

# AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN SELECTED HOTELS OF VADODARA CITY

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## ABSTRACT

Customer Relationship Management [CRM] comprises the business processes an organization performs to identify, select, acquire, develop, retain and better serve customers. These processes encompass an organization's end to end engagement with its customers and prospects over the lifetime of its relationship with them (Baran, Galka, Strunk, 2008). In present scenario, each & every organization strives to get success through practicing CRM Practices ritually. In this research study, researchers have selected hotels in the city of Baroda to gather responses from amongst the selected customers, their awareness on CRM and prevalent CRM practices especially in the Hotel industry.

The researchers have prepared the profile of selected customers visiting various selected Hotels in the Baroda city, in the State of Gujarat, India. Expectations & Experience of Customers towards various CRM Practices and its association with Gender has been examined by application of Chi-Square test. The paper advocates the necessity of implementation of CRM Practices in the Hotel Industry for its' real & great success.

**Key Words:** Hotel; Service; Customer; Relationship; Customer Relationship

## PROLOGUE

The objective of Customer Relationship Management [CRM] is to recognize and treat each and every customer as an individual. CRM comprises the business processes an organization performs to identify, select, acquire, develop, retain and better serve customers that encompass an organization's end to end engagement with its customers and prospects over the lifetime of its relationship with them'. CRM is the strategy with the various outcomes which leads to: "Optimization of revenue, profits and customer segments, fostering customer satisfying behaviors and implementing customer centric process, CRM database should enable greater customer insight, increased customer access, more effective customer interactions and integration throughout all customer channels and back office enterprise function" (ibid). It is very essential for any business to know that how to differentiate customer treatment according to an individual preferences. For differentiating customer treatment, the companies use personalized service and customized products which make some customers feel special and others simply appreciate good behavior. It humanizes their purchase or service request or complaint. Personalization and

customization doesn't mean maintaining only customer loyalty, but also driving purchases higher. Getting closer to customers and effectively responding to their needs is a great way to boost their loyalty and encourage deeper business relationship (Chaudhuri and Shainesh, 2001). CRM database enables greater customer insight, increased customer access, more effective customer interactions and integration throughout all customer channels and back office enterprise function. The four important aspect of CRM are: (1) customer should be managed as an important asset; (2) not all customers are equally desirable; (3) customers vary in their needs, preferences, and buying behavior; and (4) through better understanding their customers, companies can tailor their offerings to maximize overall value. (Baran, Galka, Strunk, 2008). **In this research paper, researchers have attempted to study the relationship between CRM practices and Hotel Industry by taking case study approach through selection of customers in the Baroda city of the Gujarat State. It has also offered the results, findings and implications derived from evaluation of selected customers' Expectations Vis-À-Vis Experiences concerning CRM practices through hoteliers of the Baroda city in the Gujarat State.**

A hotel can be defined as a place that offers accommodation, food, and beverages at a cost that enables it to make a profit. It was also defined a 'house for accommodation of paying travelers, etc', According to the Webster's Dictionary (1978), 'a building or institution providing lodging, meals and service for the people' is termed a hotel<sup>2</sup>. Its activities vary according to the aim, location, type, size and grade of the hotel. The key activities of a hotel includes viz., reception, provision of accommodation, cuisine meals and refreshment, restaurant, bar, bell to provide information to the guests, entertainment and recreation, transport facilities, parking space, swimming pool, bathroom facilities, lounge facilities, shopping facilities, telephone, television, radio, laundry and cleaning, sports facility, gym facility, wake-up calls, banquet hall, conference facilities, exhibition areas, health club etc<sup>3</sup>.

## 1.1. A BIRD EYE-VIEW OF HOTEL SECTOR OF GUJARAT & INDIA

India is a very famous holiday destination in the world, and provides ample facilities as far as lodging is concerned. It has different types of hotels to cater to its ever booming travel and tourism industry. The Hotel industry is both seasonal and cyclical in nature and is inter-related and based on the tourism industry. Seasonal demand is dependent on the climate and location. The factors for growth determinant in hotel industry are location, business, climate, tourism activity, leisure travelers, and other travelers.

### 1.1.1. The Hotel Sector of India

India has state of the art hotels to cater to its ever booming travel and tourism industry. India is dotted with hotels that fit in every budget ([www.mapsofindia.com](http://www.mapsofindia.com)). According to the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, 2011: India occupies the sixty-eighth position among the top tourist

destinations in the world. To encourage the tourism sector, the Government in recent times, has taken some measures which will benefit the sector. In the general budget for 2011-2012, Rs 11.7 Billion for development of tourism infrastructure and promotion of tourism was allocated. According to the latest Tourism Satellite Accounting (TSA) Research released by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the demand for travel and tourism in India shall grow by 8.2 percent to place India at the third position in the world between the years 2010 to 2019. The tourism sector shall emerge as the second largest employer in the World. Capital investment in India's travel and tourism sector too is expected to grow at 8.8 percent between 2010 and 2019. The capital investment in the travel and tourism sector is projected to become the fifth fastest growing business travel destination from the year 2010 through 2020<sup>4</sup>.

