the representation of 1 to 3 Star hotels which do not have a proper bar arrangement or poor level of bar service. Further, some tier-2 cities were also part of the sample survey and that also might have influenced in a response pattern of this nature.

Table-5.9: Rating of Restaurant Menu, Services and Facilities by Respondents

Rating of Food & Beverage facilities		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Multi-cuisine restaurant – menu & service	Highly satisfied	292 (57.9)	258 (51.3)
	Somewhat satisfied	147 (26.2)	165 (32.8)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	13 (2.6)	30 (6.0)
	Highly dissatisfied	08 (1.6)	02 (0.4)

Rating of Food & Beverage facilities		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
	No Comments	44 (8.7)	48 (9.5)
	Total	504	503
Utensils, crockery, cutleries etc.	Highly satisfied	233 (46.2)	202 (40.1)
	Somewhat satisfied	198 (39.3)	221 (43.9)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	16 (3.2)	29 (5.8)
	Highly dissatisfied	04 (0.8)	06 (1.2)
	No Comments	53 (10.5)	45 (8.9)
	Total	504	503

Source: Primary Data

Table-5.10: Rating of Bar Service and Overall Upkeep of Restaurants by Respondents

Rating of Food & Beverage facilities		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Bar service	Highly satisfied	151 (30.0)	169 (33.6)
	Somewhat satisfied	102 (20.2)	151 (30.0)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	14 (2.8)	27 (5.4)
	Highly dissatisfied	06 (1.2)	11 (2.2)
	No Comments	231 (45.8)	145 (28.8)
	Total	504	503
Overall upkeep of restaurant	Highly satisfied	231 (46.4)	218 (43.3)
	Somewhat satisfied	197 (39.6)	221 (43.9)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	13 (2.6)	12 (2.5)
	Highly dissatisfied	04 (0.8)	02 (0.4)
	No Comments	53 (10.6)	50 (9.9)
	Total	498	503

Source: Primary Data

The response on upkeep of the restaurants were also probed and the results suggest that only about 43%-46% of the respondents were highly satisfied on this and points to the imperative for the hoteliers and the regulators for more focused action for improvement of the restaurant services.

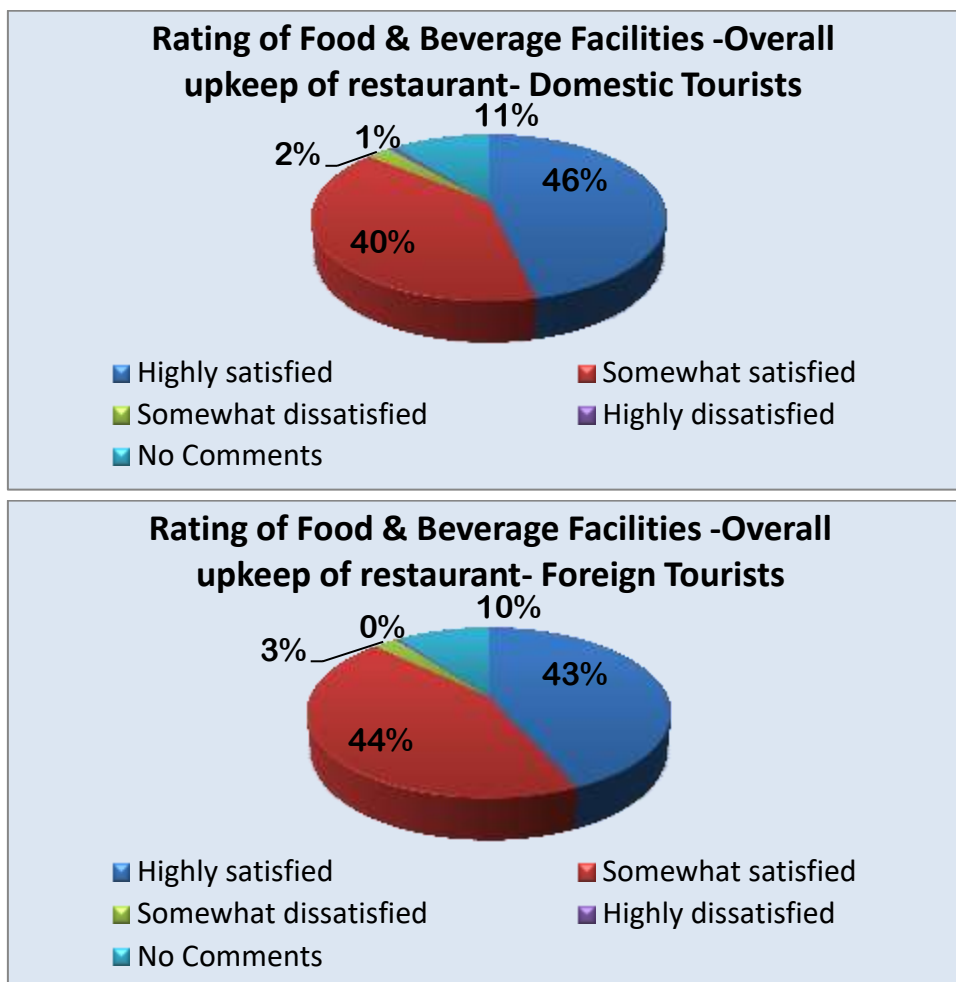


Fig.5.4: Rating of Food & Beverage Facilities -Overall upkeep of restaurant- Domestic & Foreign Tourists

E. Assessment of Guest Service Facilities by Respondents

A wide range of services are part of the hotel classification scheme and some major ones were considered for assessment in the study. Indeed, the guest services have crucial roles in shaping the perception of the guest towards the hotel and their stay in particular. One such factor is the hospitality practices especially the services extended by the hotel staff. Examination of this specific attribute reveals that the respondents have been generally satisfied and that was found common across both visitor segments (Table-5.11). In fact,

proportion of the dissatisfied respondents in the sample was not in any significant level of roughly around 11% to 13% among both visitor segments.

Multi language skills are crucial in a hospitality service segment like the hotel industry where the customers are drawn from various linguistic regions and cultures from within the country and abroad. The results emerged here points towards this as a major concern especially if the feedback from the domestic segments was considered. For, just about 45% of them reported as being highly satisfied and another 35% somewhat satisfied. Interestingly, about three-fourth of foreign respondents found to have been highly satisfied in terms of the language capabilities of the hotel staff.

Table-5.11: Rating of Hospitality Services Provided by the Hotel Staff

Rating of Guest service facilities		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Hospitality extended by the Staff	Highly satisfied	371 (73.7)	354 (70.4)
	Somewhat satisfied	113 (22.5)	127 (25.2)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	09 (1.8)	08 (1.6)
	Highly dissatisfied	04 (0.8)	03 (0.6)
	No Comments	06 (1.2)	11 (2.2)
	Total	503	503
Multi-language capability of the staff	Highly satisfied	231 (45.8)	354 (71.2)
	Somewhat satisfied	179 (35.5)	127 (25.6)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	20 (4.0)	08 (1.6)
	Highly dissatisfied	05 (0.9)	03 (0.6)
	No Comments	69 (13.7)	05 (1.0)
	Total	504	497

Source: Primary Data

Provision of information, both verbal and non-verbal, is significant in many ways and it is equally an important basis on which the guests evaluate their overall holidaying experience. When examined, about half of the respondents

in both categories were seen as highly satisfied on the information they received from the hotel staff.

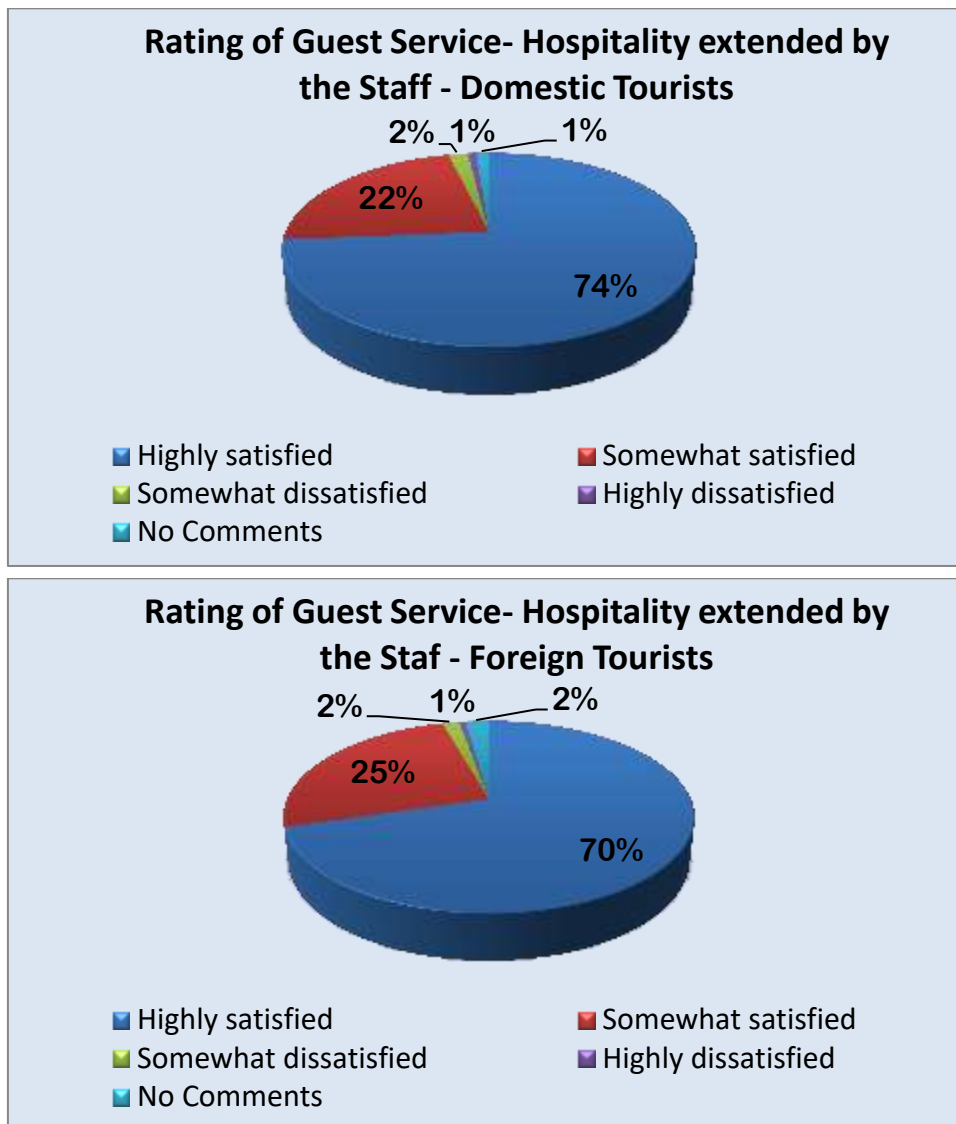


Fig.5.5: Rating of Guest Service- Hospitality extended by the Staff - Domestic & Foreign Tourists

Table-5.12: Supply of Information- Hotel Staff & Hotel Websites

Rating of Guest service facilities		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Supply of information by the staff	Highly satisfied	274 (54.3)	244 (48.5)
	Somewhat satisfied	169 (33.5)	196 (39.0)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	28 (5.6)	47 (9.3)
	Highly dissatisfied	04 (0.8)	05 (1.0)
	No Comments	29 (5.8)	11 (2.2)
	Total	504	503
Adequacy of information provided through hotel website	Highly satisfied	184 (37.2)	221 (45.3)
	Somewhat satisfied	201 (40.7)	198 (40.6)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	40 (8.1)	29 (5.9)
	Highly dissatisfied	7 (1.4)	03 (0.6)
	No Comments	62 (12.6)	37 (7.6)
	Total	494	488

Source: Primary Data

Another source of information for the guests on accommodation provisions is the websites maintained by the hoteliers (Table-5.12). As a matter of fact, invariably every accommodation provider maintains its own website for promotion and wider dissemination of information on their facilities and services. When examined, the level of satisfaction among the respondents were not encouraging in nature; for, just about 37% of domestic and 45% foreign origin tourists found the website information as highly satisfactory. It is an undeniable fact that provision of reliable and quality information is key to sustenance in a highly competitive and therefore the accommodation providers have to consider the centrality of supplying quality information for competitive sustenance.

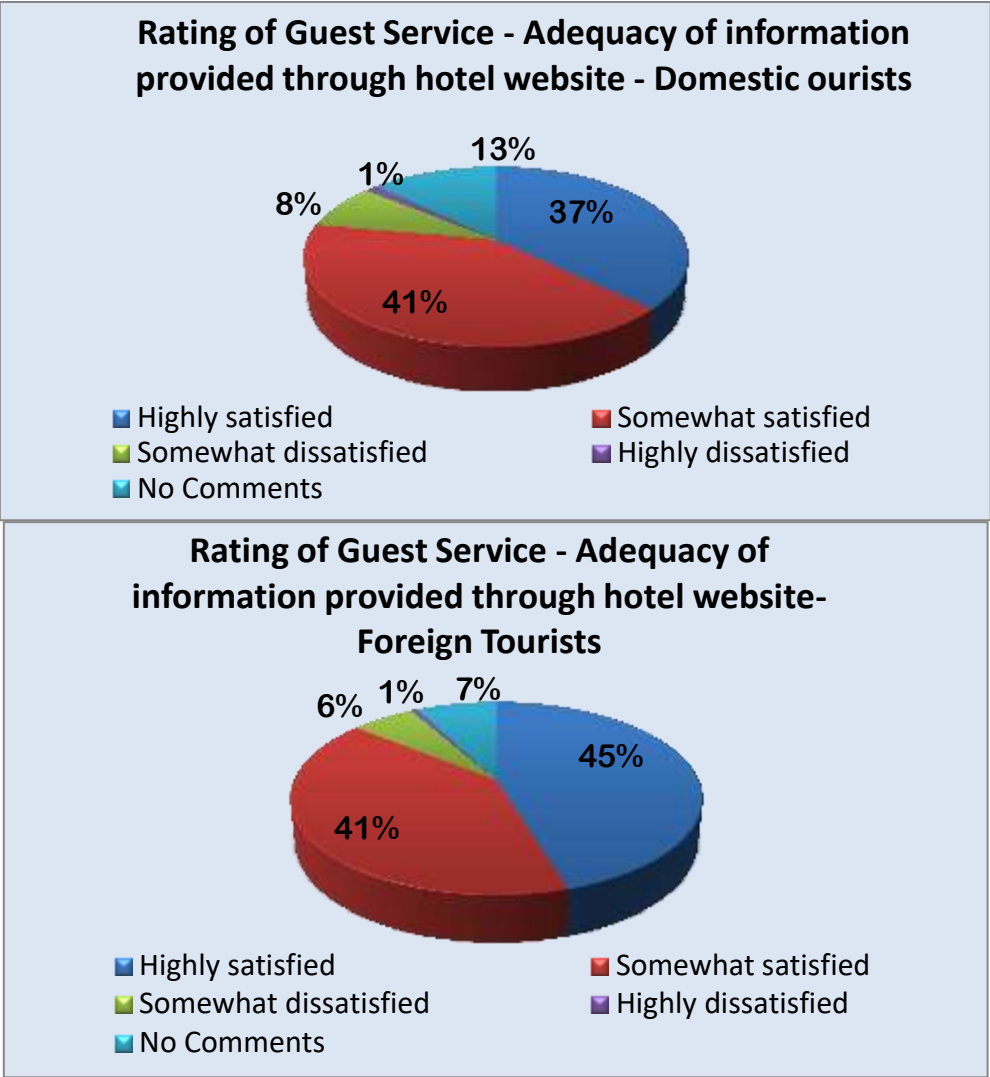


Fig.5.6: Rating of Guest Service - Adequacy of information provided through hotel website - Domestic & Foreign Tourists

The communication services such as telephone and more particularly internet have assumed greater significant in a globalized communication environment and the customers expect uninterrupted supply of these in their places of stay as well. Upon examining these in Indian context, the trend suggest that only about half of the total respondents in both categories were really satisfied on this service provisions by the hotel.

When it comes to internet and Wi-Fi services, again, it is not encouraging in nature with less than one-third of both respondent categories opining as indeed satisfied. Here, it is equally worth to note that around 30% and 26% domestic and foreign tourists respectively have not tendered any comment on

this (Table-5.13). This could be attributed to most customers having internet and Wi-Fi in their personal devices like the mobile phone and/or laptop, thereby, reducing the dependence on the hotels. However, the main grievance is observably as one of higher charges being levied for poor quality of internet services. The respondents also expected complementary internet and Wi-Fi services in the hotel but that is not usually provided in most 1-Star to 3-Star hotels.

Table-5.13: Telephone and Internet Services in Hotels

Rating of Guest service facilities		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Telephone service in the room and public area	Highly satisfied	275 (54.6)	238 (48.5)
	Somewhat satisfied	157 (31.2)	189 (38.5)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	34 (6.7)	11 (2.2)
	Highly dissatisfied	5 (1.0)	2 (0.4)
	No Comments	33 (6.6)	51 (10.4)
	Total	504	491
Internet service	Highly satisfied	164 (32.5)	150 (30.2)
	Somewhat satisfied	103 (20.4)	102 (20.6)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	65 (12.9)	81(16.3)
	Highly dissatisfied	17 (3.4)	34 (6.9)
	No Comments	155 (30.6)	129 (26.0)
	Total	504	496

Source: Primary Data

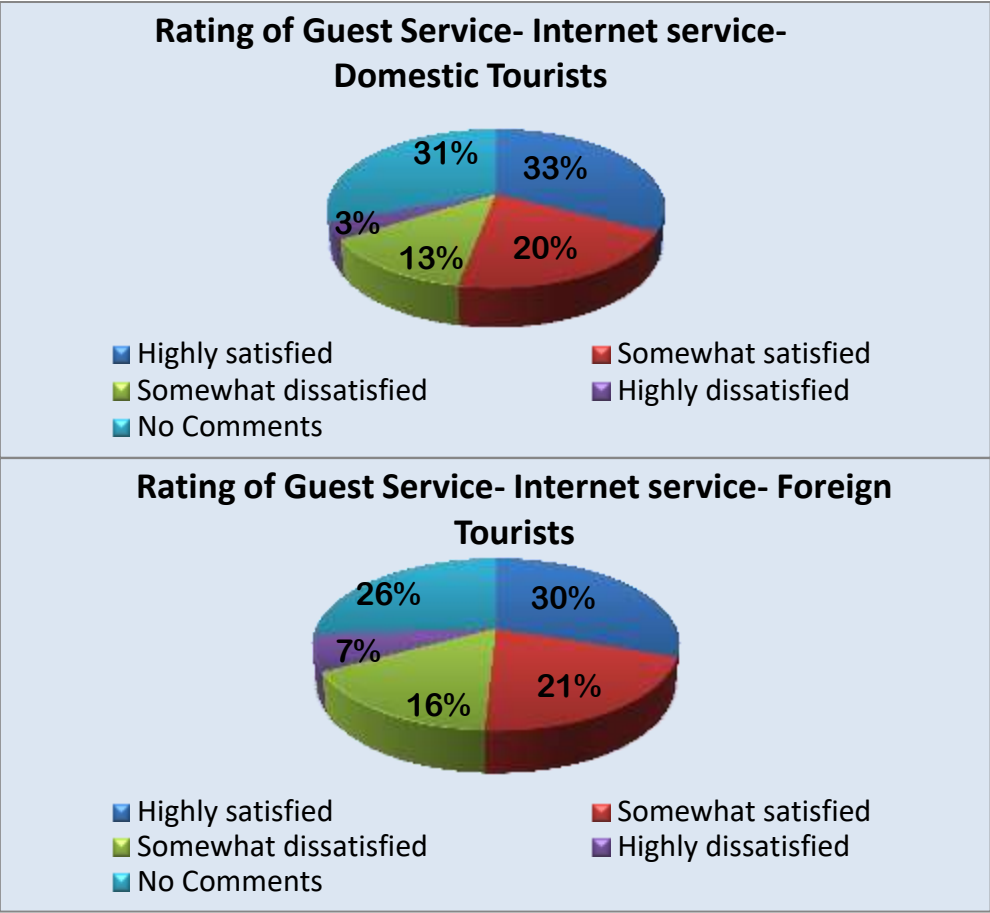


Fig.5.7: Rating of Guest Service- Internet service- Domestic & Foreign Tourists

The experience during check-in and check-out often turn out to be an irritant mainly when the delay or unfriendly handling of the hotel guests occurs. The results here revealed that this again is an area of concern since just about half of the respondents of both categories stating it as indeed a satisfactory experience.

The hotels are also places of entertainment, both passive and active in nature. It could range from the television in the room to live entertainments such as the music and dance. The demand for entertainment is generally more in hotels particularly those frequented by the business travelers. When examined, highly satisfied guests were found in the range of 41%-44% among the respondent groups being covered (Table-5.14).

Table-5.14: Check-in/Check-out Experience and Provision of Entertainment in Hotels

Rating of Guest service facilities		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Check-in/check-out experience	Highly satisfied	299 (59.3)	251 (50.0)
	Somewhat satisfied	158 (31.3)	188 (37.4)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	30 (6.0)	19 (3.8)
	Highly dissatisfied	02 (0.4)	06 (1.2)
	No Comments	15 (3.0)	39 (7.8)
	Total	504	503
Provision of entertainment	Highly satisfied	223 (44.2)	208 (41.8)
	Somewhat satisfied	209 (41.5)	201 (40.4)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	32 (6.3)	35 (7.0)
	Highly dissatisfied	11 (2.2)	10 (2.0)
	No Comments	29 (5.8)	44 (8.8)
	Total	504	498

Source: Primary Data

Table-5.15: Lobby Area and Arrangement for Safety & Security in Hotels

Rating of Guest service facilities		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Lounge/seating area in the lobby	Highly satisfied	282 (55.9)	250 (49.7)
	Somewhat satisfied	173 (34.3)	191 (38.0)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	18 (3.6)	23 (4.6)
	Highly dissatisfied	06 (1.2)	04 (0.8)
	No Comments	25 (5.0)	34 (6.8)
	Total	504	502
Arrangement for safety & security of the guest	Highly satisfied	283 (57.9)	256 (54.2)
	Somewhat satisfied	182 (37.2)	194 (41.1)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	08 (1.6)	09 (1.9)
	Highly dissatisfied	04 (0.8)	02 (0.4)
	No Comments	12 (2.5)	11 (2.3)

Rating of Guest service facilities		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
	Total	489	472
Signage and its placement, visibility	Highly satisfied	228 (47.9)	202 (42.8)
	Somewhat satisfied	221 (46.4)	218 (46.2)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	14 (2.9)	29 (6.1)
	Highly dissatisfied	04 (0.8)	01 (0.2)
	No Comments	9 (1.9)	22 (4.7)
	Total	476	472

Source: Primary Data

Another functional area of a hotel worth examining is the lounge/seating area in the lobby and the results point to average level of satisfaction among both visitor segments (Table-5.15). Similarly, the arrangement for safety and security of the guests in the hotel is also found to be not very encouraging with a little over half of the respondents rating it as highly satisfied.

Signage was another aspect being looked into and the results emerged calls for attention of the concerned authorities. Because, proportion of highly satisfied guests in the sample was found to be in the range of 42% to 48% only. When the responses were solicited on the hotel design, around 90% were opined either excellent or good (Table-5.16). In other words, those rated the property design as being poor or very poor are only very insignificant in the distribution.

The guest rating on the appeal of the hotel reception/lobby area stands to suggest that they are largely positive with predominant segments of the guests rating it as excellent or good and that is common to all visitors segments. Over the years, studies have been reporting that one of the essentials that the travelers expect in a hotel is neat and clean rooms and ambience. For instance, in a recent study on most recurring features in the classification for 4-Star & 5-Star properties, UNWTO (2015) reports that 87% of hotel classification schemes that it has evaluated have practice of daily cleaning as a major criteria in the assessment scheme.

Table-5.16: Rating of Hotel Ambience and Decor of Hotels

Rating of hotel ambience and decor		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Hotel design	Excellent	196 (40.4)	169 (35.8)
	Good	251 (51.8)	253 (53.6)
	Average	29 (6.0)	47 (10.0)
	Poor	06 (1.2)	03 (0.6)
	Very poor	03 (0.6)	-
	Total	485	472
Appeal of hotel reception/lobby area	Excellent	176 (36.4)	166 (35.8)
	Good	249 (51.4)	250 (54.0)
	Average	53 (11.0)	39 (8.4)
	Poor	06 (1.2)	08 (1.7)
	Total	484	463

Source: Primary Data

When the feedback on cleanliness of the room and hotel premises in Indian context was examined, around 60% domestic and half of foreign tourists were reported as highly satisfied. However, those reported as dissatisfied was miniscule in nature of just around 2%, whereas, the remaining were in the 'somewhat satisfied' category (Table- 5.17).

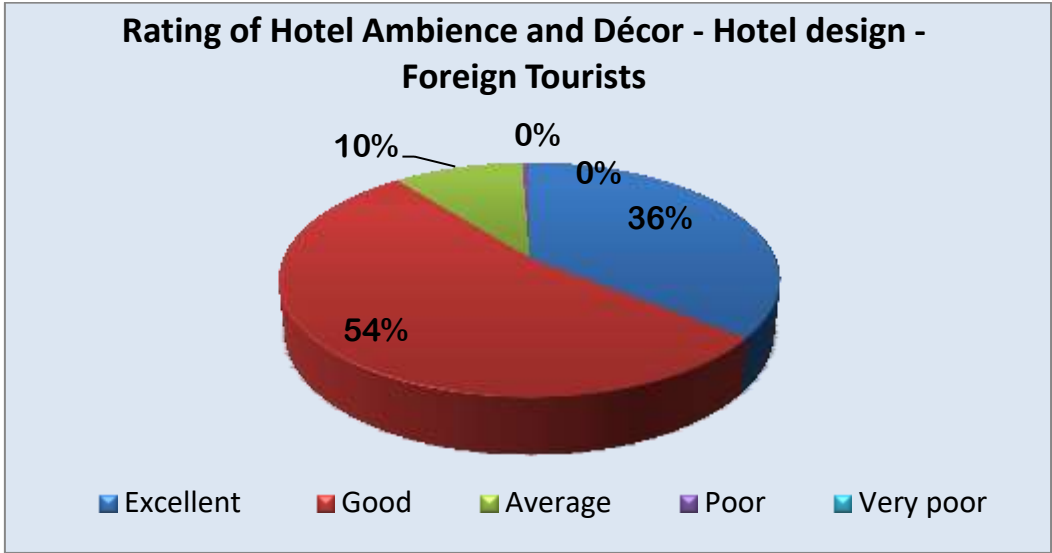
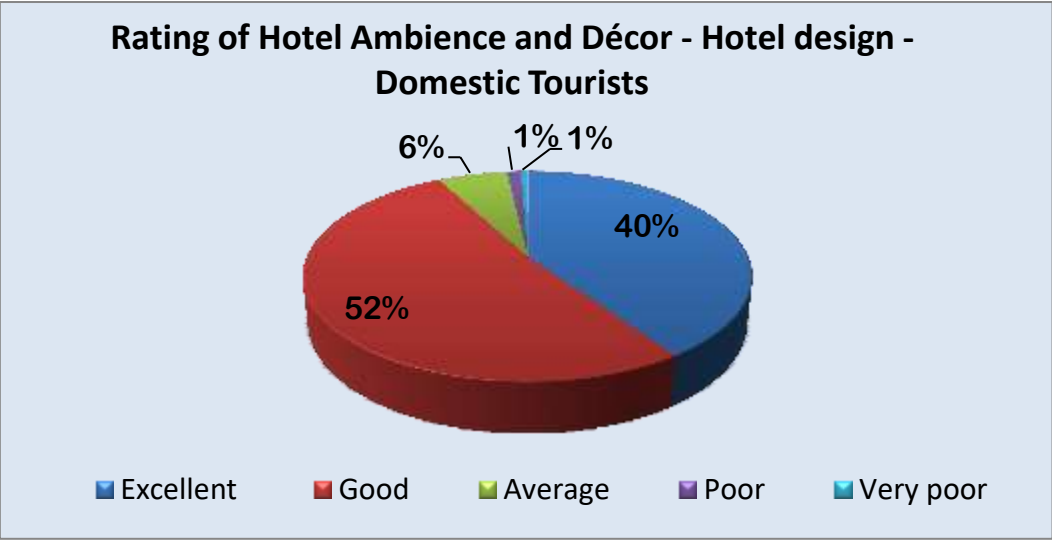
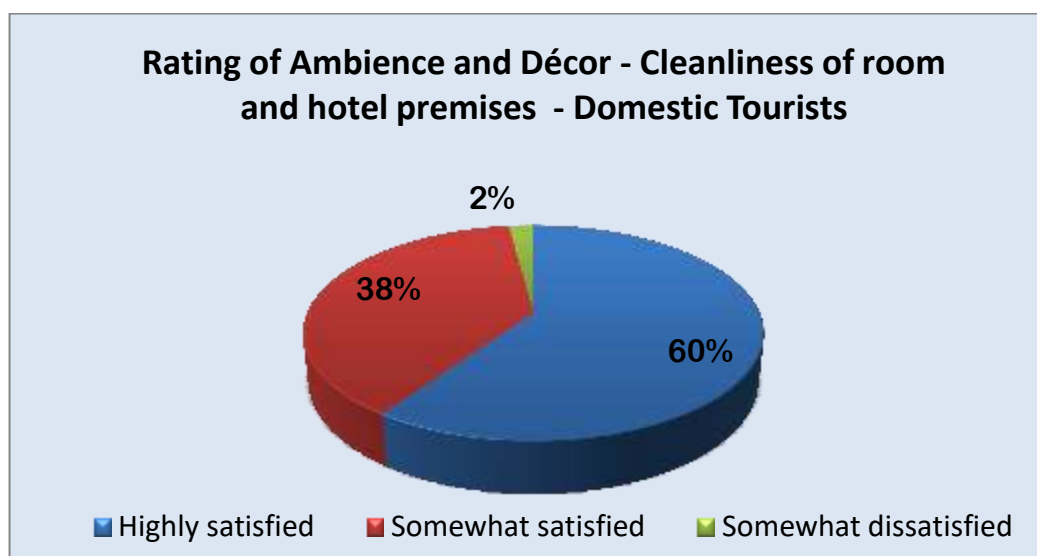


Fig.5.8: Rating of Hotel Ambience and Décor - Hotel design – Domestic & Foreign Tourists

Table-5.17: Cleanliness of Room, Hotel Premises and Eco-friendly and Sustainable Practices in Hotels

Rating of hotel ambience and decor		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Cleanliness of room and hotel premises	Highly satisfied	286 (59.6)	232 (50.4)
	Somewhat satisfied	184 (38.3)	216 (47.0)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	10 (2.1)	12 (2.6)
	Total	480	460
Eco-friendly sustainable practices in the hotel	Excellent	163 (33.9)	146 (32.2)
	Good	240 (49.9)	207 (45.7)
	Average	59 (12.3)	82 (18.1)
	Poor	11 (2.3)	05 (1.1)
	No Comments	08 (1.7)	13 (2.9)
	Total	481	453

Source: Primary Data



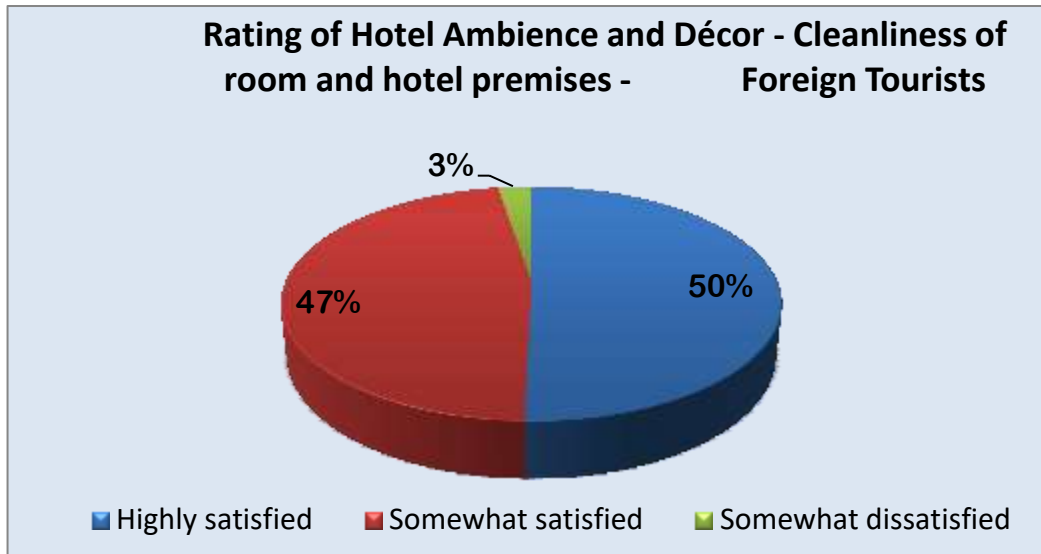


Fig.5.9: Rating of Hotel Ambience and Décor - Cleanliness of room and hotel premises - Domestic & Foreign Tourists

Of late, sustainability practices in the hotels have been gaining adequate attention, especially the green technology, energy and water conservation and corporate social responsibility practices. The UNWTO (2015) has recommended in this context that the increasing global focus on sustainability and accessibility should be reflected in both criteria and in their weighting. In India for instance, hotel classification scheme factored in many sustainability practices such as energy saving lighting, sewage treatment plant, rain water harvesting, waste management, pollution control methods (air, water, light), introduction of non-CFC equipment for refrigeration & A/c and the like. While examining the responses, the opinions were either in support of excellent or good practices (Table- 5.17).

