# Research Article

# "HOSPITALITY MARKETING SERVICES OF STAR HOTELS IN HYDERABAD--WITH REFERENCE OF MARKETING MIX COMPONENT OF "PRODUCT MIX"

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| ARTICLE INFO | ABSTRACT |
|---|---|
| | Almost all organizations including the hospitality have been adopting the marketing concept. The marketing process is defined as "The process of (a) analyzing marketing opportunities (b) selecting target market (c) developing marketing mix and (d) managing the marketing effort". Customers are at the centre of marketing process. Through market segmentation, targeting and positioning, the organization divides the total market into smaller segments, selects segments it can best serve and focuses on serving and satisfying these segments. It then designs a marketing mix to produce the response it wants in the target market. To present the marketing strategies of hotel industry with special emphasis on select 5 star and 3 star hotels in Hyderabad with reference to marketing mix components . The study is mostly an exploratory and descriptive but empirical study based on data of sample star hotels. It aims at discovering how well organized hotels located in cities are pursuing the prescribed principles and practices of hospitality marketing and with what result. The present study is useful to the 10 hotels which are included in the study to make necessary changes in the Marketing Mix strategies to improve the Customer satisfaction. This type of studies are also useful to the policy makers to make necessary changes in the policies relating to the services of hotel industry. Academicians and other scholars can make use of this type of studies to make for their insights into the related topics., *core products like* Accommodation, Amneties, Food, and beverages, conventional facilities, Conference facilities, Tariff System *Major Facilities products like* Reception, Reservation, Travel and Tour desk Facilities within the room, Car parking, Doctor on call, Health club facilities, Communicational network Guidance bureau, *Major supporting products LIKE* Business centre, Banquet/convention center, Beauty parlour, Shopping mall , Laundry Saloon, Health club, Swimming pool, Entertainment, Improved version of a product delivered in a congenial environment to the utmost of satisfaction of the customers. |

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of business is to create and maintain satisfied and profitable customers. Customers are attracted and retained when their needs are met. The marketing concept holds that achieving the organizational goals depends on determining the needs and wants of target markets and delivering the desired satisfaction more effectively and efficiently than competitors. Almost all organizations including the hospitality have been adopting the marketing concept. The marketing process is defined as "The process of (a) analyzing marketing opportunities (b) selecting target market (c) developing marketing mix and (d) managing the marketing effort"[1]. Customers are at the centre of marketing process. Through market segmentation, targeting and positioning, the organization divides the total market into smaller segments, selects segments it can best serve and focuses on serving and satisfying these segments. It then designs a marketing mix to produce the response it wants in the target market.

### Objectives of the Study

To present the marketing strategies of hotel industry with special emphasis on select 5 star and 3 star hotels in Hyderabad with reference to marketing mix components .

### Methodology of the Study

The study is mostly an exploratory and descriptive but empirical study based on data of sample star hotels. It aims at discovering how well organized hotels located in cities are pursuing the prescribed principles and practices of hospitality marketing and with what result.

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### Significance of the Study

The study is useful to the following groups.

1. The present study is useful to the 10 hotels which are included in the study to make necessary changes in the Marketing Mix strategies to improve the Customer satisfaction.
2. This type of studies are also useful to the policy makers to make necessary changes in the policies relating to the services of hotel industry
3. Academicians and other scholars can make use of this type of studies to make for their insights into the related topics
4. Among the 10 selected sample hotels, hotels have branded themselves as under:

1. Taj Krishna-5 star-Luxury Hotel.
2. ITC Kakatiya Hotel-5 star-Luxury Hotel
3. TheMarriott -Hyderabad)-5 star-Luxury Hotel
4. Taj Residency-5 star-Luxury Hotel
5. The Manohar-5 star-Business Hotel
6. Hotel Golkonda-3 star-Luxury Hotel.
7. Quality Inn-5 star-Business Hotel
8. Hotel Baseera-3star-Business Hotel
9. Kamat Lingapur-3 star-Business Hotel.
10. The Central Court-3 star-Business Hotel.

