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RANKING HOTEL MANAGEMENT COLLEGES IN INDIA- A SKEWED LACUNAE



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ABSTRACT :

"Don't take them too seriously." Make a list of schools that seem interesting and seem to focus on the things you are interested in, and go from there," says Avi Zenilman. He warns college-bound students that the difference between No. 1 and No. 50 on a list of colleges can be smaller than it appears on the printed page. Formulas for calculating these things can be funky. Rankings capture general trends, not the specifics of even individual school (The College-Rankings Game, 2007). This is the irony, when hotel management colleges are ranked in India year after year,, the ranking are more perpetual than what meets the eye. In recent years, it seems as if a list of colleges that are the "best" or "most" has been compiled (i.e., marketed) for virtually every consideration imaginable: e.g., party schools, "greenest" campuses, happiest students, college food, etc (Portland Press Herald). With over 2500 Hotel Management institutes in India offering hotel and Hospitality programmes in India, the ranking seems more insidious as there are no set norms that govern these colleges, except basic guidelines to confer a degree for the course, rather than benchmarking the programme.

KEYWORD: Ranking Hotel Management, general trends, hotel management.

INTRODUCTION:

Not all college rankings are created equal -- especially when you factor in the diverse focus and methodologies used for each ranking. As such, rankings are highly beneficial for use in college marketing. Colleges leverage rankings to promote themselves through press releases, billboards, print advertisements, radio, and television and online -- basically, anywhere there is an audience. For prospective students, rankings are only beneficial if validated by other key factors taken into consideration when vetting colleges. In other words, rankings should serve as a supplement to a holistic decision-making process. Otherwise, the rankings could serve as decoys to conceal other important issues students should be focusing upon. (South Florida Sun – Sentinel). Most college officials and faculty argue that no one number can measure the quality of their institutions.. Each attempt to be more "scientifically objective" has increased the public's belief in the rankings' reliability. However, any claim to measure the impact a college or university has on its students is just not accurate.(Gallagher, Karen Symms). Although the rating of colleges and universities around the world has been heavily criticized by educators and politicians alike, the academic rankings business is big, and booming. (Guttenplan, D D). Hotel management rankings in India are bound to be inconclusive as there are no set ranking parameters to check the validity of these ranks. Though ranking of Hotel management colleges is relatively a decade old exercise, , as currently conceived, function in a dynamic system, something like the constantly changing fortunes of players in a golf tournament; that is, a given school in itself cannot necessarily improve by "doing better" because its final rank will depend simultaneously on the pattern of improvements or declines shown concurrently by other schools-whether considering a single, or many, evaluative indices. The conceptual sense of arguments or claims about sudden declines or dramatic "improvements" in a given school must also be considered in light of the arbitrariness and demonstrated unreliability found in ranking systems such as those used by Madean's(Cramer, Kenneth Stewart)

DURATION OF THE COURSE

Many ranking agencies decipher the ranking of institutions based on the practical and Industry engagement. A major issue in hotel management education is the continuing debate as to how desirable "hands-on" work experiences are for effective application of classroom learning to actual managerial situations. Such practical work experiences and other types of experiential learning have become accepted components of the curriculum in the academic disciplines of education, hotel management, business administration, agriculture and medicine. In all these academic fields, there is common agreement that some form of experiential or practical hands-on work experience is needed to best educate the student in the most effective application of the theoretical classroom content.(Ford, Robert C; LeBruto, Stephen M). Compounding the issue in Indian hospitality education scenario is the course duration which varies between 3- 4 years and having different nomenclature ranging from Degree in Hotel Management to degree in catering Science to degree in catering Management,etc. Apart from the IHM model which is followed by the Central government, individual states also follow different patterns to award the degree, which the ranking agencies do not consider. This is a matter of concern, as It become impossible to understand whether the programme has a vocational output or a management rigor.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Though infrastructure plays an important part in ranking Hotel Management programmes in terms of Kitchen, training restaurants, housekeeping and front office labs, it does not give much importance in to quantify the usage of this infrastructure, and other ICT resources which colleges can and should provide to the students. There are chances that a college with good infrastructure facilities may not use them to its optimum level resulting in myopic teaching-learning outcome. Many hotel management institutions ranking are primarily done on the infrastructure as it is seen, but not on the actual utilization.

PLACEMENT/JOB PROSPECTS:

With myriad Job opportunities available to the undergraduates, ranking parameters should also focus on myriad placements that colleges offer, not necessarily confined to the hospitality domain. This will help the ranking to be more rationalized in modern day hospitality. Placement is an important component of hospitality management programs and is one of the most vital experiences on which graduates base their career aspirations. The effect of changing demographics on the workforce is likely to have an impact on the way hospitality employers recruit and retain managers. At present, however, significant numbers of graduates are turning their backs on the industry. The onus is on educators and industry to ensure that the placement experience is as rewarding as possible (McMahon, Quinn, Ursula).

Personality/Faculty Competency- consideration in ranking purpose- Though ranking agencies consider the faculties experience and their educational qualifications for ranking purpose, it does not detail out additional domain specific expertise that hotel management faculties should possess. The basic philosophy of teaching is 'to teach at graduate level, one must be at least a Post Graduate. In the context of government run colleges, the majority of the teaching members are not even graduates. Regular mandatory faculty refresher course/training is not in provision and even not followed in many of the colleges. The faculty without the knowledge of research methodology is teaching the very subject. No career progression/advancement programme for the faculty members exists. Faculty is treated as primary school teacher in terms of daily teaching load and salary package Faculty keeps working in one position for a minimum 10-15 yrs. (HospitalityBiz). Unless industry applied and domain specific research is considered, ranking cannot be considered ideal in term of quality output of the students.

Industry interface- Hotel Management course learning outcomes should be closely aligned with the profile of managerial success in the hospitality industry. It should incorporate the necessary subject and technical knowledge; understanding; and, cognitive, intellectual, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills and competences; to meet the needs of their future employers (Ineson, Elizabeth, Rhoden, Steven Alexieva, Lordanka). Though colleges do make an effort to place students, rankings do not take into account the number of students placed in what levels of hierarchy, and how many of them have been still working in the hotel Industry, and the curriculum has helped in their career progression.

Private/Govt affiliated: With close to 2500 hotel management colleges in the country, having affiliations to State, regional and central bodies, it becomes tough for ranking agencies to decipher, the ideal benchmarked programme. Each of these colleges has different course structure, varying credits and unscientific subjects. A ranking should consider the effectiveness of each subject offering while

deciphering the final score of individual colleges.

CONCLUSION:

In 21st century, Knowledge is power. The more knowledge power one has, the more empowered one is. According to the University Grants Commission (UGC), India needs more than 1500 universities with adequate facilities by the end of the year 2015 in order to compete in the global market. India lacks the critical mass in higher education. Its GER (gross enrolment ratio) is a mere 11 per cent as compared to China's 20 per cent, the USA has 83 per cent and South Korea's is 91 per cent. If we conclude this GER then China has double the number of students pursuing higher education than India. Most of our Indian institutes, colleges and universities lack in providing high-end research facilities. With evolving trends, hotel management rankings should consider individual academic practitioners research work output, with community outreach for better understanding to the common mass.

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