### 1.1.2. Hotel Sector of Gujarat

The Hotel industry of the State of Gujarat anticipated increased occupancy during festive season that focused more on domestic visitors than foreigners. The occupancy ratio at star-category hotels saw sharp rise from 60 to 62 per cent at present to about 70 to 75 per cent during the four months of festivities during October-January 2011<sup>5</sup>.

The promotional campaign of the Government of Gujarat called as: "Khushboo Gujarati Ki", has been believed to attract good number of tourists from other parts of India". Nearly 5 to 7 per cent of an additional growth in tourist arrivals was expected mainly due to the state government's promotional campaign. Room occupancy ratio at the star-category hotels saw sharp increase from 60 per cent to more than 75 per cent during festive months. ([www.businessstandard.com](http://www.businessstandard.com)).

## 2.0. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It has been classified into various categories as follows

### 2.1: Customer Relationship Management

In the early 1990's, the concept of relationship marketing was formally introduced in to the field of service marketing. Financial Service Institutions, Airlines and other services providers found it more profitable to retain and reward the existing customers. It was established that building closer relationship with customer provided better results to companies. The process invites total commitment on the part of the entire organization in evolving and implementing relationship strategies that would be rewarding to all concerned<sup>6</sup>.

In CRM, a variety of after marketing tactics has been used for customer bonding or staying in touch after the sale is made. It focused on individual or one-to-one relationship with a customer that integrated database knowledge with a long-term customer retention and growth strategy.

It is about attracting new customer which should be viewed only as an intermediate step in the marketing process for developing close relationship with the customers and turning

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them in to loyal ones which are equally important aspects of marketing<sup>7</sup>. It is to establish, maintain, and enhance relationship with customers and other partners at a profit so that the objective of the parties involved is met<sup>8</sup>.

It is aimed at improving marketing productivity that is achieved by increasing marketing efficiency and enhancing marketing effectiveness,

It is an integrated effort to maintain and build up a network with individual customer and to continuously strengthen the network for the mutual benefit of both sides, through interactive, individualized and value-added contacts over a long period of time<sup>9</sup>.

It is a business strategy designed to optimize profitability, revenue and customer satisfaction. It is to collect and store information about customers that is used to test new marketing offers and the best ones are turned into full-scale marketing campaigns<sup>10</sup>. Marketers now emphasize on total customer satisfaction, which indicates that the customer is satisfied and delighted with respect to purchase of a product or availing a service.

### 2.2: CRM in Service Sector

K M Mital in the year of 2003 emphasized in his study that Patient needs were driver for efficient hospital services.

Personal contact and relationships was found very important in health care environment. The study was carried out to know relevance and significance of CRM for hospitals where three broad groups of outpatient, inpatient and emergency services were considered<sup>11</sup>.

Sipra Mukhopadhyay explored in the year 2003, the strategies adopted by hospitality industry to maintain customer relation-ship. There were various facets, namely, satisfaction, loyalty, retention measures, complaint management failure and recovery. The study revealed that segmentation and targeting with appropriate product and pricing more so for the restaurants along with product innovation were the major strategy thrust in the industry. The study indicated that a balanced mix of tangibles and intangibles would achieve the desired result<sup>12</sup>.

S Raganath and Joseph Shields (2003) proposed that the roadmap for online insurance could be smoothed by the introduction of e-CRM techniques in the online insurance business, by making the present agents and middlemen as network partners for information gathering, transfer, servicing and processing. The study revealed that the implementation ability of e-CRM was high in the stages of 'Routine Post sale Transaction' and 'Non -routine Post-sale Transactions' while it was suggested that it could be used in tandem with human interaction in the 'Pre-sale Interaction' and 'Sale Transaction' stages. Human action could help in stage 1 viz., 'Customer Research'.

The perceptions were found to be significantly different in both the life and general insurance segments, with the

willingness of agents for participation in data mining being very low in the general insurance segment<sup>13</sup>.

## 3.0. BASIC TERMS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY

The proposed research study would focus on following important terms that have been defined as follows.

### 3.1. Customer:

A customer is one who actually purchases a product or service from a particular organization or shop. A customer is always defined in terms of a specific product actual or company.

However, the term customer is far wider term encompassing not only the buyer or customer but also all its users, called as consumers<sup>14</sup>.

### 3.2. Consumer

One that consumes, especially one that acquires goods or services for direct use or ownership rather than for resale or use in production and manufacturing.<sup>15</sup> . A consumer is a person who buys goods or services for personal needs and not for resale or to use in the production of other goods for resale<sup>16</sup>.

