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**Entrepreneurship in the Tourism Industry - Issues pertaining to SME's:
A study of small and medium hotel operators in Tamil Nadu.**

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Abstract

The pandemic of COVID-19 and the resulting disruptions have created ideal conditions for revamping the outdated educational system. Traditional education programmes will be strengthened by the quick transition to online mode, which coincides with the end of the current academic year. The transformation from a steeping tea figure in education to a competency-based learning programme has begun. Tourism and the use of internet technology are crucial for people's socioeconomic development. It is the relocation of people for leisure purposes from their usual residence to a tourist site. Tamil Nadu is the most popular tourist destination in India, with 3859.09 lakh domestic visitors in 2018. According to the Economic Survey 2019-20, Tamil Nadu is one of the top three states in terms of attracting domestic and international tourists. The four main components of tourism are attraction, accommodation, accessibility, and amenities. Tamil Nadu is known for pilgrimage tourism, history tourism, hills tourism, beach tourism, medical tourism, and other forms of leisure travel. Hotel rooms, motels, resorts, service apartments, guesthouses, and other lodging options are available to visitors. The tourism industry is primarily reliant on hoteliers. Small and medium hotel proprietors, who are the primary enterprises in the tourism industry, house and feed tourists. More than 10,000 small and medium firms operate budget hotels and lodges, according to the President of the Tamil Nadu Hotel Association. The researcher chose to look at the issues that small and medium-sized hotel owners face in order to better understand their role in the tourism industry. The study's main goals are to determine the study profile of small and medium hotel operators (gender, age, education level, work experience, and courses taken), evaluate the hotel operators' entrepreneurial characteristics (financial resources to start or expand the business, marketing development, and government support), and analyse their problems and issues related to their hotel operations.

Keywords: Tourist profiles in Tamil Nadu, entrepreneurial traits, marketing development, financial resources, hotel operators, and so on.

Introduction

Tourism is a vital component of people's social and economic growth. It is defined as the movement of people from their usual abode to leisurely places such as tourist attractions. The Ministry of Transportation formed the first tourism sector on March 1, 1958. In 1967, the Indian government established a new Ministry of Tourism. Since 1971, the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC) has been trying to develop tourism in Tamil Nadu. The TTDC's main mission is to provide

transportation and lodging infrastructure. Tamil Nadu is India's tourism leader, with 60.73 lakh international visitors and 3859.09 million domestic visitors in 2018. The four main components of tourism are attraction, accommodation, accessibility, and amenities. In Tamil Nadu, notable tourist attractions include beaches, mountains, historical sites, museums, zoos, national parks, cultural centres, and natural tourism sites. Hotel rooms, motels, resorts, service apartments, guesthouses, and other lodging options are available to visitors. Hotel owners play an important role in the tourism industry. The most profitable tourism firms are small and medium-sized hotel owners, which provide travellers with lodging and catering services. Because hotel owners play such an important role in the tourism industry, it was chosen to concentrate on issues that impact small and medium-sized hoteliers. The primary objective of this study is to assess hotelier profiles, entrepreneurial qualities, financial variables, marketing trends, and general operator challenges. Sightseeing in Tamil Nadu Tamil Nadu is at the southern region of the Indian Peninsula. The Bay of Bengal surrounds it on the east, the Indian Ocean on the south, the Western Ghats on the west, and Andhra Pradesh on the north. Tamil Nadu is known for pilgrimage tourism, history tourism, hills tourism, beach tourism, medical tourism, and other forms of leisure travel. UNESCO World Heritage Sites include the Mamallapuram coast temple, Five Rathas and Arjuna's Penance, Braghadeeswarar temple, Thanjavur, Iravadeeswarar temple Darasuram, Brahadeeswarar temple, GangaikondaCholapuram, and Nilgiri Mountain Railway. Due to well-connected road infrastructure, train links, and airport stations in major towns, tourists visit a variety of tourist spots in Tamil Nadu.