F. Overall Assessment of the Stay Experience by Respondents

The response of the hotel customers on their overall experience of staying in the hotel was analyzed for each category of accommodation and the results are furnished at Table-5.18. When it was analyzed against domestic tourists, it was observed that the proportion of tourists rated their experience as ‘excellent’ increases with the increase in the star rating with 69% of those stayed in 5- Star category accommodation endorsing it accordingly (Table- 5.18). As it would have expected, those stayed in the ‘others’ category had only about little over 55% rating their experience as either good or excellent.

Specific to the foreign tourists, the trend emerged is almost similar to that of the responses of domestic tourists. Notably, the former reported to have better experience of staying at the budget category accommodation (1-star & 2-star) suggesting that this segment would be equally attractive and appealing to that of higher starred hotels (Table-5.19). However, non-starred properties seemingly not meeting up the expectations of this segment, and therefore, may be less attractive if necessary image reinforcement measures were not taken by its developers.

Table-5.18: Overall Experience of Tourists in Different Accommodation Categories

Overall Experience- Domestic	Type of accommodation (in %)					Average/ Total
	1-2 Star	3 Star	4-Star	5- Star	Others	
Excellent	20.7	32.6	43.1	69.4	20.0	37.3
Good	62.1	54.7	49.0	26.5	35.6	45.8
Average	13.8	8.1	7.8	4.1	24.4	11.6
Poor	3.4	0.6	-	-	2.2	1.2
No Comments	-	2.9	-	-	17.8	4.1
Total	87	172	102	98	45	504
Overall Experience- Foreign						
Excellent	39.5	20.9	29.8	68.3	18.4	35.4
Good	42.0	51.4	55.4	27.9	46.9	44.7
Average	18.5	12.2	10.7	2.9	16.3	72.1
Poor	-	1.4	-	-	4.1	1.1
No Comments	-	14.1	4.1	0.9	14.3	6.7
Total	81	148	121	104	49	503

Source: Primary Data

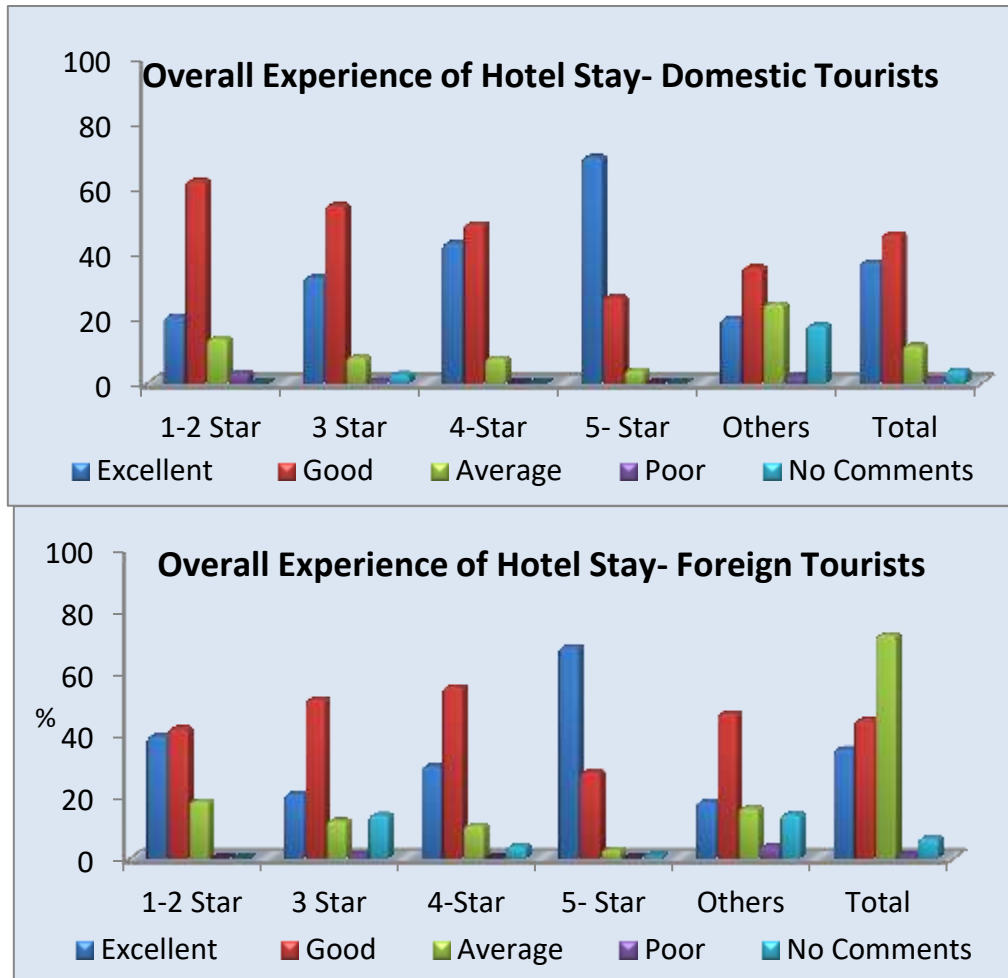


Fig.5.10: Overall Experience of Hotel Stay- Domestic & Foreign Tourists

It would be interesting to know the views of the respondents in recommending the properties they were staying at present to others and also for their future visits. The responses have been very encouraging with over 87% endorsing the same. Specific domestic tourists, those stayed in higher starred hotels where in more agreement to this than others. Encouragingly the foreign respondents were more affirmative of this pattern.

Table-5.19: Endorsement of Present Accommodation Unit to Others

Recommend the hotel to others- Domestic	Type of accommodation (in %)					Average/ Total
	1-2 Star	3 Star	4-Star	5- Star	Others	
Yes	86.2	87.2	96.0	91.8	75.6	87.4
No	10.3	4.7	2.0	-	6.7	4.7
No Response	3.5	8.1	2.0	8.2	17.7	7.9
Total	87	172	102	98	45	504
Recommend the hotel to others- Foreign						
Yes	97.5	77.7	90.1	98.0	73.5	87.4
No	2.5	7.4	7.4	1.0	8.1	5.3
No Response	-	14.9	2.5	1.0	18.4	7.3
Total	81	148	121	104	49	503

Source: Primary Data

The feedback of the tourists especially from those of foreign origin on price parity of the accommodation services in India to that of other countries can be a qualified pointer on the price competitiveness of the sector in India. With this view, when responses were analyzed, nearly 80% of them were found to have held the view that the present hotel has provided them with the kind of facilities that they could expect for similar budget/rate from similar kind of hotel in their or in other countries (Table-5.20).

Table-5.20: Price Parity of Present Hotel to that of Other Countries

Overall feedback of the hotel		Frequency & % Distribution
Whether present hotel provided the kind of facilities one could expect from similar kind of hotel in other countries for similar budget/rate	Yes	401(79.7)
	No	28 (5.6)
	No comments	74 (14.7)
	Total	503

Source: Primary Data

G. Basis of Hotel Selection

There are various ways of selecting a hotel for the tour and there are many studies establishing the impacts of different factors in this process. However, this study suggests that most chunks of the respondents were particular about the category of hotel accommodation while on tour (Table-5.21).

Table-5.21: Basis of Accommodation Selection for Tour

Basis of Hotel/Accommodation Selection for Tour		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Whether particular about the category of hotel accommodation while on tour	Yes	344 (76.1)	361 (81.9)
	No	108 (23.9)	80 (18.1)
	Total	452	441

Source: Primary Data

When the main basis of selecting a hotel was examined, the respondents in general were considering the hotels with official star rating. When probed further, over half of the respondents reported to have shown preference towards star rated/classified hotel with reasonable prices. Only about one-fourth of them found to have expressed the preference for star rated hotels of reputed brands and this pattern was common among both the visitor segments (Table-5.22).

As regards to the online source that is mostly relied while gathering feedback on hotels, about 37% of domestic and 48% of foreign respondents have used different sources. Those include review in Facebook, Twitter, other social media, review by hotel booking site and hotel's own review.

Table-5.22: Basis of Accommodation Selection- Major Considerations

Basis of Hotel/Accommodation Selection for Tour		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
If official star rating is a major consideration, then type of hotel preferred	Star rated hotels of reputed brands	115 (25.8)	104 (24.0)
	Star rated/classified hotel with reasonable price	243 (54.5)	255 (58.8)
	Cannot say	88 (19.7)	75 (17.2)
	Total	446	434
Online source that is mostly relied while gathering feedback on hotels	Review by hotel booking site	128 (27.8)	96 (22.0)
	Review in Facebook, twitter, other social media	138 (30.0)	116 (26.6)
	Hotel's own review	23 (5.0)	13 (3.0)
	All of the above	171 (37.2)	211 (48.4)
	Total	460	436

Source: Primary Data

The respondents in general considered a hotel to have Official Star/Diamond rating/classification either very important or somewhat important and they constitutes 90% of domestic and 87% of the foreign tourists (Table-5.23).

Table-5.23: Basis of Accommodation Selection- Importance of Official Rating and Guest Reviews

Basis of Hotel/Accommodation Selection for Tour		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Importance for a hotel to have Official Star/Diamond-rating/classification	Very important	242 (51.2)	189 (42.8)
	Somewhat important	188 (39.7)	195 (44.2)
	Not that important	13 (2.7)	36 (8.2)
	Not at all important	08 (1.7)	03 (0.7)
	No comments	22 (4.7)	18 (4.1)
	Total	473	441
Importance of guest	Very important	317 (67.6)	281 (64.0)

Basis of Hotel/Accommodation Selection for Tour		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
reviews for hotel selection	Somewhat important	128 (27.3)	132 (30.1)
	Not that important	05 (1.1)	14 (3.2)
	Not at all important	10 (2.1)	04 (0.9)
	No comments	09 (1.9)	08 (1.8)
	Total	469	439

Source: Primary Data

When importance of guest reviews for hotel selection was examined, about two-third have reported it as very important (Table-5.24). Those considered it as insignificant is miniscule in proportion. This pattern was found consistent among both visitor segments.

Table-5.24: Basis of Accommodation Selection- Web Ratings & Quality Assurance Through Official Classification

Basis of Hotel/Accommodation Selection for Tour		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Should guest review website indicates official rating of the hotel they have reviewed	Strongly agree	265 (56.7)	245 (55.4)
	Agree	181 (38.6)	165 (37.3)
	Disagree	07 (1.5)	18 (4.1)
	Strongly disagree	02 (0.4)	-
	No comments	12 (2.6)	14 (3.2)
	Total	467	442
Weather official Stars/Diamond classification to assure better quality of service standards	Strongly agree	186 (39.7)	187 (42.4)
	Agree	239 (51.1)	208 (47.2)
	Disagree	21 (4.5)	22 (5.0)
	Strongly disagree	04 (0.9)	01 (0.2)
	No comments	18 (3.8)	23 (5.2)
	Total	468	441

Source: Primary Data

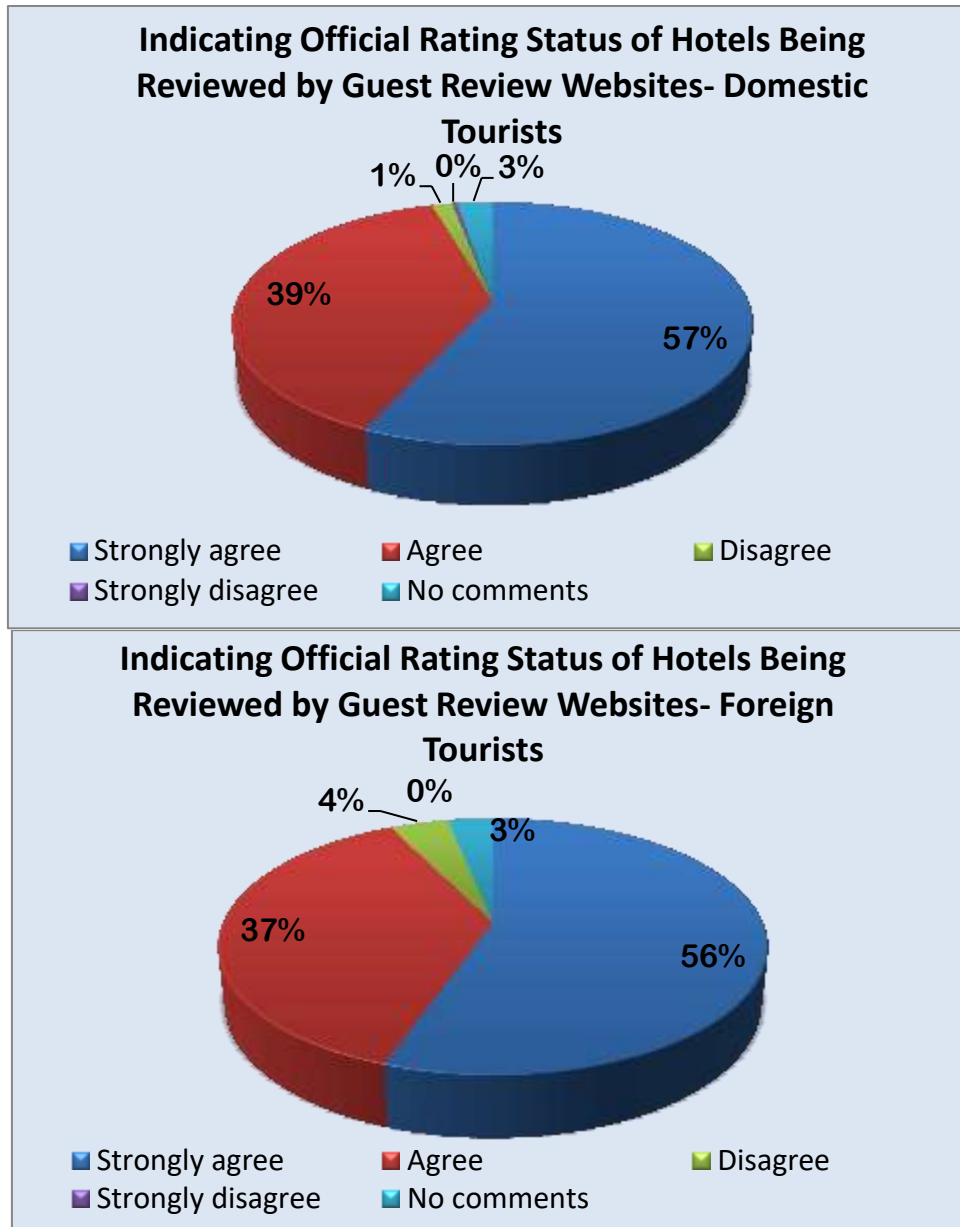


Fig.5.11: Indicating Official Rating Status of Hotels Being Reviewed by Guest Review Websites- Domestic & Foreign Tourists

Each hotel classification scheme has innumerable number of parameters for each star/diamond classification and that may not be known to most hotel guests. When this was examined, 36% of domestic and 23% of foreign respondents were reported to be aware on various parameters. Further, about three-fourth of the respondents have also expressed that it would be difficult for an ordinary man to understand hundreds of parameter in use for Star/Diamond ratings.

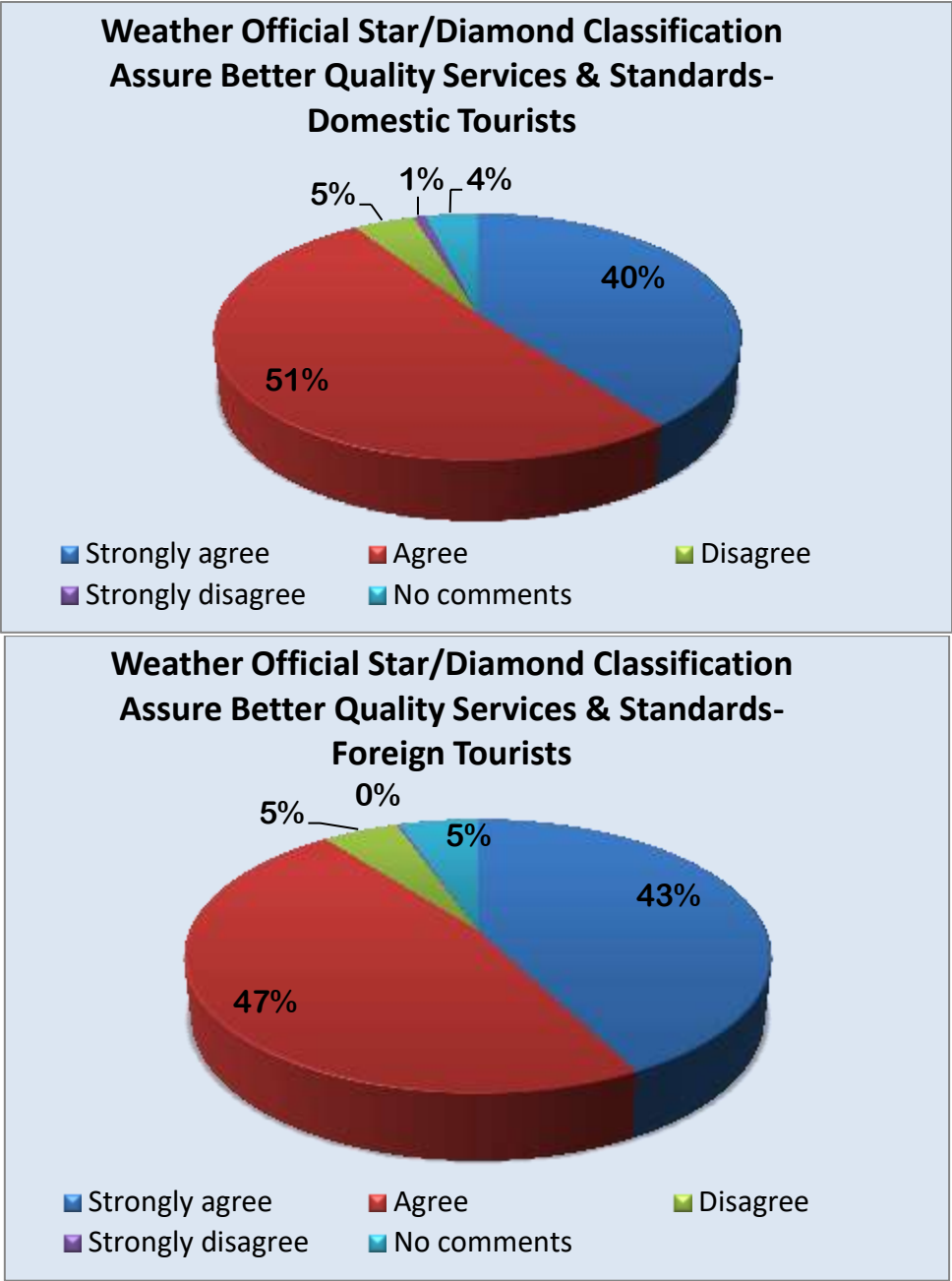


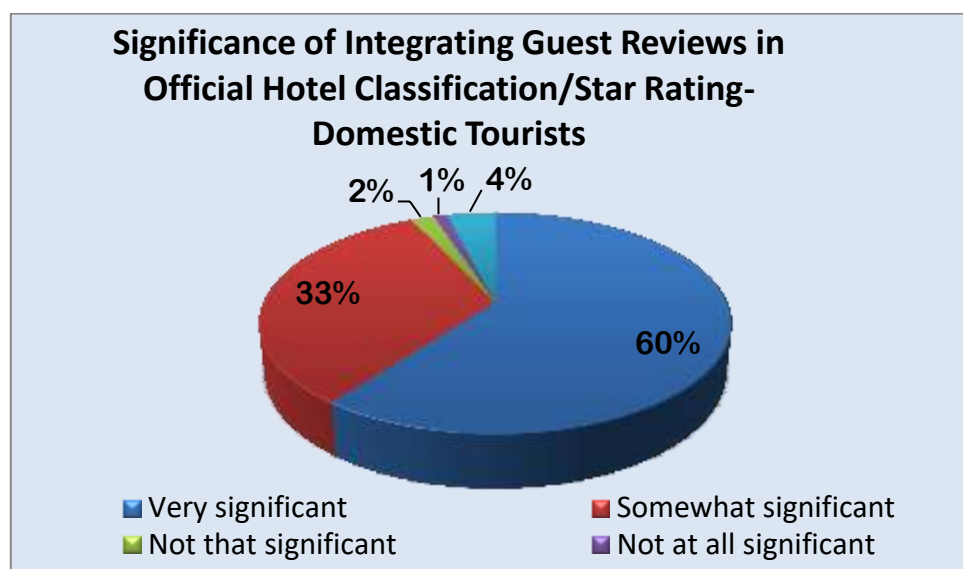
Fig.5.12: Weather Official Star/Diamond Classification Assure Better Quality Services & Standards- Domestic & Foreign Tourists

When further probed on significance of integrating guest reviews in the official classification/star rating schemes, about two-third of both respondents groups expressed it have been very significant (Table-5.25). In fact, some developed countries have already started this process which the agencies like UNWTO have also endorsed.

Table-5.25: Awareness about Star Classifications Parameters and Integration Guest Reviews of Official Classification

Significance of guest reviews		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Awareness about various parameters used in Star/ Diamond rating of hotels	Yes	183 (36.3)	119 (23.7)
	No	282 (56.0)	311 (61.8)
	No comments	39 (7.7)	73 (14.5)
	Total	504	503
Significance of integrating guest reviews in the official classification/star rating	Very significant	284 (60.3)	260 (59.1)
	Somewhat significant	154 (32.7)	141 (32.0)
	Not that significant	09 (1.9)	22 (5.0)
	Not at all significant	05 (1.1)	02 (0.5)
	No comments	19 (4.0)	15 (3.4)
	Total	471	440

Source: Primary Data



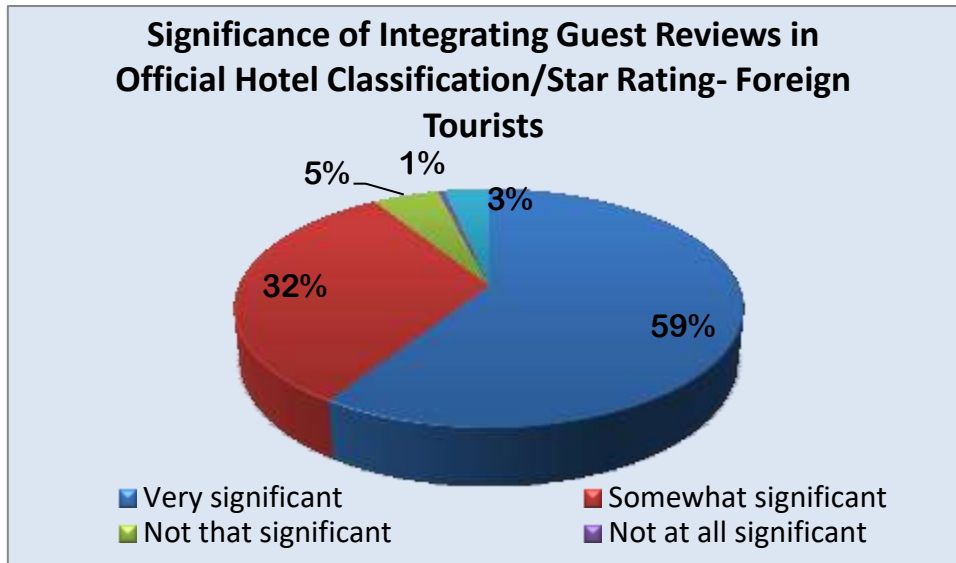


Fig.5.13: Significance of Integrating Guest Reviews in Official Hotel Classification/Star Rating- Domestic & Foreign Tourists

Table-5.26: Respondents’ Ability to Understand Classification Parameters

Ability to understand classification parameters		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Difficult for an ordinary man to understand hundreds of parameter in use for Star/Diamond ratings	Yes	401 (79.6)	376 (74.8)
	No	64 (12.7)	47 (9.3)
	No comments	21 (7.7)	46 (15.9)
	Total	486	469
Able to distinguish those at hotels of different Star/Diamond categories	Yes	165 (90.2)	86 (72.3)
	No	18 (9.8)	33 (27.3)
	Total	183	119

Source: Primary Data

Among those expressed their awareness about various parameters being used in the classification schemes, it was further probed on their ability to distinguish those at different Star/Diamond categories of accommodation units. They were predominantly in agreement on this (Table-5.26). However, it is worth to note here that while the broad components of classification may be known to such respondents, detailed scheme of the facilities and

provisions need not be known since there are too many such parameters and the hotel guests are not usually privy to many of those.

A. Current Trip Details

The details examined here are type of tour arrangement, nature of travel arrangement, duration of trip, main purpose of visit and the like. About one-third of the domestic and 57% of the foreign tourists made their own arrangement including booking of the travel requirements (Table-5.27). The remaining were either on package or all-inclusive package tours. As regards to the nature of bookings for the travel, about 28% of domestic and 48% of foreign tourists did so through travel agent/tour operator. The proportion of those made the bookings directly with service provider is about 28% and 21% respectively.

Table-5.27: Arrangement Current Trip

Trip details		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Type of tour arrangement	Independent tour	304 (63.2)	266 (56.7)
	Inclusive package (transport and stay)	81 (16.8)	63 (13.4)
	All-inclusive package	96 (20.0)	140 (29.9)
	Total	481	469
Nature of Travel arrangement	Directly with service provider	137 (28.7)	101 (21.5)
	Through e – portals	132 (27.7)	89 (18.9)
	Travel agent/tour operator	137 (28.7)	230 (48.9)
	Friend & relative	50 (10.5)	23 (4.9)
	Others	21 (4.4)	27 (5.7)
	Total	477	470
Duration of trip	Upto 3 days	317 (68.3)	119 (26.2)
	4-7 days	91 (19.6)	118 (26.0)
	8-14 days	25 (5.4)	150 (33.0)
	Above 14 days	12 (2.6)	59 (10.8)
	One day excursion	19 (4.1)	08 (1.8)
	Total	464	454

Source: Primary Data

Specific to duration of the trip at places of survey, it was 03 days or less for around 68% of domestic respondents, followed by those on 4-7 days of stay. When it comes to foreigners, about one-third stayed for about 8-14 days but only a little over 10% of them reported to have stayed above 14 days.

The main purpose of visit for the domestic segment was business/professional (48%) followed by holidaying, leisure & recreation (34.5%). Corresponding proportion against foreign tourists were 23.7% (business/professional) and 58.7% (holidaying, leisure & recreation) (Table-5.28).

Table-5.28: Main Purpose of Current Visit

Trip details- Main purpose of visit	Frequency & % Distribution	
	Domestic	Foreign
Business/professional	242 (48.0)	119 (23.7)
Holidaying, leisure & recreation	174 (34.5)	296 (58.7)
Religious/pilgrimage	06 (1.2)	15 (3.0)
Education & training	22 (4.4)	19 (3.8)
Health/Medical/Wellness	07 (1.3)	10 (2.0)
Social (i.e visiting friends & relatives, marriages etc.)	09 (1.8)	10 (2.0)
Incentive tour	05 (1.0)	01 (0.2)
others	10 (2.0)	-
No comments	29 (5.8)	33 (6.6)
Total	504	503

Source: Primary Data

As regards to the frequency, it was first visit for about 65% of foreigners followed by 14% reporting it as their second visit (Table-5.29).

Table-5.29: Frequency of Visit to India- Foreign

Trip detail- Foreign		Frequency & % Distribution
Frequency of visit to India	First visit	327 (65.0)
	Second visit	72 (14.3)
	Third visit	10 (2.0)
	Fourth and above	39 (7.8)
	No comments	55 (10.9)
	Total	503

Source: Primary Data

The respondents were mainly in the age group of 29-38 years with 47% of Indians and 43% foreigners reporting accordingly (Table-5.30). Nearly one-fourth of all were in the age of 18-28 whereas those above 58 years were negligent in its proportion.

Table-5.30: Respondent's Age, Gender and Marital Status

Respondent Profile		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Age	18-28	116 (24.4)	112 (24.0)
	29-38	216 (47.4)	200 (42.8)
	39-48	81 (17.8)	86 (18.4)
	49-58	37 (8.1)	51 (10.9)
	Above 58 yrs	06 (1.3)	18 (3.9)
	Total	456	467
Gender	Male	416 (87.0)	320 (65.6)
	Female	62 (13.0)	168 (34.4)
	Total	478	488
Marital status	Married	347 (74.6)	278 (58.9)
	Unmarried	118 (25.4)	194 (41.1)
	Total	465	472

Source: Primary Data

Further, most of them were graduate or post-graduate & above. About 90% of domestic and 77% of foreign respondents were also either employed or self-employed.

Table-5.31: Respondent’s Education and Employment Status

Respondent Profile		Frequency & % Distribution	
		Domestic	Foreign
Education status	Secondary	2 (0.4)	2 (0.4)
	Higher Secondary	18 (4.0)	29 (6.5)
	Graduate	144 (31.7)	200 (44.8)
	Post graduate & above	290 (63.9)	215 (48.2)
	Total	454	446
Employment status	Employed/self-employed	430 (89.7)	356 (77.4)
	Unemployed	10 (2.1)	26 (5.7)
	Student	25 (5.2)	57 (12.4)
	Retired	07 (1.5)	18 (3.9)
	Others	07 (1.5)	03 (0.6)
	Total	479	460

Source: Primary Data

VI. Stakeholders' Perception on Hotel Classification Scheme in India

The stakeholders canvassed for the study were those establishments directly conducted with the accommodation business such as the hotels, travel agents, tour operators, on-line travel agents and the industry professional bodies like Hotel Association of India (HAI) and Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO). Some other bodies in both accommodation and travel intermediaries segments were also approached for soliciting information but the same was not supplied. A total of 130 questionnaires were completed in nature and those were used for analysis. The major areas on which the feedbacks were gathered included reasons for many hotels opting out of official classification, rationale for hotel classification, hotel selection, classification process in India and the need for making classification compulsory for accommodation establishments. The results of the analysis are discussed in the following session.

6.1.A Selection of Accommodation by the Guests

The purpose of gathering this information from the suppliers and the intermediaries was to evolve a supply-side perspective on this aspect. While there are many factors to influence the process of hotel selection, this study made an attempt to rank the major ones in order to establish relative importance of those. The results show that the price play most important role with highest proportion of respondents assigning either first or second ranks against this (Table- 6.1).