### 3.3. Service

Service, by nature, is essentially intangible, it differ from products significantly, since it lacks a physical form leading to an uncertainty in their definition, outcome, and evaluation. The key challenge of the services marketing is compared to marketing of products is how to communicate its benefits to customers effectively, and regulate the quality of services<sup>17</sup>.

### 3.4. Hotel

A hotel can be defined as a highly organized commercial unit, In other words it is "home away from home". A hotel may be defined as a place that offers accommodation, food, and beverages at a cost that enables it to make a profit; 'a building or institution providing lodging, meals and service for the people' is termed as hotel.<sup>18</sup>

### 3.5. Relationship

The dictionary meaning of the term relationship has been described as a logical affiliation, association, or connection between two entities that benefits both of them". If a relationship is a logical affiliation, association, or connection, then relationship marketing must refer to marketing the relationship Indeed. The analogy predominately used by marketing academics (e.g. Hunt and Morgan, 1994; Levitt, 1983) is that of a marriage-an exclusive, enduring and deeply personal relationship between two people, which forsakes all others.

This might be attractive for the supplier although it raises ethical question about polygamy but may not be so for the buyer who is expected to make a commitment, which incurs the opportunity cost of fidelity.

**3.6. Customer Relationship Management**

CRM is a management process of acquiring customers by understanding and fulfilling their requirements to retain them in a way that would meet their expectations and also attracting new customers through customer specific strategic marketing approaches. The process invites total commitment on the part of the entire organization in evolving and implementing relationship strategies that would be rewarding to all concerned<sup>19</sup>.

**4.0. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

An attempt has been made in this research study to offer results, findings and its implications collected through using structured-non disguised questionnaire that used neutrally worded questions and also Likert Scale to collect responses of selected 122 customers' who were conveniently drawn from amongst different customers' across various heterogeneous socio-economic age-groups, occupations, educational qualifications, gender, and income-groups to study his or her overall awareness and to measure their expectations vis-à-vis experiences on selected hotel services as offered to them by the selected hoteliers in the Vadodara City of the Gujarat State. This pilot research study based on descriptive research design offers report on selected customers' responses on perceived benefits on various kinds of CRM Practices as employed by the selected hoteliers, and feedback on problems being faced by them in availing hotelier services in the Vadodara City of the Gujarat State.

The researchers have undertaken reliability<sup>20</sup> and validity<sup>21,21</sup> of the structured questionnaire. The Cronbach's Alpha score ranges from 0.629 to 0.971 shows internal reliability of the Scale and reflected the degree of cohesiveness given in table number -01

The researchers have also measured convergent validity by comparing mean scores of scale with other measures of the same construct which revealed that less variation was observed in the given question categories and average satisfaction score was found to be as similar. Majority of the respondents were found as placed between categories of 'Highly Dissatisfied to Highly Satisfied' given in table number -02

**5.0. DATA ANALYSIS & RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY**

The researchers have offered profile of the respondents. They have applied frequency analysis, computed and distribution mean, standard deviation and ratio values for data analysis. The Chi-square test was put to use to test the significant differences in opinion of selected customers for selected items.

The results of the data analysis showed that 79.5 percent of males belonging to the age group of 26 to 35 years availed hotel facilities for various professional reasons. 32 percent of the hotel users are professionally qualified. From amongst, all the categories of Occupation, businessmen and women availed the maximum hotel facilities (37 percent). Individuals either Professionals or Businessmen or Women with the Annual Family Income of below Rs. 3 lakhs obtained the benefits and facilities of hotels. 46.7 percent of the hotel goers have visited the hotels considered for the study for the first whereas 37.7 percent were found as frequent visitors. It was found that frequency of visit to the Hotel does have significant concern and implications in terms of expectations of the visitors, purposes for visit and rate of usage of services provided by the Hotels. Infrequent visit of customers in Hotels leads to expected loss of customer, reduced profit, and poor performance with more no of switchers with low Loyalty.

**Table : 01: Table Showing Summary of Indicators and Reliability Alpha Score**

Sr. No.	Selected Criteria	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
01	Awareness about Various Services of Hotels (Q-8)	0.899
02	Actual Experience Considering the Ambience of the Hotel	0.897
03	Actual Experience Considering the Service Quality of the Hotel	0.700
04	Actual Experience Considering Facilities and Rooms Facilities and Services (Q 9 – 11B to 16 B & 21 B to 24 B & 35 B)	0.759
05	Actual Experience Considering Functioning of Facilities in Hotel (Q 9 – 17B to Q 9 – 20B)	0.643
06	Actual Experience Considering Housekeeping & Services of Hotel (Q 9 26 B to 28 B)	0.838
07	Actual Experience Considering Food Quality of Hotel (Q 9 37 B to 39 B)	0.629
08	Actual Experience Considering Personalize Service Provided in Hotel (Q 9 40B to 47 B & 59 B to 61 B)	0.812
09	Actual Experience Considering Reliability of Service (Q 9 -48 B & 49 B)	0.819
10	Actual Experience Considering Social Bonding (Q 9 – 50 B to 58 B & 67-68 B)	0.813
11	Actual Experience Considering Complaint Management (Q 9 – 62 B to 64 B)	0.804
12	Actual Experience Considering Trust on Services Provided in Hotels ( Q 9 – 65 & 66 B)	0.720
13	Actual Experience Considering Price Charged by Hotel	0.874
14	Actual Experience Considering Behaviour of Hotel Staff (Q 9 – 72 B 88 B)	0.971
15	Actual Experience Considering Commitment to Provide Services (Q 9 – 89 B to 91 B)	0.719
	<b>Overall Reliability on Hotel Services</b>	<b>0.966</b>