Hyderabad being the fast growing business centre, and it is the destination and a preferred venue for many major organizational conferences, the inflow of corporate / business people is very high and therefore all the 5 star hotels are eyeing on this market segment and competing among themselves for a larger market share by attracting this segment by augmenting their accommodation and banquet facilities.

### Marketing Mix for Services

The marketing mix is a "mix of ingredients to create an effective marketing offer for the target market. The increased attention to the application of marketing concepts in the services sector has brought into question what the key components or / elements of a marketing mix for services are, or what they should be. The traditional 4 p's of the marketing mix–"Product, Price, Physical Distribution and Promotion" are derived from a much a longer list developed from the Haward Business school in 1960's, the original list consisted of 12 elements including plan, Branding, Personal selling, packaging, fact- finding and analysis.

### Expand Marketing Mix for services including Hospitality

Overtime the 4 p's were widely accepted for product marketing mix. However, the special characteristics of services posing challenges to management have led service marketers to conclude that they can use additional variables to satisfy service customers and adopt the concept of an expanded marketing mix for services. The expanded list includes 5,7 and 11 elements also. Not withstanding the divided opinion on the number, majority of the authors on marketing including great personalities like Philip Kotler Zithmal and Bitner Lovelock etc., have considered 7 p's the optimal mix of services. They are

1. Product
2. Price
3. Physical distribution
4. Promotion
5. People
6. Process
7. Physical Evidence.

However as rightly observed by Phillip Kotler, "The issue is not whether there should be 4, 7 or 10- p's so much as what framework is most helpful in designing marketing strategy"[2]. Marketing mix is mixture of strategies that is used by the management to accomplish the objectives and goals. To adopt it management has to make decisions about each element in the mix and determine how people will respond to the strategies separately and in combination. All the decisions about the marketing mix strategies then become the strategic marketing plan. "A marketing mix like a football team, calls for a collaborative effort among players, each member contributing to success in a different yet important way"[3].Against this background of the widely accepted optimal mix of **7 p's** for services marketing, this chapter has analyzed the strategies relating to the first **4p's** in the selected sample star hotels .

### Hospitality Products and Services

"A product is anything that can be offered to market for attention, acquisition use or consumption that might satisfy a want or need. It includes physical objects services, places, organization, and ideas"[4]. One of the challenges in services marketing is to ensure that the product is tailored to suit the ever- changing needs of target market. "Without an understanding of the market place, and about customers, and about competitors, it is very unlikely that a new product will be a success"[5]. With the passage of time it is but natural that traditional services tend to become obsolete. If the same old services are continued, business is affected adversely. Earlier, rooms in a hotel were equipped with nominal facilities. Today, Central Air- conditioning, Internet facilities, T.V., Refrigerator, Mini- bar etc., are found in the rooms of a number of hotels. Nevertheless, the customer wants something more. Peripheral services often became the way in which the heart of customers is won.

Product strategic planning encompasses a bundle of decisions on innovation and improvement of products and services. Lovelock[6] has categorized service innovations into seven, ranging from major service innovations to style changes. Designing a service product is a complex task that requires an understanding of how the core and supplementary services should be combined, sequenced and scheduled to create an offering that meets the needs of target market segments. Although innovation is central to effective marketing, major service Innovations are relatively rare. Innovations are costly and risky. More common is the use of new technologies to deliver existing services in new ways. In mature industries, the core service can become a commodity. The search for competitive advantage often centers on improvements to the value creating supplementary services that surround this core. The hotels are therefore supposed to be more careful in choosing alternatives - development of new product vis-à-vis augmenting the existing product.

### Types of hospitality products

The hotel product has a number of components like Accommodation, Food & Beverage, Recreation and health,

shop, Transport apart from others. Of all these, the Accommodation and Food, Conventional, Conference facilities Bar and beverage components are considered the core. And the other facilitating and supporting products. Augmented product is the total product offering including the atmospherics, behaviour of the staff, décor and the accessory, services like transportation, communication, medical, Communication network, guidance bureau and secretarial assistance. While the core product offered by most hotels is more or less the same, by differentiating the augmented and tangible product levels, the service may be enhanced in cost effective ways to make it more attractive to its target markets. Differentiation and competition therefore, takes place largely at the augmented product level.