Table- 6.1: Basis of Hotel Selection by the Guests

Hotel Selection		Top ranks (% Distribution)					
		1	2	3	4	5-8	Total
Basis	Budget vs. price	52.4	27.8	6.3	7.1	6.4	128
	Brand reputation	17.1	20.3	20.3	23.6	18.7	127
	Official star rating	12.7	17.7	10.3	15.1	44.2	128
	Hotel location	8.2	16.4	34.4	13.1	27.9	126

Hotel Selection	Top ranks (% Distribution)					
	1	2	3	4	5-8	Total
Hotel accessibility	7.4	4.9	19.7	19.7	48.3	126
Online feedback	4.9	7.4	6.6	16.4	64.7	126
Endorsement of relatives/ friends	1.8	11.1	8.5	11.1	67.5	120

Source: Primary Data

It was followed by brand reputation and official star rating but relative ranking of these were far below the price. When the hotel guests were probed on their choice of the type of accommodation while on tour, more than half were reportedly preferring the star-rated /classified hotel with reasonable price, whereas, only about one-fourth were keen on star-rated hotels of reputed brands. A similar pattern also emerged from the response of the stakeholders with over 66% stating it very important for the hotels have official classification, whereas for another 25%, it was somewhat important (Table-6.2).

Table-6.2: Importance of Official Classification and Guest Reviews for Hotels

Importance level	To have Official classification (In %)	Guest reviews for hotel booking (In %)	Display of official star-rating on hotel websites (In %)
Very important	66.2	40.9	68.5
Somewhat important	24.6	52.8	24.6
Somewhat not important	5.4	2.4	5.4
Not at all important	1.5	2.4	1.5
No comments	2.3	1.5	-
Total	130	127	130

Source: Primary Data

Specific to role of guest reviews in booking decisions, around 41% was of the view that it is very important and for another 53%, it was somewhat important (Table-). As far as the norm for classification in India goes, it is mandatory for all classified hotels to display the classification status on the

websites under a separate icon on the opening page. When this question was put to the respondents, over 68% considered it very important and another quarter of respondents treat it as somewhat important. This means that the hoteliers are in agreement on display of the official star-rating on websites. Interestingly, a random checking of some of the classified hotels stands to suggest that very few hoteliers are particular in doing so.

With a vibrant virtual connectivity and social media environment, the hotel guests have also started narrating their experiences in particular hotels which now reaches to a wider audience. The online platforms like Expedia, TripAdvisor, Travelocity, Yatra.com etc. and many other traditional travel intermediaries have also launched their own rating process and classification of hotels. Thus, along with the guest reviews, it is desirable to have star rating also displayed on the hotel websites. In the process, some studies have revealed that there are also attempts to manipulate the guest reviews by the reviewing websites which put certain hotels of poor ratings though the actual ratings may be higher.

Table- 6.3: Indicating the Official Classification/Rating of Each Hotel being reviewed by Hotel Review Websites

Hotel reviews must be displayed (in %)	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Cannot say	Total
	33.8	63.7	1.6	0.8	127

Source: Primary Data

One of the suggestions for better control of the reviews is to display the official classification/rating of each hotel being reviewed by hotel review websites. To understand this in Indian context, the respondents were sought to furnish their views. The results clearly show that the reviewing websites must indicate the official rating of the hotels along with their review outcomes (Table-6.3).

6.1.B Rationale for Official Classification of Hotels

The hotel classification systems have been developed with a view to ensure safe and reliable stay and food service to the travelers. It was also a mechanism to standardize and market various services of the hotels to the tourists and to inform the tourism professionals and agencies interested about the facilities and standards of different categories of the hotels. However, the rationale of classification schemes across the world has been different and documentation of the same was attempted by UNWTO and that has been discussed in the previous section.

While classification is treated as a standardization and bench-marking frame work, there were also apprehension of it being used as a means to control and regulate the hospitality industry by way of taxation, tariff control and the like. Reportedly, this has often prompted the accommodation establishments to opt out of official classification, which is voluntary in nature at present in India.

According to the respondents of this study, there exists a fear that classification could interfere with the freedom of the hoteliers and their business, which interestingly, was ranked as the top most reason for opting out with 40% assigning the top ranking. About one-fourth of respondents have also assigned top most rank on classification making the social obligations of the hotel mandatory. It was equally worth to notice 16% assigning the top rank against 'it as means to regulate the activities' (Table-6.4).

Table- 6.4: Reasons for Hotels Opting out of Classification

Opting out of Classification		Rank order (% Distribution)					
		1	2	3	4	5-8	Total
Reasons	Consider it as interference on freedom to do business	40.0	32.8	17.6	6.4	3.2	125
	Makes social obligations of the hotel mandatory	25.2	13.4	11.8	16.0	33.6	121
	Consider it as means to regulate the activities	16.3	20.5	16.2	8.5	38.5	120

Opting out of Classification	Rank order (% Distribution)					
	1	2	3	4	5-8	Total
The scheme is above their hotel standards	9.2	13.3	29.2	20.8	27.5	123
Incremental benefits are not attractive enough	8.1	11.4	9.8	13.8	56.9	125
Attract many additional charges/expenses	5.2	4.3	8.7	20.1	61.7	118
Hotels consider their standards are above existing scheme	3.6	12.6	16.2	25.2	42.3	118

Source: Primary Data

Specific to the rationale of classification, couple of crucial propositions were furnished to the respondents and the results emerged thereof are interesting. For, more than 90% of respondents either agree or strongly agree on the point that classification would help conforming to bench-marking standards. For another 94% consider it as a good communication tool when it comes to industry offers (Table-6.5).

Table- 6.5: Rationale for Official Hotels Classification - Conform to Bench-marking Standards and Communication on Industry Offers

Agreement level	Help conforming to bench-marking standards (In %)	Good tool to communicate industry offers (In %)
Strongly agree	25.1	37.0
Agree	66.2	56.6
Disagree	2.4	1.5
Strongly disagree	2.4	1.5
Cannot say	3.9	3.1
Total	127	127

Source: Primary Data

Further, over 96 % opined it as highly justified or justified on account of the consumer concerns. Almost similar proportion also thought it either justified or highly justified as a tool for periodic monitoring of the Sector (Table-6.6).

Table- 6.6: Rational for Official Hotels Classification- Justified on Consumer Concerns and Periodic Monitoring of the Sector

Importance level	Justified on Consumer Concerns (In %)	Tool for periodic monitoring of the Sector (In %)
Highly justified	36.2	33.8
Justified	60.6	60.6
Not justified	1.6	3.9
Not at all justified	1.6	1.5
Total	127	127

Source: Primary Data

Most majorities of respondents were also in agreement to the fact that it is a promise to the customers on the quality of services and standards that a hotel offers (Table-). On the question of whether classification used as a tool to monitor and control the sector in India, only little over half of them were in agreement on this (Table-6.7).

Table- 6.7: Rational for Official Classification of Hotels- Promise on Quality and Standards it Offers

Promise on Quality and Standards (in %)	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Cannot say	Total
	62.2	31.4	2.9	2.3	127

Source: Primary Data

Table- 6.8: Effects of Non-observance of Stipulated Standards on Hotel Business

Non-observance of standards		Rank order (% Distribution)					Total
		1	2	3	4	5-6	
Effects	Reduce customer confidence	41.3	37.2	11.9	4.0	5.6	127
	Degrade brand value	30.2	31.7	23.0	14.3	0.8	126
	Sustainability of hotel business	12.9	21.0	19.4	21.0	25.7	125

Non-observance of standards	Rank order (% Distribution)					
	1	2	3	4	5-6	Total
Image of the country-destination	12.9	8.1	35.5	24.2	19.1	125
Makes promotion tougher	6.5	6.5	13.8	32.5	40.7	124

Source: Primary Data

Needlessly, classification is to be approached as a qualified tool for maintenance of provisions and standards at the hotel establishments and that contribute to better customer satisfaction and turn-over. But, non-observance of those stipulated hospitality standards would adversely impact the prospect and sustainability of the hotel business. This study shows that its worst effect would be reduced customer confidence in such properties and it would equally have the propensity to degrade brand value of the hotel (Table-6.8). Other effects on the hotel prospects can be sustainability of business and distorted image of the country-destination.

6.1.C Feedback on Imperative of Hotels Classification

Since the official classification is not mandatory for operating accommodation establishments in India, a good chunk of the formal hotel segment and predominant part of informal sector units stay away from classification, and therefore, do not figure in the official accommodation statistics in the

“85% of Australian travelers told us that they recognize and use Star Ratings when they choose accommodation “
Star Ratings in Australia

country. This is very much evident in the room statistics available from the Central Ministry of Tourism documents. But, according to Hotel Association of India, all of their member hotels hold official rating/classification.

On the question of whether the classified hotels in India offer the standards at par with similar category of hotels in other leading country destinations, around 60% have responded in affirmation. When it was probed further with those not endorsing this, many reasons were cited and the common among those are provided below:

- Intra-category differences in facilities are higher
- In a price-quality matrix, leading country destinations offer better facilities and services than the similar category of hotels in India
- The prices in other countries are much more competitive
- Understanding of consumer behavior is comparatively better in other countries
- Overseas destinations are more cleaner and follow sustainable standards and checks
- There exist a discrepancy in terms of the corporate rate and the rates offered to the tourists in India but it is comparatively much less in other countries
- Most hotel staffs in India were found not properly trained in respective functional areas.

As stated earlier, different classification schemes in the world adopt different frameworks and sets of parameters. This often result the customers expressing their resentments since they often find mismatch of the facilities and services in different countries. To address this, there were initiatives including under the aegis of UNWTO, exploring the possibility of evolving a largely uniform classification scheme at the global level. But such initiatives were not encouraged arguing that, to be sustainable, tourism must be able to consolidate its diversity rather than seeking uniformity.

When the same question was put to the respondents here, around 58% were of the view that unification is highly desirable and another 35% held it somewhat desirable (Table-6.9). This pattern is not in sync with the views of UNWTO and International Hotel and Restaurant Association (IHRA).

Table- 6.9: Whether Unification of Hotel Classification Schemes Globally is Desirable

Desirability of unification of classification (in %)	Highly desirable	Somewhat desirable	Not at all desirable	No comments	Total
	57.5	35.4	2.4	4.7	127

Source: Primary Data

The UNWTO-IHRA study rather advocates for the States to setup their own classification scheme by devising appropriate methodologies taking in to account the cultural differences as they relate to the services and facilities, markets and purpose of travel. However, it is worth noting here that the agencies like HAI support an approach to devising the classification parameters in India that takes in to account localizing the best global practices.

How far is Indian scheme comparable with other leading ones in the world? Only a little over half of respondents hold it in affirmation and that reflects disagreement level including that of HAI on this important aspect. In India, it was also observed that many hotels advertise themselves as ‘Star classified’ when they are not holding official classification. Such practices amount to violation of unethical practices and could be treated as the breach of contract. Encouragingly then, most majorities of respondents (88%) including HAI are not in support of such practices (Table-6.10).

The accommodation sector has grown to a level that is hugely expansive and diverse with millions of rooms on offer. The fast evolving technology has amplified the process and resulted in to a highly competitive hospitality environment. Striving for a dynamic quality environment and customer satisfaction in such complex ecosystem is a major challenge, and hence, it was also tried gathering the views of the suppliers on those means.

Table- 6.10: Comparability of Indian Accommodation Classification Scheme

Observations	Response (In %)		
	Yes	No	Total
Whether classified hotels in India offer standards at par with similar hotels in other leading country-destinations	60.7	30.3	127
Whether Indian classification scheme is comparable with other leading classification schemes in the world	57.9	42.1	121
Whether proper on part of the hotels to claim ‘as Star classified’ when it is actually not	12.2	87.8	123

Observations	Response (In %)		
	Yes	No	Total
Whether classification used as a tool to monitor and control the sector in India	53.5	46.5	127

Source: Primary Data

Table- 6.11: Means to Strive for Dynamic Quality Environment and Customer Satisfaction

Towards a dynamic quality environment & maintain customer satisfaction		Rank order (% Distribution)					
		1	2	3	4	5-8	Total
Means	Continuous training & capacity building of staff	33.1	16.1	22.6	14.5	13.7	124
	Gathering regular customer feedback updating delivery stds.	27.0	19.8	11.9	18.2	23.0	126
	Establish & maintain internal quality control process diligently	17.6	28.0	15.2	20.0	19.2	125
	Responsible pricing	12.2	11.4	25.3	18.7	32.5	123
	'Deliver what is promised'	10.2	11.9	14.4	11.9	51.7	118
	Leverage technology in quality control processes	3.4	4.9	1.6	4.1	86.2	123
	Monitoring online reviews	1.8	14.7	16.5	9.2	57.8	109

Source: Primary Data

A set of 07 means considered important were framed and the responses were sought from them. The results stand to suggest that continuous training & capacity building of the staff is most important with about one-third of respondents assigning top rank against it. It is followed by gathering regular customer feedback updating delivery standards (top rank- 27%) and establishing and maintaining the internal quality control process diligently (Table-6.11).

6.1.D Feedback Hotels Classification and Process

In India, classification of the tourist accommodation are carried out by the Ministry of Tourism through Hotel and Restaurant Approval Classification Committee (HRACC) having the officials of the Ministry as well as the representatives from the professional bodies such as FHRAI, HAI, IATO, TAAI and Principal of the Institute of Hotel Management. The classification is awarded to the hotels in pursuance to the visit of HRACC and the recommendations thereof. However, some industry participants have been holding that industry participation is not adequate enough in the classification process.

Since inspection being an important part of the assessment process, respondents were sought to opine whether HRACC is adequately represented by the industry stakeholders and that was concurred nearly 83% of respondents (Table-6.12). On question of whether (re)classification fees being paid at present is reasonable; again, over 80% opined it as reasonable. On the contentious subject of making the classification mandatory for all accommodation units in India, again, more than three-fourth have held that it should be made mandatory.

Table- 6.12: Feedback on HRACC, Classification Fees, Mystery Check and Making Classification Mandatory for Accommodation Units

Feedback	Response (In %)		
	Yes	No	Total
Whether HRACC is adequately represented by the industry stakeholders	82.7	17.3	127
Whether (re)classification fees being paid at present is reasonable	80.3	19.7	122
Should classification be made mandatory for all accommodation units in India	76.4	23.6	127
Should 'mystery check' by the independent (third party) inspectors be encouraged as part of official classification scheme	73.2	26.8	127

Source: Primary Data

When probed on why should the classification be made mandatory for all hotel units, the reasons emerged were: a). It has potential to increase harassment; b).Hotel industry is not in a position to upgrade/maintain the standards for the units getting ready for classification; c). Does not serve any purpose unless monitored properly from time to time; d). Absence of a watchdog; e).Absence of mystery audit every year. Further, HAI was of the opinion that instead of making the classification mandatory; the statutory compliances are made to be made mandatory.

Further, frequency of the reclassification was also being debated for some time now, which at present in the country is five years. But on this, responses gathered for this study are largely in support of either every year (31.6%) or in every two years (37.8%). Only about 17% held that present system of 05 years is fine (Table-6.13).

Table- 6.13: Frequency of Reclassification of Hotel Units as per Respondents

Frequency of reclassification (in %)	Every Year	Every 2 Years	Every 3 Year	Every 4 Year	Every 5 Year	Just once	Total
	31.6	37.8	8.1	2.7	17.1	2.7	111

Source: Primary Data

When it comes to adequacy of existing scheme for classification in the country, only about half of them found it to be adequate enough, whereas, 37% felt the need for improvement (Table-6.14).

Table- 6.14: Adequacy of Classification Scheme for Tourist Accommodation in India

Adequacy (in %)	Adequate enough	Needs improvement	No comments	Total
	51.6	37.3	11.2	126

Source: Primary Data

Table- 6.15: Views on Engaging Independent (Third Party) Inspectors in Addition to HRACC for Hotel Assessment

Response (in %)	Could be considered	Cannot be considered	No comments	Total
	60.3	17.0	22.7	106

Source: Primary Data

In many leading countries, ‘mystery check’ by the independent (third party) inspectors is integral to the official classification process. When probed on whether to encourage this in India, about 73% held that it should be so. Further, whether it could be considered in addition to the HRACC assessment, again, about 60% were in agreement, whereas, only 17% did not agree on this (Table-6.15).

Table- 6.16: Significance of Integrating Guest Reviews in the Classification Scheme for Hotel Units

Integration of guest reviews (in %)	Highly significant	Significant	Not at all significant	No comments	Total
	55.1	43.3	0.8	0.8	127

Source: Primary Data

Similarly, many scholars and UNWTO have argued for integrating the guest reviews in the scheme. The views emerged from this study is also in confirming nature on this, wherein, 55% considered it to be highly significant and another 43% as significant (Table-). In other words, 98% are in agreement on the significance of guest reviews in the classification scheme.

6.2 Views of Industry Associations on Hotel Classification

Industry associations are not only the platforms voicing the views and concerns of respective segments that it represents but could also manifest collective wisdom of its members. Its role in settings standards and benchmarks on a continuous basis has also been adequately acknowledged. Thence, soliciting the views of the bodies representing the tourism sector has been considered integral to a study of this nature. Accordingly, some leading associations operating in this domain were identified first and then

approached for the response on a well-structured questionnaire. Completed schedules from two bodies viz. The Hotel Association of India (HAI) and The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) were received outcome of the same furnished at Annexure-3.

6.2.1 Views of Hotel Association of India (HAI)

1. All members of the association hold official classification status.
2. Incremental benefit of official classification is not attractive enough, whereas, business policy and strategy are the two main reasons for many hotels opting out of official classification.
3. Classified hotels in India offer the standards at par with similar category of hotels in other leading destination countries of the world.
4. Unification of hotel classification schemes globally is somewhat desirable in India and best global practices needs to be customized to local/ ground realities.
5. India's classification scheme is not compatible with the other leading classification systems of the world. The Indian system should encourage the practices of mystery shopper, confidentiality/ surprise element, weightage to customer feedback, weightage to standards like ISO, REED etc. and adequate weightage to customer needs should also be given.
6. It is inappropriate for non-classified hotels to claim as star rated when it is actually not holding any official classification.
7. Effects of non-observance of stipulated standards: It can lead to degradation of the hotel brand, degradation of the image of the destination country, reduced customer confidence, to make promotions tougher and adversely affect the sustainability of hotel business.
8. Basis of guests selecting a hotel: Price vs. budget, hotel location, accessibility, brand reputation, endorsement by relatives/ friends, on line feedback, official star / diamond rating of hotel and loyalty programs of the hotels (in order of importance).
9. It is somewhat important for the hotels to have official star rating classification.

10. It is somewhat important for the hotels to display their official star/ diamond ratings on its website.
11. Guest reviews are very important for booking a hotel, and therefore, it is very important to integrate the guest review in the official classification/ star rating scheme.
12. Websites gathering guest reviews should clearly indicate the official classification/ star rating of each hotel being reviewed.
13. Official classification is justified by the consumer concerns. It is equally a good communication tool on the industry offers particularly for hotels and also a definitive promise on the quality of services and standards offered by the hotel.
14. Official classification should not be a tool to monitor and control accommodation tariffs.
15. The Hotel and Restaurant Approval and Classification Committee (HRACC) in India is adequately represented.
16. Official classification should not be made mandatory for the Hotels. However, in its absence, quality standards are to be regulated through statutory compliances, international standards like ISO, user generated content, awards and accreditations.
17. For accommodation units classification should be done only once.
18. Mystery checks by third party (independent) inspections should be encouraged.
19. There should be no fee for (re)classification of accommodation units.
20. No comments were offered on whether existing hotel classification scheme in India is adequate but was of the opinion that once classified, hotel may be subject to surprise visits and de-classified in case of repeat/ lapses.
21. Factors like delivery of promises, continuous monitoring of online review/ feedback, establishment and maintenance of integral quality control process diligently, continuous training and capacity building of staff, leveraging of technology in the quality control process, gathering of regular customer feedback, update delivery standards and responsible pricing, in order of importance, can lead industry strive for

a dynamic quality environment and achieve customer satisfaction on a continuous basis.

6.2.2 Views of Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO)

1. Many hotels opt out of official classification system as they feel it is interference on their freedom to conduct business
2. Classified hotels in India do not offer the standards at par with similar category of hotels in other leading destination countries of the world.
3. India's classification scheme is not compatible with the other leading classification systems of the world. Hence, more focus should be given on international standards of quality, responsibility, insurance, staff quality & quality of crockery, bed sheets, beds, bath fittings, cleanliness, security and safety and best international practices.
4. It is inappropriate for non-classified hotel to claim as star rated when it is not holding any official classification.
5. Non-observance of stipulated standards by accommodation units reduces customer confidence, degrades hotel brand, adversely affects sustainability of hotel business, image of destination country takes a beating and would make promotion tougher
6. It is very important for the hotels to have official star rating classification.
7. It is very important for hotels to display their official star/ diamond ratings on its website.
8. Role of guest reviews for booking a hotel is not very important.
9. Websites gathering guest reviews should very clearly indicate the official classification/ star rating of each hotel reviewed.
10. Rationale for Classification: Strongly agreed that official classification helps the hotels to be in conformity to various benchmarking and standards; justified by the consumer concerns; a good communication tool on the industry offers particularly for hotels; an effective tool for periodic monitoring of development in the sector and; a definitive promise on the quality of services and standards offered by the hotel.

11. Guests usually do not select a hotel based on official classification/ star rating.
12. The Hotel and Restaurant Approval and Classification Committee (HRACC) in India is adequately represented.
13. Official hotel classification should be made mandatory in the country failing which the control on standards of hotel is not possible. Further, review and reclassification should be done every five years.
14. It could be considered to carry out, third party (independent) inspections in addition to HRACC. Further, current hotel classification scheme in India needs improvement.
15. Mystery checks by third party (independent) inspections should be encouraged.
16. Fee payable for (re)classification is reasonable.

How should the industry strive for a dynamic quality environment and achieve customer satisfaction on a continuous basis: By gathering regular feedback and update delivery system, leveraging of technology in quality, continuous monitoring, online reviews/ feedback, continuous training and capacity building of staff, continuous delivery of promises and responsible pricing can lead.

VII. Assessment of Supplementary Tourist Accommodation Classification Schemes in India

7.1 National-level Schemes Compared

7.1.1 Tented Accommodation

With fast change in the holidaying behavior, choice of accommodation has also undergone considerable transformation. This was equally complemented by growing awareness and demand for eco, adventure, pilgrimage, and wildlife tourism have created the need for travel to remote areas, forests, riverside, etc. Especially, constructions of permanent structures in these fragile ecological settings are not allowed and that is also not suggestive. The places of this nature are also susceptible to the vagaries of seasonality of the demand. This necessitated and encouraged the need of tented accommodation/camping in such sites, for which, the Central Ministry of Tourism has introduced a voluntary approval and classification scheme for campsites in India.

7.1.1.1 Tented Accommodation Scheme in India

The existing classification provisions for two categories of campsites-Standard & Deluxe, based upon fulfilling the criteria as per the Scheme. The property has to adhere to stipulated quality and safety standards, which is subject an auditing through a scoring mechanism, wherein, it is necessary for the assessee to gather minimum scores forward of a specific rating. For award of 'Standard' rating, the assessment is made on 82 parameters, out of which 56 are necessary, 20 desirable and 6 not compulsory/applicable. But for 'Deluxe' rating, there are 67 necessary, 13 desirable and another 2 not compulsory parameters. Further, the quality assessment is undertaken against 14 criteria catalogue and another set of parameters that are again assigned with separate scores. The total score is 100 points, but, a minimum of 60 points are required to qualify for any classification. The Camps/tents accruing a score of 80 and above is categorized as Deluxe and those scored between 60 and 79 are rated as 'Standard'.

7.1.1.2 AAA Classification of US Campsites

Under this scheme, a campsite must meet 17 essential requirements and these are related to management style, general facilities and site specifications. To carry-out the assessment, the assessors make unannounced site-visits where the overall visual appeal, environmental quality and the completeness, cleanliness and facilities are evaluated. Upon the visit, three levels of rating are assigned as below:

- **Level-1:** Offers modest natural appeal, rustic sites and limited facilities. It will be suitable for budget minded travelers and campers seeking a simple unadorned setting.
- **Level-2:** Offers enhanced natural sites, well defined sites and at least one general service facility. This will be appropriate for campers who prefer modest social or recreational options and some access to convenience and comforts.
- **Level-3:** Offers prominent natural elements, groomed sites, extensive recreational options, variety of general service facilities. This will be ideal for campers seeking exciting visual elements, social programs, and comfortable amenities such as temperature controlled bathrooms and heated showers.

7.1.1.3 AA Rating of UK for Caravan Parks and Camping Sites

In the UK, the caravan parks and camping sites are rated on a 5-point scale, called Pennant rating, based on the style and range of facilities they offer. There are various parameters to be fulfilled in each pennant rating as depicted below. A comparison of the Indian and AA classification of UK is made below by depicting the necessary parameters in a tabulated form (Annexure-VIII).

Major Observations- AA of the UK

The comparison of AA Pendant rating standards for campsites/tented accommodation to the same stipulated for India enabled the following observations:

- AA Scheme clearly states the number of tents/pitches to be put up in a given area and the ratio thereof, which reduces when the rating

increases. For example, 30 pitches are permitted in case of 1-3 Pennants and 25 pitches in one acre of camp able land.

- Children's playground with equipment and games room/recreation area is necessary from 3 Pennant rating (Unless the park is geared towards adults) but this is not the case for India.
- There automatic laundry and drying facility (minimum one) is essential from 3 Pennant onwards no mention of it in India.
- Internal roads and paths to be well lit and being a tented accommodation this is vital in a safety aspect, whereas, Indian scheme is silent on this.
- Unlike in India, Electric Hook ups are compulsory in AA rating so that the guests can use some of their electric equipment and the power derived from the main source. Getting electricity is often a major concern since these units are temporary in nature.
- Proper signage indicating the location of chemist/shop clearly is required from 2-Pennant onwards, whereas, a quality shop either on-site or within a reasonable distance is also required from 4-Pennant onwards.

It was also observed that for Pennant rating of UK and the Level- 1 to 3 ratings of USA, the camping sites are often inside natural parks and tents are sometimes erected by the tourists itself. There is a provision of allotting some area in the camping site for the tourists to make their own tents. However, as per Indian scheme, all the tents are supposed to be erected by the promoter with the prescribed amenities and level of service (Annexure-4). There is no such provision for tourists to pitch their camps on their own.

7.1.2 Serviced Apartments/Apartment Hotels

7.1.2.1 Classification Criteria in India

Apartment hotels or serviced apartments are becoming popular among business travelers and people who travel with family for extended stay at the destination. An apartment hotel complex usually offers a fully furnished apartment, but these are also similar to a conventional hotel on many counts.

Unlike the hotels, length of stay in these properties could vary anywhere from few days to months and even years. As it is intended for longer stay, many fittings and provisions would also be similar to that of a usual home than of a hotel.

India has a voluntary scheme for classification of fully operational apartments which is administered again by the Central Ministry of Tourism. The properties are assessed in four categories viz. 3-Star, 4-Star, 5-Star and 5-Star Deluxe. The star rating is determined based on the property assessment covering the facilities and other tangible and intangible attributes as figured in the Scheme. For 3-Star and 4-Star categories, there are a total of 51 parameters, out of that, 46 are necessary and 05 are desirable. For 5-Star and 5-Star deluxe properties, total parameters are 52 in numbers, of which, 50 are necessary and 02 desirable. For the classification/reclassification, the property is inspected by the HRACC and classification awarded thereof is valid for a period of five years.

7.1.2.2 Classification Criteria as per Visit England Scheme

The United Kingdom has an elaborate criteria catalogue and assessment method for classification of serviced apartments/apartment hotels. The Minimum Eligibility Requirements (MER) should be met for any property to be considered for classification. These MER include eight key areas, major ones being statutory requirements, guest services, guest in room accessories, kitchen inventory inside the room etc. In addition to the minimum requirements and quality guideline scores, a high standard of cleanliness is imperative and overall percentage awarded for cleanliness has to meet the following minimum levels:

Cleanliness Score for Serviced Apartments in UK (%)				
1-Star	2-Star	3-Star	4-Star	5-Star
40	50	65	75	90

Once the minimum entry requirements are found fulfilled, quality guidelines to be assessed and the apartment ranked from 1-Star to 5-Star based on score aggregate. Over all, ten key areas are identified and scores awarded within each of the key areas. When the scores are totaled, the assessed property will

have an overall percentage score that will place it within one of the five star rating bands. However, in order to confirm a particular star rating, the scores awarded within each of the key areas also need to fall within that band or higher. Assessors are trained to award scores against national benchmarks in an objective and consistent manner.

Each of the sub-criteria are assigned scores out of maximum 05 points and then the total scores of the key areas are calculated to derive the percentage points for the key areas. Accordingly, all 10 key areas are taken into consideration and the lowest score accrued by the applicant property makes it eligible for a star category shall be the basis of rating and awarding.

Minimum Eligible Score for Serviced Apartments Rating in UK (%)	
Rating	Level
1 star	Acceptable= a mark of 1
2 star	Quite Good= a mark of 2
3 star	Good= a mark of 3
4 star	Very Good= a mark of 4
5 star	Excellent = a mark of 5

7.1.2.3 Comparison of the UK and Indian Schemes

A comparative statement of the classification standards in India and the UK has been prepared and the details are furnished at Annexure-IV. As far as the case of goes, there are three level of assessment, starting with the Minimum Eligibility Requirements (MER), then cleanliness standards and quality indicators. In India, it is based on a set of 52 parameters and whether those are being met /fulfilled, wherein, those desirable ones are treated as optional. Further distinctions can be seen as per below (Table-7.1).

Table-7.1: Apartment hotels- UK and Indian Schemes Compared

Salient attributes- India	Salient attributes- The UK
Differentiation: <i>It is not observed in rating the properties as 3-Star, 4-Star, -5-Star & 5-Star Deluxe categories</i>	Various additional requirements in MER or quality indicators are specified separately for each Star rating
Kitchen: <i>Necessary but the inventory like frying pan, ice tray, kettle, mixing bowls, plates etc. not indicated</i>	A separate kitchen in the room along with kitchen inventories is MER
Management efficiency or its assessment: <i>No found mention</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Management efficiency is a key area of MER ✓ Definite parameters to assess efficiency and procedures in dealing with guests during the different stages of guest cycle ✓ All the information pertaining to the property & its services should be communicated and displayed where necessary ✓ Any charges for extra services to be notified <p>(Above will help easing out the procedural hassles viz. booking, registration etc. and also improve guest satisfaction)</p>
Provision of information to the Guest/ Tourist: <i>Finds no mention</i>	Adequately covered
Décor & Ventilation: <i>Finds no mention</i>	Particular attention given to decoration, flooring, furnishing and fitting, lighting and a pleasant ambience, and ventilation both in the rooms and public areas.

Specifically, provision of information should be key quality indicator of assessment for serviced apartment classification because normally people who are coming to apartment hotels may stay on for a longer periods ranging

from weeks to months. Thus, it is imperative that, as in the UK's case, proper information like use of household equipment, waste disposal, concierge hours, tourist information etc. is passed on to the resident. Other services good enough to give a personal touch like providing with plants, DVDs, books etc. would also create a positive feel among the guests.

7.1.2.4 Major Observations on Apartment Classification

The comparison with two major schemes stands to suggest that Indian scheme calls for a thorough revamping including refining of the assessment parameters of apartment hotels. It should be such that three, four and five Star rating would enable distinguishing the apartment hotels of different standards. Specific to 5-Star Deluxe rating, it shall be excellent in terms of quality and service levels in commensuration to the expected standards. The following are to be incorporated in to the classification guidelines of apartment hotels of different star categories.

- Separate guidelines for three, four and five Star category apartment hotels.
- 5-Star deluxe category to have a luxuriant décor/ambience and outstanding quality of services and facilities to distinguish it from the five star category.
- Long-term stay demands longer duration of service, and hence, management efficiency should be an assessment criteria. It must include efficient and speedy complaint redressal, procedural simplicity, fast guest services etc.
- Provision of information, its dissemination, a separate Concierge/information desk with the functioning time ranging from 8 hours to 24 hours a day as required for particular star ratings are to be brought in.
- A long stay in a serviced apartment requires extended level of adequate comfort. The level of spaciousness of both inside the room and public area, space for entertainment and outdoor games etc., hence become more of a necessity and to be included as mandatory requirements.
- The dining facilities like coffee shop, multi cuisine restaurant, specialty restaurant etc. should be dealt more precisely. While the rooms are

expected to have attached kitchen, it is still necessary to at least one restaurant for all categories, depending upon the number of rooms/guests.

