

# 'Indian Restaurant sector is a sleeping giant'

**Tarun Kapoor**, professor for Hotel and Restaurant Operations at the School of Hotel and Restaurant Management (SHRM) at Cal Poly (California) for the past five years. His industry experience and business ownership have gained him much respect as an educator and enabled him to advise and consult for numerous hotel and restaurant companies, both large and small in the US and abroad. He was on a four-day trip to Bangalore where he taught the teachers of the Indian Hotel Management on how to deal and mould the students, aspiring for a career in the hospitality industry. **R Nishevita** speaks to him at length on his achievements and the Certified Hospitality Educator (CHE) workshop which attracted more than 40 teachers from all over the country.

**EH&C:** Besides being in SHRM as director what are your achievements in terms of conducting workshops?

**Tarun:** I coordinated and conducted workshops on behalf of organisations like Educational Institute of AH&MA, the Educational Foundation of national Restaurant Association (NRA), Club Manager's Association of America (CMAA) and several international groups, from countries like Japan, China, Korea and Indonesia.

**Prior to joining SHRM, what positions were you holding in the industry, more particularly in terms of holding a GM's post or running some restaurants?**

I held management positions in both American and International Hospitality organisations. Two positions in my career of particular note are when I served as the general manager of a 600 room five star hotel and second, owned and operated two critically acclaimed restaurants and catering business for seven years.

**You are running a consultation business. Who are your major clients?**

My clients include TGI Fridays, Motels of America, Trusthouse Forte, Choice Hotel International, Carl Karcher Trust, Radium Hot Springs Resort, Kadie's Diner, Santa Monica Yacht Club and Travel Lodge Suites.

**What are your other activities besides being a consultant and educator?**

I still feel that I am very active in several professional organisations. I am on the board of directors for the Los Angeles Chapter of the American Institute of Wine and

Food. I also actively participate in the strategic planning committee for the Council of Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Educators and continue to make presentations at the state, national and international conferences of many hospitality organisations including the British Columbia and Yukon Hotel Association of Catering executives, the International Hotel, Motel and Restaurant show, the California Hotel and Motel Association, the California Restaurant Association and the Convention Expo Summit.

**In what way will the CHE course help the IHM teachers here?**

Most of the teachers here seldom have any teaching experience. It does not mean that they are not good teachers. They are very good when compared to many teachers across the world but what they lack is the process of teaching which is what the CHE course is currently focussing upon.

The course teaches the primary objective of teaching, next it teaches how to fulfill that objective, the mode to achieve the objectives, the best way to deliver the lecture, how to use support media like video, clips, films, charts etc, and at last, how students can be made to participate in teaching.

**How can you claim that the CHE course will optimise the teachers' performance?**

The students, who are the receivers of knowledge seldom retain anything more than 10 per cent of the lecture delivered in an hour long period, unless the lecture is accompanied with practicals. To increase this retention percentage, the teachers have to adopt

practical and innovative ideas suited to the class environment. Passive learners' retention capacity is just above 10 per cent while he teachers attending my class may have a retention capacity of 90 to 95 per cent.

In order to increase the retention capacity of the students, the teachers have to plan their lecture, take the objective and deliver the knowledge in such a way that they achieve their objective.

**You think that this is the only way you can churn out good students from IHMs? Apart from evaluating the students through examinations is it not essential to adopt the same method to evaluate the teachers too?**

The answer to the first part of the question is 'No'. There are various methods by which you can achieve your goal successfully. One of them is the valuation method. Everything that is done in the curriculum has to be valued, the programme, the college, the teachers and students. In India, only students are valued while other areas are neglected. Unless the students evaluate the college and teachers, the institutes can't improve themselves. In India, knowledge is only delivered in the form of a lecture. But the ability to use the knowledge is seldom taken into account.

Now coming to the second part, teachers' performance should be evaluated by the students, it is difficult to know the ability of students as well as the teachers. Teachers should be as good as five star hotel managers.

**How do you envisage the role of the IHMs in view of the sudden**



**spurt in the hospitality industry and growing demand for good managers, chefs and other professionals?**

Currently 50 institutions are offering hotel management courses in India. I foresee a heavy demand for trained personnel in the industry. The industry will demand quality education as majority of the international chains are coming into India. The government should also consider liberalising the academic business. Indian educators need guidance from an organised association like CHE.

**What is the future of the hotel industry in India?**

As it is, the five-star deluxe category hotels are at par with the international hotels. By the turn of the century, the Indian hotel industry will spread its wings to other countries. Very little research is being done in US about the Indian hotel industry. Indians themselves, can do research on Indian restaurants. This industry is a sleeping giant. The day one thinks of starting a restaurant in

every lane, the industry fast either in a grade 1 at a five star hotel, restaurant in the can cater to the upper who have the intent money in hotels but the five-star cost. The community is asking moderate cost and facilities which are lacking in it.

**Do you feel that the Indian restaurant giant is sleeping like the Indian restaurant sector?**

Yes, even the international restaurant giants are sleeping. I feel they are missing a golden opportunity like Pizza Hut and McDonald's already in the queue. There are chances that a dozen international restaurant chains will enter the Indian market soon.

**What about the Indian restaurants that are missing the metros and 'A' grade?**

Even when Indian restaurants do open, in six months are not what they are. Service drops drastically, becomes nothing short of a side eatery. There is a need to renovate with modern times.

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