### *Core, Facilitating, Supporting, and Augmented Hospitality Products*

### *Core products*

- Accommodation, Amneties Food, and Beverages Conventional facilities
- Conference facilities Tariff System

### *Major Facilities products*

- Reception Reservation Travel and Tour desk Facilities within the room Car parking Doctor on call
- Health club facilities Communicational network Guidance bureau

### *Major supporting products*

- Business centre Banquet/convention centers Beauty parlour
- Shopping mall LaundrySaloon
- Health club Swimming pool Entertainment

### *Augmented product*

Improved version of a product delivered in a congenial environment to the utmost of satisfaction of the customer.

### "*Product Mix" of Selected Sample Star Hotels*

Hospitality industry offers many examples of product mix, product development, Branding and positioning. To meet the needs of target market, a variety of rooms, banquet facilities, food and beverages and other services are offered by a star hotel expected of its star category as also complying with the norms of the relevant star category by Department of Tourism, Government of India.

### *Product Mix*

**Rooms:** In broader terms, our selected sample star hotels offer three categories of rooms as below:

| Category of Rooms | Target group |
|---|---|
| 1. Non-Executive Rooms | 1. Individuals and Families |
| 2. Executive Rooms | 2. Business Executives / Officials |
| 3. Suites | 3. Higher Income Group including business and leisure travellers. |

In each category, there are again a variety or rooms to suit the needs and capacities of different strata in each target group. Rooms differ in size, design, décor, facilities and services.

**Non- executive Rooms:** these are intended for individuals and families who visit on personal work or holidaying. They are provided double bed and limited facilities and services.

**Executive Rooms:** As the name implies, they are intended for business and official visitors. They are a bigger size, of different design and décor and provide additional facilities and services. These include high speed wireless internet connectivity, LCD/Plasma TV, access to exclusive club Lounge, business centre, small meeting room / office, mini-bar, complimentary transport to air port etc.

**Suites:** The biggest and more elegant parlour with a living rooms, Dinning room, master bedroom, Mini - Bar, more than one bath room, a small kitchen, exclusive butler, personal fax and also a private swimming pool in 5 star deluxe hotels.

**Exclusive Rooms for Women Guests:** Gender segmentation has long been used in marketing clothing, cosmetics, magazines, education and so on. It is just beginning to be used in the hotel industry. Hoteliers are now taking women guests into consideration in designing their hotel rooms. Exclusive rooms meant for the single lady traveller have amenities keeping in mind her requirements and special needs pertaining to bath rooms, security, safety and comfort levels.

**Hotel within a Hotel**: The concept of 'Towers; i.e., hotel within a hotel is also followed by a few hotels. Hotel within a hotel is a club suite/floor, with special amenities for executive guests.

**Table no 1** Showing broad classification of rooms in selected sample star hotels

| Hotel Category | Non-Executive/ Personal Rooms- | Executive rooms | Suites | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| `5 Star Hotels | 534 | 638 | 113 | 1285 |
| 3 Star Hotels | 333 | 195 | 63 | 591 |
| Ground Total | 867 | 833 | 176 | 1876 |

It is obvious that 5 star hotels are mostly meant for corporate / business executives and higher -ups with more than 63 percent of the rooms targeted for this segment whereas only 37percent for individuals/ families. As regards 3 star hotels, their target is middle class guests as evident from majority of the rooms (74 percent) intended for them, followed by executives (26 percent) from small and medium enterprises. Only three of the 6 selected sample star hotels has **"Eva Floor"** with exclusive rooms for women. Service in these rooms is done by all ladies team. Other hotels are providing "non-smoking rooms" to single lady travellers.

Towers concept i.e., hotel within a hotel is widely applied and published by ITC Hotel Kakatiya Sheraton and Towers. "Towers" form part of the name of the hotel in six Sheraton hotels, including the one at Hyderabad. Towers club is a separate floor specially designed for executive class to provide the finest in hospitality and personalized service in an atmosphere of gracious elegance, where everything needed is provided under one roof.