- As stay is longer and the residents may self-cook their food, possibility of creating waste and drain are more. Hence, cleaning, waste disposal and hygiene should be paramount and to be assessed as a minimum entry requirement for all categories of apartment hotels.
- As stated above, an inventory of kitchen utensils like for cooking, cutleries and crockeries for service etc. are to be treated as basic standard.
- Other provisions such as adequate ventilation, proper gardening and landscaping, provision for daily newspaper/magazines, mandatory safety regulations etc. are also to be minimum standards.

7.1.3 Classification Scheme for Time-share Resorts

In hospitality sector, timesharing is used to describe a method of use and/or shared ownership of vacation real estate where purchasers acquire a period of time (often one week) in a condominium, apartment or other type of vacation accommodation. According to the American Resort Development Association-ARDA, timeshare is also known as vacation ownership. Considering the importance of this segment and so as to provide standardized world-class services to the customers, India has put on roll a voluntary scheme of classification of timeshare resorts (TSR). It classifies the applicant properties in to three star categories namely 3-Star,4-Star and 5-Star, wherein, the classification is valid for a period of 5 years.

In India, mixed use of the property by way of timesharing and hotel is permitted; however all the facilities and amenities as required for the particular star category are to be fulfilled. In no circumstances can apartments in a time share resort be sold individually for residential or any other purpose. Also, TSRs including heritage and resorts which are the members of All India Resort Development Association (AIRDA) will be considered for classification/project approval.

Ass a norm, there should be a minimum of 10 apartments, and in any case, the number of eligible members should not be more than the available number of

apartment/ week. A dedicated kitchen is required with all facility in case of single bedroom and larger. As per existing scheme, there are a total of 48 parameters for 3-Star category and 49 for 4-Star and 5-Star categories. Out of these, 42 are necessary and 6 desirable for 3-Star categories whereas 49 are necessary and 2 desirable for 4-Star and 5-Star categories respectively. According to the location of the property such as hill station, waived off certain facilities such as swimming pool, air conditionings etc. are also allowed during the assessment.

7.1.3.1 Major Observations on Classification for Time-share Resorts

Timeshare resorts are usually set up in tourist destinations, where the main distinguishing element is vacation ownership. There are multiple owners for a property, which is sold to potential buyers in a particular number of room nights in blocks. The level of service and facilities does not vary from other classified resorts that are falling under the general hotel classification system. There are also properties often opting for a mixed use such as timeshare and hotel. Given this, it is considered appropriate that the general hotel classification system can be adopted for timeshare properties also. However, certain variations in parameters like the room size, provision for indoor and outdoor activities etc. as already existing applicable for classification of timeshare resorts can also be considered.

7.1.4 Evaluation of Motel Classification Scheme

According to American Hotel and Lodging Association (AH&LA), the term Motel is derived from the motor-hotel, originally meant to define the hotel providing both stay and parking. The first half of 20th century, especially coinciding with rapid expansion of road transport, is considered to be the golden era of motels. The large highways and rise in car travel especially in the 1960's led to further growth of motels in many countries. But, the severe competition posed by conventional hotel segments especially the advent of big chain hotels with better facilities and services coupled with fast emergence of other means of transport like the rail and air modes has indeed put considerable strain on motel demand and thereby its sustenance. In many places, it was often managed by individuals/smaller groups. However, beginning of the 21st century witnessed to comeback of some popular motels in US like the Econo lodge and Knights Inn.

Another major reason for its decline can be attributed to a very marginal difference between the hotel and motel except that the motel is generally used to mean a limited service property with exterior corridors. In other words, it is a hotel that provides limited number of amenities which also does not provide food service.

7.1.4.1 Classification of Motel in India

The Central Ministry of Tourism(MoT) approves motels at project stage and already functional motels can seek approval if they fulfill all the existing norms. The approval is valid for 5 years. It can be further observed that:

- There is no categorization or grading of motels based on star or any other ratings according to facilities/parameters offered.
- Eco-friendly practices like sewage treatment plant, rain water harvesting, waste mgmt., pollution control, non CFC equipment etc. to be followed
- The architecture of the building in eco-fragile areas should be creative with respect to sustainability and energy efficiency and as far as possible in conformity with local art/architecture and with local materials.
- All statutory approvals are to be obtained separately from respective agencies, and any violation if found so, the approval given is liable to be withdrawn
- Authorized officers from MoT should be given free access to inspect the premises without prior notice.
- The parameters are broadly categorized under the following nine components and are either necessary or desirable.

Table-7.2: Areas of Assessment for Classification of Motels in India

Sl. No	Areas	No: of parameters
1	General	06 (05 necessary, 01 desirable)
2	Guestroom	05 (5 necessary)
3	Bathroom	21 (18 necessary, 2 desirable, 1 optional)
4	Room & Facility for differently abled guests	04, all necessary
5	Public areas	10 (10 necessary, bar as per local laws)
6	Kitchen	15, all necessary
7	Staff	04, (2 necessary and 2 about % of skilled/ supervisory staff)
8	Staff welfare/facilities	04, all necessary
9	Guest services	32 (11 desirable,19 necessary,1 available on request, 1 optional)
	Total	101 parameters

7.1.4.2 Classification of Motel in Australia

Australia awards Star rating to motels based on the scores accrued in three key areas of assessment i.e. quality and condition, cleanliness, facilities and services. A percentage score is calculated for each of these from a scale of acceptable (20%) to excellent (90%). The assigning of property rating is based on the lowest score obtained against the three key areas, which means that a very high score in other two aspects will not be suffice to overlook the performance in the third factor. The table below shows the various core requirements for the various star awards in the key areas for motel rating in Australia.

Table-7.3: Areas of Assessment for Classification of Motels in Australia

Star Rating	Quality & Condition	Cleanliness	Facilities & Services
*****	Excellent (90-100%)	Excellent (95-100%)	Excellent (85-100%)
****.	Superior (75-89%)	Very good (85-94%)	Superior (70-84%)
****	Very Good (65-74%)		Very Good (60-69%)
***.	Good (55-64%)		Good (50-59%)
***	Reasonable (45-54%)		
**.	Moderate (35-44%)	Good (75-84%)	Moderate (30-49%)
**	Adequate (30-34%)		
*.	Satisfactory (25-29%)		Acceptable (20-29%)
*	Acceptable (20-24%)		

More than 200 criteria have been ranked by Australian travelers according to what is important to them (Consumer Importance Weighting Index). Three above-mentioned assessment areas are related to property attributes like bedrooms, bathrooms etc. Within these areas also, guests could place different values for things that make up their experience, which accordingly gets more and less weightage while grading. The total overall scoring and corresponding rating will also depend on the total scores that a property accrues in the assessment process. There are explicit benchmarks and scoring pattern which delves into the minute details and decides the grading pattern.

7.1.4.3 Observations on Classification of Motels- India & Australia

It is observed that India does not have star-specific rating for motels even though each property is assessed under nine areas of assessment against 101 parameters, of which, some are mandatory and some desirable. Any property fulfilling the parameters will be given approval as a motel. But, a major weakness of the scheme is it cannot ensure quality of services and facilities since no such specification on parameters has been inbuilt in to the scheme (Annexure-5). For example, unlike Australian scheme, when it is required to have a bed in India's case; there is no mention about the size, quality or type of mattress, cover or pillow. Necessary guest services requirements are drinking water, ice, public telephone, wake-up call service etc. which are basic

mandatory requirements. Further, Wi-Fi, utility shop, fitness center, beauty salon, laundry are all desirable in nature.

Contrary, Australia has a scheme of assigning weightage on certain factors, determined on the basis of customer experience index, which is known as the Consumer Importance Weighting Index. For example, under the room, the guest may be giving more value for bed/size followed by bedding and window coverings. This would help finding out where emphasis needed to be given so that the guest satisfaction level may be improved. Specific to amenities under Guest services, parameters are elaborate in nature like business center, secretarial assistance, housekeeping, internet kiosk, guest feedback practices, recreational facilities like swimming pool, sauna-steam bath, spa, tennis court etc. All of these carry scores and enable rate the properties into various star categorizing.

The building exterior, parking facility in a motel adjacent to rooms, covered parking with weather protection and video surveillance carry scores and duly assessed in Australia. Signage, gardening and landscape and the condition of building are also assessed with scores there. But in India, number of parking bays proportionate to the room is only mentioned. Again, Australia has separate criteria for bedroom, bedding, mattress and furnishings with scoring according to the level of facility and quality. The lighting inside the room, window coverings and privacy, floor coverings and ceilings are also covered adequately, whereas, India has no specifications on these counts.

When it comes to in-room facilities, Australian scheme does the assessment against ten parameters viz. entertainment, lounge seating, dining table/chairs, business desk, general appliances (microwave, refrigerator and toaster), security & safety etc. For bathroom, parameters are twelve in numbers like shower bath, lighting, WC's, vanity, fittings, free floor space etc. In India the bathroom facilities and specifications are well defined with necessary and desirable factors.

The comparison enables to summarize that the scheme for motels India deals with basic requirements and facilities only, whereas, Australia has innumerable parameters which are assessed/evaluated for quality standards, basing on which, the properties are awarded with suitable star rating. However, a rigorous scheme as in Australia may not be tenable in Indian

context but there exists a strong case for qualitative improvements in defining the minimum requirements and eligibility standards for making the motels more attractive and competitive. In India, officially classified motels are presently very few even though there are large numbers of such establishments operating along the highways as motels and bringing those under the ambit of classification could be considered.

7.1.5: Incredible India Bed & Breakfast/Homestays Scheme in India

The existing scheme in India provisions to classify the Bed & Breakfast/Homestay establishments in two categories- Silver and Gold, and awarded for a period of two years. To qualify for this classification, the owner/promoter along with his/her family must be residing in the same establishment and to provision for letting out a minimum 01 and maximum of 06 rooms. The properties are assessed against a total of 36 parameters, designated either as mandatory or desirable but not area-wise assessment such as bedrooms, bathrooms etc. is not undertaken. For Silver certification, there are 24 mandatory and 12 desirable parameters, whereas for Gold certification, mandatory and desirable requirements are 35 and 01 respectively. Preference is also given to homes providing the Indian experience like Indian décor, cuisine etc.

7.1.6 Scheme for Guest House Classification in India in India

This is most predominant and extensively spread segment of the tourist accommodation and primarily constitute the informal sector functions. It is most economical and availed by most majorities of the tourists especially in the peripheral areas. But being highly unorganized and cheap, it also encounters the problems of minimum comforts, and more particularly, cleanliness and hygiene. However, considering the rising demand for budget accommodation, the Ministry of Tourism has evolved a scheme for rating and approval of the guesthouse. It is meant to standardize and ensure descent, good and clean facilities in the guest houses and unregulated accommodation units springing up in the country.

One of the basic requirements for classification is that the property must be in possession of all statutory licenses as required for operation of the lodges. It must also have minimum of six rooms with 25% A/C rooms. All basic

requirements with respect to guest comfort and safety need to be met. There are 13 parameters assigned with scores and the establishment must accrue a minimum score of 60% in general as well as for cleanliness in order to get the approval.

7.1.6.1 Bed & Breakfast/Homestay and Guesthouse Scheme of India Compared with VisitEngland's Guest Accommodation

An online search suggest that very few countries have the classification schemes comparable to the Indian schemes on the Bed & Breakfast/Homestay and the Guesthouses. That limits the scope of comparing Indian scheme with the same in other countries. However, a scheme found closer to it is VisitEngland's Guest Accommodation, and hence, it was attempted to match both schemes to sketch out the patterns and standards.

The VisitEngland scheme for Guest Accommodation comprises all forms of guest accommodation establishments, assessed on same sets of criteria and awarded one to five star ratings. The types of establishments include Bed & Breakfast establishments (B&B), Farmhouse, Guesthouse, Inns, Restaurant with rooms and room only fall under the above classification scheme. There are nine broad areas of assessment, where, five key areas are cleanliness, bedrooms, bathrooms, breakfast quality and hospitality/friendliness identified. A maximum score of 05 is assigned to all parameters. Besides the above, property is also assessed on statutory obligations, minimum entry requirements (1star) and commensurate levels of quality for star rating.

During assessment, quality judgements are made across all areas of the customer facing business. For an organization to gain a star rating has to achieve an overall percentage score as stipulated for a particular star category and also must have accrued minimum percentage score in each of the key areas of assessment. The aggregate score a property gathers from the scores of individual areas of assessment will place it within one of the five-star rating bands. The area-specific assessment invariably would ensure that the establishment is offering consistent level of services on the star rating it was awarded. The following percentage scores are required for a property to be in each category (Detailed scheme comparison at Annexure-6).

Table-7.4: Minimum Scores Required for Award of Star Rating to Guest Accommodation- VisitEngland (In %)

Area	1 Star	2 Star	3 Star	4 Star	5 Star
Overall	30-46	47- 54	55-69	70-84	85-100
Cleanliness	40	50	65	75	90
Hospitality	40	50	65	75	90
Bedrooms	30	47	55	70	85
Bathrooms	30	47	55	70	85
Breakfast	30	47	55	70	85

The Gold and Silver rating is awarded to each Star category. This is meant to provide an exceptional and consistent quality of service over and above the minimum requirements for that particular category in the five key areas as stipulated. The Gold Rating will have a mystery visit and these awards are meant to be of significant marketing advantage and logos can be displayed in websites and advertisements. A breakfast award is also given for the choice, range, food quality, service and hospitality of food service in the restaurant.

Unlike hotels in the UK, rating of the guest accommodation above 1-Star is mainly assessed based on the facilities and services provided above the MER, and in very few cases, that the specifications have been laid out for 3-5 star categories.

7.1.6.2 Main Observations- Bed & Breakfast/Homestay and Guesthouse Scheme

The concept of homestays/B&B is becoming popular in many tourist destinations in India. In today's changing scenario, where higher participation of the local community in the tourism activity is sought, homestays/B&B are the ideal way of social engagement between the host and the guests. It is also an opportunity for the hosts to gainfully engage in with the business of tourism and to be a partner in the local economic development in general.

But often, the people engaged in the B&B/homestay business are found not adequately aware about the basic hospitality practices like courteous service,

greetings, communication etc. This necessitates a support system for professional guidance and managerial assistance for the owners/operators. A periodic capacity building/training program for these stakeholders in dealing with these, particularly the cross cultural issues, communication, etiquettes and manners, basic F&B service etc. would be highly desirable. In addition,

- Preference given for the location of the property like facing a water body, at a hill station, plantation etc.
- A website to be made mandatory with basic information on the property, location, and pricing and cancellation policy.
- All B&B/homestays shall have the facility for arranging local transport/site seeing (In collaboration with a local tour operator).
- A basic fire-fighting equipment made necessary in all establishments.
- Public area and room security should be given more thrust by including safety aspects of the room like lock, peephole, curtains etc.
- Proper signage should be there located on the highways/road leading to the property making it easily accessible for the guests.
- Basic entertainment facility like a TV/music system shall be made necessary at least in the common area.
- The existing two-tier classification needs to be subject to further refining and a Platinum rating also to be incorporated so that the facilities can be better distinguished and rated. A scheme of this nature is already in operation in the state of Kerala.

Another area of concern is direct marketing, which these property owners may not be undertake in effective ways owing to the factors like cost, expertise, lack of networking skill, domain knowhow and the like. Lesser guest numbers and inadequate revenue would in turn decrease their interest in sustaining with the business. This, then necessitates active marketing support from the approving authority so as to motivate those in the business because the existing support is reportedly not adequate and encouraging.

7.1.6.3 Main Observations- Guesthouse/Guest Accommodation Scheme of VisitEngland's and India

There exists considerable difference in the classification scheme and criteria catalogue for Guesthouse/Guest Accommodation classification in India and VisitEngland. Contrary to Indian scheme, VisitEngland has more elaborate arrangements- both in terms of requirements and standards. In later case, every major category is further sub-divided into definite criteria sets according to the Star category. There is also greater emphasis on sustainable practices especially adoption of energy conservation and other eco-friendly practices in VisitEngland scheme, whereas, Indian scheme is silent on these except a mere question in application form. Further, VisitEngland scheme has following specifications further:

- Certain tips & tricks given in order to help the host to provision of better facilities/service and also to adopt better practices (for sustainability & accessibility).
- A more elaborate description of the food served and the food service is there in the case of Visit England. In India's' case, it finds a mention as 'dining area serving Indian/Continental Breakfast'.
- Entertainment facilities including the television in the common areas are not part of Indian standard.
- The need for a website, pricing and cancellation policies are also not clearly mentioned about.

The basic idea of guest house approval in India is to bring upgraded level of comfort and services from the existing guesthouses and other unregulated accommodation units spread over the cities and towns under some form of standardization mechanism. Over the years, the demand for safe and clean accommodation on a reasonable price has rapidly grown up. In such budget accommodation provisions, the elements like internet/Wi-Fi, complementary toiletries etc. are also considered necessary and expected but he occupants. Of late, the cost of providing such essential provisions and services also come down considerably.

As far as the present classification scheme in India for the Guesthouses goes, the Ministry of Tourism has a framework for assessment and approval.

However, this Scheme does not have provisions for grading the guesthouses in to different categories. While the scheme in the countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia were examined, assigning of Stars depending on specific standards was observed. In this backdrop, it was considered appropriate to have a grading system for the Guesthouses in India also. For supplementary accommodation units like IIB&B/Homestays, two-tier rating system of Silver and Gold is already in place. Hence, a revised scheme in line to the above can be developed for rating of the Guesthouses also in India.

However, Star rating for Guesthouse is not considered as tenable since this symbol is assigned to the Hotel segment and the public mostly associate the starring scheme that way. Hence, starring for the Guesthouses could also result confusion on the type of accommodation. The lodge owners could misuse the very symbol and over price the product. Further, there is probability for the less informed guests to assume Star-rated Guesthouses to that of hotels. Therefore, a system of Silver, Gold and Platinum Scheme is proposed for classification and approval of the Guesthouse properties in the country.

Further, efforts are needed to bring more small-scale accommodation units from the unorganized sector within the purview of the classification so that some levels of standardization in respect of the facilities and services could be achieved, which will hugely benefit the low and middle income travelers. With respect to the scoring pattern, any property scoring a total of 60points is eligible for approval whereas such units are to be equipped with the important safety or guest facilities. Instead of grading the guest houses into Silver/Gold based on the accrual of scores, it would be more effective to have a mechanism that fulfills some necessary minimum requirements first. The parameters over and above the minimum ones can be subject to scoring and the grading of the property determined accordingly (Annexure-7). Adoption of the following additional features are also proposed for the new scheme to be devised for the guest houses.

- a) Essential services and facilities such as internet/ Wi-Fi, entertainment facility, Channel TV/Music system, complementary toiletries etc. are to be assessed for Silver rating.

- b) A Gold-rated Guesthouse to have more luxurious décor and amenities compared to the Silver-rated one.
- c) Cleanliness and hygiene given more emphasis with specific scores assigned.
- d) The option of a complimentary breakfast can be included as it also is a value addition for the customer that in turn will increase demand and more business for the promoter.
- e) There should at least be a room along with bathroom earmarked for the disabled-abled guests as necessary requirements.

Finally, the fire safety precautions and all other legal requirements should be addressed as mandatory/MER irrespective of whether the property has been rated Silver, Gold or Platinum.

7.2 State- Level Classifications Schemes in India

7.2.1 Odisha Government's System of Accommodation Classification

According to Hotel Tariff: Based on the spending capacity of tourists, the existing hotels in Odisha have been broadly divided into three categories. These hotels are all non- classified hotels.

Table-7.5: Hotel Classification in Odisha

Category of Hotels	Average Tariff per Room per day
Low Spending Group(LSG)	Up to Rs.500/-
Middle Spending Group(MSG)	Rs.501/- to Rs.999/-
High Spending Group(HSG)	Rs.1000/- & Above

Table-7.6: Non-classified Hotel Position in Odisha at the End of 2014

Category of Hotels	No. of Hotels	No. of Rooms	No. of Beds
High Spending Group(HSG)	334	11,303	23,344
Middle Spending Group(MSG)	399	8,120	16,864
Low Spending Group(LSG)	956	15,950	30,392
Total	1,689	35,373	70,600

For the above category of hotels in Odisha, there are no specific classification guidelines or parameters available with the State Tourism Department for the hotel promoters to get approval of hotels project. The facilities to be provided in the hotels are left to the promoters as per their feasibility and economic condition. According to Department of Tourism, Government of Odisha the accommodation units are defined as follows:

7.2.1.1 Hotels

Hotel projects should have facilities expected of establishments in the 1 to 5 star categories as per the prevailing guidelines of the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India for hotels. Such hotels should also obtain category certificate from Ministry of Tourism.

7.2.1.2 Resorts

The resort project should have a minimum of 20 lettable rooms with attached bathrooms. Unless it is a hill station or a beach or a location, which, in the opinion of the DoT does not require air conditioning, at least 35% of the rooms should be air conditioned. The bathroom carpet area should measure at least 3.5 sqm. It should have restaurant /dining hall with a seating area of minimum 40 sqm. (excluding kitchen and storage). It should have a telephone with STD facility. The plot on which resort is located should admeasure at least 10,000 sqm. It should have at least 4 of the following facilities.

- Indoor games (e.g. Table-Tennis, squash, Billiards, Bowling Alley etc.)
- Conference Room
- Swimming Pool
- Tennis or Badminton court
- A health club
- A lounge

7.2.1.3 Motels and Wayside Amenities:

The Motel project should be located on a National Highway, State Highway or Main District Road (MDR). It should have at least 4 lettable rooms and all the lettable rooms should have attached bathrooms.

Note: In the state of Odisha there are no specific classification system/guidelines adopted by the state tourism department for classification of the hotels. These hotels are approved under the state tourism policy 2013-14 as a tourism projects. More over the state Tourism Department follows the guidelines of Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India.

7.2.2 Supplementary Accommodation Classification in Karnataka

Classification of hotels under star rating/gradation in the state of Karnataka is done by HRACC/HCC as it applies to all the states in the country. Hotels intend to have any star ratings have to follow the procedures laid by MoT/HRACC. Apart from star ratings, Karnataka state has some of the unique types/means of accommodation to meet the increasing demand of accommodation by both domestic and international tourists. The other means of accommodation identified/approved by State Tourism Department are as follows.

- Home-stays
- Caravans and Caravan parks
- Wayside amenities (which is similar to Motels or Restaurants on Highways)
- Yatri Niwas
- Youth Hostels and Dormitories
- Jungle lodges and Resorts

7.2.2.1 Guidelines for Development of Homestays in Karnataka

As per new scheme for Homestays, it is called '*Athithi*' to supplement the demand of accommodations at various tourist destinations in the State of Karnataka. These are expected to provide standard facilities with minimal investment and encourage the locals to earn an extra income. Under the Scheme, the Homestays are minimally regulated and treated as a non-commercial activity. The guidelines provide a clear procedure for registration/classification/re-classification of the Homestays, mandatory facilities required in a Homestay, incentives available to the Homestay owners etc. Detailed Scheme is furnished at Annexure-XIII.

7.2.2.3 Guidelines for Development and Promotion of Caravan Tourism

One of the essential pre-requisites for Caravan tourism is the presence of Caravan Parks. A Caravan Park is a place where Caravans can stay overnight in allotted spaces providing basic or advanced amenities and facilities. Minimum requirements/eligibility for development of caravan tourism are furnished at Annexure-XIV.

7.2.2.4 Guidelines for Yatri Niwas

These guidelines have been proposed to assist and facilitate development of quality and affordable Yatri Niwas and dormitories in the state with the intent to provide tourists an affordable, comfortable and convenient option for accommodation (Detailed Scheme is furnished at Annexure-XV).

7.2.2.5 Guidelines for Development of Youth Hostels

The Department of Tourism has developed guidelines to assist and facilitate in development of quality and affordable Youth Hostels in the state with the intent to provide young tourists an affordable, comfortable and convenient option for accommodation. Facilities to be provided are at Table-7.6 and the detailed scheme may be seen at Annexure-XVI.

Table-7.7: Facilities to be Provided by Youth Hostels in Karnataka

Room	Front desk	Visitor sitting area and lobby
Tourism info booth	Souvenir Shop	Free internet service for all guests
Parking for at least 4 cars and 2 buses for every 30 persons		All rooms should have telephone connectivity

7.2.2.6 Guidelines for Jungle Lodges and Resorts

This unique scheme of classification is mainly based on location and activities offered. The location of resorts usually scenic natural places, like forest areas (National parks and reserves), bank of water bodies (Rivers, Lakes and Beaches), hill stations, etc. the places are often fragile, pristine and sensitive.

Karnataka Government owns 16 finest properties under Jungle lodges and Resorts brand, ranging from tents to rooms to independent cottages. It promotes Eco-tourism, wildlife tourism, adventure tourism and various outdoor activities like wildlife safaris, trekking, bird watching, camping, white water rafting, Kayaking, coracle ride, snorkeling, fishing, mountain biking, etc., that are non-consumptive components of eco-tourism and in general help in environment conservation.

7.2.3 Supplementary Accommodation Classification in Kerala

Kerala has evolved a grading/classification scheme for the accommodation categories such as home-stay, Grihasthali, Vazhiyoram, Ayurveda centers, House-boats and Serviced Villa. The inspection of these facilities and the certification thereof is undertaken by the State Tourism Department in diligence the scheme for each category. A summary of the features of those are furnished in the following section.

7.2.3.1 Home-stays

The existing system classifies the homestays into three categories namely Silver, Diamond and Gold, where, Gold rating is highest. The classification is done by a committee constituting members from the State Tourism Department, District Tourism Promotion Council and Local-body member from respective area. Inspection is undertaken on the facilities, ambience, cleanliness, service quality and qualification/knowledge/skill of the host. Reportedly, there are 2500 rooms registered homestay facilities in the state (Classification Scheme is Annexure-XVIII).

The checklist for classification consists of a total number of 90 items. The items are of Necessary (N) and Desirable (D) in nature and arranged under five categories— General, Guest Rooms, Bathrooms, Public Area and Kitchen. It is mandatory for the promoter to fulfil all necessary items to become eligible for (re)classification. All necessary items and most of desirable catalogues carry one mark each, whereas, ten items of the later are given two points each to add weightage to commitment towards society, culture and environment. The marks acquired through 'desirable' items would enable the promoter to acquire higher rating. It is designed in such manner that the promoter could

examine the various items and ensures their property's eligibility for classification and the grading the property could acquire.

7.2.3.2 Grihasthali

This scheme, launched in 1998, aims to provide accommodation for tourists in heritage buildings of more than 50 years old. Often the 'tharavadu' (ancestral home) of traditional families are utilized for this purpose. The idea is to preserve traditional architecture while promoting hospitality and equally acting as additional source of income for the house owner. The State Government provide a subsidy of 25% (up to a maximum of Rs.5 Lakhs) for renovation of the heritage building but as per a report in 2012, the scheme has not attracted adequate attention (Times of India, 9th April 2012, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thiruvananthapuram/No-takers-for-tourism-depts-Grihasthali-scheme/articleshow/12601165.cms>).

7.2.3.3 Vazhiyoram/Wayside facilities

This envisaged creation of quality wayside facilities including restaurant, souvenir shop, clean toilets, multipurpose stall (for ATM, internet café etc.) with sufficient parking facilities and landscaped surroundings. These facilities have been classified in to three categories viz. Class-I, Class-II and Class-III based on the facilities and space offered. Class-I is graded as finest one. No stay is provided in these units and there is a specific design pattern to follow by all. These units are run by private parties independently with some investment subsidies from the Government in the beginning.

7.2.3.4 Ayurveda Centers

In order to standardize and prevent mushrooming of illegal centers, Kerala Tourism has come up with a unique classification scheme for the approval Ayurvedic centers. There are two types of classification- Green Leaf and Olive Leaf, where Olive Leaf is rated as premium category. The basis of classification is the facilities provided to the guests such as meditation/yoga halls, rejuvenation therapies, separate treatment rooms, ambience and landscape, steam bath facility etc. There also exist certain regulatory requirements such as the male masseurs for male guests and female masseurs for female guests, which need to be followed strictly. In addition, displaying name and details of doctors, nurses, masseurs etc. are also necessary for the approved units.

Similarly, to function as any Ayurvedic center in the state, mandatory regulations are in place for obtaining separate approvals from the respective agencies of the State Government. This would be required over and above the classification from Kerala Tourism.

7.2.3.5 Classification of Houseboats

Houseboats are huge attractions in Kerala and often treated as USP of the state. Thousands of houseboats are in offer in the state though its highest concentration is seen in the backwater areas of central Kerala. Mushrooming of houseboats necessitated some form of standardization of the facilities and services in order to ensure the safety standards. Accordingly, the State Tourism Department has come up with a two-tier classification scheme- Gold Star and Silver Star. All approved houseboats must have to host a flag inscribing the mnemonic status accorded to it. The flag shall be approved by the State Tourism. In addition, houseboats adhering to prescribed eco-friendly standards would be accorded a Green Palm Certificate also.

7.2.3.6 Serviced Villas

This is a recently introduced scheme meant for approval scheme of serviced villas. These need to be independent furnished home preferably built in Kerala-style architecture and with a minimum of 01 to maximum 06 rooms (12 beds). It must have a well-equipped kitchen and a cook along with an English speaking person to assist the guests. Unlike the homestays, presence of the owner is not mandatory in this case.

VIII. Conclusion and Recommendations

Keeping pace with the change in the consumer behavior and choices, the hospitality service providers can be seen responding with varied service orientations and product offerings to meet those expectations. The core functions of food and accommodation have invariably been the focal area of transformation where the thrust of the production function cycle was upon the quality and personalization. Being a core service product that is firmly rooted in the intangibility and service quality standards, one of the biggest challenges is often reported as optimization of customer satisfaction. Since a sizable chunk of these customers are drawn from the international markets where they are also exposed to different standards and practices, any amount of mismatch in the hospitality deliveries could lead to dissatisfaction and eventual negative perception of the product and the destination in general.

Accommodation is a consideration for the travelling people because of its function as home away from home. Hence, the seekers consider a variety of factors such as the budget, comfort and provisions, location etc. while choosing places to stay. The developers of accommodation products, in response, create their product range in a manner as to cater the intended spectrum of the visitor segments but the issue have been defining and stipulating the standards and features. This has led to emergence of the classification scheme for accommodation units in the early 20th century itself and that evolved over the years, kept embracing the changes in the motivation for the product design and provisions.

However, while there exist variations in the classification schemes across the world, there were also initiatives to move toward a globally standardized and unified scheme for hotel classification. However, such moves were equally opposed citing the dangers of 'common products and experiences' at the cost of diversity that is core of the visitors' experience. Many institutions have also argued that any such move could also eliminate the local hospitality traditions and practices or 'cultures of hospitality', thereby, posing challenges to existence of the very culture.

India has reportedly begun classification of the hotels in late 1960s, and over the years, the system has evolved in to more comprehensive one with over 140 criteria and 09 areas of assessment. In spite of these, the guests have been complaining the failure on the part of many classified hotels in offering the promised standards, thereby, expected value for their money. There is a considerate view that compounding of the guest grievances and its expression through a well-integrated virtual media space could turn out to be major concern when it comes to the country's image and the competitive sustainability. It was also observed that most of the complaints were directed against the un-classified hotels, whereas among the officially classified hotels; it was comparatively very less. This in turn stands to suggest that the latter category perhaps largely conforms to the expected standards and deliverables, especially intangible ones that the hotels claim of offering. It is substantiated by the fact that periodic hotel property verification and certification as necessitated by the classification schemes enable such hotels compliance to stipulated quality standards.

Another related concern reportedly is the compatibility of the Indian classification scheme to that of other leading schemes in the world. The mismatches can be either in terms of the areas of assessment or the sets of parameters influencing the guest's expectations and experiences in the hotels. The scenario thus emerges necessitated a re-look at the scheme in India afresh and that formed the main rationale for this study. Thus the main aim of this study was to attempt benchmarking of the parameters and standards for the purpose of tourist accommodation classification in India in such a manner that it would be largely in sync with the global best practices. With this in view, in addition to matching with the major classification schemes in the world, it was also attempted to gather the feedback and perspectives of the major stakeholders such as the tourists, hoteliers, hotels associations and other professional bodies such as the TA&TO. Major findings of the study are summarized and discussed in the following section.