The diverse tourism attractions of Tamil Nadu attract a large number of domestic and international travellers. The most frequent visitors to Tamil Nadu are from the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, Canada, Australia, Germany, Malaysia, Singapore, Italy, Japan, Sri Lanka, Oman, and Bangladesh. Occupy. Foreign tourist eTourist visas, which were first launched in 2014 for visitors from 46 countries, are now available in 169 countries. The number of foreign visitors to India has increased from 445,000 in 2015 to 236,900 in 2019. The Etourist Visa Program is to thank for this. According to the Economic Survey 201920, Tamil Nadu is one of three states that attract both local and foreign tourism. The number of domestic and international tourists' visits to Tamil Nadu between 2015 and 2018 is below.

table.TABLE: 1, NUMBER OF TOURISTS VISITED TAMILNADU

Year	Foreign Tourists in Lakhs	Domestic Tourists in Lakhs	Total in Lakhs
2015	46.85	3334.59	3381.44
2016	47.20	3438.10	3485.30
2017	48.60	3450.61	3499.21
2018	60.73	3859.09	3919.82

Source: <http://www.tamilnadutourism.org/pdf/Tourism-EnglishPolicyNote201920.pdf>

From the above table, the researcher observed that the tourists' inflow is increasing steadily in foreign and domestic markets. This is due to well-planned marketing strategies and participation of stakeholders in the international travel mart and roadshows.

Number of Hotels in Tamil Nadu: The hotels in Tamil Nadu are classified as star hotels, budget hotels and lodges. , The small and medium entrepreneurs run the budget hotels and lodges, and the number is more than 10000, according to Venkadasubbu, President Tamil Nadu Hotel Association. It is observed that 98-star hotels are available in different cities of Tamil Nadu.

Objectives: The objectives of the survey include investigating the profile of small and medium-sized hotel operators, assessing the entrepreneurial characteristics of hotel operators, and analyzing issues and issues related to hotel operations.

Scope of Survey: The current survey focuses on issues related to hotel operations by small and medium-sized entrepreneurs. This study discusses small and medium-sized hotel operator profiles, business details, related financial issues, and marketing issues. The reaping pose also takes into account the operator's government expectations. From the results of the research, researchers sought valuable suggestions for improving tourism.**Methodology:**

Sources of Data: Two types of data, namely primary and secondary, are collected for this study. The study is a descriptive one. The researcher collects the primary detached from the hotel operators, and the second is from government websites, magazines, relevant research articles and books.

Sample design: 100 hotels run by medium and small entrepreneurs were selected across the state, and the survey was conducted on an unrestricted, convenient basis.

Collection of Data: The primary data Based on the study's objective, a questionnaire has been designed to collect information from the hotel operators.

Profile of the respondent: The profile of the hotel operators includes gender, age, education level, work experience and course attended. This profile will help tourism planners with an entrepreneur's managerial development skills to organise a particular training programme for hotel operators.

Gender: Gender represents the sex of the respondent. Out of 100 operators surveyed, 98 per cent of the operators are male, and the remaining is female.

TABLE: 1, GENDER

Gender	No. of respondents	Percentage
Male	98	98
Female	02	02
Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

From the above table, it is understood that the majority (98 %) of the respondents are male. It is inferred that males are interested in managing the hotels.

Age: Age is an essential factor when considering work efficiency. In this research, of the 100 respondents, 22 per cent have aged between 30 and 40 years, followed by 34 per cent are 41 to 50 years, 36 per cent are 51 to 60 years, and the remaining are above 60 years.

TABLE: 2, AGE

Age in Years	No. of Respondents	Percentage
30 -40	22	22
41 – 50	34	34
51 – 60	36	36
Above 60	08	08
Total	100	

Source: Primary data

The above table indicates that most (56 per cent) of the hotel operators have an age range between 30 and 50 years.