**Table : 02: Table Showing Comparison of Mean Scores of Extent of Respondents' Opinion about Services Provided by Selected Hotels Located in Vadodara City:**

Respondents' Opinion with respect to Criteria		Respondents' Opinion with respect to Criteria		Difference in Mean Count (Column 2 - Column 4)
Rating Scale 1 (Highly Dissatisfied) to 5 (Highly Satisfied)				
(Average Score of Q-9 - 1B to Q-9-91B)	Mean Score (Rank)	(Average Score of Q-10 -1B to Q-10-15B)	Mean Score (Rank)	
1	2	3	4	5
Ambience of the Hotel	4.01	Ambience of the Hotel	4.05	-0.04
Service Quality of the Hotel	3.74	Service Quality of the Hotel	4.00	-0.26
Facilities and Rooms Facilities and Services	3.95	Facilities and Rooms Facilities and Services	4.12	-0.17
Functioning of Facilities in Hotel	4.07	Functioning of Facilities in Hotel	4.25	-0.18
Housekeeping & Services of Hotel	4.10	Housekeeping & Services of Hotel	4.29	-0.19
Food Quality of Hotel	3.76	Food Quality of Hotel	4.18	-0.42
Personalize Service Provided in Hotel	3.51	Personalize Service Provided in Hotel	3.30	0.21
Reliability of Service of Hotel	4.15	Reliability of Service of Hotel	3.84	0.31
Social Bonding	3.53	Social Bonding	3.28	0.25
Complaint Management	3.59	Complaint Management	3.86	-0.27
Trust on Services Provided in Hotels	3.67	Trust on Services Provided in Hotels	4.07	-0.4
Price Charged by Hotel	3.66	Price Charged by Hotel	3.83	-0.17
Behaviour of Hotel Staff	4.20	Behaviour of Hotel Staff	4.17	0.03
Commitment to Provide Services	3.31	Commitment to Provide Services	3.87	-0.56
<b>Overall Average</b>	<b>3.80</b>		<b>3.93</b>	<b>-0.13</b>

**Table : 03: Table Showing Profile of Selected Respondents availing/using selected Hotel Services:**

Sr. No.	Selected Demographic Variables of Selected Respondents	Number and Percentages of Selected Respondents	
01	Gender	Males	97 (79.5)
		Females	25 (20.5)
02	Age Group	Below 25 years	31(25.4)
		26-35 years	42(34.4)
		36- 45 years	23(18.9)
		Above 46 years	26(21.3)
03	Educational Qualification	Less than Graduate	4(3.3)
		Graduate	29(23.8)
		Post-Graduate	30(41.0)
04	Occupation	Professional Qualification/Diploma	59(32.0)
		Student	4(3.3)
		Businessman/Woman	37(30.3)
		Self-employed	17(13.9)
05	Annual Family Income	Service	31(25.4)
		Professional	33(27.0)
		Below 3 Lakhs	8(6.6)
		3 to 4 Lakhs	16(13.1)
		4 to 5 Lakhs	9(7.4)
		5 to 6 Lakhs	1 (.8)
		6 to 7 Lakhs	10(8.2)
		7 to 8 Lakhs	9(7.4)
8 to 9 Lakhs	14(11.5)		
	9 to 10 Lakhs	18(14.8)	
	More than 10 Lakhs	37(30.3)	

Individuals, Professionals and Business Groups adopt various modes of making bookings in hotels. 37.7 percent of the Bookings in the hotels were found to be done using Internet. Telephonic bookings too are not completely out-of-date (33.6 percent). The hotel industry acts like a support system to various other businesses, industries as well as Corporate Sector, Tourism Sector and Health Sector respectively. The reasons for visiting hotels revealed that 76 percent of the hotel users affirmed that business commitments serve the key purpose of visiting hotels at various occasions. The recreation, religious ceremonies and rituals, sports and fun activities contributed 2 percent of all the motives of availing hotel facilities. The hotels provide a range of facilities to allure its customers such as availability of services at the click of button or a call away to make the customers feel at home or to provide them an extended home, ranging from wake up call, to babysitting, doctor on call, car rental and even kids activity centre. 40 percent of customers were found as aware about Safe deposit locker in Room but only 15 per cent of them had actually used it. 21 per cent of them had used it most of the time. Low awareness and usage was found for certain services and facilities such as viz., Spa Facility in the Hotel, Discotheque in the Hotel, Yoga Room in the Hotel, Beauty Parlor in the Hotel, Sauna & Jacuzzi in the Hotel, Shopping Center in the Hotel. The highest degree of awareness was found with regard to availability of Non-Smoking Rooms (41percent). But, only 6.6 percent of them had actually used it sometimes, and 18 percent of customers had used it most of the time.