A. Global Trends

A.1: UNWTO and IH&RA Joint Study on Hotel Classification

- 1. Existence of official Classification scheme:** This joint study conducted in 2004 revealed that 83 countries covered reportedly have official classification schemes for hotels.
- 2. Agencies involved in devising and drafting the classification schemes:** A total of 49 countries have the national tourism administration (NTA's/NTO's) and other government officials undertaking classification, whereas, 36 countries were following the system of another country.
- 3. Applicability of Classification scheme:** It is mandatory for all establishments to have classification in 43 countries, whereas, establishments could operate without being classified in 32 countries. In 55 countries, they needed only permission to operate.
- 4. Major Rating Symbols:** Star-based system is most widely used, but in some countries such as the USA, Diamond rating system is in existence.
- 5. Rationale for official Classification scheme:** Major ones are consumer concerns, promoting quality, a marketing tool, help monitoring the development in the sector. Other cited ones are promotion of the investment and establishing compatibility with classification in other countries.
- 6. Criteria Catalogue:** There exists an exhaustive range of parameters arranged under different areas, though the description of areas vary from country to country. For instance, South Africa has around 950 parameters whereas the UK has 468 followed by Germany & Sweden (270), Spain (261), Spain, Australia and France having above 200 parameters. The UNWTO study (2004) concluded that tourism must be able to consolidate its diversity, and not to seek uniformity, in order to remain sustainable. Thus, a unified global scheme for the classification of hotels and other tourist accommodation may not be culturally tenable and sustainable.

A.2: UNWTO & Norwegian Accreditation Study

This joint study titled 'Hotel Classification: Hotel Classification Systems: Recurrence of Criteria in 4 and 5 Star Hotels' released in 2015, covered 34 national systems. Major findings emerged are as per following:

- The 'room' is the top cluster in terms of proportion of criteria across all destinations.
- There is little to no difference in the recurrence of criteria catalogues in both 4-star and 5-star categories. In general, criteria in 5 star criteria catalogues are also reflected to some extent in 4 star catalogues in the vast majority of cases.
- A major area of concern is the little focus on accessibility in the classification schemes, particularly for the guests with reduced mobility, which reportedly has a low recurrence of 26%.
- While assessment covers a variety of parameters and areas, most prominent ones are the room, followed by bathroom/F&B/ services/front desk, though relative importance the later ones may vary across the schemes.

As regards to assessment method, approaches and the agencies for assessment are different. The criteria are also found many in numbers and varied, covering most functions of the hotels though relative significance each may vary in the assessment procedure.

A.3: UNWTO Study on Online Guest Reviews and Hotel Classification Systems-2014

In recent years, there have been moves towards integrating the guest/customer reviews and feedback inputs, especially from on-line platforms, with the classification scheme and that is gaining momentum. The UNWTO (2014) observes: '75% of the surveyed consumers and hotels indicated that the integration of reviews in to classification system is potentially important... classification systems help the guests filter the hotels, while guest reviews provide a means to help select from a smaller set of acceptable options'. This is a clear pointer on the necessity of the countries incorporating the online guest reviews in the hotel classification schemes and

assigning it a meaningful place in the bench-marking and standardization process.

This study has also revealed that measurable criteria are proportionately less compared to the qualitative attributes of the hotel. This in itself is a challenge, especially in devising and executing a classification process in transparent and objective manner.

B. Assessment Method in Selected Classification Schemes

The Indian scheme is voluntary in nature and awards rating to the hotels from 1-Star to 5-Star Deluxe categories upon an assessment of the property by the Hotel and Restaurant Approval and Classification Committee (HRACC). The method of assessment is that the assessors (HRACC) visit the property on an announced date and inspect and document the presence/absence of the prescribed criteria catalogue. The visit is against an application by the developer who seek the award of a specific Star-rating for the property. Perhaps, the very method of inspection and documentation merely of the presence/absence of a given criteria catalogue appears to be the major bottleneck of the Indian scheme. Because, it is not necessary that mere presence of certain services/facilities would amount to assurance of stipulated quality standards. Similarly, the criteria catalogue is also relatively less in number in India.

However, it can be observed in general that all major Schemes examined in this study follow some form of quality bench-marking of the parameters either by assigning weightage or scores/points. The criteria catalogue is more elaborate and each one is clearly defined/ explained to add clarity. Together, 18 areas of assessment were observed across the schemes, whereas, some of it viz. room for the disabled and staff and welfare were found specific to Indian scheme. Like in many developed countries, the Scheme in India is voluntary and the Award is granted for a period of five years.

A summary of some major global schemes are as furnished below:

B.1: Diamond Ratings of the US- AAA Scheme

- ❖ It follows a system of Diamond ratings 1 to 5 Diamonds, wherein, the rating of the property is voluntary and administered by the American Automobile Association.
- ❖ The system comprises of two distinct components- Approval Requirements and Diamond Rating Guidelines. The earlier are uncompromising mandatory standards or criterion, whereas the later are somewhat flexible parameters and help property in getting a particular Diamond rating.
- ❖ Approval Requirements are basic necessities and assessment is made in the areas viz. cleanliness and condition; management and style of operation; exterior and public areas; guest rooms; guest bathrooms.
- ❖ Adequate emphasis is accorded to the building structure, design and exterior appeal; landscaping; and main entrance whereas these areas are not assigned with enough focus in India.

B.2: Star Rating of VisitEngland Scheme

- ❖ It assigns Star ratings to the properties upon assessment every year. The classification scheme is also updated every year.
- ❖ Since 2006, all hotels in the UK are assessed on these 'Common Standards' and awarded one to five star ratings.
- ❖ Assessors are trained for awarding scores against national benchmarks in an objective and consistent manner. Property verification is undertaken by mystery guest checks.
- ❖ It follows a 'Scoring System' where each criterion spread under in 09 key areas are assessed. Upon calculating the total scores that a property has accrued during assessment, overall percentage of that score is determined and then place it on to respective Star band depending on a pre-determined percentile system- ranging from 1-Star to 5-Star.

- ❖ Each key area need to attain the stipulated score to fall within a specific band or higher. However, in order to conform a particular star rating, the scores awarded within each of the key areas also need to fall within that band or higher.

B.3: Star Ratings of Australia- AAA System

- ❖ The Star ratings of hotels in Australia is undertaken by STARRATINGS AUSTRALIA, a standalone standard accreditation division of Australian Motoring Services, a wholly owned subsidiary of Australian Auto Clubs (AAA).
- ❖ Criteria catalogue is not Star category-specific. Instead, accrual of total scores by a property during assessment on a maximum score sheet would determine its specific Star rating status.
- ❖ A system of scores is adopted for granting of star ratings on a three-year cycle.
- ❖ A property is assessed on three key areas viz. Quality and condition, Cleanliness and Facilities and Services from acceptable (minimum) to excellent (highest). However, in case of Cleanliness, minimum rating should be 'good'. The Stars are awarded according to the score earned in three key areas of assessment.
- ❖ Assessment is carried out by the designated Inspectors, and the grievances if any of the developer, is redressed before the Star rating is awarded.
- ❖ For consumer complaints and dispute redressal, Starratings Australia has a system of mystery guest assessment. To verify quality standards by the qualified specialists also, the mystery guest system is used.

B.4: Star Ratings of Abu Dhabi Scheme

- The licensing and classification department under Abu Dhabi Tourism authority (ADTA) is designated for inspection and star awarding. Inspection is carried out on a pre-announced date. A system of mystery guest check is also in place.
- Classification system is reviewed and upgraded every two years, where the industry participates actively.

- Assessment parameters are classified into mandatory and rating criteria standards and rated it on a scoring system. Depending on the total scores that a property accrues during assessment out of a maximum score of 900, appropriate rating is determined.
- There are mandatory minimum requirements and that do not carry points. As regards to distribution of points for different areas, maximum allocation is given to the accommodation (46%) followed by guest services (23%), infrastructure (22%) and restaurants (9%).
- Inspection is conducted by ADTA and that include spot checks/inspections including those upon complaint, if any, from an assessed.
- A well-established customer communication system in force where the guests can register the complaints about their hotel stay through e-CS or mail/writing, etc., which is normally acknowledged within a day.
- A highly developed IT enabled e-classification system is in existence in Abu Dhabi and that equally help in classification process. An intranet for existing hoteliers called ADTA is also in operations, where the hoteliers are also trained in using this e-system.

B.5: Star Ratings System of South African Scheme

- ❖ A system of Star rating is followed and the ratings are awarded by the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) upon verification of the property on pre-announced date, and on annual basis.
- ❖ The Scheme is developed in such manner to have certain minimum criteria requirements/‘category entry requirements’, and these should be fulfilled at the time of applying for the Star rating.
- ❖ There are about 940 parameters and each of it is assessed on 6-point scale- Unacceptable; Acceptable; Good; Very Good; Excellent; Outstanding. An ‘unacceptable’ rating of any facility/service carries ‘0’ point.
- ❖ The summary of points during assessment are aggregated and total points determined, based on which, the property is awarded the Star rating as per the Scheme.

- ❖ Among the category portfolio, bedroom carried maximum weightage of 22.8% followed by general service (15.4%), dining facilities (15%) and bathrooms (13.4%).

B.6: Star Ratings of European HotelStars Union Scheme

- ❖ The European HotelStars Union schemes functions under the patronage of HOTREC (Hotels, Restaurants & Cafés in Europe), established in 2009, comprises of the hotel associations of many European countries. Presently, it has 13 full members, whereas, three are at the implementing stage and another two are in their planning stage.
- ❖ This common framework is meant to serve the objective of moving towards harmonised hotel classification criteria and procedures for the participating countries.
- ❖ The properties are awarded with Star ratings from 1-Star to 5-Star and a Superior rating in each category. Accreditation of Superior indicates that such hotels acquired considerable points over and above threshold points required for its specific rating, but do not comply with the minimum criteria catalogue for the next higher category.
- ❖ Certain criteria are mandatory according to the star category and do not carry points, whereas, non-mandatory ones accrue points. There are 270 criteria for assessment, mandatory and non-mandatory, arranged under seven assessment areas and rated on a Score-based scheme.
- ❖ A hotel property has to accrue minimum scores in the non-mandatory criteria as well to qualify for an award of a particular Star rating.
- ❖ There exists a system of active and systematic gathering and evaluation of guest opinions about the hotels services, analysis of the weaknesses, and the realization of improvement for quality control.
- ❖ Mystery guesting is compulsory criteria for a 4-Star superior and above segments.

B.7: Star Rating Scheme of Malaysia

- ❖ Classification of tourist accommodation establishments are undertaken by the Ministry of Culture, Arts & Tourism, on pre-announced date

every three year. The system of mystery guest check is also in place to ascertain the assured qualities.

- ❖ Classification is mandatory for all hotel properties and the classification system is updated every three years.
- ❖ Malaysia adopts a grading and weightage system to award Star ratings to hotels from 1-Star to 5-Star. There are six key assessment criteria and a minimum marks prescribed for award of each star rating.
- ❖ Key areas of assessment are: Qualitative and aesthetic requirement, Common areas; Bedroom requirement; Services; Safety standards and hygiene; and staff.

Examination of the above schemes enables to suggest in general that the main areas of assessment in these schemes are largely similar even though relative importance attached to each area may differ across the Schemes. Further, greater emphasis can be seen accorded to cleanliness, sustainable practices and safety arrangements in some countries, particularly the developed ones. It was also observed that the criteria arranged under different assessment areas vary across the schemes perhaps owing to the way in which respective criteria have been approached in each scheme. In general, India is deficient in certain relevant parameters and those have been identified and recommended for upgrading the Scheme in the country.

C. Areas of Assessment in the Classification Schemes

The areas of assessment found common across all the schemes are the guest rooms, bathrooms, guest services and the food & beverage services. Of these, guest rooms carry the highest weightage, followed by is bathroom, whereas in some schemes like in USA and Australia, about 27% parameters are arranged under the bathroom area. Another common area is guest services, assuming weightage in the range of 9% (Abu Dhabi) to 17% (South Africa) in the total criteria catalogue. However, it is worth noting that F&B service carries highest weightage in VisitEngland scheme, but in other cases, its numbers are very less.

D. Assessment of India's Classification Scheme

A matrix-based crossed-matching of the Indian scheme with other leading schemes enabled locating inconsistencies and relevant explanations specific to the Indian scheme. Particularly, mapping the best practices and diversities in the parameters provided fresh insights and contributed in meeting the main objective of benchmarking to strengthen the Indian scheme. The findings reveal that unlike other schemes examined, the system in India is merely descriptive and takes in to account only the presence or absence of certain facilities and service provisions for award of star rating. This may not necessarily ensure the required quality standards and meeting the expectations and that makes it imperative to embrace an assessment methodology that will address the quality standards of the criteria under assessment. Upon examination of the schemes, some specific pattern has emerged as per below:

- In India, the criteria catalogue is arranged as 'necessary' and 'desirable' for awarding the Star. The properties move from 1* to the next by adding certain features. It was also observed that the distinction of a 4* property or a category above, distinctions in terms of the criteria catalogue is marginal. Further, '5* Deluxe' classification was found in India's case only though the schemes such as HotelStar.EU has two separate grading in each star category, a 'Superior' rating for better one in same category.
- In all schemes examined, properties are awarded a specific Star/Diamond rating on the basis of the stipulated minimum scores/weight on an assigned scale. The assessment methodology is assigning particular score/weight depending on number of items of the criteria catalogue and quality features of the criteria as determined by the assessment team.
- Except in Indian scheme, each criterion is sufficiently described/ explained for clarity so as to assess it more objectively. The criterion catalogues are also more elaborative and more in numbers.
- There are minimum or entry level requirements for each Star category. In some schemes, scores/points are assigned these, whereas in other schemes; points/score not assigned. By offering more features in a

specific Star category, the property can gain better rating within the same category, instantaneous being that in HotelStar.EU, a 5* property can be assigned 5* 'Superior' award by accruing the points above the optimal limit required for the award of the particular Star. Similarly, VisitEngland scheme also has a system of awarding 'Silver' and 'Gold' rating within a specific Star rating.

The summary of criteria catalogue furnished against each Star category below are either not part of existing Indian scheme or those lacked proper description. These are either necessary/entry level requirements or those enabling a property to accrue additional points for improving their rating status.

D.1 1-Star/ Diamond Rating

D.1.A General Requirements

Certain good practices stipulated in other schemes are not part of Indian scheme though few of those are very much in practice already as per following:

1. Registration of all hotel guests, making all guests clear of the pricing, additional services, taxes, cancellation policies and charges.
2. Annual deep cleaning schedule including the mattresses.
3. Qualitative aesthetics, suitably placed sign boards visible at night etc.
4. Provision of basic information on hotel classification/rating.
5. Qualitative and aesthetic requirement – safe, functional, standard quality and well maintained.

D.1.B Guest Room

In this most assessed area of a hotel property, while many matching criteria can be found in Indian scheme, some are not figured and few others are not sufficiently described as per below:

- Sizable proportion of a hotels 'bedrooms and bathrooms having sizes larger than stipulated standard for each star category should be assigned additional weightage.

- Except in HotelStar.EU and Malaysian scheme, Air-conditioning of all rooms is necessary in other schemes, whereas, it is 25% in India. However, it accrues additional points in HotelStar.EU. Hence, proportion of air conditioned rooms in Indian scheme can be considered for increasing to 50% in lower level ratings. Because, it was observed that rooms in almost all classified hotels in India are either fully air-conditioned or a huge chunk has this provision.
- In general, mattress protector is a minimum requirement and that can be considered for India, which is 'desirable' for lower level properties.
- Provision of Shelves/drawer space to be specified as 'minimum of 02 drawers/shelves'.
- The lampshade to be provided if it is decorative.
- One bedside light per sleeping position.
- Provisions of the wardrobe need to be elaborated as 'adequate space with hangers and cloth hooks'.
- At least one light-control from the door.
- Provision of cable TV with a remote may be made a minimum requirement for all Star category.
- Means of securing the room from inside and outside, a key or a key card, peep-hole and internal securing may be made minimum from existing desirable requirement.
- Double-bed to be accessible from both the sides in all categories.
- Provision of multi lingual emergency procedure displayed in every room and at main public areas of the hotel.
- Spare pillow and blanket to be made available on request at no extra cost.
- Minimum mattress thickness may be redefined from 10 cm to 13 cm.

D.1.C Bathroom

- Provision of Western style WC in all rooms is a norm in all cases but it is minimum 25% in India, which may be increased to 50%.

- Wash basin of appropriate dimensions with a provision of hot and cold water supply, adequate lighting and a power socket nearby is common to other schemes and to be made minimum requirement in Indian scheme also.
- The bath towel should be specified as 'clean and low absorbent'.
- Provision of guest toiletries to be specified as 'soap and body wash and good quality shampoo'.
- Provision of towel rail/hood, toothbrush tumbler and toilet paper in reserve may be minimum requirement.

D.1.D Public Area

- Appropriately positioned lighting for safety and comfort at locations like stair case, corridors, landing area etc. for 24 hours.
- Décor of the hotel with the works of local artists may be encouraged. This could enhance a sense of local hospitality on one hand and encouraging local craftsmen of preserving these crafts while creating additional employment and income opportunities.
- Adequate dustbins in the common areas with lids and plastic bag linings to a norm. This would help ease of disposal and separation of waste bins for recycling.
- Fireproof and equipped with communication systems in the corridors.

D.1.E Room & facilities for Differently Abled Guests

The Indian scheme is elaborative and treat this as a separate area of assessment, which is not found in other schemes. However, some good practices as below has been proposed for consideration to make the hotel more access friendly:

- Vibrating alarm for hearing impaired guests.
- Provision of hotel information in a range of formats like large prints, braille, MP3 downloads, photo graphs etc.
- A familiarization tour of the hotel.
- Crockery contrast table linen/surface to assist visually impaired.

D.1.F Food & Beverage Services

- Professional presentation of the menu with clearly defined prices and taxes.
- Sufficient staff for prompt service having acceptable knowledge of menu and dishes.
- All meals freshly cooked/ prepared and served.
- As a good practice, flexible meal time to help the diabetic and the people of different culture.

D.1.G Guest Services

The parameters under this assessment area are found largely in consistent with the schemes examined here.

D.1.H Quality and Online activities

The Indian scheme stipulates it is mandatory for the hotel to show the classification status on its website under a separate icon on its opening page, which on the click will display the order of classification issued by Ministry of Tourism. But a random checking of this stands to suggest that some hotels are not complying with this requirement. The review of the schemes suggest that the Indian scheme must mandate a provision in the scheme for the hotel 'website with updated information and realistic pictures along with the hotel location'. It is also desirable to have a system for analysis of guest reviews and complaint management in a systematic manner. Further, website having provision for direct booking could also be encouraged.

D.2. 2-Star/ Diamond Rating

The parameters/ features elaborated/specified below are those either not figured for 2-star rating scheme in India but offered by the hotels, or those additional features required for qualifying to ascend from 1-star to 2-star rating.

D.2.A General Requirements:

Stipulations are largely in conformity to the 1 star/ diamond rating.

D.2.B Guest rooms:

- From present minimum requirement of 50% air-conditioned rooms, it may be made a necessary for all rooms.
- Multiple enclosed drawers for accommodating luggage items of two persons in double rooms.
- Provision of TV with remote not less than 32" flat panel with free to air channels.
- Provision of writing table chair and sufficient lighting on the table

D.2.C Bathrooms:

- Two soaps, body wash and good quality shampoo.
- Washable bath mat.
- Shelf

D.2.D Public Area:

Enhancement in the level of comfort, materials, design and increased functions in the lounge or seating area in the lobby are expected and to be made necessary requirements.

D.2.E Room & facilities for Differently Abled Guests:

Similar to 1-Star stipulations

D.2.F Food and Beverage Services:

In addition to stipulations of 1-Star, a limited room services to be made available.

D.2.G Guest Services

The features of present Indian scheme are found largely in sync with 2-Star stipulations in the other schemes.

D.2.H Quality and Online activities

Stipulations are in sync with 1-Star rating

D.3. 3-Star/ Diamond Rating

As progress to a 3-Star facility, the assessment starts focusing on the aesthetics and quality aspects of the property and a clear progression is visible from 1-star and 2-star stages. The features listed below are the additional requirement over 2-star rating for qualification to this stage.

D.3.A General Requirements:

- Overall aesthetically appealing visual effects in most of the areas
- Appropriate local decoration should be promoted in most of the areas
- Good and qualitatively appealing landscaping in areas where guests are frequented
- Good, healthy and attractive plants displayed at all location in a manner that is suitable to the environment of the place of hotel.

D.3.B Guest rooms:

- Larger room, but over and above the stipulated minimum requirements to accrue additional points.
- All rooms to be air conditioned/heated, either through central air conditioning or split air conditioning units.
- Significantly enhanced cleaning and that is visibly felt.
- Minimum mattress thickness to be of 13 cm.
- Bedding of good quality and comfort
- Triple sheeting, overstuffed duet, skirting, bed throw and scarf
- Additional usable decorative/non-decorative pillow on demand
- Spare blanket on request at no extra charge
- Shelves- adequate space for two pieces of luggage, provision to hang up a suit bag, collapsible wood luggage rack/ decorative bench, two drawers per bed
- Wardrobe- Closet depth to enclose full length suits/cloths, good quality hangers, heavy gauge wires/rods

- The room lighting should be good and enhances with ambience, a range of lighting options
- Power socket – one near the desk-top and accessible power sockets near the bed
- Writing table/ substantial flat surface properly illuminated
- Digital TV not less than 32"; comfortable to watch from chair and bed; pay TV; channel music, with listings of TV channels provided in the room
- One upholstered chairs plus stool/guest, furniture and soft furnishing to provide good use of comfort and quality
- All floorings, carpets, rugs, hard wood flooring etc. of good quality
- Safe keeping/ in-room safe made necessary
- In room internet/ Wi-Fi service made necessary
- Wi-Fi facility in public areas made necessary
- Shoe polishing kit made necessary

D.3.C Bathrooms

- All rooms to have Western style WC
- Full size wash basin to be made necessary- under mounted, pedestal, vessel etc.
- Soap (2 nos), body wash, shower gel, shampoo, conditioner, body lotion, facial tissue etc. of good quality
- Shower cabin with decorative material & design, double curtain, light weight glass doors with adequate space for comfort and ease of move
- All rooms to have shower cabin/bath-tub
- Towel rails/ tower hooks made necessary
- Provision of shelves, proper lighting and ventilation.

D.3.D Public Area:

Enhanced design, material and appearance; enhanced level of comfort that is visibly experienced. In addition:

- Lighting and illumination that enhance overall appeal and ambience
- Decorative design enhancements in materials, floors, seating, carpets, rugs etc.

D.3.E Room & facilities for Differently Abled Guests:

- Similar to 2-Star stipulations

D.3.F Food and Beverage Services:

- Self-service buffet style breakfast
- Provision of all three meals served and multi cuisine menu available
- 24 hours' room service available for all meals
- F&B service available to non-resident guests but the menu and service timing can be as suited to the property management.

D.3.G Guest Services:

Largely in conformity to 1 & 2 Star provisions

D.3.H Quality and Online activities:

Stipulations are in sync with 1-2 Star rating

D.4. 4-Star/ Diamond Rating

As the property enters to 4-star rating, the stipulations becomes more emphasized on the quality standards of facilities wherein the services and delivery assumes prominence. This can be observed in every area of assessment.

D.4.A General Requirements:

- Aesthetic requirements- the building, furniture, fixtures, furnishings, exteriors and interiors are of high quality and consistent in form and color. There are no obvious signs of pending maintenance/repair
- Landscaping and Gardening- ground and garden well maintained; landscaping and gardening is suitable to the local environment; extensive use of appropriate mature plants and landscaping material.

D.4.B Guest rooms:

- Bedding of superior quality and presentation is such that it enhances overall impression of the room
- Tightly woven soft bed linen
- Upscale bed pillow and cover and choice of pillows to the guest
- Spare pillow and blanket available on request at no extra charge
- Bath robe for the guest
- Sufficient space for two pieces of luggage
- Upscale quality enclosures with two door width, properly illuminated, provision for drawers, shoe rack, two or more shelves, dresser top etc.
- Full size mirror of upscale design and material
- Superior levels of lighting with good positioning and ease of use- separately for lobby area, wardrobe area, dining area, easy sitting, dressing area, bed side reading light/person, lights controllable from beds
- Power sockets- one near the desk top and another accessible socket near the bed, internationally accepted power sockets at suitable locations
- TV cables and cords are concealed, extensive range of channels, radio channels, audio-visual in house channels etc.
- Chairs of very good quality, seating for three guests- sofa/ chairs, upholstery of very good quality

- The overall treatments, window curtains- upscale providing a significant visual appeal.

D.4.C Bathrooms:

- Bathroom floor- well fitted, easily washable, upscale material, anti-skid
- Bathrobes, slippers, hair dryer, vanity mirror etc.
- Cabinetry- of very good quality, multiple shelving and drawers
- Guest toiletries- soaps, body wash, shower gel, shampoo, conditioner, body lotion, facial tissues, bath essence, shower caps, nail file, shaving kit, convenience kit etc.-all to be of very good quality
- All rooms to have western style WC, shower cabins of upscale design and standards with solid surface
- 25% rooms to have bath tubs as minimum requirement
- Shelf in the bathroom
- Décor and lighting that enhances the overall appeal and ambience

D.4.D Public Area:

Substantial enhancement in the design, material, function and quality in addition:

- Illumination in all key areas designed to enhance the ambience and to be of very good quality, decorative design and visual appeal
- Decorative directional signage that enhance the visual appeal
- Flooring, ceiling, skirting, carpets, rugs- upscale decorative materials and design
- No threadbare or fraying sections of carpets or rugs

D.4.E Room & facilities for Differently Abled Guests:

Similar to 3 Star stipulations

D.4.F Food and Beverage Services:

- 24 hours' room-service available for all meals.
- Buffet style multi cuisine breakfast with hot and cold beverage
- Separate lounge/bar area, upscale surroundings
- Clearly defined menu with specific mention of rates and taxes
- 3 courses served for dinner; adequate choice of hot and cold dishes
- Flooring, ceiling and lighting- Superior quality, appropriate design, patterns and textures.

D.4.G Guest Services:

Minimum requirements in Indian scheme is elaborate and in conformity to leading classification schemes examined here

D.4.H Quality and Online activities:

Indian scheme is largely elaborate and in conformity to leading classification schemes examined here.

D.5. 5-Star/ Diamond Rating

While the provisions of physical attributes in a five-star property is largely similar to a 4-star rating, what makes the distinction is the level of quality and delivery standards that are of very high levels and aesthetical value. Those features and stipulations for a 5-star rating have been delineated and dealt below.

D.5.A: General Requirements: The emphasis is on the quality of provisions especially the design and its appeal which are expected to be of very high quality/ standards. The visual appeal of every aspect of a property- design, landscaping and gardening, exterior, public areas etc.- should provide such high level of standard to the guests.

D.5.B: Guest Rooms

- The room size increases to 200 sq. ft. and bathroom to 45 sq. ft. in Indian context. Similar increase is also observed in certain other schemes.
- All bedding of the highest quality, excellent standard and laundered to excellent condition.
- Daily cleaning of bed, walls, fittings, bed-linen changed daily to keep these in excellent condition.
- The luxuriously soft pillow providing silk-like feel
- Turn-down service
- Wardrobe- Fully fitted with wide range of excellent quality hangers, provided with illumination inside, upscale materials and distinctive design.
- Lighting- Excellent with separately controllable options.
- Chairs- One easy chair of excellent quality and an additional chair for use at writing table/guest.
- Opaque curtains/ screen at all windows- Luxurious treatment giving significant visual appeal.
- Flooring- Luxurious material, design and presentation.

D.5.C: Bathroom

Besides the features of 4-Star stipulation, the following are also to be treated as minimum requirement.

- Bathroom size increases in such manner to enable ease of movement and additional provisions.
- Shower Cabin- custom treatment; separate shower and tub; Fixed door enclosure for shower, etched, frosted, embossed, tinted etc.
- Bathtub- preferably two person capability, outstanding quality
- Defogger, built in lighting etc.

D.5.D: Public Area

There should be substantial enhancements in the materials, designs, increased functions/ coordination and enhanced level of comfort for a property to move on to 5-Star stage. Additional features in 5-Star level are:

- Lounge/seating: Excellent quality and condition of the furniture and fittings to provide overall luxurious ambience, generous personal space and choice of space. Additional facilities like secondary dining, leisure, business center, spa, multiple semi-private area in the lounge.
- Furniture made of outstanding materials, having distinctive design and function, provide luxurious comfort
- Exceptional illumination
- Concierge, Paging and Limousine services are available
- Escort for all the guests to the bedroom by a highly skilled staff
- Multiple guest service areas like front desk, bell stand, concierge, video kiosk etc.

D.5.E: Room & Facility for Differently Abled Guest:

Similar to 4-Star stipulations.

D.5.F: Food & Beverage Services

- Excellent quality appearance and furniture with good space in dining areas. Alcoholic drinks served 24 hours with a comprehensive range of drinks including wines and cocktails being available and table service is provided.

D.5.G: Guest Services: Largely in conformity to 4-Star level provisions.

D.5.H: Quality & Online Activities: Largely in conformity to 4-Star level provisions.

E. Perception of Hotel Guests on Star Rated Accommodation

The purpose of gathering perception of the hotel guests was to corroborate their views on present offerings of the hotel properties and their satisfaction.

Results emerging from survey of 1007 tourists (504 domestic and 503 foreign) were concluded are:

E.1 Hotel Booking and Information Provision:

- The main source of information on respondents' present hotel was internet (37%) followed by travel agents (TA's) and tour operators (TO's) for the domestic tourists. For foreign tourists, about 45% reported to have the information from TA's and TO's.
- Around 31% of domestic tourists saw the hotel website first and then booked the room, another 25% made booking through travel agent. Contrary, around 43% of foreign tourists booked through travel agents, whereas one fourth made it through the hotel website.
- More than half of the domestic tourists reportedly stayed at the current hotel for two days and another 31% for three days and more. In case of foreigners, those stayed for two days were around 43%, whereas, proportion of those stayed three days or more stood at 45%.
- When probed on whether the respondents stayed in similar kind of accommodation in the past, almost everybody replied in affirmation.
- On provision of information supplied by hotel staff on various services and add-ons, about 90% endorsed as having received such information.

E.2. Assessment of the Guest Room

- About 62% of domestic and 57% of foreign respondents were found to have been highly satisfied on the room and the fixtures in it like size, bed, mattress, linen, furniture, mirror etc. Together, proportion of those 'highly satisfied' and 'somewhat satisfied' accounted for more than 95% of the respondents in both segments.
- On provision of tea maker, drinking water, crockery, glass ware etc. in the room, 56% of domestic and about 52% of foreigners were highly satisfied. The proportions of those dissatisfied in the sample were about 6% and 5% respectively.
- Specific to overall lighting in the room, more than two thirds of both segments were found highly satisfied. Similarly, share of those

dissatisfied in the sample were about 2%, meaning that in general, respondents were satisfied on this count.

- When it comes to provision of hotel information (services etc.) inside the room, more than half of them were highly satisfied and another 40% somewhat satisfied.

Thus, the overall feedback on the room and provisions in general, as per the pattern emerged, is satisfactory.

E.3. Assessment of Bathroom

- About 62% of the domestic tourists were highly satisfied on the bathroom fixtures, size, towel, toiletries, mirror, WC toilet etc. Corresponding proportion among the foreigners was about 51%. Those somewhat satisfied on these were 31% and 39% respectively.
- When feedback on shower-cabin, bath-tub, hot-water supply was gathered, satisfaction level was found comparatively not encouraging with 53% domestic and 41% foreigners were reporting as highly satisfactory.

E.4. Assessment of Food and Beverage facilities

- The feedback on multi cuisine restaurant, menu and service were not very encouraging as just about 58% domestic and 51% guests rated it as highly satisfactory.
- When feedback on quality of utensils, crockery, cutlery etc. were ascertained, it was also not encouraging-46% domestic and 40% foreign guests expressed it as highly satisfactory.
- As regards to bar service, the segments rated it as highly satisfactory are about one-third among both categories. This could perhaps be due to the fact that those who did not want to comment were proportionately higher (domestic-45.8% and foreign – 28.8%).
- Similarly, on overall upkeep of the restaurant also, those rated it as highly satisfactory were only 46% among domestic and 43% among foreigners.