**Bar& Restaurants:** While the 5 star hotels have 2 to 4 restaurants and all are multi cuisine restaurants offering Indian, Moghalai, Chinese and continental food, 3 star hotels have 1 to 3 restaurants. Only three of the 3 star hotels offer only vegetarian multi cuisine. In some 5 star hotels, there are exclusive restaurants for western and Indian food. Hydrabadi

biryani, a specialty food liked in the region is served up to midnight in 8 of the 10 hotels. All the hotels reported round the clock service in their restaurants including coffee shop.

**Beverages:** Excepting one 3 star hotel, all the other selected sample hotels have a bar with wide range of cocktails and hot drinks served. Three of the 5 star hotels have separate pubs also operated on weekends. Two of the 3 star hotels are using their bars as a pubs on weekends.

**Banquet Facilities:** Banquet facilities refer to Banquet Halls, Board Rooms, conference halls and Function Halls. Now a days, corporates are preferring to hold their meetings/ conferences at a star hotel as a hotel provides not only the meeting place but also accommodation, food and beverages to the delegates under one roof. Corporate meetings are prime sources of revenue for a hotel. Conventions generate not only the direct sales but indirect sales as well as, compared to the vocational visitors. It has been estimated that the overall cost in time and money of attracting 320 to 760 individual guests is much greater than the cost of signing up on convention with a company. Banquet services being more economical and profitable, the star hotels are competing among themselves to enrich the banquet facilities form time to time. The position in selected sample star hotels is as follows. (**Table No. 2**)

**Brand Names of Selected Sample Star Hotels**

National and multinational hotels may adapt their brand names to convey the region to which the particular hotel belongs to. For example Marriot Hotel at Hyderabad is name as 'Marriott Hyderabad'. Similarly ITC Sheraton Hotels are named in honour of the legendary rules of the region. For example, ITC Hotel at Hyderabad is name ITC Hotel "Kakatiya Sheraton and Towers"; ITC Hotel "Chola" Sheraton at Chennai; welcome Hotel "Mughal Sheraton" at Agra; ITC Hotel Grand Maratha Sheraton and Towers at Mumbai; ITC Hotel Sonar "Bangla" at Kolkatta; ITC Hotel Mourya at Delhi.

Similarly, some hotels are named after promoters and / or places to which they belong to. For example, Kamath Lingapur Hotel, Hyderabad carries a logo including the place of birth of the promoter of the hotel "Begre", "Kamath" denotes and name of the promoter and "Lingapur" denotes place of the owner of the land leased to the hotel.

Residency Hotel is branded as "Quality Inn- Residency" signifying that it is unit of Choice Hotels India with brand name "Quality Inn". Hotel "The Manohar" is named after promoter Manohar. Hotel Golkonda Hyderabad is named after the famous "Golkonda fort of Nizam".

**Table No 2** Showing Banbquet Facilities in Selected Sample Star Hotels

| S. No | Name of the Hotel | Banquet Facility |
|---|---|---|
| 01 | Taj Krishna | 5 Banquet Halls (30-1200 Capacity),2 Board Rooms (08-12 Capacity),Outdoor venues available for special dinners |
| 02 | ITC Hotel Kakateya Sheraton & Towers | One large hall divisible into three (900 Capacity) 2 Board Rooms,A Terrace Garden |
| 03 | Marriott Hyderabad | One Conference Hall (1300 Capacity) 12 break out meeting rooms. |
| 04 | Taj Residency | Five meeting rooms(450 Capacity) 2 Bed Rooms (8 Capacity) ,A Lawn Garden |
| 05 | The Manohar | 3 Conference Halls(500 Capacity), 3 Board Rooms (10-15 Capacity), Roof Garden (500 Capacity) |
| 06 | Hotel Golkonda | 5 Banquet Halls (300 Capacity) Green Lawns |
| 07 | Quality Inn Residency | 7 Banquet Halls (950 Capacity) |
| 08 | Hotel Baseraa | 2 Conference Halls(1500Capacity),Garden(500 Capacity) |
| 09 | Kamat Lingapur Hotel | 2 Banquet Halls (120 Capacity), One Board Room (8-10 Capacity), Mini Conference Room (30-50 Capacity) |
| 10 | The Central Court Hotel | One function hall(250 Capacity),One Board Room (50 Capacity), Terrace Garden (500 Capacity) |