## 6.0. FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The researchers have calculated the criteria wise ratios of Mean Scores of Experiences against Expectations for selected Hotel services for the selected respondents. The calculated ratios with regard to 'Ambience of the Hotel,' Service Quality of the Hotel', 'Rooms Facilities and Services' showed that respondents received what they expected, but little variations were found on selected criteria such as viz., Housekeeping & Services of Hotel, Food Quality of Hotel, Personalized Service Provided in Hotel, Social Bonding, Complaint Management. Although, highest differences were found in case of Commitment to Provide Services. The researchers have also presented analysis on selected variables concerning selected respondents' overall satisfaction for selected hotel services with its individual mean value and standard deviation.

It showed that customers were 'Overall Satisfied' with regard to selected criteria such as viz., 'Ambience of the Hotel, Service quality considering its mean scores which were 4.05, and 4.00 with marginal standard deviation of 0.92 and 1.00 respectively. The respondents were found as 'Not Overall Satisfied' with regard to remaining selected criteria. The calculated standard deviations revealed that mean scores were with marginal deviation and within the acceptable ranges (Refer Table Number 4 to 10).

**Hypothesis-1:** There is no significant difference between the selected Customers' Gender and their opinion about selected

hotelier services as offered to them by the selected hoteliers in the Vadodara city in the state of Gujarat.

**Hypothesis-2:** There is no significant difference between the selected Customers' overall opinions towards staff deployed at Hotel in the selected hotels in the Vadodara city in the state of Gujarat viz-a-vis their Gender.

**Hypothesis-3:** There is no significant difference between the selected Customers' Gender and their overall opinion about Ambience of selected hotels in the Vadodara city in the state of Gujarat.

**Hypothesis-4:** There is no significant difference between the selected Customers' Gender and their overall opinion about Room of the selected Hotel in the Vadodara city in the state of Gujarat.

**Hypothesis-5:** There is no significant difference between the selected Customers' Gender and their overall opinion about personalization in the selected hotels in the Vadodara city in the state of Gujarat.

**Hypothesis-6:** There is no significant difference between the selected Customers' Gender and their overall opinion about Complaint Management in the selected hotels in the Vadodara city in the state of Gujarat.

**Hypothesis-7:** There is no significant difference between the selected Customers' Gender and their overall opinion about Social Bonding by the selected hotels in the Vadodara city in the state of Gujarat.

In case of various services provided by selected hotel, the study could not find significant association. But, in case of selected services such as viz., "Check-in Process in Hotel is Simple"; "Arranges for visit to the Local Market" & "Arranges for Doctor when required" revealed significant association amongst the selected Male & Female customers. Selected respondents' opinion towards 'Behavior of Staff' was found as significantly related with the 'Gender' in case of certain selected criteria such as viz., 'Staff Dress, Staff is Reliable, Staff is Honest, Staff is Courteous, Staff is Knowledgeable, Staff tries to understand Customers needs, Staff pays Special attention to each Guest, Staff resolves Complaint Quickly, and Staff is available when required'. But, in case of few selected criteria such as viz., 'Respondents' opinion towards Behavior of Staff was found as significantly related with the 'Gender' in case of certain selected criteria such as viz., 'Staff is Sincere, Staff is Friendly towards the Guest, Staff is Competent in providing Service, Staff Behaves Politely, Staff attends Complaints Politely, Staff responds to Inquiry Quickly, Staff handles problem effectively, Staff Behaves well with all Customers' in Hotel'.

Selected respondents' opinion towards 'Ambience of Hotel' was found significantly related with the 'Gender' on certain selected criteria such as viz., 'Painting, Furnishing, & Lighting of the Hotel'.