Thus, the feedback in general on the restaurant and the provisions are not very encouraging.

E.4. Assessment of Guest Service Facilities

- Encouragingly, nearly three-fourths of the respondents were highly satisfied on the hospitality extended by the hotel staff. Those expressed to have been dissatisfied were negligible in proportion.
- The level of satisfaction on the multi-language capability of the staff emerges to be divergent among the visitor segments; for 46% of domestic and over 71% of foreign guests treated it has highly satisfactory.
- ‘Supply of information by the hotel staff’ is an area warranting attention, since the guest feedback is not very encouraging. Similarly, feedback suggest that the hotel website also calls for considerable improvements.
- As regards to telephone service in the room and public area, both visitor segments considered it highly satisfied (about 50% in both cases).
- Against internet service, feedback is indeed discouraging with less than one third are only rating it as highly satisfactory. In other words, level of guest dissatisfaction is very much revealing if results are anything to go by.
- Check-in and check-out is another area needing focus. Provision of entertainment also received discouraging level of response, suggesting both as areas needing attention.
- Lounge/seating area in the lobby and safety and security arrangement for the guests have also received moderate response only. Notably, appeal of the lobby was rated as ‘good’ by about half of them and another over one-third accorded ‘excellent’ status.
- Specific to cleanliness, around 60% domestic and 50% foreign guests have considered it highly satisfactory. Perhaps, proportions of the dissatisfied guests were very negligible.

- However, responses on overall experience of staying in the hotel received very encouraging rating. Notably, guest rating bettered with increase in the star rating, particularly among 5-star rated properties.
- When probed on whether the present hotel provided the kind of facilities one could expect from similar kind of hotel in other countries for similar budget/rate, around 80% of the foreign guests have answered in affirmation.

E.5. Basis of Hotel Selection

- On question of whether the guests were particular about the category of hotel accommodation, more than three-fourth have confirmed they were.
- Around one-fourth of both the segments opined that star-rated hotels of reputed brands is a major consideration, whereas, more than half reported to have star-rated hotels with the reasonable price as their major consideration.
- To gather feedback on hotels, review from social media like Facebook, twitter and other social media emerged as main sources, followed by review by the hotel booking sites such as Trip-Advisor, Expedia etc. Notably, 37% of domestic and 48% of foreign guests have consulted different online platforms available to them for gathering hotel information.
- On importance of the hotel to have official star rating, more than half of domestic and 43% of foreigners treated it as very important. Interestingly, those considering it as unimportant were found to be very miniscule.
- When, importance of guest reviews in the hotel selection were examined, more than three-fourths among both segments replied in affirmative. Again, those considering it as unimportant were indeed negligible.
- More than half of respondents were in strong agreement on the guest review websites to indicating official rating of the hotels that they have reviewed.

- The respondents were of strong view that the hotel's official star rating would assure better quality of service standards.
- It is not feasible for a hotel guest to know multitudes of parameters used in star ratings and this was also confirmed by this survey with only 36% domestic and 24% foreign guests replying in affirmative. However, these figures call for cautious treatment as 129WYB BUHDG 'P; L&t is reasonable to assume that most guests may not have been privy to detailed classification scheme, and hence, its finer aspects. At best, their feedback could be based on the experience with different hotel properties.
- Specific to integrating the guest reviews in the official classification, around 60% considered it very significant. However, only for a miniscule proportion it was not that important.

E.6. Current Trip Details

- Around 63% domestic and 56% foreign tourists made their own arrangements for the tour, whereas, remaining were on either inclusive or all- inclusive package arrangements.
- With regard to nature of travel arrangement, around 28% of domestic guests have booked either with the service provider or through TA/TO's. Those made it through e-portals were about 27%. As regards to foreign guests, nearly half of them made arrangements through TA/TO's and another 21% directly with the service provider. Notably, those booked through e-portal were roughly 19% only.
- When main purpose of visit was examined, 48% and 34% of domestic guests were either on business/professional or holidaying/leisure/recreation. But about 59% of foreigners were on holidaying/leisure etc. whereas those on business/professional trip were roughly 24%.
- When it comes to frequency of visit to India, it was their first visit for 65% of the foreign guests, followed by 14% on their second visit.

E.7. Demographic Profiling of Respondents

- As for the age of respondents, single largest segment emerged to be 29-38 years, followed by those in the age group of 18-28. These groups together accounted for 72% and 67% of the respondents respectively.
- Domestic respondents were predominantly male (87%) and this pattern was largely in sync with the foreigners also (65%). Three-fourths of domestic respondents were married and corresponding proportion among foreigners were around 59%.
- Respondents were predominantly post-graduates and above or graduates and mostly employed or self-employed.

F. Stakeholders' Perception of Accommodation Classification

F.1 Guests' Selection of Accommodation

- Ranking of a set of selected parameters stands to suggest that 'price vs. budget' is the major factor and it was accorded with highest ranking, either as first or second. Next important aspect was the brand reputation though it was distantly placed, followed by official star rating.
- More than two-thirds of the respondents were of the view that it is 'very important' for the hotels to have official classification and the display of its official rating, including the hotel website. Only a very few have considered this as being not that important.
- Specific to the role of guest reviews in hotel booking, around 41% viewed it very important, whereas for another 53% it was somewhat important.
- Specific to display of the reviews by the hotel review websites, around 34% strongly agreed on its display in the review websites and another 64% were in agreement on this.

F.2 Rationale for Official Classification of Hotels

In India, classification of tourist accommodation units is voluntary and therefore many hotel units reportedly do not subject their facility for any official rating and classification. It was also observed that many hotels

withdrew from the renewal of classification rating, probably due to various considerations, major being statutory compliances. Given this, it was attempted to ascertain the rationale for the classification and also the reason for the hotels opting out from official classification procedure, the result of which are summarized below:

- As regards to rationale for official classification, 25% strongly agreed that it would help conforming to the benchmarking standards, whereas, those in agreement on this were about 66%. In other words, about 60% were in agreement on this.
- About 37% of the respondents strongly agreed upon its role as a good tool to communicate the industry offers and another 57% also agree on this.
- Nearly 36% and 60% respectively were of the view that classification is highly justified or justified on consumer concerns.
- Nearly 34% and 60% were of the view that it is a tool for periodic monitoring of the sector.
- About 62% were strongly in agreement that classification is a promise on the quality and the standards it offers. Another 31% also agreed on this.
- When reasons for the hotels opting out of classification were examined, based on a ranking scheme, official classification as an interference on their freedom to do the business gathered highest ranking.
- Next major reason was it could make hoteliers' social obligations mandatory, followed by, some considering it as means to regulate their activities.
- However, a good chunk of the respondents agreed that non-observance of stipulated standard could adversely affect the hotel business by way of reduced customer confidence, degradation of the brand value, sustainability of the hotel business etc.
- On the question of unification of hotel classification schemes globally, around 58% were of the view that it is highly desirable.

- On classified hotels in India offering standards at par with similar hotels in other leading country destinations, around 61% responded in affirmative.
- On the question of whether Indian classification scheme is comparable with other leading schemes of the world, 58% of the respondents were in agreement to this.
- Respondents were predominantly of the view that it is highly improper on part of the hotel to claim as 'star classified' when it is actually not. Only about half of them held the view that classification is used as a tool to monitor and control the sector in India.
- In a dynamic quality environment, maintaining customer satisfaction is of utmost importance. When the means for the same were ascertained, continuous training and capacity building of the staff emerged to be the most important, followed by gathering regular customer feedback and updating delivery standards. Establishing and maintaining internal quality control process diligently also figured prominently.

F.3 Feedback on Classification Process

- Respondents were of strong view that HRACC in India is adequately represented by the industry stake holders. As regards to classification fee, more than 80% considered it reasonable.
- On the question of whether classification of accommodation units in India to be made mandatory, more than three-fourths were in strong agreement to this.
- About three-fourths of respondents also held that 'mystery check' by independent (third party inspectors) must be encouraged as part of the official classification scheme.
- On equally important question of re-classification frequency, they were largely in support of it either in every two years (37.8%) or every year (31.6%). Only about 17% opined that it could be every five years.

- As regard to adequacy of classification scheme, 51% considered it adequate enough, but, 37% held that it needs improvement.
- On engaging independent inspectors in addition to HRACC for hotel assessment, about 60% were of the view that it could be considered.
- Specific to integrating the guest reviews in the classification scheme, 55% consider it as highly significant and 43% consider it as significant. In other words, roughly 93% were of the view that it is significant.

F.4 Observations of the Hotel Association of India on Proposed Classification Scheme for Hotels

After the presentation of the draft findings and the recommendations at a meeting chaired by the Secretary-Tourism, Govt. of India, the draft report and the proposed classification schemes were again sent to the Hotel Association of India (HAI) and The Federation of Hotels and Restaurants Association of India (FHRAI). HAI has forwarded the observations on the proposed Classification Scheme for Hotels but those are pertaining to five stars rating only. The comments of the study team to those are furnished at Annexure-? While examining those, the overall framework of the study and the specific objectives being laid-down thereof were kept in perspective. In general, HAI appears to largely concur the proposed scheme for the star rating of the hotels in India. Some of the observations tendered by HAI were in sync with the international practices and those were considered, whereas, few were pertaining to the existing classification scheme in India viz. area stipulation for the room that the study team considered to retain such existing parameters as such.

G. Evaluation of Supplementary Accommodation Schemes

G.1 Motels

- Indian classification system for motels does not have any star rating scheme; instead, it is just an approval process upon assessment of 101 parameters in nine areas, arranged as mandatory and desirable.
- While the parameters are stipulated, no specific standards have been assigned for assessment.

- When the Indian scheme for motels was compared with the Australian scheme, it was observed that the motels in Australia are assigned star ratings in similar lines with the hotels. The areas of assessment for motels were also found to be largely in tune with that of hotels.
- The analysis enabled to conclude that the classification of motels in India requires improvements on the minimum eligibility and the same is proposed for consideration. It is also a considerate view that the motel facilities fulfilling the star rating parameters can also be brought under the ambit of the hotel classification with suitable modifications to maintain the character of motels. In the USA also, motels are assessed largely within the framework of hotel classification.

G.2 Incredible India Bed & Breakfast/Homestay Establishment Scheme

- Upon examining the UK scheme, it was observed that both of these have been clubbed under the heading 'guest accommodation'. The assessment of the facilities is carried out on a score-scale and the ratings are assigned accordingly.
- In terms of assigning specific ratings to these units, three distinct grades namely Silver, Gold and Platinum have been suggested. Here, it is to record that Kerala has such a system in practice already for classification of home-stays. This will help grading the facilities more explicitly for the quality standards.
- The scheme should also have eco-friendly, environmentally sustainable practices and suggested accordingly.

G.3 Guest House Accommodation Scheme

- The Indian scheme for guest houses was compared with the UK scheme to observe that though Indian scheme has score-based system to classify the guest houses, the criteria for assessment are very less in numbers (13 nos.). Whereas in UK, not only is the criteria catalogue more elaborative, the properties are also assigned star ratings upon assessment.
- There is imperative to make the assessment scheme more elaborate by incorporating the needs of the modern day travelers. Therefore, it is proposed for inclusion of the provisions like television, some

entertainment items, Wi-Fi/ internet, complimentary toiletries etc., and where possible, provision of breakfast could also be considered.

- The system of scoring for assessment should be continued and more areas of assessment incorporated so that the guest houses can be graded as: Silver, Gold and Platinum

G.4 Tented Accommodation Scheme

- The scheme in India was compared with the schemes of UK and the USA. It was seen that while the UK has five different categories of rating, the USA has three such ratings.
- The Indian scheme is found to be elaborate in terms of criteria catalogue assessed against 82 criteria of which 67 are necessary and these do not carry any score. Remaining are taken as desirable. Further 14 criteria have been incorporated as quality indicators and these carry scores for classifying the facility into 'standard and deluxe'.
- It is considered appropriate to have more of a uniform scale for grading the supplementary accommodation units in the country. Therefore, it is suggested to have a rating system of – Silver, Gold and Platinum for tented campsites as well.

G.5 Apartment Hotel Scheme

- To derive necessary clarity on the Indian system, the scheme prevailing in the UK was considered. It was observed that similar facilities in the UK are called serviced apartments where the properties are subject to a five-star rating scheme, based on a score system. The criteria catalogue is equally expansive as in the case of hotel star ratings.
- As per the Indian scheme, apartment hotels are classified into four categories, starting from 3-Star to 5-Star Deluxe. As regards to 3-Star and 4-Star ratings, very few differences in the criteria catalogue can be observed. Similarly, for 5-Star and 5-StarDeluxe rating, differences in terms of criteria are very few in numbers.
- The examination of the Indian scheme enables to suggest that a thorough revisit of the classification scheme is required so as to bring clear distinction of the property rating and suggested accordingly.

Further, the inventories also need to be made more focused and easily describable.

G.6 Timeshare Accommodation Scheme

- Though timeshare resorts are gaining popularity, a comparison of Indian scheme with other schemes could not be undertaken as no comparable scheme was found existing.
- The timeshare properties in India are found to be existing either as apartments/ cottages or conventional hotel. Now, more and more players are entering into the domain of time share accommodation, but also operating as timeshare property as well as hotel.
- Existing rating scheme in India is from 3-Star to 5-Star. While scrutinizing, it was observed that the distinction between these ratings are negligible since the total parameters of assessment are in range of 48-49 criteria in total with minor variations in necessary and desirable features.
- It is considered to suggest for continuation of the existing star rating system i.e. 3-Star to 5-Star with detailed and distinguishable criteria catalogue for rating so as to grade each star category for clear distinction at each stage. The criteria catalogue must also have more features added to the room, kitchen and indoor & outdoor activities appropriately to make the system more refined and meaningful.

H. Recommendations

This study was an attempt towards evolving a comprehensive benchmarked framework for classification of tourist accommodation in India. The conclusions emerged have enabled suggesting a set of specific recommendations in order to make the classification scheme in India more sustainable and inclusive. The main areas for which the recommendations being advanced encompass the nature of classification committee and procedure, frequency of classification, mandatory nature of classification and the improvements needed in the existing criteria catalogue for Classification. The area wise recommendations are furnished below:

H.1 Agency for Classification

H.1.1: The classification scheme and the criteria catalogue is becoming more complex and sophisticated, and therefore, it is proposed to constitute an autonomous body namely 'Tourist Accommodation Classification and Regulatory Authority' (TACRA). The Central Ministry of Tourism shall be the administrative department for TACRA, which would also act as arbitration/appealing authority for all matters related to classification from time to time. Its members may be drawn from the government and specialists from the academia, hotel industry, travel intermediaries, architects and civil engineers. It may be ensured that the members of the committee are domain experts with proven records of specialization in respective fields.

H.1.2: The Establishment Assessment Committee shall comprise of 01 experts each from the hospitality industry, travel intermediary segment (Travel Agents/Tour Operators), Central IHM Principal, Civil Engineer, Architect and Interior Designer.

H.1.3: A panel of Hospitality, Civil Engineer, Architect and Interior Designer experts could be drawn out at the state/regional level. For each inspection, members can be drawn through a computerized random procedure.

H.1.4: The 'Mystery Guest' as well as the 'hotel guests' feedback need to be incorporated in to the classification scheme and suggested accordingly. For 'Mystery Guest' review, a panel could be constituted with the persons of proven expertise and impeccable credentials. A Code of Conduct for them can be evolved and the same signed with TACRA.

H.2 Periodicity of Reclassification

The stakeholder's feedback is clearly in support of frequent property assessment and reclassification. However, considering the complexities involved in the (re)classification, it is considered reasonable to recommend for continuance of every five-year interval. However, a mid-term evaluation in the third year is deemed necessary to have a control on the standards and stipulations so as to ensure proper compliances and the same suggested herewith.

H.3 Mandatory Provision for Classification

The studies of UNWTO reveal that a good number of countries in the world, particularly the developing countries, have made classification of tourist accommodation mandatory. The feedback emerging from the study, mainly from the stakeholders, is also largely in support of making classification mandatory in India. In consideration of this, it is proposed that the classification and rating of tourist accommodation may be made mandatory in the country.

Specific to the type of tourist accommodation units to be covered under the provision of mandatory classification, a minimum 10 rooms or an investment of Rs. five crores (excluding the cost of land), whichever is lowest, should be made as a norm. For those units below this limit, classification can be made voluntary. The proposed TACRA could be equipped in such manner that it is able to handle the classification requirement of all tourist accommodations in the country. Further, the expenses towards classification and management of TACRA can be borne by the concerned property itself.

H.4 Law for Classification of the Tourist Accommodation in India

Presently, India does not have a legislation to specifically cater for the purpose of classification of tourist accommodation. The existing 'Sarais Act-1867' and 'The Delhi Hotels (Control of Accommodation) Act-24, 1949' have been recommended for immediate repeal by The Law Commission of India (LCI) as these are viewed as 'obsolete'. Hence, it is recommended for enactment of a legislation of an Act to specifically cater for the purpose of 'Tourist Accommodation Classification'. Further, the said Legislation must also have specific provisions to enforce penalties as deemed appropriate on those establishments violating the mandated provisions of the affidavit submitted thereof for ensuring the quality standards for the Award of Classification.

The Act thus enacted shall have the provisions to make the State Governments follow the Schemes of classification designed and implemented by TACRA from time to time. For such establishments that cannot be brought under the existing schemes of TACRA, the State Governments may be free to develop its own schemes and the classification thereof.

H.5 Independent E-Portal for Classification

The countries like Abu Dhabi have a comprehensive e-portal for recording the guest-complaints and also for the details pertaining to all classified hotels. A similar system would be helpful for horizontal and vertical integration of processes and information, which in turn, could complement the process of classification and its strengthening in India. Hence, launch of an e-portal system for the hotels to enable and facilitate responsible classification scheme has been proposed. The system would also facilitate on-time guest feedback to make the feed-backing more transparent and reliable.

H.6 A Mobile Application for Live Feedback

Since the guest-feedback is very significant, a mobile application specifically programmed to gather live feedback of the hotel guests about their experience of staying at hotels has been recommended. However, while designing, the programming must envisage adequate safeguards against potential challenge of manipulation by vested interest sections.

H.7 Parameters and Assessment Methodology

The parameters shall comprise of minimum requirements and add-ons, where, minimum ones would be of entry-level requirements in nature for a specific star rating. Add-on features would enable the property to accrue points, and for each star category, a property must gather minimum points as stipulated in aggregate as well as in area-wise, to obtain a particular star-rating. As regards to the system of rating the parameters, the criteria catalogue(parameters) would be subject to rating by an assessment/inspection team as constituted and deputed by TACRA.

H.8 Recommendation for system of classification for hotels

- From present practice of verification of presence/absence of criteria, it is proposed for moving towards a dynamic and rating-based system. This would immensely help proper benchmarking of the hotel facilities thereby enhancing customer satisfaction.

- For rating of criteria, a point-based system is proposed herewith. The Inspectors shall assign points as appropriate for each criteria during their visit.
- Like in some leading classification schemes, it is proposed to have two separate rating within each star rating. Up to 4-Star, a 'Superior' rating for each category is suggested. As regards to 5-Star rating, there already exists a 'Deluxe' rating and that can be followed.

H.9 Existing system of classification for Motels

The classification of motels in India requires improvements on the minimum eligibility and the same is suggested herewith. It was also a considerate view that the motel facilities fulfilling the star rating parameters can also be brought under the ambit of the hotel classification, with suitable modifications to maintain the character of motels. In the USA also, the motels are assessed largely within the framework of hotel classification.

H.10 Incredible India Bed & Breakfast/Homestay Establishment Scheme

In terms of assigning specific ratings to guest accommodation, three categories have been proposed– Silver, Gold and Platinum. Here, it is to record that Kerala has already such a system in practice for classification of home stays. This will help grading the facilities more explicitly for the quality standards. The scheme should also have eco-friendly, environmentally sustainable practices and suggested accordingly.

H.11 Guest House Accommodation Scheme

There is an imperative to make the assessment scheme more elaborative by taking into account the needs of the modern day traveler. Therefore, it is proposed to incorporate the provisions like television, some entertainment items, Wi-Fi/ internet, complimentary toiletries etc. and where possible provision of breakfast could also be considered. The system of scoring for assessment may be continued and more areas of assessment incorporated so that the guest houses can be graded as silver, gold and platinum.

H.12 Tented Accommodation Scheme

It is considered appropriate to have a more of a uniform scale for grading the supplementary accommodation units in the country. Therefore, it is suggested to have a rating system of – Silver, Gold and Platinum for tented campsites as well.

H.13 Apartment Hotel Scheme

It is suggested to bring the clear distinction of the property rating and suggested accordingly. Further, the inventories also need to be made more focused and easily describable.

H.14 Time Share Accommodation Scheme

It is considered to suggest for continuance of the existing star rating system i.e 3-Star to 5-Star, with detailed and distinguishable criteria catalogue for rating of each star category. The criteria catalogue must incorporate more features of the room, kitchen and indoor & outdoor activities appropriately to make the system more refined and meaningful.

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Annexures

Annexure-I : Status of Approved Hotels and Rooms Available in India				
Accommodation types	2008		2014	
	No of Hotels	No. of Rooms	No of Hotels	No. of Rooms
Five Star Deluxe	105	22254	113	23907
Five Star	94	11387	92	11744
Four Star	121	9299	134	7969
Three Star	683	30577	554	22724
Two Star	287	8494	80	1902
One Star	118	2834	41	1193
Apartment Hotel	6	514	03	249
Time share resort	0	0	01*	31*
Heritage hotel	64	1921	42	1237
B&B Establishment	0	0	52	242
Guest House	0	0	05	77
Unclassified/Pending classification	115	7807	117	8323
Total	1593	95087	1234	79567

Source: Tourist Statistics- 2008 &2014

Annexure-II: State-wise Approved Hotels and Rooms in India				
State	2008 (Nos.)		2014 (Nos.)	
	Hotels	Rooms	Hotels	Rooms
Andhra Pradesh	101	7390	59	7026
Assam	15	638	15	491
Bihar	07	373	03	132
Chandigarh	03	192	07	646
Chhattisgarh	05	160	01	54
Delhi	51	9554	47	7506
Goa	59	5364	43	4254
Gujarat	73	3984	47	3463
Haryana	31	2525	44	4102
Him. Pradesh	23	915	07	340
J&K	3	239	03	220
Jharkhand	08	278	04	175
Karnataka	53	4866	39	4527
Kerala	312	8648	446	11936
M.P	40	2025	21	1016
Maharashtra	239	19327	162	11483
Odisha	16	876	08	586
Pondicherry	13	359	06	401
Punjab	85	2297	18	845
Rajasthan	103	5206	60	3965
Sikkim	04	115	09	261
T.N	228	11699	100	5982
U.P	46	3452	37	3876
Uttarakhand	22	1010	06	292
W.B	39	2796	32	2486
Other N.E States &the rest	09	288	09	506

Source: Tourist Statistics, Min. of Tourism, Govt. of India

Annexure-III: Best Ranked Hotels in India		
Sr. No	Name of Hotel	Rank*
1	Taj Rambagh Palace, Jaipur	2
2	Taj Lake Palace, Udaipur	6
3	The Oberoi Udayvilas, Udaipur	1
3	The Oberoi Amarvilas Palace, Agra	4
4	The Oberoi Rajvilas, Jaipur	5
5	Taj Falaknuma Palace, Hyderabad	-
6	The Oberoi, Gurgaon	-
7	The Leela Palace Kempinski, Udaipur	-
8	The Leela Palace Kempinski, New Delhi	7
9	The Oberoi, Mumbai	8
10	Taj Land's End, Mumbai	
11	Taj Mahal Palace & Tower, Mumbai	3
12	J.M Marriott, Mumbai	9
13	The Leela Kempinski, Gurgaon	10

*: Conde Nast, The Best Hotels in India: Readers' Choice Award, Aug. 11, 2014
 #: <http://traveljee.com/india/top-10-most-expensive-luxury-hotels-india/>, 15.02.2015

Annexure- IV: Quality Assessment Report- Visit England Scheme

Key Areas	Criteria
Cleanliness	Dining Area
	Public Areas
	Bathrooms
	Other Public Areas
	Bedrooms
Bedrooms	Decoration
	Furniture, fittings and furnishings
	Flooring
	Beds and bedding
	Lighting, heating and ventilation
	Towels and toiletries
	Space, comfort and ease of use
Bathrooms	Decoration
	Fixtures and Fittings
	Flooring
	Lighting, heating and ventilation
	Towels and Toiletries
	Space, comfort and ease of us
Service and Efficiency	Booking service
	Arrival service
	Lounge service
	Bar service
	Other services (leisure etc.)
	Departure service
	Room service
	Restaurant service
	Restaurant wine and drinks service

Key Areas	Criteria
	Breakfast service
Exterior	Building appearance
	Grounds, gardens and frontage
	Car parking
	Leisure
All Public Areas	Decoration
	Furniture, fittings and furnishings
	Flooring
	Lighting, heating and ventilation
	Space, comfort and ease of use
	Stairs, corridors, hallways and public WCs

Annexure-V: Matrix for Assessment of Australian Star Rating (AAA)

Key Assessment area : Quality and Condition; Cleanliness; Facilities and Services

Criteria	Sub-Criteria	No. of Parameters
Guest Services	Reception	16
	General	14
Recreational Facilities		13
Building Exterior		10
Food & Beverages	Restaurant	6
	Room Service	10
Bedroom	Bed Covers	6
	Bedding	13
	Mattress and size of Bed	4
	Furnishing and storage	23
	Bedside Lighting	4
	Room Lighting	3
	Window coverings and privacy	6
	Free Floor Space	3
	Floor coverings	4
	Walls and Ceilings	5
In Room Facilities	Tea, Coffee, Cutlery, Crockery, Glassware	5
	General Appliances	3
	Entertainment	14
	Lounge Seating	4
	Dining Table and Chair	3
	Business Desk	4
	Heating, Cooling, Ventilation	5

Criteria	Sub-Criteria	No. of Parameters
	Laundry	7
	Security and Safety	8
	Non-smoking Rooms	1
Bathroom	Shower and Bath	9
	Vanity	5
	Fittings	8
	Toilet	3
	Lighting	2
	Personal Amenities	3
	Towelling	5
	Window Coverings and Privacy	3
	Free Floor Space	4
	Walls, Ceiling	4
	Floor Coverings	4
	Bathroom Type	3
	Ventilation	2

Annexure-VI: HOTELSTARS.EU Classification Criteria (2015-2020)

S. No.	Area	Total assessment Criteria
1	General Hotel Information	15
	1.1 Cleanliness and hygiene	1
	1.2 Preservation and condition	1
	1.3 General impression	1
	1.4 Staff	1
	1.5 Car park	4
	1.6 Others	2
	1.7 Facilities	5
2	Reception And Services	43
	2.1 Reception and facilities	20
	2.2 Cleaning of rooms and laundry	5
	2.3 Laundry and ironing services	6
	2.4 Payment	1
	2.5 Miscellaneous	11
3	Room	149
	3.1 General room info	6
	3.2 Sleeping comfort	27
	3.3 Room equipment	25
	3.4 Safe keeping	4
	3.5 Noise control/ air conditioning	6
	3.6 Entertainment electronics	11
	3.7 Telecommunications	8
	3.8 Miscellaneous	20
	3.9 General bathroom info	42

S. No.	Area		Total assessment Criteria
4	Gastronomy		23
	4.1	Beverages	8
	4.2	Bar	2
	4.3	Break fast	5
	4.4	Food	8
5	Event Facilities (MICE)		13
	Only points to be accrued in this area as nothing is minimum required		
	5.1	Banquet options	3
	5.2	Conference rooms	7
	5.3	Equipment/ technology of conference rooms	3
6	Leisure Provisions		19
	Only points to be accrued in this area as nothing is minimum requirement		
	6.1	Sports	3
	6.2	Spa/ wellness	9
	6.3	Children	3
	6.4	Others	4
7	Quality And Online Activities		08
	7.1	Quality systems	4
	7.2	Online activities	3
	7.3	Others	1
		Total	270

Sr. No.	Annexure-VII: Malaysia: Key assessment criteria				
1	Qualitative and aesthetic requirements (The function & aesthetic are based on all equipment viz. furniture, soft furnishing, decoration, and bathroom, sanitary ware and fitting)				
Criteria	a. Safe	b. Function	c. Colour	d. Aesthetic	e. Ambience
2	Common area				
Criteria	Reception area (hall, lounge, lobby, main entrance, facilities for the disabled)	Bar	Fine dining room/ restaurant/ breakfast room		
	Banquet / conference room	Restaurants	Outdoor area/ indoor area		
	Entertainment/recreation/ Sports	Dustbins	Sanitary installation for common areas		
	Public health toilets for disabled	Lifts	Public telephone		
	Thermal conditioning for common areas	Corridors	Corridors precautions		
3	Bedroom requirements				
Criteria	Minimum size specifications	Bedroom furniture and fittings	Kiblat sign in bedrooms	Electrical equipment	
	Bedroom windows	Thermal conditions in bedrooms, ventilation	Bedroom doors	Ventilation in rooms	
	Bedrooms communication system	Audio-visual installation in all categories: bedrooms	Drinking water in bedrooms	Information material: bedrooms	
	Stationery in bedrooms	Sound proofing for bedrooms	Suite	Sanitary installation- bedrooms	
	Water hose	Bed linens, towels	Room for the disabled		
4	Services				
Criteria	Food & beverage service	Front desk services	Safety deposit box		
	Left luggage facilities	Foreign exchange	Business centre		
	Internet access services	Credit card facilities	Shopping arcade		

	Medical service	First aid facilities	Tourism services
	Laundry and valet service		
5	Safety standards and hygiene		
Criteria	Fire, electricity, other safety facilities and security	Emergency power supply	
	Kitchen	Separate compartment	
	Food protection	Refuse	
	Insect and vermin protection		
6	Staff		
Criteria	Number of staff	Employment	Staff qualification
	General qualification	Language	Mode of greeting
	Staff uniform	Medical examination	Staff facilities
	Sanitary installations	Rest areas and changing rooms	Staff canteen
	Staff training	Sarau (prayer room & indication of Kiblat)	
7	Management		
Criteria	Training on environment awareness	Both guests and staff to be educated through website for the green actions taken and promote others also to take their own green actions	
	Encouragement to monthly campaigns on environmental awareness like on waste reduction, reuse, recycling, waste separation and compositing program	Donating to charity – sheets, towels, table linen, furniture, carpeting, window coverings, appliances and bed spreads that are no longer in use – corporate social responsibility	

Annexure-VIII: Tented Accommodation/ Camping Sites Compared: India & United Kingdom

India	United Kingdom				
Standard/Deluxe category	1 Pennant Park	2 Pennant Park (In addition to 1 Pennant)	3 Pennant Park (In addition to 2 Pennant)	4 Pennant Park (In addition to 3 Pennant)	5 Pennant Park (In addition to 4 Pennant)
Exterior & Grounds: Total score: 08 Approach (2); Landscaping (2); Exterior lighting (2); Parking (2)	Entrance and access roads of adequate width and surface, Well-drained ground, and same level pitches	As of 1 Pennant	Facilities, services and park grounds are very clean and well maintained, buildings in good condition Attention to customer care and security, Evenly-surfaced roads and paths	Internal roads, paths and toilet blocks lit at night	As of 4 pennant
Tents Total Score: 10- Furniture (2); Furnishings (2); Décor (2); Tent facilities & amenities (2); Linen (2)	No more than 30 pitches per acre, At least 5% of pitches allocated to tourers	As of 1 Pennant	As of 1 Pennant	25 pitches per campable acre (maximum)	As of 4 Pennant
Bathrooms Total Score: 04- Facilities (1); Fittings (1); Linen (1); Toiletries (1)	Washroom with flush toilets and toilet paper provided (if no sanitary facilities are offered, this should be clearly stated)	Separate male/female washrooms (including a minimum 2 WCs and 2 washbasins for every 30 Pitches), Hot and cold water direct to each basin, Externally-lit toilet blocks	Modern shower cubicles (one per gender for every 35 pitches), preferably with doors, with free hot water. Decent, modern or modernised toilet blocks (lit all night) to contain mirrors, shelves and hooks, shaver/hairdryer points, waste bins with lids in female toilets, unbroken toilet seats, soap, clean towels and/or hand dryer	Spacious vanity-style washbasins or similar, including some in cubicles Fully-tiled or equivalent shower cubicles with doors, dry areas, shelves and hooks (at least one per	Several designated self-contained cubicles ideally containing WC, washbasin and shower. All toilet blocks to be heated. Remaining washbasins