It is evident from the table that the 5 star hotels have bigger banquet capacities, accommodating 250- 1500 people at a time, where as 3 star hotels, excepting one, have the banquet facilities accommodating 250- 500 people. Only one 3 star hotel has bigger banquet halls with 1750 capacity. Hotels differ in provision of services required for holding conferences and functions. Banquet halls are highly flexible in all the hotels, in that, they are divisible to suit the requirements of the sponsors. Seating arrangements are either in auditorium type or U- Shape. Size of the halls, seating arrangements and facilities provided are highly customer specific.

**Branding**

Branding has long been popular in consumer goods. Today, it has become much more common in services. Value is added through creation of strong brand names and their owners of the brands can command premium prices for them. A brand name is that part of a brand that can be vocalized-a sign, symbol or design or a logo or a combination of these -and is the visual part of branding. Hotel chains provide many examples of brand .Logos are also used by some hotels (**Table No. I.3**). Name changes reflecting the alliance/ partnership with a reputed hotel also help value addition through new brand name. For example, Taj-Krishna, ITC Hotel Kakatiya Sheraton and Towers.

Branding of hospitality products rooms, restaurants and banquet halls has become a common practice with star hotels. Each hotel brands distinctively its different categories of rooms, restaurants, bars, banquet halls with a different service design aimed at different target segments. (Table No. 4)

**Product augmentation in selected sample Star Hotels**

The augmented product is an important concept in services because services require customer's co- production of the service. For most service products, the customers come to the service delivery system; they have to interact with employees and other customers the delivery of the service affects the customer's perception of the service. The augmented service offering combines what is offered with how it is delivered. Some of the major elements of the augmented product are the physical environment customer interaction, process and people who deliver the service. All selected sample star hotels have reported that they will be regularly improving the physical conditions and facilities within the rooms, restaurants, banquet halls and also on the premises, simplifying the processes by computerization of the reservation system, access to central reservation system, Toll free reservation, billing system, electronic feedback on customer satisfaction, provision of additional facilities like business centre, exclusive lounges, providing laptops and other electronic equipment on request,

internet and fax facilities within the room, secretarial and language translator services and so on.

**Table No 3** Showing Logos of Selected Sample Star Hotels

| S.NO | Name of The Hotel | Logo |
|------|-------------------|------|
| 01 | Taj Krishna |  |
| 02 | ITC Hotel Kakateya Sheraton and Towers |  |
| 03 | Marriott Hyderabad |  |
| 04 | Taj Residency |  |
| 05 | The Manohar |  |
| 06 | Hotel Golkonda |  |
| 07 | Quality Inn Residency |  |
| 08 | Hotel Baseraa |  |
| 09 | Kamat Lingapur Hotel |  |
| 10 | The Central Court Hotel |  |

### Positioning

Positioning starts with the product. But positioning is now what we do to a product but what we do to the mind of the prospect. "Positioning" is defined as "the act of designing the hotels image and value so that the segment customers understand and appreciate what the hotel stands for in relation to its competitors". Its purpose is to provide an organization with a sustainable competitive advantage by creating differences, advantages and benefits which make people to think about a place or a product[7]. Positioning is of particular significance in the service sector as it places an intangible service within a more tangible frame of reference.

### Components of positioning strategy

Positioning strategy has two facets viz., "product positioning" and "organizational positioning". Product positioning takes place through product differentiation establishing a competitive advantage which will appeal to substantial target marketing.

**"Organizational positioning"** - The positioning of the organization as whole - is also the other important part of positioning strategy. It lays emphasis on projecting other organization as superior organization apart from the point of view of superior products and services by highlighting the specialties, achievements, recognition & rewards etc., though wide publicity.