**Table : 04: Chi square Value of Selected Respondents of Different Gender v/s their Opinion on Various Services Provided at Hotel.**

Sr. No.	Selected Criteria	'P' Value of X <sup>2</sup>
1.	Provides 24 hrs Online reservation	NS(.321)
2.	Check-in Process in Hotel is simple	S(.004)
3.	Check-in process takes less time	NS (.289)
4.	Prompt Room Service	NS (.081)
5.	Offers Wake-up calls	NS (.105)
6.	Offers Restaurant Reservations	NS (.171)
7.	Provides Babysitter Service	NS (.799)
8.	Arranges purchase of Movie Ticket from Multiplexes, if required	NS (.838)
9.	Arranges for visit to the Local Market	S (.006)
10.	Arranges for Doctor when required	S (.004)
11.	Provides Quick Service in Dining section	NS (.156)
12.	The Hotel Staff is well Dressed	NS (.494)
13.	The Hotel Staff is Sincere	S (.034)
14.	The Hotel Staff is Reliable	NS (.075)
15.	The Hotel Staff is Honest	NS (.195)
16.	The Hotel Staff is Courteous	NS (.206)
17.	The Hotel Staff is Friendly towards the Guest	S (.040)
18.	The Hotel Staff is Knowledgeable	NS (.347)
19.	The Hotel Staff is Competent in providing Service	S (.027)
20.	The Hotel Staff tries to understand Customers needs	NS (.214)
21.	The Hotel Staff pays Special attention to each Guest	NS (.194)
22.	The Hotel Staff Behaves Politely	S (.000)
23.	The Hotel Staff attends Complaints Politely	S (.011)
24.	The Hotel Staff responds to Inquiry Quickly	S (.008)
25.	The Hotel Staff resolves Complaint Quickly	NS (.587)
26.	The Hotel Staff handles problem effectively	S (.044)
27.	The Hotel Staff Behaves well with all Customers' in Hotel	S (.006)
28.	The Hotel Staff is available when required	NS (.060)
29.	Hotel is Located at a Convenient place	S (.019)
30.	Hotel is well signposted	S (.048)
31.	Hotel is having sufficient Parking space	S (.010)
32.	Hotel is free from Pollution	S (.005)
33.	Hotel is well Painted	NS (.637)
34.	Hotel is well Furnished	NS (.366)
35.	Hotel is having sufficient Lighting	NS (.209)
36.	Rooms of Hotel are well Furnished	NS (.384)
37.	Rooms in the Hotel are Safe	S (.001)
38.	Provides Safe Deposit locker in Room	NS (.539)
39.	Wi-Fi Connectivity is available in the Room	NS (.770)
40.	Arrangement inside the Room is Comfortable	NS (.154)
41.	Maintains Cleanliness in Room	NS (.088)
42.	Maintains cleanliness in Bath Room	S (.024)
43.	Considers Request for Specific Room Number	S (.002)
44.	Considers Special need during Check-in	S (.015)
45.	Receive Special Discount on Room	S (.034)
46.	Manager Escorts to the Room	NS (.556)
47.	Greeted with Flowers in Room	NS (.110)
48.	Offers Welcome Drink	NS (.592)
49.	Personalized Welcome Letter in Room	NS (.456)
50.	Recognized by Name during Stay	NS (.199)
51.	Provides Membership Card of the Hotel to the guest	NS (.298)
52.	Frequent guest programme that allows to earn points towards free accommodation	S (.048)
53.	Provides programs for Children	NS (.324)
54.	Complaints are welcomed by Hotel	NS (.307)
55.	Provides Facility of Written Complaint System	S (.003)
56.	Regret letter for Specific Complaint is given to the concerned guest	S (.004)
57.	Get well soon card to guest who are ill	NS (.211)
58.	Special Discounts on special occasion during stay	NS (.297)
59.	Special Discounts during festivals	NS (.423)
60.	Provides Complementary cake on Birthday during Stay	S (.019)
61.	Arranges for get together every fortnight for long Stayers	NS (.237)
62.	Repeat Guest not to Wait at Reception	NS (.147)
63.	Provides Special privileges to Repeat guest	NS (.449)
64.	Wishes on Important Occasions	NS (.795)
65.	Provides with Occasional Gifts	NS (.673)
66.	Thank you mail sent to Customers for choosing Hotel	NS (.087)
67.	Connecting with customers on Face book after they Leave	NS (.164)

The research study revealed that selected Male & Female respondents were having alike opinion towards certain selected criteria such as viz., 'Furnishing in Room, Availability of Safe Deposit Locker in Room, Availability of Wi-Fi Connectivity in the Room, Arrangement inside the Room, and Maintaining Cleanliness in Room. while differences were found in opinion in case of two criteria such as viz., Safety of Room and Maintaining Cleanliness in Bath Room. The selected respondents' opinion towards 'personalization of Services in Hotel' was found as 'Equal' with respect to the 'Gender' of the selected respondents. The selected respondents of opposite Gender were found as having diverse opinion towards certain selected criteria concerning personalization of services in Hotel such as viz., 'Room Number, Special Need during Check-in, receiving Special Discount on room and Frequent Guest Programme that allowed guest to earn points towards free Accommodation'. The selected respondents' opinion towards Complaint Management in the Hotel were not found significantly related with the 'Gender' in case of certain selected criteria such as viz., 'Complaints are welcomed by Hotel' except the other two criteria in which the opinion of selected respondents on Complaint Management is different concerning 'Facility of Written Complaint System', and 'Regret letter for Specific Complaint is given to the concerned Guest'. No significant association was found in case of the opinion of selected respondents on 'Social Bonding vis-à-vis their Gender' except one criteria that is 'Complementary cake on Birthday during Stay of the concerned Guest'.