India	United Kingdom				
				<p>gender for every 30 pitches)</p> <p>Some combined toilet and washing cubicles, at least 2 for up to 150 pitches, 4 for over 150, and 6 for over 300.</p> <p>Toilet blocks heated October to Easter</p>	ideally cubicle
<p>Public Areas- Total Score: 08- Furniture (2); Furnishings (2); Décor (2); Restrooms (1); telephone in public places (1)</p>					
<p>Food and Beverage- Total Score: 08- Choice of cuisine, menu (2); décor (2); food quality (2); use of local cuisine (2)</p>					
<p>Kitchen- Total Score: 07- Equipment (2); food storage (2); facility planning (1)</p>					

India	United Kingdom				
Cleanliness- Total Score: 08- Overall impression					Several fully-serviced pitches
Hygiene- Total Score: 08- Pot & Dish Washing (2); drinking water (2); staff facilities (1); pest control (2); garbage disposal (1)	An adequate drinking water supply and reasonable drainage	As of 1 Pennant + Dishwashing facilities (covered and lit)	As of 1 Pennant + Free hot water for dishwashing		
Safety & Security- Total Score: 08 - Fire fighting equipment (2); signage (2); awareness of procedures (1); public area and room security (2); first-aid (1)	Local fire authority requirements met	Location of chemist/shop clearly signed	Reasonable efforts at on-site security and supervision	Good security and supervision	Excellent supervision and security, including barrier.
Communication- Total Score: 05- Phone service (2); e-mail / internet access (2); PC and other equipment (1)	Location of emergency telephones clearly displayed and urgent telephone numbers signed	As of 1 Pennant	Public telephone on site or nearby (clearly signed), available 24-hours where mobile telephone reception is poor		
Guest Service- Total Score: 05– Overall Impression		Reception area, Warden available during the day (times must be obviously displayed), and a 24- hour contact number clearly signed,	Warden hours and 24-hour contact number clearly signed	Reception area open during the day, with tourist information available and 24 hours Warden. Quality shop on-	As of 4 Pennant

India	United Kingdom				
				site (or within a reasonable distance)	
Eco-friendly practices- Total Score: 10- Waste management, recycling (2); no plastics (1); Water conservation, Harvesting (2); pollution control-air, water, sound, light (2); Alternative energy usage (1); sewage disposal (2)	Chemical disposal arrangements, ideally with running water (not applicable if tents only), Adequate refuse disposal arrangements, clearly signed				
Promotion of local Resources - Total Score: 04- Local culture-local folk dance and music (2); local arts & handicrafts (2)					
Staff quality- Total Score: 07- Overall impression (3); Level of training (2); Employment of local youth / personnel (2)					
			Automatic laundry with some drying facilities, separate from toilets (one washing machine and one tumble dryer is adequate)		

India	United Kingdom				
			Several electric hook-ups	At least half of all pitches must have electric hook-ups	Electric hook-ups to most pitches
			Several hard standings, wheel runs and/or firm, level ground	Minimum 10% hard standings, where necessary	Hard standings where necessary, at least 20% of total amount
			Children's playground with equipment, games room and/or recreation area unless park is geared towards adults	Baby changing facilities (if applicable)	
				A late arrivals enclosure or arranged agreement for late arrivals	
					Motorhome service point with access for large unit

Annexure- IX: Comparison of Serviced apartments/Apartment Hotels in India and Visit England

India	Visit England
General	
24 hours Lift for buildings more than ground floor plus 2 floors	Lifts, 3 or more floors
Parking	Parking
	Exterior – Appearance of the building, Ground, Garden, frontage
	Self-contained Apartment: bedroom, bathroom, public area and kitchen are all contained behind one common door.
Guest Room	
Minimum 10 lettable rooms. All rooms with outside window/ventilation	<p>All bedrooms are to have sufficient space to allow guests freedom of movement around all furniture and fittings including sofa beds. Rooms may be small but careful planning ensures best use of space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decoration • Floorings • Furniture, fittings • Bed • Bedding & Linen • Heating, lighting, ventilation • Space, comfort & ease of use
Minimum floor area studio including sleeping, living, bathing, cooking & dining area in Sq. ft 250 Sq. ft (3 & 4 star) 250-300 (5 star & 5 Deluxe)	
Minimum Floor area 1 bedroom including sleeping, living, bathing, cooking & dining area in Sq. ft. 500 Sq. ft (3 & 4 star) 500-650 (5 star & 5 Deluxe)	
Minimum Floor area 2 bedroom including sleeping, living, bathing, cooking & dining area in Sq. ft. 760 Sq. ft (3 & 4 star) 950 (5 star & 5 Deluxe)	
Minimum Floor area 3 bedroom including sleeping, living, bathing, cooking & dining area in Sq. ft. 1000 Sq. ft (3 & 4 star) 1250 (5 star & 5 Deluxe)	

Dining area – Separate Dining table and Chairs	
Air Conditioning – cooling and heating as per the climatic condition	Means of Heating or cooling need to be provided in room
Iron and Iron board	yes
A 15 amp earthen power socket	Adequate number as per requirement
Television	A colour TV should be provided
Internet connection	Wi Fi or Internet connection
Telephone in room	Direct dial telephone in each apartment
Wardrobe with minimum 12 cloth hangers per bedding	yes
Shelves or Drawer space	yes
	At least one window opening directly in to open air, opaque curtain (AC where no windows are there)
Bathrooms	
Number of dedicated (private) bathroom – studio 1 for 3* & 4* 1 for 5* & 5* Deluxe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decoration • Flooring • Fixtures, fittings & sanitary ware • Heating, lighting, ventilation • Towels & Toiletries • Space, comfort & ease of use • One bathroom and WC with bath shower, bathmat , towel rail, wash basin, soap dish to be provided. • Mirror adjacent to washbasin and power socket nearby. • Hand towel and bath towel. • Toiletries • Heating in all bathrooms • Heated towel rail/dry towels.
Number of dedicated (private) bathroom – 1 bedroom 1 for 3* & 4* 1 ½ for 5* & 5* Deluxe	
Number of dedicated (private) bathroom – 2 bedroom 2 for 3* & 4* 2 ½ for 5* & 5* Deluxe	
Number of dedicated (private) bathroom – 3 bedroom 2 for 3* & 4* 3 ½ for 5* & 5* Deluxe	
Minimum size of bathroom in square feet	

36 Sq. ft (3* & 4*) 40 Sq. ft (5* & 5* Deluxe)	
WC toilet with seat and lid, toilet paper	
Floors and walls to have non porous surface	
Indoor games/Games room and Outdoor games like, Tennis, Badminton etc.	Recreation
Water Saving taps/shower	
Kitchens/Kitchenettes	
Kitchenettes for Studios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decoration • Flooring • Heating, lighting, ventilation • Furniture/fittings • Electrical/gas equipment • Crockery, cutlery, glassware • Kitchenware • Pans & Utensils • Space, comfort & ease of use
Kitchens for 1 bedroom and larger	<p>Provision of Cooker with Oven, grill and at least 4 boiling rings.</p> <p>A zinc equipped with draining board Sufficient storage</p> <p>Kitchen Inventory : An elaborate set of kitchen inventory mentioned both per person like Bowl, plates, mug, tumbler, wine glass, knives, spoon, forks, crockery, set of glasses etc. and per apartment like toaster, frying pans, baking trays, condiment set, peelers etc.</p>
Washing machines/dryers (Desirable)	Washing machine/ central Laundry

Public Areas	
A lounge or seating in the lobby area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decoration • Floorings • Furniture/fittings • Space, comfort & ease of use • Heating, lighting, ventilation
Reception facility manned 24 hours	
Heating and cooling to be provided in enclosed public rooms	
Dining room serving breakfast	
Garbage room (wet and dry)	
Room for left luggage facility	
Health fitness facility (Desirable for 3 star and necessary for 4 star and above category)	
Guest Services	
Utility shop	
Acceptance of common credit cards	Yes (common credit cards, travellers cheques)
A public telephone on premises, unit charges made known	Yes
Wake up call services on request	
Messages for and telephone number of Doctor in front office	
Assistance with luggage on request	yes
Stamps and mailing facilities	
Left luggage facility	yes
Fax and photocopy service	
Business centre	
Safekeeping facilities available	
Smoke detectors	Smoke alarms
Fire and emergency procedures displayed in rooms behind door	Fire, Gas and electrical safety
Fire exit signs on guest floor with emergency power	A high degree of general safety and security must be maintained, including information on procedures in the event of

	an emergency
Public liability insurance	
Swimming pool	optional
	Booking, price details, Brochure, and website
	Information about advance if any, cancellation policy. Additional charges for any services etc
	Cleanliness of Public area, Bedroom, Bathroom and Kitchen (at least 5 days in a week, daily cleaning may be chargeable)
	Minimum bed sizes, including sofa beds and bunks, are as follows: Single: 190cm x 90cm (6'3" x 3') Double: 190cm x 137cm (6'3" x 4'6")
	Shop/Bar/Restaurant
	Energy saving lights or bulbs
	Management Efficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre arrival guest info • Welcome and arrival procedure • Welcome pack hamper
	Guest & Tourist Information

Annexure-X: Comparison of Parameters for classification of Motels- India & Australia		
Particulars	India	Australia
1. General		
Full Time Operation - 7 days a week	N	
All trade licenses	N	
Public liability Insurance	D	
24 hours lift for (Ground floor + 2 floor)	N	
Fully serviced Bedrooms, Bathrooms and Public area on Daily basis	N	Housekeeping (at different level carries different points)
Floor surfaces clean and in good repair	N	Y
		Building Exterior
		Garden and Landscaping
		Guest Feedback Practices
		Business Centre
2. Guest Rooms		
Minimum 10 lettable rooms, all rooms with outside windows / ventilation.	N	
Minimum size of bedroom excluding bathroom in sq. ft	120 Sq. Ft	
Air-conditioning	50% (According to Climatic condition)	
A clean change of bed and bath linen daily & between check- in 's	N	Yes

		Specification are mentioned on Bed cover, Bedding, Mattress size, Bed Size, Furnishing/Storage, Bed side lighting, Room Lighting, Window coverings and Privacy, free floor space, floor coverings and walls and Ceiling.
		Tea, coffee, (Provided in room) cutlery, crockery and Glassware, entertainment (TV, game system, MP 3 song/Docking station etc), seating, table and chairs, Business desk.
		Electronic entry
		Refrigerator, Toaster, Microwave, Rubbish bin
		TV, Multi channel selection, In house movies, pay per view.
		Electronic entry, Internal locking, in room safe or Safety deposit at reception, In room video surveillance.
Suites	2% with minimum of 1	
3. Bathroom		
Number of rooms with attached bathrooms	All	
Minimum size of bathroom in square feet	36 Sq Ft	
1 bath towel and 1 hand towel to be provided per guest	N	Towels (Bath sheet, Bath robe, face cloth and Hand towel)
Bath mat	N	
Guest toiletries to be provided- minimum 1 new soap per guest	N	Soap holder and toiletries

A clothes – hook in each bath/shower room	N	
A sanitary bin	N	Sanitary bin
Each western WC toilet to have a seat with lid and toilet paper	N	Yes with plastic cistern
Floors and walls to have non – porous surfaces	N	Yes
Hot and cold running water available 24 hours	N	
Shower cabin	N	Separate shower and full size bath
Bath tubs	Optional Facility	
Water saving taps / shower	N	Mixer taps
Energy saving lighting	N	
Hairdryer	D	Personal amenities (Min 5 items) and Hair dryer.
		Vanity area, Bathroom fittings (cloth/Towel hooks, racks, toilet brush, mirror lighting, taps etc.
		Toilet Brush holder
		Lighting and power sockets
		Bathroom door with privacy and insect screens on external windows
		Bench/shelves space, Hand Basin
		Mixer taps, conveniently located mirror, Towel rails, Adequate cloth and towel rails/hooks.
		Walls and Ceilings – Natural stone, designer tiles etc.
		Ventilation – Mechanical exhaust system

		Rubbish bin, Extra toilet rolls, Toilet brush and holder
4. Guest Services		
Safe keeping / in room safe	In Reception	In room safe or safety deposit at reception
Minibar / Fridge	D	Full Mini Bar/ Limited Mini Bar
Vending Machine	To be available in common area	Vending Machine
Drinking water	N	
Guest Linen	Good linen need to be provided	
Shelves / drawer space	N	Sufficient Shelves and Drawer space
5. Room and facilities for the differently abled guests		
Provision of wheelchair for the differently abled guest	N	
At least one room for the differently abled guest	N	
Ramps with anti-slip floors at the entrance. Minimum door width should be one metre to allow wheelchair access.	N	
Bathroom for Disabled	N	
Public restrooms	N (Unisex)	
6. Public Areas		
Lounge or seating area in the lobby	N	Lounge or seating in lobby
Reception	N (manned minimum)	Reception (Score based on operation)

	24 hours a day, call services 24 hours)	
Availability of room, F&B and other tariff	N	
Heating and cooling to be provided in public areas	Temperatures to be between 20 – 28 degrees Celsius	Heating and Cooling and ventilation
Public rest rooms for ladies and gents with soap and clean towels, a washbasin with running hot and cold water , a mirror, a sanitary bin with lid in unisex & ladies	N	
Accommodation Facilities for the Drivers	N (Dormitory with 6 beds, attached bathroom / toilet)	
Food & Beverage	One Multi-cuisine Restaurant cum coffee shop open from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. and 24 hr Room service	Restaurant/Dining Room Full cooked breakfast Room service
		Provision of Dining table/bench and chairs
		Packed Lunch Service
		Off site dining Options
Crockery & Glassware	N	Crockery, Glassware
Cutlery to be at least stainless steel	N	Cutlery,
Bar	N	
Kitchen	N	
Refrigerator with deep freeze	N	
Segregated storage of meat, fish and vegetables	N	

Colour coded synthetic chopping boards	N	
Tiled walls non –slip floors	N	
Head coverings for Production staff	N	
Daily germicidal cleaning of floors	N	
Good quality cooking vessels / utensils	N	
All food grade equipment Containers	N	
Ventilation system	N	
Garbage to be segregated – wet and dry	N	
Wet garbage area to be airconditioned	N	
Receiving areas and stores to be clean and distinct from garbage area	N	
Six monthly medical checks for production staff	N	
First – aid training for all kitchen staff	N	
Pest control	N	
7. Staff		
Staff uniforms for front of the house	N (To be Clean and Good Condition)	
English speaking front office staff	N	

Percentage of Supervisory Staff	40%	
Percentage of Skilled staff	30%	
Staff welfare / facilities		
Staff rest room	N (separate for male and Female with bunk beds, lighted and ventilated)	
Staff locker room	N	
Toilet facilities for staff	N (Full length mirror, hand dryer with liquid soap dispenser)	
		Staff Induction and Training
Dining area	N	
Guest Services	N	
Valet Parking services to be available	N	
Adequate Parking	N	Parking Situated adjacent to all rooms, Covered parking, weather protection, External Video Surveillance
Dedicated parking area with hose pipe for water for cleaning of vehicle by the guest	N (Self service / paid service. Minimum 2 slots for 25 rooms block)	
Vehicle Mechanic on Call	N	
Air Compressor for tyre inflation	N	
Dry- cleaning /laundry	D (May be out	Laundry (Points)

	sourced)	
Iron and iron board	N	
Linen room	N	
Paid transportation on call	N	
Shoe cleaning service	D	
Drinking water	N	
Ice (from drinking water) on demand	N (Complimentary on request)	
Acceptance of common credit cards	N	
Assistance with luggage on request	N	
A public telephone on premises. Unit charges made known	N	
Wake – up call service on Request	N	
Messages for guests to be recorded and delivered	N	
Name Address and telephone numbers of doctors with front desk	N	
Stamps and mailing facilities	D	
Newspapers available	D (may be placed in the lounge)	
Access to travel desk Facilities	D	
Left luggage facilities	N	
Provision for emergency	N	

supplies toiletries / first aid Kit	(May be chargeable)	
Health and Fitness Facilities	D	
Beauty salon and barber's shop	D	
Florist	D	
Utility Shop	D	
Money changing facilities	D	
Metal detector	N	
ATM	D	
Wi Fi	D	Internet Kiosk and Wireless Internet
8. Recreational Facilities		
	NA	Large/Medium/Small swimming pool
	NA	Indoor pool
	NA	Pool Towels
	NA	Sauna
	NA	Steam Room
	NA	Tennis Court/Half Tennis Court
	NA	Gym
	NA	Gym Towels

Annexure-XI: Comparison of B&B/Homestay Scheme of India with Guest Accommodation Classification Scheme of Visit England

Parameters in India (Silver and Gold)*	Parameters in Visit England#
All trade licenses	All statutory obligations with respect to buildings, fire safety, location, licences, food and beverage etc. need to be obtained. Guest register to be maintained.
General Well maintained and well equipped house and guest rooms with quality carpets/area rugs/tiles or marble flooring, furniture, fittings etc. in keeping with the traditional life style	All statutory obligations with respect to buildings, fire safety, location, licences, food and beverage etc. need to be obtained. Guest register to be maintained.
Sufficient parking with adequate road width	Clean & tidy Parking areas
Guest Rooms- minimum 1 lettable room and maximum 6 rooms (12 beds).All rooms should be clean, airy, pest free, without dampness and with outside window /ventilation	
Minimum floor area in sq ft (each room) Plains -120 sqft(silver) 200 sqft-(Gold) Hills -100 sqft(silver) 120 sqft(Gold)	Min requirement -single-5.6 sq.m/60 sq.ft Double-8.4 sq.m/90 sq.ft. Twin room – 10.2 sq.m /110 sq.ft
	Bed size (min) - single 190x90cm Double-190x137cm (specific measure given for children)
Comfortable bed with good quality linen & bedding preferably of Indian design	Size and spaciousness, beds and bedding, bedding quality, furniture, furnishings and fittings, Windows and ventilation, lighting and heating, flooring, wash basins, in room accessories and telephone.
Attached private bathroom with every room along with toiletries	Yes , bath/shower, lidded WC, toilet paper/holder,soap,sanitary bin, opaque curtain, extractor fan, adequate hooks, bathmat, towel rail, hand & bath towel,

	power socket, wash basin
Minimum size of each bathroom in sq ft 30sq ft-silver 40 sqft-Gold	
WC toilet to have a seat & lid, toilet.	Yes
24 hrs running hot and cold water with sewerage connection.	
Water saving taps/showers	
Well maintained smoke free clean,hygienic, odour free, pest free kitchen.	
Dining area serving fresh continental and or traditional Indian breakfast.	Breakfast- Substantial Continental Breakfast, dinner optional
Good quality Cutlery and Crockery	
Air conditioning/heating depending on climatic conditions with room temperature between 20-25 degree C in the offered room.	In room heating provided
Iron and Iron board on request	Yes, on request
Internet connection	Yes
15 AMP earthed power socket in the guest room.	Yes
Telephone with extension facility in the room	Yes
Wardrobe with at least 4 cloth hangers in the guest room	Cabinet/shelf, wardrobe with sufficient hangers, opaque curtains/ blinds/ shutters,
Shelves and drawer space	
Drinking water-Complementary aqua guard/RO/ mineral water	
Chair/table Good quality chairs, working table and other necessary furniture	Bedside table, a dressing table, writing desk, small table with an adjacent mirror, chair/stool,
Washing machines/ dryers in the house with arrangements for laundry/ dry cleaning.	
Refrigerator in the room	

A lounge/seating arrangement in the lobby	
Heating/cooling to be there in enclosed public rooms	
Garbage disposal facilities as per Municipal laws	
Acceptance of cash/cheques/DD	
Message facilities for guests	Yes
Doctor on call-Name, address and telephone number of Doctor	
Left luggage facility	
Assistance with luggage, on request	
Safe keeping facilities in the room	
Smoke/heat detectors in the house	
Security- security guard	Safety & Security measures -Emergency info, printed details ,
Maintenance of register for check in check out records including passport details(foreigner)	
	Cleanliness -Daily cleaning of bathrooms and WC's, flooring and seating, cleanliness of bedding and replacement of towels and linens. Clean and fresh smelling bathrooms and shower rooms with particular attention to extractor fans, mirrors and shower curtains.
	Lighting - Energy light bulb, controllable from door, bedside reading light/person.
	In room accessories - Tea/coffee making machine in bedroom or public area.
	Miscellaneous - Room locking system, power socket, ashtray, wake up calls.
	Lounges, bars -
	Exterior -Building, fixture, fittings and exterior décor must be maintained.

Annexure-XII: Comparison of Guest Accommodation Classification Scheme in India & the UK

Parameters in India (Silver and Gold)*	Parameters in Visit England#
All trade licenses	All statutory obligations with respect to buildings, fire safety, location, licences, food and beverage etc. need to be obtained. Guest register to be maintained.
Location & décor	
Dining facilities Breakfast/lunch / dinner room service/ self service	Breakfast- Substantial Continental Breakfast, dinner optional
Crockery/ Glassware/ tableware/ linen	
Maintenance of kitchen/ utensils (3 Tier- Washing system should be applied)	
Cold storage facilities	
	Public area- Lounges, Bar, dining area, restaurant, hallways, stairs, Corridors & landings, Safety & Security regulations, Exterior & Condition of building, Public area rest rooms
Cleanliness/Hygiene Front areas/ public areas, rooms, kitchen, store, Pantry, refrigerator, dining area/bar (where applicable as per by-laws), garbage area, staff facilities and back areas including maintenance areas.	Cleanliness- Daily cleaning of bathrooms and WC's, flooring and seating, cleanliness of bedding and replacement of towels and linens. Clean and fresh smelling bathrooms and shower rooms with particular attention to extractor fans, mirrors and shower curtains.
Pest Control- front of the house, guest rooms, kitchen and F&B areas, back areas, stores (where permitted), staff facilities and back areas	
Staff- Percentage of trained/ experienced employees	

Uniform and staff facilities- Smart & clean uniforms, staff lockers etc.	
RO treated/UV treated water / Branded bottled water to be made available for guests, Availability of 24 Hour water . RO treated/UV treated water to be used for cooking	Yes
Parking facilities	Yes
Safety and Security- CCTV in public areas with data backup	Yes, Listed under Public area
Other facilities/ amenities under desirable categories	
	Hospitality & Friendliness -Bookings and pre arrival information, Guest arrival welcome and access, payment/Departure
	Bedroom -size and spaciousness, beds and bedding, bedding quality, furniture, furnishings and fittings, Windows and ventilation, lighting and heating, flooring, wash basins, in room accessories and telephone.
	Bathroom - WC, En-suite, Shower room, fixtures & fittings.

* In India specific scores are given for each item with a maximum of 100 and 60 % required for becoming eligible for classification. A minimum of 60% separately for cleanliness is also necessary.

In case of Visit England Guest accommodation classification all the mentioned parameters are having more elaborate specifications according to the classification category.

Annexure-XIII: Karnataka- Guidelines for Development of Homestays

Eligibility	<p>Eligible applicants are required to fulfill the following conditions to submit applications for the purpose of registration of Homestays:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The owner or promoter of the Homestay unit should be the owner of the property where the Homestay is functioning/proposed to function. ➤ The owner or promoter of the Homestay unit should be physically residing with his/her family in the same Homestay unit or within the premises/campus in close proximity. Individuals or families who own a house of good quality located within the state and can make available, a maximum of 5 (five) rooms with toilet facilities exclusively for tourist accommodation, and who agree to provide basic minimum infrastructure standards and assured quality in service. ➤ A Police Clearance certificate has been obtained from Local Station House Officer. ➤ At least one of the family members residing in Homestay units should be able to communicate in English. ➤ The minimum floor area of each room in the Homestay should be atleast 120 sq ft for double bedroom and atleast 100 sq ft for single bedroom. ➤ The minimum size of each bathroom in the Homestay should be 30 sq ft. ➤ There should be an easy access from the road by a footpath/mule track to the Homestay and should be in good condition. ➤ Residents should not carry out any commercial activity of tours and travel, sight-seeing, transport, handicrafts or any other similar activity in or from the Homestay unit. <p>The proposed Homestay is not registered as a Hotel or commercial establishment; and not enjoying any benefits under any of the State or Central Policy/Act/ Guidelines.</p>
Minimum Requirements	<p>The application fee and the registration fee payable for Gold Guest Class and Silver Guest Class category. The Regional Classification Committee may recommend registering a Homestay under Gold Guest Class or Silver Guest Class.</p>
Registration/ Classification/ Reclassificatio	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Homestay units shall be registered as per these guidelines and classified as per the prescribed classification criteria. ii. Upon receiving application from the Homestay unit for

<p>n Procedure</p>	<p>registration/ classification/re-classification, inspection is carried out by the private agency appointed by DoT or prescribed Authority appointed by Government or Regional Classification Committee constituted by the State Government for the purpose. No requests for deferment of inspection shall be entertained.</p> <p>iii. The physical verification and evaluation of Homestay unit include the surrounding environment, hygiene, cleanliness, safety and security provided to the tourist, presence of facilities and services as per the checklist provided. If found satisfactory with the facilities, the authority shall recommend to DoT for the classification of the Homestay unit.</p> <p>iv. Accommodation units obtaining Class-A category will be awarded Gold Guest Class status and; Class-B category Silver Guest Class status.</p> <p>v. The Regional Classification Committee will consist of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Principal Secretary (Tourism) State Government ✓ Regional Director, India Tourism ✓ Representatives from IATO ✓ Representatives from TAAI ✓ Local India Tourism Office ✓ Representative from State Tourism Department ✓ Commissioner of Police / Superintendent of Police of the District or his representatives. <p>vi. The members of Homestay units should undergo the training program conducted by DoT or service providers as prescribed by the Tourism Department, after registration of their Homestays within the time prescribed by DoT. Failure to attend the training program would lead to cancellation of the Certificate of Registration.</p> <p>Once the Certificate of Registration is obtained from DoT, the applicant is required to register the Homestay unit with the Panchayat.</p>
<p>Expiry of Certificate of Registration and Classification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Registration and Classification shall be valid for a period of 3 (three) years from the date of issue of orders of registration or in case of reclassification, from the date of expiry of the last classification, provided that an application has been received at least 3 months before the expiry of the last classification. ✓ On expiry of 3 (years) from the date of issue of orders of registration, or in case of reclassification from the date of expiry

	<p>of the last classification, the registration of the Homestay Units should be renewed on payment of renewal fee as provided in the table below, within 15 days of expiry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In the event of any violation of the provisions of classification, State Tourism Department shall have the power to Refusal and Cancellation of Registration awarded to a homestay unit.
<p>Monitoring and Evaluation of Homestays</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There shall be an independent panel to monitor and evaluate the Homestay units in the State, This would ensure consistent efforts to provide assured service standards. This shall be done by a Monitoring Committee which shall be duly notified by the Department, so that assured minimum standards are continued to be maintained in these Homestay units. ✓ The panel shall be drawn from various stakeholders and expert agencies involved in tourism and eco- tourism fields. ✓ DoT has framed certain guiding principles for running of the homestays and that should be followed by the Homestay Owners. ✓ Only Homestay units duly registered with the Tourism Department would be eligible for the different incentives of the Karnataka Government.
<p>Classification Parameters for Homestays- Requirements</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">A. Front Sitting Area/Lobby</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Adequate ventilation and natural or artificial lighting b. Adequate, good quality furniture and in good condition. c. Clean, spacious, and well maintained lobby / front sitting area. <p style="text-align: center;">B. Bed Rooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Minimum two lettable room & maximum 5 rooms (10 beds) with attached bathrooms. All rooms should be clean, airy, pest free, without dampness and with good ventilation. b. Minimum size of a single bed room should not be less than 100 sqft and the minimum size of the double bedroom should not be less than 120 sqft. c. Well maintained and well equipped with quality carpets/area rugs/tiles or marble flooring, furniture etc. in keeping with the traditional lifestyle. d. Clean, comfortable beds with rubberized or cotton mattresses or foam rubber pillows and good quality linen. e. Width of the single bed should not be less than 3 ft and width of the double bed should not be less than 4.6 ft. f. Serviceable and safe locks with keys on each door leading out of

the bed room.

- g. Windows suitably curtained or fitted with blinds or equivalent.
- h. If air conditioning is not provided all bed rooms should have electric fans.
- i. Internal telephone or call bell system for the convenience of guest.
- j. A dressing table with mirror, ward robe or wall cupboard and/or cloth hangers must be available.
- k. Fresh linen should be provided and bed linen should be changed at least once in 02 days.
- l. An iron and an ironing board should be made available on request. Air conditioning /heating depending on climatic conditions with room temperature between 20 and 25 degree centigrade.
- m. A 15 amp earthed power socket in the guest room.
- n. Wardrobe with at least 4 cloth hangers in the guest room
- o. Shelves or drawer space in the guest rooms
- p. Complimentary aqua guard/RO/Mineral water
- q. Name, address and telephone numbers of doctors
- r. Safe keeping facilities

C. Bathrooms

- a. The size of each bathroom should not be less than 30 sqft.
- b. Western WC toilet to have a seat and lid, toilet paper
- c. Every toilet should be in a good working condition.
- d. Every bath room should have over-head showers in good working condition.
- e. Bathroom floors should be clean, and of non-skid impervious materials.
- f. Bath room walls should be preferably tiled up to 5ft in height or plastered with smooth cement.
- g. Bathrooms should have wash basin, mirror, towel rail, cloth hooks etc.
- h. Good quality, absorbent towels should be provided.
- i. 24 hours running hot and cold water with water saving taps/shower with proper sewage connections

D. Dining Area

- a. Clean, well maintained separate dining area with good quality comfortable tables and chairs.
- b. Adequate stock of good quality cutlery, crockery, tableware and table linen.

E. Kitchen

- a. Well maintained smoke free, clean, hygienic, odour free, pest free kitchen and well ventilated kitchen.
- b. Adequate food storage facilities.
- c. An exhaust fan to remove hot air and other odours from the kitchen.
- d. A fire extinguisher or fire blanket should be available in the kitchen.
- e. All drainage in and around the kitchen should be clean, kept covered and lead to a soakage pit.

F. Windows and ventilation

- a. Every bedroom should have at least one opening window with clear glass to provide natural light and adequate ventilation. Rooms without windows are not acceptable. If windows are sealed, an approved ventilation system should be provided.
- b. Windows should be well fitted, easy to open and shut, and remain open.