Education Level: Educational qualification of a person will be beneficial in understanding managerial problems and also help in taking business decisions. Out of 100 respondents, 18 per cent of the operators completed their high school, 59 per cent are graduates, 12 per cent are postgraduates, and the remaining are other category are completed their professional courses.

TABLE: 3, EDUCATION LEVEL

Level of Education	No. of Respondents	Percentage
High school	18	18
Degree	59	59
Post Graduate	12	12
Others	11	11
Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

The above table indicates that most (59 per cent) of the hotel operators are graduates. It is inferred that an educated person will manage the different business activities efficiently and effectively.

Work experience: Work experience means experience gained in employment. Of the 100 respondents, 12 per cent have less than 5years of experience, 58 per cent of the hotel operators have experienced between 5 and 10 years, 25 per cent have 11 to 15 years, and the remaining have more than 15 years of work experience.

TABLE: 4, WORKING EXPERIENCE

Experience in years	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 5	12	12
5 -10	58	58
11-15	25	25
More than 15	05	05
Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

The above table indicates that most (58 per cent) of the operators have work experience between 5 and 10 years.

Course Attended: Courses on tourism and hotel management will help operators manage the hotel operations' functional areas. Of the 100 people surveyed, 14 per cent of the operators attended or studied a related course on tourism and hotel management and the remaining are not attended any course related to business management.

TABLE: 5, COURSE ATTENDED ON TOURISM AND HOTEL MANAGEMENT.

Detail	No. of Respondents	Percentage
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Yes	14	14
No	86	86
Total	100	100

Source: Primary source

From the above table, the researcher understands that most hotel operators do attend or study any course on tourism and hotel management.

Small and medium-sized hotel owners have the following entrepreneurial characteristics: Self-confidence, independence, ability to learn from mistakes, willingness to achieve, readiness to take chances, and willingness to innovate are all qualities of small and medium-sized hotel operators. increase. "Confidence" gets 380 points, "independence" gets 372 points, "capacity to learn from mistakes" gets 366 points, "willingness to achieve" gets 361 points, and "willingness to take chances" gets 362 points (361 points). rice field (353 points), ability to innovate (315 points).

TABLE: 6, ENTREPRENEURIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SMALL AND MEDIUM HOTEL OWNERS

Characteristics	Opinion Rating										Total	Rank
	SA		A		MA		DA		SDA			
	Nos.	Points	Nos	Points	Nos.	Points	Nos.	Points	Nos.	Points		
Self-confidence	22	110	36	144	42	126	0	0	0	0	380	1
Independence	20	100	32	128	48	144	0	0	0	0	372	2
Ability to learn from failure	18	90	30	120	52	156	0	0	0	0	366	3
Need of achievement motivation	15	75	31	124	54	162	0	0	0	0	361	4
Risk taking tendency	14	70	30	120	52	156	3	6	1	1	353	5
Innovativeness	8	40	22	88	51	153	15	30	4	4	315	6

Source: Primary data

From the above table, it is inferred that the Risk-taking tendency and Innovativeness are preferred with less importance.

Financial source to start or enlarge the business: The primary source of finance for starting and enlarging the business is Commercial banks, Government agencies, Family and friends and Own savings. Out of 100 respondents, 52 per cent of the hotel operators seek commercial banks' help for their business expansion, 31 per cent have used family and friends sources, 10 per cent used their savings and the remaining used government agencies like State industrial development corporations; etc.

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TABLE: 7, FINANCIAL SOURCE TO START / ENLARGE BUSINESS

Financial Source	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Commercial Banks	52	52
Government Agencies	07	07
Family and Friends	31	31
Own savings	10	10
Total	100	100

Source: Primary source

The above table indicates majority (52 per cent) of the operators used financial help from commercial banks.