#### 7.0: IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:

It mainly revealed following.

- Male respondents were found to be more in number as compared to the female respondents. In such a case Low percentage of female's respondents could offer more opportunity to Hoteliers as number of women serving at a higher post has increased, this could be done by taking contract of those companies where females are serving in large numbers.
- Hoteliers should offer facilities like spa, beauty parlour, and shopping centre within the hotel and a short tour of city provided by hotels could increase the chances of male respondent to come along with their family members so that when at work, family members can rejoice engaging themselves in the activities designed by the hotels. To motivate females to avail such facility discount coupon could also be an added advantage.
- Majority of the respondents were found in the age group between 26 to 35 years that offers an opportunity to the hoteliers as at this age people think of earning and spending. Making them aware about various in house services and the services that they have outsourced would lead them avail those services adding to their profitability graph.
- Majority of respondents were found to be professionally qualified which is indicative of the fact that they are highly professional and they would react differently to every encounter. This suggests that timely training could be provided to new and ongoing employees so as to reduce the chances of service failure and reduce the communication gap between the Hotel customer's and service providers also making the stay comfortable and relaxed.
- This research study revealed that majority of respondents who made their stay were Businessmen/Women that presents an opportunity to hoteliers to increase these numbers by contacting event management companies and arranging business fairs so as to provide Business information related to Baroda city as well as adjoining areas, which would attract more number of businessmen/women .
- Majority of respondents who made their stay belonged to the category with annual family income being more than 10 lacs. The hoteliers can categorize their guests on the basis of their food habits, type of room they have selected, and their spending patterns so as to up sell and cross sell their products. The Hoteliers should find all the opportunities to "cross sell" their facilities and motivate their guests to cull out money from their pockets, beyond just paying the basic room rate. This would help Hoteliers to increase their share of profit.
- First time visitors were found to be more in number in comparison to repeat and or frequent visitors which creates an opportunity for the hoteliers to retain the first time customer and convert them into repeat customers, but this could be done through cordially welcoming the guest, providing them with welcome letter in their room and by offering a welcome drink while handing over the keys to customers.
- These small gestures leave long lasting impression on the customers and also transform the first impression into the last impression leading to a long term business relationship.
- Majority of respondents were found to book Hotel through Internet that asserts how revolution in information and technology has changed the facets of business.
- As online booking is available with almost all the Hotels it has become a difficult task to retain customers' as most of the hotels offer competitive pricing because it is very easy to compare the prices of one hotel to another. This offers an opportunity to hoteliers to rethink their strategies to increase their booking online by providing accurate Hotel information, by making booking process simple, payment to be made on arrival, making them aware about ongoing scheme, new schemes and also by keeping

software to know number of visitors visited the site and number of them actually booked.

- This research study revealed significant relationship between 'Check in process and Gender'. It is considered that females are more impatient as compared to males. So, they may find check in process as complicated in their experience. The hoteliers should focus on service dimensions important to guests by considering it gender wise and not those based on own opinions.
- The study showed significant relationship also between 'Hoteliers arranging a visit to the local market and Gender'. It is considered that people from all over the globe come for various purpose and make their stay. It is always found that females are more apt to visit local market while staying in Hotel in comparison to males. This provides an opportunity to Hoteliers to arrange tour of the local market on Sundays and if demanded on other days. So, to maintain long-term win-win relationship with customers. But, in case of opinion towards various other services provided in Hotel is independent on gender.
- The difference in opinion towards 'Behavior of Staff' showed that Male and Female respondents need to be treated differently which implies that Staff should be trained accordingly.

If the difference is not created by the Hoteliers then it would be difficult in developing a relationship that could develop into a valuable source of reliable repeat business and strong customer loyalty.

- This research study brought out the result that 'Ambience of hotel' is highly dependent on Gender' which implies that the hoteliers should understand the perception of Male/Female differently. To illustrate, in case of Hotel being well signposted the male would be clearer by reading the information while females would be more receptive to pictures used as a sign boards in Hotels.
- The Male/Female respondents differs in his or her 'Perception towards the Availability of Parking Space and different types of Parking' such as viz., an underground parking, outdoor parking, parking by concierge which implies that the hoteliers should take care of parking on the basis of gender like in case of female customers hoteliers should prefer parking by concierge.
- In case of opinion towards Room of hotel only two criteria were found to be dependent upon the gender, which are related with the Cleanliness and Safety in Room this implies that Male/Female customers differs in his or her expectations regarding these criteria. It is therefore suggested that hoteliers should have a special locker in room which could open only through voice of a stayer.