Organizational positioning in case of hotels refers to obtaining and communicating the superiorities of the hotel organization as a whole like:

- Star category
- Approval of department of Tourism, Government of India / State
- Membership in National and International Federations
- Awards and Rewards
- Strategic Alliances with International Hotels.

### Positioning By Selected Sample Star Hotels

All the selected sample star hotels have been highlighting the special features of their products and services and also the special features of the hotel in their promotional media-website, broachers sign boards letters and print media etc.

- "Taj Krishna" is positioned as Luxury hotel; its membership in The Leading Hotels of the World, a rare privilege-is very much highlighted by the hotel.
- "Taj residency" is positioned as Luxury hotel.
- "ITC Hotel Kakatiya Sheraton and Towers" is positioned as a franchise of Sheraton International. 'Towers' is made part of the name of hotel itself indicating that it follows the concept of "hotel with in a hotel".
- "Marriott Hyderabad" is positioned as franchisee of Marriott international.
- "Quality inn residency" is positioned as a business hotel and also the first 3 star hotel in Andhra Pradesh to be awarded ISO 9002 certification.
- "Hotel Manohar" - the 5 star hotel- is positioned as ISO 9001:2000 certified hotel.

- "Hotel Golkonda" is positioned as 3 star luxury hotel with 5 star comforts.
- "Kamat Lingapur Hotel" highlights that it is a vegetarian hotel by making a special mention of "vegetarianism over 60 years"

**Table 4** Showing Branded Accommodation and Services in Selected Sample Star Hotels

| Sl.No | Name of the hotel | Brand names of rooms | Brand names of restaurants | Brand names of Bar/ Pub | Brand names of banquets |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Taj Krishna | Deluxe,Taj club, Deluxe suite, Luxury suite, Presidential suite | Encounter, Firdaus Golden Dragon Lounge, La Patisserie | Seasons Bar T2- Disco Theque | Grand ball room,The deccan, Board rooms |
| 2 | ITC Hotel Kakatiya sheration and Towers | Executive club, SheratonTowers Club suite, ITC one, Luxury suite, Presidential suite | Peshwari, Dakshin, Dumpukht, Deccan pavilion Rani, Rudramambhas's Court | Dublin Bar Marco polo bar-pub | Hyder mahal Hyder Mahal-1 Hyder Mahal-II Hyder Mahar-III,Pre-function, BoardRoom,Cabinet |
| 3 | Marriott Hyderabad | Quality Deluxe, Junior suite, Deluxe suite | The Patin, Bidri, Okra | Bridge Bar | Medos, Meeting rooms |
| 4 | Taj Residency | Standard Residency Deluxe suite Presidential suite | The blue flower paradise Lounge | Atrium Bar | The Lawns,Board Room,Jade Room Raaga,Trinity, Kohinoor, Kohinoor Lawns |
| 5 | The Manohar | SuperiorClub, Jr.Suite,Peluxe Suite,Presidential suite | Copper Pot Café Take Off | M-Bar | Poll Side, Pergola, Board Room, Topaz, Sapphire Emerald, Crystal Palace., |
| 6 | Hotel Golokonda | Premium rooms, Premium Suites | The Jewel of Nizam, SkyLight, High atrium | Trumpet | Tanasahi, Taramali Baghmati, Baradari, The GreatTable, Bagh Khas |
| 7 | Quality inn residency | Executive,CorporateClassic, Residency suite Quality suite | Venue ,Café Capri | One Flight Down | Board room, Images, Meridian Symphony, TerraceI,TerraceII,Harmony |
| 8 | Hotel Basaraa | Standard ,Deluxe Super deluxe, Executive suite, Presidential suite | Mehfill, Pickles, The parlour | Out swinger | Mini, Baithak, Baseraa Garden |
| 9 | Kamat Lingapur hotel | Standard,classic, executive | Shrinng | | Triveni,Anupama Chandrika, Radhika |
| 10. | The central court hotel | Budget, standard, business club, classic suite, Royal suite | Touch of Clas coals embers salt and pepper | High spirits level | The estMinister, The Perrac, Board room |

Source: Broachers / Tariff cards of hotels.

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