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## A study of food and beverage service practices in Indian hotel industry

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### Abstract

The Indian hotel industry, a major contributor to the nation's economic growth, is undergoing significant transformation, especially in the food and beverage service sector. This study aims to explore the latest practices influencing the sector, including technological advancements, sustainability, evolving consumer preferences, and post-pandemic recovery strategies. The research uses secondary data sourced from websites and articles. Key practices identified in the study include the rise of contactless dining through digital menus and QR codes, reflecting hygiene and safety concerns triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the concept of cloud kitchens, focusing on delivery-only services, has gained popularity, reducing overhead costs and broadening customer reach. Hotels are increasingly sourcing ingredients locally, emphasizing sustainability and supporting organic farming, while catering to health-conscious customers by offering gluten-free, vegan, and keto options. Interactive dining experiences, such as live cooking stations, provide guests with personalized culinary interactions. Sustainability efforts are evident in zero-waste kitchens and food waste reduction initiatives. Premium bar services offering artisanal cocktails and local beverages reflect the growing trend of unique, high-quality drink offerings. Furthermore, artificial intelligence (AI) and chatbots are enhancing customer service by automating tasks and providing data-driven insights, while contactless technologies and digital payment systems have become more prominent due to pandemic-induced shifts in consumer behaviour. Environmental sustainability is also prioritized, with hotels adopting energy-efficient technologies, water conservation measures, and waste management practices. The study concludes that technological innovation, sustainability, and consumer-centric strategies are defining the future of the Indian hotel industry, requiring ongoing adaptation to the evolving needs and expectations of modern travellers.

**Keywords:** Indian hotel industry, food and beverage services, contactless dining, cloud kitchens, sustainability, AI, digital payments, consumer preferences, technological advancements.

### Introduction

The Indian hotel industry is one of the largest and fastest growing sectors in the country. It is contributing significantly in the country's overall development especially economic development. As per the report presented by World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the Indian tourism and hospitality industry is expected to contribute nearly INR 15.24 trillion to the economy by 2028 (WTTC, 2021). According to the Brand Equity Foundation (2021), the food and beverage industry is one of major job providing industry in India through various options like food preparation, service, management trainees, cloud kitchen and logistics. It will create millions of jobs for youth, men, women, people in rural areas in sectors like food delivery services, cloud kitchens and food processing. However, a number of changes are undergoing in the industry which are driven by changes in consumer behavior, technological advancements, environmental concerns, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper examines the latest food and beverage service practices shaping the Indian hotel industry including technological innovations, sustainability practices, changing consumer preferences, and the post-pandemic recovery.

### Objective of the study

To trace out latest practices in food and beverage service sector in Indian Hotel Industry.

### Research Methodology

For the current study, the researcher has applied secondary data from websites and article.

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## Food and beverage service practices in Indian Hotel Industry

### Contactless Dining and Digital Menus

Hygiene and safety concerns due to the COVID-19 pandemic has been observed widely in Indian Hotels. Use of digital menus and QR codes for contactless dining experiences have been widely used in the sector. Guests can scan a QR code on their table to view the menu and place their orders, reducing physical contact between guests and staff (KPMG & Google, 2021) <sup>[11]</sup>.

### Cloud Kitchens (Delivery-Only Kitchens)

With the growth of online food delivery services, the concept of Cloud kitchen has gained more popularity. Hotels are setting up dedicated kitchens that focus solely on fulfilling delivery orders, allowing them to reach a wider customer base while minimizing overhead costs of running a physical restaurant (Nair, 2020) <sup>[5]</sup>.

### Sustainability and Locally Sourced Ingredients

Local made ingredients which are produce from organic farming are used by hotels to give the guests a unique experience. This practice supports local farmers, ensures fresher ingredients, and reduces the carbon footprint of food transportation (Sharma & Agarwal, 2020) <sup>[7]</sup>.

### Health-Conscious Menus

Health-conscious customers are catered by offering options in menu like gluten-free, vegan, keto, and low-carb dishes. Chefs tailor dishes to meet individual dietary preferences and requirements (Jha, 2021) <sup>[9]</sup>.

### Interactive Dining Experiences

Hotels in India have introduced live cooking stations and DIY food stations to augment the guest dining experience. By doing these activities which allows the guests to prepare their own meal, hotel makes the guest to feel wow by providing personalized culinary experiences (Chauhan & Vashisht, 2020) <sup>[8]</sup>.

### Focus on food waste reduction and zero-waste kitchens

Indian hotels are espousing zero-waste kitchens where food scraps are composted. Surplus food is donated to the needy ones. The main purpose is to align with the growing emphasis on sustainability and reducing food waste in the hospitality industry (PWC, 2020) <sup>[6]</sup>.

### Premium Bar and Beverage Experiences

Luxury hotels are upgrading their bar services to offer artisanal cocktails, craft spirits, and locally inspired drinks. This trend emphasizes quality, unique beverage offerings, and creative presentations, often featuring indigenous ingredients (KPMG & Google, 2021) <sup>[4]</sup>.

### Applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Chabot's

Artificial intelligence (AI) is playing a huge role in enhancing customer service through automation and data analytics. Routine tasks like booking confirmations, providing information, and answering guest queries (Jha, 2021) <sup>[9]</sup> are being done by Chabot's. Now, Hotels are able to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty as they data of guests with them.

## Contactless Technology and Digital Payments

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of contactless technologies in the hospitality industry especially food and beverage sector. Self-check-in kiosks, mobile room keys, and touch less check-out processes, QR scanners are seen more to reduce human interaction. It has been observed that digital payment platforms like UPI (Unified Payments Interface) and mobile wallets are now widely used in the Indian hotel industry which provides guests with convenient and secure payment options (KPMG, 2022) <sup>[3]</sup>.

## Energy Efficiency and Green Building Certifications

Energy-efficient technologies have become a key issue for Indian hotels. Hotels are applying solar energy, LED lighting, and energy-saving HVAC systems to reduce operational costs and carbon footprints (Sharma & Agarwal, 2020) <sup>[7]</sup>. NOC for Green building certifications from organizations like LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) and IGBC (Indian Green Building Council) help hotels to keep them environmentally friendly.

## Water Conservation and Waste Management

Water conservation is one of the key areas of concern in Indian hotels as India is facing water scarcity. For this, hotels in the India are adopting water-saving technologies like low-flow fixtures, water recycling systems, and rainwater harvesting. Apart from these, hotels are implementing waste management initiatives, such as composting, reducing plastic usage, and donating surplus food to local charities (KPMG & Google, 2021) <sup>[4]</sup>.

## Conclusion

The Indian hotel industry is experiencing a noteworthy transformation which is led by technological advancements, sustainability initiatives, focus on consumer expectations, and the post-pandemic recovery process. The emerge of smart technologies, the application of green practices, and the rise of experiential tourism are some of the major trends shaping the future of the food and beverage service industry. Continue innovation and service alignment with the changing preferences of modern travelers will be the focus point for all hotels.

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