- The Safety provisions should be there at the room like Magic Eye and a record of staff serving the customer in that room could facilitate safety in room. Frequent and timely visit of housekeeping persons in the bathroom would lead to cleanliness in bathroom.
- Significant relationship was found between opinion of gender and personalization in the hotel in the certain criteria like Considers Request for Specific Room Number, Considers Special need during Check-in, Receive Special Discount on Room and Frequent guest programme that allows earning points towards free accommodation.
- It was observed that few people are superstitious towards certain numbers while other believes in lucky numbers so there must be flexibility of providing specific room number to the extent it is possible by the hoteliers. Being superstitious of Male /Female depends on the Country of Origin and its Culture. Discount given to customer need to be customized as per the Gender. As females would prefer discount in Food, Beauty Parlor etc in comparison to male. Frequent Guest Programme that allows to earn points towards free accommodation should be as per the gender. As Female if, married would like to get benefit of Free Stay in hotel of entire family, where as Male may react differently.
- Attitudinal difference was found between the Male and Female customers towards the Complaint Management in the hotel as Female Customers are bit sensitive they would not like to complain verbally so provision of 'Written Complain System' should be made available in the Hotels.
- Males/Females differ in his or her attitude they may like to be socially bonded or they may not. So due care must be taken by the hoteliers while making social bonding with customers as few may treat as encroachment of privacy.

## 8.0: CONCLUSION

The CRM is a management process of acquiring customers by understanding and fulfilling their requirements to retain them in a way that would meet their expectations and also attracting new customers through customer specific strategic marketing approaches. The Indian hospitality industry has emerged as one of the key industries driving the growth of the services sector in India. It has always been linked to the prospects of the tourism industry and tourism is the foremost demand driver of the industry. It has recorded healthy growth fuelled by robust inflow of foreign tourists as well as increased tourist movement within the country and it has become one of the leading players in the global industry. It is highly fragmented with a large number of small and unorganized players accounting for a lion's share.

An analysis of the drivers revealed the factors for growth of the market and included growth in tourism, opening of the aviation sector, emergence of budget hotels, shortage of hotel

rooms and major events. India being a land of rich natural diversity has consistently been on the tourists' radar and tourism had been on a growth trajectory. India is presently considered a provider of low cost medical treatments, which has led to the development of India as a destination for medical tourism. These factors have contributed to the growth of tourism which is a powerful driver for growth of the hotel sector. The opening up of the aviation sector has provided the needed thrust. Major players diversifying into the mid-market segment to develop budget hotels has also been an added driving force. Such hotels are constructed to tap prospective consumers who seek stay at affordable price. International companies are increasingly looking at setting up such hotels, with most industries in an attempt to slash down the expenses, budget hotels are much in vogue ([www.expressindia.com](http://www.expressindia.com)).

It is suggested that creating a customer-keeping vision by differentiating the Male/Female requirement would orient toward building long-term relationships with both service providers and customers will satisfy emotional needs and create an affectionate internal atmosphere that will spread out to customers. The proactive approach to building long-term relationships with customers should be focused rather than on reactive strategies.

The marketing strategies for both new and existing and male and female customers should take customer future expectations into account, considering how each element of the marketing mix such as viz., changes in the service, marketing communications, and value added services) may affect customers' current usage levels and expectations of future use.

#### (Endnotes)

- <sup>1</sup> Baran, Galka, Strunk, 2008
- <sup>2</sup> Raghualari & Smritee Raghualan, 2010
- <sup>3</sup> Madanlal, 2007
- <sup>4</sup> [www.equitymaster.com](http://www.equitymaster.com)
- <sup>5</sup> [www.businessstandard.com](http://www.businessstandard.com)
- <sup>6</sup> H. Peeru Mohamed and A. Sagadevan, 2003
- <sup>7</sup> Berry, 1992
- <sup>8</sup> Gronroos, 1990
- <sup>9</sup> Adrian Payne, 2005
- <sup>10</sup> Sungmi Chung and Mike Sheman, 2002
- <sup>11</sup> K M Mital, 2003
- <sup>12</sup> Sipra Mukhopadhyay, 2003
- <sup>13</sup> S Ragunath and Joseph Shields, 2003
- <sup>14</sup> IGNOU, Study Material MS-61 pp 6
- <sup>15</sup> [www.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com)
- <sup>16</sup> [www.yourdictionary.com](http://www.yourdictionary.com)

- <sup>17</sup> Berry, 1991
- <sup>18</sup> Raghualari & Smritee Raghualan, 2010
- <sup>19</sup> H. Peeru Mohamed and A. Sagadevan, 2002
- <sup>20</sup> Naresh K. Malhotra, 2007 and Jum C. Nunnally, 1981
- <sup>21</sup> Naresh K. Malhotra, 2007; R.D. Sharma & Hardeep Chahal, 1999; Parasuraman et. al., 1991

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