G. General

- a. Guest register with names, addresses, passport number, with dates of arrival/departure etc for references to be maintained.
- b. List on display of food items/ type of meals available and the charges that apply.
- c. First aid facilities should be available.
- d. Adequate fire precaution and fire-fighting equipments in good working order to ensure safety of guests.
- e. Garbage should be stored in covered bins until it is disposed as per municipal laws.
- f. Adequate parking facilities for vehicles.
- g. Homestay unit to be covered by an insurance policy including public liability, against any liability claim by guests.
- h. Smoke/heat detectors in the house

Annexure-XIV: Guidelines for Development and Promotion of Caravan Tourism

Eligibility	Any Company intending to develop a Caravan Park shall be eligible.
Land requirement	Minimum 2 acres with a minimum of 15 parking bays and a density of not more than 25 Parking Bays for every 2 acres. For every 15 parking bays constructed at least 8 caravans (bought or rented) must be available onsite for immediate occupancy. All caravans bought or rented must comply with the caravan specifications in India.
Park Design and Location	Should be compatible with its surroundings (natural and manmade). Open space should be of adequate dimensions and designed for its intended purpose. It should be landscaped to a standard that visually and physically separates the Caravan Park from surrounding uses and where desirable, separates uses within the park. There should be a provision of proper sewage disposal, rain water harvesting & picnic tables. The park layout should be capable of achieving adequate separation of different occupancies and activities and should be constructed to a standard suitable for use in all weather conditions.
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Landscaping and plantation should be planned in a way to achieve privacy, screening and security. ❖ Plantations and green cover should be in accordance / line with local indigenous species ❖ Landscaped areas should be located and designed to alleviate prevailing winds, dust and to some extent, noise. ❖ Proper water harvesting structures should be put into place and wherever possible, recycled water should be used in landscaped areas. ❖ Onsite Facilities: The following facilities should be provided for: Food Court: Pharmacy, Information Kiosk and Wi-fi coverage ❖ Open space recreation: In addition to the buffer zone and separation strips between Caravan Parks and roads, a space or spaces for the purpose of recreation may be provided within the park at a rate of not less than 5% of the total site area. This space should be strategically located in relation to the Caravan Parks and roads to ensure safe conditions for children with respect to vehicular movement. ❖ Internal Roadways: All internal roadways should be designed to provide for convenient vehicular movement within the Caravan Park. They should be of adequate width, provided with an approved surface and be adapted to the topography of the park area. The design should provide adequate drainage and the

	<p>elimination of excessive grades and cut. Road levels should facilitate site drainage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ There should be provision for wheelchair accessibility in the Caravan Park. ❖ Parking Bays: The Parking Bays are to be provided as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> B. At least one bay with a minimum size of 15m x 6 m (Relaxable for hilly and high altitude areas). C. And other bays with a minimum size of 7.5 m x 5 m. D. There should be a minimum gap of 5 metres between caravans. Each parking bay should be clearly defined and should have direct access to a metal/ cemented service road. The parking bay should be raised minimum 6 inches from the ground. Construction of the parking bay should ideally be of brick & mortar. Each parking bay should be provided with electricity and water connections, sewerage and solid waste outlets in strict adherence to international / Indian environmental norms / best eco practices.
<p>Services to be provided at Parking Bays</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Water: The Caravan Park should be provided with a constant supply of water including a constant supply of potable water. Each parking bay should be provided with a standpipe designed in such a way so that there is unhindered vehicular movement and approved tap fitting capable of having a hose attached thereto. ➤ Electricity and lighting: Electricity supply and distribution throughout the Caravan Park should comply with the supply authorities' codes and standards applicable. Each site should be provided with an outlet. All areas of the Caravan Park especially the parking and basic facilities areas should be well lit with provision of a generator for back up. ➤ Laundry facilities: Laundry facilities should be provided with a minimum of one washing machine and an automatic dryer for every five parking bays. ➤ Toilet Facilities: The toilet building of the caravan parks should have separate screened access for men and women, . with adequate supply of hot and cold water. Separate toilets for drivers should be provided. The ladies' toilet should have two water closets (WC's), two wash hand basins & mirrors, two showers and dressing areas Baby Changing facility for every ten bays. Men's toilet should have atleast one urinal (2 stalls) two water closets (WC's) two wash hand basins & mirrors, two showers and dressing areas for every ten bays. Separate toilets should be provided for differently abled. All the above facilities

	<p>should be provided within two years from the date of issue of this policy. New caravan parks should be provided with ecological sanitation (Ecosan) which offers a new philosophy of dealing with what is presently regarded as waste and wastewater. Clarification: In case of caravan parks having more than ten parking bays, the toilets for men and ladies should be increased as a multiple of these configurations for every ten Parking Bays or part thereof.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Waste disposal: Waste disposal should be carried out in a hygienic manner, adhering to Responsible Standards, Hygiene, and Environment Friendly Practices. ➤ Movement and Parking: A drive-in area and forecourt of sufficient dimensions should be provided for the parking of caravans and towing vehicles, clear of the general traffic movement. Turning circles must be designed to ensure that a caravan and towing vehicle can turn in the space without disrupting the general Caravan Park area.
<p>Minimum for Caravans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The specially built vehicles being used for the purpose of travel, leisure and accommodation would be termed as ‘Caravan’ and would include vehicles viz. RVs, Campervans, Motor Homes etc. with following minimum features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sofa cum bed for 2 persons.] ✓ Kitchenette with fridge and micro wave oven. ✓ Toilet cubicle with hand shower and sufficient fresh water storage. ✓ Partition behind driver.’ ✓ Communication between passenger and driver. ✓ Air- condition (desirable). ✓ Eating table. ✓ Audio / video facility. ✓ Complete charging system – external and internal. ✓ Caravan should be enabled with GPS. ✓ Vehicle to be Bharat Stage II compliant
<p>Hygiene, Responsible Standards, Environment Friendly Practices</p>	<p>Responsible tourism friendly policy should be adopted for sustainable growth which also benefits the local community and does not adversely affect the local environment. Use of eco-friendly practices and local products should be encouraged. There should be a provision of facility for segregation of garbage into biodegradable (kitchen waste etc), non-bio-degradable (thermo coal products, aluminium foil, cigarette butts etc) & recyclable (newspapers, bottles, cans etc). Composting should be encouraged for the disposal of</p>

	<p>kitchen garbage. Solid waste and sewage disposal should be carried out in an orderly and eco-friendly manner. Each Caravan Park should be provided with a system for the reception, storage and disposal of all refuse and waste matter originating from the park. All such materials should be handled in a manner so as to not create any offence, hazard to health, harborage for vermin nor permit possible fly/ mosquito breeding. Two standard pattern garbage covered receptacles / bins for bio-degradable and non-degradable waste should be provided for each parking bay, which should be cleaned at least twice a day. The Caravan Park should be provided with an adequate and safe method of sewerage collection treatment and disposal. The sewerage system should be installed in accordance with the requirements of the concerned authorities. Each Caravan Park should be provided with an approved sewer connection point for waste water originating from the caravan.</p> <p>➤ Other Operational Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Operational requirements for the Caravan parks would be: ✓ Caravan Parks should be operational 24 x 7 during the tourist season. ✓ Entity must appoint an experienced Manager to operate and maintain the park, the criteria for which will be decided by the Certification Authority. ✓ Caravan Parks should be well connected by fair-weather road from the main road ✓ Caravan Parks shall have all necessary trading licenses / NOCs from concerned authorities including fire NOC. ✓ Establishment shall have public liability insurance ✓ Standardization of electricity, garbage disposal, water and sewage connections to ensure total compatibility with Caravan specifications in India.
Safety & Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Registration to be done with police department and constant communication with police department. ✓ A boundary wall with limited entry and lockable gates around the Caravan Park area to avoid unnecessary trespassing and unauthorized entry. Adequate security and safety arrangements in the Caravan Park viz. deployment of security guards with a system of patrolling. ✓ A properly equipped First Aid kit at the reception and adequate first aid training should be provided to the staff. The facility of doctor-on-call should be available at the park. A well defined mechanism should be available to handle a medical emergency. The park management should maintain effective coordination

	<p>with local medical establishments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The supervisory staff and other workers should be trained in Disaster Management to face disasters such as fire, road accidents, earthquakes, floods, landslides (in hills) etc.
Incentives/ Concessions	<p>These concessions are set out in the following sections/clauses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Section 4 of this policy for details related to procedure for Registration and applying for availing Incentives for the tourism related projects and services. ❖ Annexure 1 for classification of towns/ cities in Karnataka for the purpose of availing incentives. ❖ Annexure 2 for eligibility for availing incentives and concessions under this category.

Annexure-XV: Karnataka- Guidelines for Yatri Niwas

Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Existing reputed private hoteliers, Yatri Niwas owners ✓ Private Land owners/ Entrepreneurs
Other Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The site area on which Yatri Niwas is located should be at least 0.5 acre. ✓ Ownership/lease of land and land use should be in order. ✓ Should be located on National Highway, State Highway or Main District Road (MDR) or within distance of 1.5 kms, 1 km or 0.5 km. respectively from such highways/MDR. ✓ The facility must be wheelchair accessible. ✓ Should have at least 10 lettable rooms and 100% of lettable rooms should have attached bathrooms. 4 out every 10 rooms must be wheelchair accessible and have attached bathrooms that can be used by disabled persons and /or senior citizens. ✓ Should have at least 2 dormitory rooms one for women and one for men as per the requirements specified for constructing dormitories under these guidelines. ✓ Should have restaurant/dining hall with sitting area of minimum 30 sq. mtrs. (excluding kitchen, Storage) ✓ The double room and single room should have minimum carpet area of 12 sq.mtrs and 10 sq.mtrs respectively. ✓ Rooms should have adequate furniture, fixtures, linen and AC. ✓ Bathroom carpet area should measure at least 4 sq.mtrs ✓ Attached toilets for each Dormitory / Room: Bathroom fittings should be of branded company with ISI mark. ✓ Should have telephone with STD facility. ✓ Internet and wifi facility must be available in all rooms. ✓ Should have a separate public toilets for men and women and first aid centre ✓ The following facilities must be provided for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Front Desk • Visitors sitting area and lobby • Tourism info booth • Souvenir Shop • For every three lettable rooms one car parking must be provided of minimum 5 sq. mtrs.

- Free internet service for all guests.
- All rooms should have telephone connectivity
- ✓ At least in the entire facility to provide uninterrupted power supply for all the appliances in the facility.
- ✓ 24 hour uninterrupted hot and cold water supply.
- ✓ Provision of well lit, dedicated visitor parking area is to be provided in the facility for parking of tourist vehicles. These areas should be paved and fenced to suit the type of facility. These areas should have security to ensure safety of the vehicles.
- ✓ Staff should be in uniform, well-groomed and properly trained. Number of workers should be proportionate to the capacity of the unit in all services provided.
- ✓ Staffs should be trained local residents specialised in the respective fields of operation
- ✓ Staff should be hospitable and capable to effectively respond to Tourist requirements and should have a fair idea of the places of tourist interest in the State.
- ✓ Front desk staff should be well versed in English and other regional languages to communicate with tourists from different regions of the country and abroad
- ✓ There should be provision of solid waste management with incinerators and rain water harvesting. Additional incentives will be given for provision of STP, green energy etc.

Annexure-XVI: Karnataka- Guidelines for Dormitories

Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Dormitory should be gender specific and constructed as part of Yatri Nivas. Dormitories by themselves will not be considered a tourism product. ✓ There should not be more than 12 beds in 1 dormitory room with adequate furniture, fixtures and linen. ✓ A standard of space requirement of 5 sq.mtrs per person must be maintained while building a dormitory. For example if the dormitory capacity is 12 beds the dormitory carpet area must be at least 60 sq. mtrs ✓ Each dormitory room should have attached shower rooms (3 nos.) and toilets (4 nis.)
Incentives and Concessions	<p>As under:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Section 4 of this policy for details related to procedure for Registration and applying for availing Incentives for the tourism related projects and services. ✓ Annexure 1 for classification of towns/ cities in Karnataka for the purpose of availing incentives. ✓ Annexure 2 for eligibility for availing incentives and concessions under this category

Annexure-XVII: Karnataka- Guidelines for Youth Hostels

Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ DoT intends to develop the Youth Hostels by assisting/ facilitating private entrepreneurs / franchisees. These entities could be: \ ✓ NGOs, Educational Institutes, Sports Academy, and Associations etc can take up the development and management. ✓ Priority will be given to those entities which are: ✓ Already in the tourism sector with a prior expertise in operations and management of similar projects. ✓ Owners of Land suitable for development of such facilities around the identified tourist destinations. However a partnership between land owners and the above mentioned entities will be given higher priority. ✓ Priority for incentive will be based on location as determined by DoT.
Other Requirements	<p>To benefit from the incentives for Youth Hostels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Youth hostel should be built on minimum 2 acres of land. ✓ Rooms can be single, double or on triple occupancy basis. Single, double and triple rooms should have minimum carpet area of 10 sq.mtrs, 12sq.mtrs and 16 sq.mtrs respectively. ✓ If a youth hostel has dormitories the requirements for dormitories will also apply. There must be a minimum of 15 rooms (single, double, triple or dormitory would all be considered as a single room) with a capacity of atleast 30 persons and all rooms should have attached bathrooms. ✓ Rooms should have adequate furniture, fixtures and linen. ✓ Bathroom carpet area should admeasure at least 4 sq.mtrs ✓ Bathroom fittings should be of branded company with ISI mark. ✓ Should have a dining hall with a canteen / mess With sufficient capacity ✓ Should have separate public toilets for men and women and first aid centre. ✓ Provision of anodised aluminum/wooden doors and windows ✓ Provision of well lit, dedicated visitor parking area should be provided in the facility for parking of tourist vehicles. These areas should be paved and fenced to suit the type of facility. These areas should also have security to ensure safety of the vehicles. ✓ At least one electrician, plumber, sweeper, etc should be

	<p>available for general service and maintenance on a 24 hrs basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 24 hrs security and CCTV surveillance at reception, corridors and all entry and exit points should be provided. At least one female security personnel should be present at all times. Power back up system should be provided in the entire facility to provide uninterrupted power supply for all the appliances and provisions. Staff should be in uniform, well-groomed and properly trained. Number of workers should be proportionate to the capacity of the unit in all services provided.✓ Staffs should be trained local residents specialised in the respective fields of operation✓ Staff should be hospitable and capable of responding effectively to Tourist requirements and should have a fair idea of the places of tourist interest in the State.✓ Front desk staff should be well versed in English and other regional languages to communicate with tourists from different regions of the country and abroad.✓ There should be provision of solid waste management with incinerators and rain water harvesting. Additional incentives would be given for provision of STP, green energy etc.
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**Annexure- XVIII: Kerala- Checklist for Classification/
Reclassification of Homestays**

S. No	Item	Silver	Gold	Diamond	Marks
I	General				
1	Address Proof (Ration card & Election ID card/Aadhaar Card / Passport) of applicant	N	N	N	1
2	Ability to communicate in foreign language other than English by any one member of the family residing in the house.	D	D	D	1
3	Proximity to tourism destination (3 km radius)	D	D	D	1
4	Clean and hygienic premises of Homestay	N	N	N	1
5	Bedrooms, bathrooms and public areas serviced daily while there are tourists	N	N	N	1
6	Building in good condition (Paint, roof, lock & key etc.)	N	N	N	1
7	Surveillance cameras for safety and security	D	D	D	1
8	Occupancy Register and Bills (Annexure 4 & 5)	N	N	N	1
9	Proof of training attended on Food Safety/ Entrepreneurship/ Travel & Tourism/ Hospitality Management	D	D	D	1
10	Facilities for persons with differential abilities	D	D	D	2
11	Code of conduct for visitors	N	N	N	1
12	Local employment (100%)	D	D	D	1
13	Women employment (50%)	D	D	D	1
14	Sourcing local goods	D	D	D	1
15	Sourcing of local services	D	D	D	1
16	Promotion of local art and culture	D	D	D	1
17	Promotion of local souvenirs	D	D	D	1

S. No	Item	Silver	Gold	Diamond	Marks
18	Cultivation of minimum 10 numbers of fruits/vegetable within the compound	D	D	D	2
19	Type of building- Heritage/ Traditional architecture	D	D	D	1
20	Use of alternative sources of energy	D	D	D	2
21	Use of five star rating electrical equipment	D	D	D	2
22	Facility for rain water harvesting	N	N	N	1
23	Pipe compost	N	N	N	1
24	Segregation of wastes	D	D	D	1
25	Ban on plastic bags, covers, bottles	D	D	D	1
26	Encouraging use of alternatives to plastic	D	D	D	1
27	Realistic promotional materials	D	D	D	2
28	Power back up	N	N	N	1
II	Guest Rooms				
29	All rooms to have good ventilation and attached/separate toilets	N	N	N	1
30	Minimum size of bedroom excluding bathroom has to be 120 sq. ft. (For traditional/heritage houses – 100 sq. ft.)	N	N	N	1
31	Air-conditioning	D	D	D	1
32	Fan/Room heater	N	N	N	1
33	Provision of clean white colour bed and bath linen at the time of check-in. Change of the same on subsequent days on request of the guest.	N	N	N	1
34	Minimum bed width for single is 90 cm. and double 120 cm.	N	N	N	1
35	Mattress minimum 10 cm. thick - coir, cotton, foam or spring	N	N	N	1
36	Minimum bedding 2 sheets, 2 pillows & 2 blankets (in air-conditioned rooms), mattress protector/bedcover	N	N	N	1

S. No	Item	Silver	Gold	Diamond	Marks
37	Sufficient lighting, 1 per bed	N	N	N	1
38	Flexible wall lamp above headrest	D	D	D	1
39	A 5 AMP earthed power socket	N	N	N	1
40	A table with drawer that can be used for writing purpose also	N	N	N	1
41	A folder with writing pad, pencil, brochure/tariff, emergency phone numbers – police, hospital, house	N	N	N	1
42	Television and One Malayalam/English Newspaper	D	D	D	1
43	Two chairs per room	N	N	N	1
44	Wardrobe with minimum 4 cloth hangers per bedding	N	N	N	1
45	Shelves/luggage rack	D	D	D	1
46	Separate waste bin for degradable and non-degradable items	N	N	N	1
47	Opaque curtains or screening and mosquito net for all windows	N	N	N	1
48	Drinking water + 1 glass tumbler per guest	N	N	N	1
49	A mirror, at least half length (3 feet)	N	N	N	1
50	A 'do not disturb' knob card	D	D	D	1
51	Bath Mat and Room Mat	N	N	N	1
III	Bathrooms				
52	Minimum size of bathroom 20 sq. ft.	N	N	N	1
53	One bath towel and one face towel per guest	N	N	N	1
54	Shower/ tap facility	N	N	N	1
55	A clothes-hook in each bath/shower room	N	N	N	1
56	A sanitary bin	N	N	N	1
57	Western type Water Closet	N	N	N	1

S. No	Item	Silver	Gold	Diamond	Marks
58	Toilet paper	N	N	N	1
59	Floors and walls to have non-porous surfaces	N	N	N	1
60	Water saving fittings in bathroom and 24 hours hot & cold running water availability	N	N	N	1
61	Energy saving lighting (CFL/LED) in guest rooms	D	D	D	1
62	Energy saving lighting (CFL/LED) in premises	D	D	D	1
63	Bottled toiletry products including body shampoo, moisturizer	D	D	D	1
64	Complimentary tooth paste, tooth brush, shaving kit, comb	D	D	D	1
65	Guest toiletries – soap (per guest) - shampoo (common)	N	N	N	1
66	One bucket with mug	N	N	N	1
67	Wash basin & face mirror	N	N	N	1
IV	Public Areas				
68	Telephone facility	N	N	N	1
69	Internet connection	D	D	D	2
70	Feedback Register	D	D	D	2
71	Complaint Register including action taken	N	N	N	1
72	Dining room with quality furniture	N	N	N	1
73	Non-plastic crockery & glassware	N	N	N	1
74	Non-plastic cutlery	N	N	N	1
75	Wash basin with liquid soap	D	D	D	1
76	Water Purifier for potable water	D	D	D	1
77	Washing machine/facility for laundry services	D	D	D	1
78	Security guard	D	D	D	1

S. No	Item	Silver	Gold	Diamond	Marks
79	Luggage/seating arrangements in the lobby area	D	D	D	1
V	Kitchen				
80	Use of organic products	D	D	D	2
81	Refrigerator	N	N	N	1
82	Daily cleaning of kitchen	N	N	N	1
83	Stainless steel made Cooking Range/Stove	N	N	N	1
84	All quality equipments& utensils	N	N	N	1
85	Ventilation system	N	N	N	1
86	Purified drinking water	D	D	D	1
87	Garbage to be segregated – wet and dry and disposed/ treated	D	D	D	2
88	Waste bucket with lid	N	N	N	1
89	Kitchen Sink	N	N	N	1
90	Biogas plant	D	D	D	2

**Annexure-XIX: Views of Industry Associations on
Accommodation Classification**

S. No	Parameters	Indian Association of Tour Operators	Hotel Association of India
A. On Hotel Classification			
1.	Whether all member hotels of your association hold official classification/rating?	NA	All members of the association hold official classification
2.	Reasons for many hotels opting out of official classification	Interference on freedom to conduct business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incremental benefit of official classification is not attractive enough • Business policy and strategy
3.	Do classified hotels in India offer the standards at par with similar category of hotels in other leading destination countries of the world?	NO	Indian hotel standards are at par
4.	Views on unification of hotel classification schemes globally	No comments	Some what desirable; best global practices customized to local/ ground realities
5.	India's classification scheme is compatible with the other leading classification systems of the world	<p>NOT compatible</p> <p>More focus on international standards of quality, responsibility, insurance, staff quality & quality of crockery, bed sheets, beds, bath fittings, cleanliness, security and safety should be given and internationally best be practiced in India</p>	<p>NOT compatible</p> <p>Indian system should have the concepts of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mystery Shopper • Confidentiality/ Surprise element • Weightage to customer feed back • Weightage to standards like ISO, REED etc. • Weightage to customer needs

6.	Should hotels not having any official ratings claim themselves as “star classified”?	Inappropriate for non-classified hotel to claim as star rated	Inappropriate for non-classified hotel to claim as star rated
7.	Effects of non-observance of stipulated standards by accommodation units (as ranked)	Ranked as 1 (having equal importance to each): Reduces customer confidence; Degrades hotel brand; Adversely affects sustainability of hotel business; Image of destination country takes a beating Rank-2: Would make promotion tougher	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Degrades the hotel brand 2. Degrades the image of the destination country 3. Reduces customer confidence 4. Would make promotion tougher 5. Adversely affects the sustainability of hotel business
B. On Basis of Hotel/Accommodation Selection			
8.	Basis of guests selecting a hotel	No comments	In rank order of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Price vs. budget 2. Hotel location 3. Accessibility 4. Brand reputation 5. One endorsed by relatives/ friends 6. On line feedback 7. Official star / diamond rated hotel 8. Loyalty programs
9.	It is important for the hotels to have official star rating classification	Yes; Very Important	Yes; Somewhat Important
10.	Hotels should display their official star/ diamond ratings on its website	Yes; Very Important	Yes; Somewhat important

11.	Role of guest reviews for booking a hotel	Not that important	Guest reviews are Very Important
12.	Websites gathering guest reviews should clearly indicate the official classification/ star rating of each hotel being reviewed	Strongly agree	Agree
C. On Official Classification Rationale			
13.	Official Classification helps the hotels to be in conformity to various benchmarking and standards	Strongly agreed	Cannot say
14.	Official classification is justified by the consumer concerns	Highly justified	Justified
15.	Official Classification is a good communication tool on the industry offers particularly for hotels	Strongly agreed	Agreed
16.	Official classification is an effective tool to periodically monitor development in the sector	Highly justified	No response
17.	Official classification is a definitive promise on the quality of services and standards offered by the hotel	Strongly agreed	Agreed
18.	It is significant to integrate guest review in the official classification/ star rating scheme	NO response given	Very significant
19.	Official classification is a tool to monitor and control	NO response given	Did NOT agree

	accommodation tariffs		
20.	Guests usually select a hotel on the basis of official classification/ star rating	DISAGREE that the guests select a hotel based on its star rating as it all depends on their choice. Now guests have their specific requirements and purpose of study	DISAGREE as prime factor for the choice of hotel is budget, suitability of hotel location to his/her purpose of stay, hotel reviews, referrals and loyalty programs.
D. On Classification Process			
21.	HRACC is adequately represented	YES	YES
22.	If HRACC is not adequately represented, any suggestion?	N.A	N.A
23.	Hotel classification should be made mandatory in the country	Official classification should be mandatory in India	It should not be mandatory
24.	In absence of official mandatory classification, to safe guard the destination image there can be other mechanisms	It is a MUST to have mandatory system in place failing which the control on standards of hotel is not possible	In the absence of mandatory official classification quality standards are to be regulated through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory compliances • International Standards like ISO • User generated content • Awards and accreditations
25.	(Re) Classification should be frequent	Review and reclassification should be done every FIVE years	Classification should be done only ONCE
26.	In addition to HRACC, third party (independent)	Could be considered	No response offered on third party inspections for assessment

	inspections should be carried for assessment		
27.	Mystery checks by third party (independent) inspections should be encouraged	Should be encouraged	Should be encouraged
28.	Fee payable for (re)classification is reasonable	Yes	There should be NO fee
29.	Existing hotel classification scheme in India is adequate	Current hotel classification scheme needs improvement	NO comments offered, but once classified hotel may be subject to surprise visits and de-classified in case of repeat/ lapses
30.	Factors that can lead industry strive for a dynamic quality environment and achieve customer satisfaction on a continuous basis (Rank order)	Ranked as 1 (having equal importance to each): Gather regular feedback and update delivery system; Leverage technology in quality; Continuous monitoring, online reviews/ feedback; Continuous training and capacity building of staff; Continuously deliver what is promised. Rank-2: Responsible pricing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver what is promised 2. Continuously monitor online review/ feedback 3. Establish and maintain integral quality control process diligently 4. Continuous training and capacity building of staff 5. Leverage technology in the quality control process. 6. Gather regular customer feedback and update delivery standards 7. Responsible pricing

Annexure-XX: Recommended Parameters and Observation of HAI with Observation of Study-team

Area of Assessment	Star rating		Observation of HAI	Comments of Study-team
	5-Star	5*- Deluxe		
Recommendation as per study				
1. General				
Adequate noise/intrusion protection with double/ triple glazing	N	N	Adequate Noise reduction should be available for the guests. Double/Triple glazing should be optional based on hotel location (for e.g. if close to an airport)	Agreed for making it optional for resort and suburban locations where potential for sound pollution is less
Display of coloured flags at entrance	N	N	Pls Remove and add Indian / company flag / state	Coloured flag is standard practice and hence retained
2. Bedroom				
2.1: General				
Minimum Size of Bedroom (excluding bathroom size)	200 Sq. ft		Please change to: Combined size of bedroom + bathroom (bay size) to be a minimum of 245 sqft for 5* and 5* Deluxe hotels as the in-room design will keep changing based on guest lifestyle. In addition, Hotels operating for over 20 years and with current or recent 5 star and 5* deluxe rating should be excluded from the size limitations. Also, Heritage and Historic Buildings should be excluded from rigid size standards. The	Area-standard is an existing norm of Indian scheme and retained as such. Further, Heritage and Historic Buildings can be excluded

Area of Assessment	Star rating		Observation of HAI	Comments of Study-team
Recommendation as per study	5-Star	5*- Deluxe		
			categorization should focus on guest experience and can use publicly available guest reviews (for e.g. Trip Advisor) as another source of information.	
25-50% of rooms with area exceeding 10% min. stipulated standard	Point	Point	This criteria should exclude Historic / Heritage hotels	Agreed
Evening house-keeping (turn-down service) provided and advertised	N	N	No advertising needed	To remain since it is a 'good practice' the guests to know the hotel services
Key Card lock for guest rooms	N	N	Pls modify to include some exceptions for historic hotels and Palaces where we might have traditional keys or electronic keys in shape of a traditional key (key card should not be mandatory)	Agreed on some exceptions for historic hotels and Palaces
2.2: Bedding& linen				
Night spread/ Bed cover	N	N	Pls add 'or Duvets'	Duvets' added
Mattress protector/Bed cover	N	N	Pls add 'or Duvets'	Duvets' added
Embroider pillow cases of good quality	Point	Point	Pls remove	It is optional and point-based, hence can remain

Area of Assessment	Star rating		Observation of HAI	Comments of Study-team
	5-Star	5*- Deluxe		
Blanket	N	N	Pls add the word 'or Duvet'. Pls add spare blanket in closet	Agreed on HAI suggestion
Dressing table	N	N	Pls remove as all new design of rooms (even internationally) do not include Dressing Table	Leading schemes do have this parameter and thus retained
One upholstered chair/couch and one chair near writing table of appropriate quality/person	N	N	This criteria needs to be optional. Can be rephrased as comfortable seating for 2 people	Leading schemes do have this parameter and thus retained
3. Bath room				
3.1: General				
Minimum size of bathroom (sq. ft.)	45 sq. ft.		Please change to: Combined size of bedroom + bathroom (bay size) to be a minimum of 245 sqft for 5* and 5* Deluxe hotels as the in-room design will keep changing based on guest lifestyle. In addition, Hotels operating for over 20 years and with current or recent 5 star and 5* deluxe rating should be excluded from the size limitations. Also, Heritage and Historic Buildings should be excluded from rigid size standards. The categorization should focus on guest experience and can use publicly available	Proposed scheme is an existing measure and hence retained as such

Area of Assessment	Star rating		Observation of HAI	Comments of Study-team
Recommendation as per study	5-Star	5*- Deluxe		
			guest reviews (for e.g. Trip Advisor) as another source of information.	
Bathrooms with Bathtubs	N	N	Pls remove this point. Consumer habits are changing and bath tubs are not always required. In addition water conservation has become more important now. The criteria should mention shower cubicle or bath tub.	Figured in all major schemes and retained. However, if required, based on a survey among the guests, it can be revisited
3.3: Sanitary& fittings				
Shower cabin (Shower curtain to suffice up to 3-Star)	N	N	Pls rephrase as bath tub and/or shower cubicle based on room and hotel design (and location)	Recommendations are in sync with the leading schemes and thus retained.
Min. % of rooms with bath-tubs	20%	50%	No mandatory bath tubs or cubicle requirement. Have atleast one available	To retain
25%-50% in excess of min. standard for bath-tubs	Point	Point		To retain; better provisioned hotels should benefit
Above 50% in excess of min. standard for bath-tubs	Point	Point		To retain; better provisioned hotels should benefit
3.4: Bathroom furnishing				
Flexible Makeup mirror and vanity seating	N	N	Should be optional based on room / bathroom design and location. Pls change to	Agreed for point-accrual

Area of Assessment	Star rating		Observation of HAI	Comments of Study-team
	5-Star	5*- Deluxe		
Recommendation as per study			points or remove	
4: Public area				
Escorting/accompanying guest to the room by hotel staff and briefing the location of hotel facilities given		Escorted by hotel staff with excellent communication	Move to points as this will vary by hotel and location	To retain as mandatory as it is an important guest service function expected in luxury hotels
4.1: Furnishing & décor				
Heating and cooling to be provided in public areas (20-28 ⁰ C)	N	N	Pls make this optional based on location and design of hotels. Some hotels have open lobbies by design (for e.g. in locations like Goa and Coorg)	Agreed for making it point-based for the properties in resort location where it is deemed not necessary
5.1: Kitchen/ Food Production area				
One of the kitchens in the hotel to be transparent for the guests to see it	N	N	Should be optional based on kitchen design and restaurant concepts	Agreed for making it point-based
5.2: Food and Beverage service				
9. Cloth hand gloves for service staff	N	N	Should be optional	These are good practices and retained
10. Menu cards display at each table separately	N	N	Should be optional	

Area of Assessment	Star rating		Observation of HAI	Comments of Study-team
	5-Star	5*- Deluxe		
Recommendation as per study				
6: Guest services				
6.1: General				
A public telephone on premises placed at accessible height(Unit charges made known)	N	N	Should be optional. Most guests have their own mobile phones now	It is an essential service and retained
Travel Desk – Information on places of interest and travel arrangements	N	N	Pls modify to say or include Concierge	It is an essential service and retained ; Not suggest to combine with Concierge service
Utility Shop/Kiosk	N	N	Should be point based as most utility items are stocked at front office level	Can be point-based
6.4: Recreation, Health and Entertainment				
Additional recreational facilities – Indoor & Outdoor games	N	N	Optional / Needs to be Point based	Can be point-based
Library at a separate location	Point	Point	Pls remove as this is not relevant anymore	It is point-based and to retain
24-hour Ice cream/coffee parlours	N	N	Pls remove or rephrase. This will depend on location / resort type. Most locations might have all day dining options that will cater to	Can be point-based

Area of Assessment	Star rating		Observation of HAI	Comments of Study-team
	5-Star	5*- Deluxe		
Recommendation as per study			this need.	
7. Staff & Welfare				
Display of badges- name & rank	N	N	Should be optional. No need for rank.	Name badge is an identification marker and to remain as mandatory. Name on it can be point-based
Degree/Diploma from central or state IHM's/FCI's or from NCHMCT affiliated IHM's or from other reputed Hospitality schools (<i>Note: Accrue points if above min. stipulations</i>)	60%		Should be optional or point based. Some companies like Taj will have their own skill development programs	To retain as mandatory; recommendation is inclusive
8. Inclusive tourism practices				
8.1: Facilities for Differently abled guest				
Electronic wheel chair	N	N	These points should be optional. They can be point based. Services should be available to assist people with special abilities	These are inclusive and best tourism practices. To retain
Provision for visually impaired/blind	N	N		
Provision for hearing impaired/deaf	N	N		