Marketing development: It is a strategy to attract new customers. In the hotel business, the various marketing technique used to develop business includes tourism operators, websites, travel agencies, use of

hoardings banners and brochures. Out of 100 respondents, 27 per cent of the operators used tourism operators for developing their business, followed by 31 per cent used travel agents, 12 per cent websites, 6 per cent used advertisement hoardings and signboard others include 16 per cent,

TABLE: 8, MARKETING DEVELOPMENT

Marketing technique	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Tourism operators	27	27
Web sites	12	12
Travel agency	31	31
Hoardings/ Banner	06	06
Brochure	02	02
Signboard	06	06
Others	16	16
Total	100	100

Source: Primary source

From the above table, the researcher understood that websites' usage for promoting business among small and medium hotel operators is low.

Problems encountered by operators: Lack of tourist management skills and knowledge, lack of understanding on how to apply for financing from financial institutions, lack of awareness on tourism trends and opportunities, and lack of tourism marketing skills are the key issues that firms confront. is. "Lack of tourism management skills and knowledge" received 353 points among the 100 hotel operators polled, followed by "lack of information about tourism trends and prospects" (343 points), and "lack of tourism marketing capabilities." Continued. a score of 339 "Insufficient understanding of how to apply for financial institution subsidies."

TABLE: 9, PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY OPERATORS

Problems	Opinion rating										Total	Rank
	SA		A		MA		DA		SDA			
	No	Poi nts	No	Poi nts	No	Poi nts	No	Poi nts	No	Poi nts		
Lack of management skills and knowledge in tourism	15	75	45	180	25	75	8	16	7	7	353	1
Lack of knowledge on how to apply funding from financial institution	8	32	36	144	36	108	12	24	8	8	316	4
Lack of knowledge in tourism trends and opportunities	12	48	43	172	36	108	6	12	3	3	343	2
Lack of tourism marketing skills	10	40	42	168	38	114	7	14	3	3	339	3

Source: Primary data

From the above table, it is observed that most of the hotel operators do not know the financial institution details for the development of their business.

Government support for Hotel Operators: The small and medium entrepreneurs of hotel businesses seek help from the government for developing their business. The general expectations include training for entrepreneurs in hotel operations, tourism infrastructure development activities planned by the government, help in financial support for the development of hotels, and facilitating marketing activities. Out of 100 operators surveyed, “Help in financial support for the development of hotel business” scored the highest points (364) and stood the first rank, followed by “Facilitate marketing activities for business development” scored 347 points, “Training for hotel operators in Hotel Management” scored 336 points and “Tourism infrastructure development activities planned by government” scored 328 points.

TABLE 10, EXPECTATIONS OF HOTEL OPERATORS FROM GOVERNMENT

Problems	Opinion rating										Total	Rank
	SA		A		MA		DA		SDA			
	Nos.	Score	Nos.	Score	Nos.	Score	Nos.	Score	Nos.	Score		
Training for hotel operators on Hotel Management.	18	90	34	136	24	72	14	28	10	10	336	3
Tourism infrastructure development activities planned	15	75	32	128	28	84	16	32	9	9	328	4

by the government												
Help in financial support for development of hotels.	22	110	39	156	24	72	11	22	4	4	364	1
Facilitate in marketing activities for business development.	20	100	37	148	22	66	12	24	9	9	347	2

Source: Primary data

The researcher understood that financial and marketing assistance is an urgent need for government hotel operators from the above table.

Findings:

v In 2018, a total of 39.19.82 million rupees of tourists (domestic and foreign) visited Tamil Nadu. v The total number of lodges operated by tourist hotel owners is 10,000. v The majority (98 percent) of hotel operators are male. v When it comes to operator age, the majority (56 percent) are between 30 and 50 years old. v The majority of 59 hotel owners are educated and have a graduate degree 58.

v In terms of work experience, the majority of respondents (58 percent) have 5 to 10 years of experience.

v Only 14% of the operators took hotel management and tourism training. Self-confidence, independence, the ability to learn from mistakes, the willingness to achieve, the courage to take chances, and the ability to innovate are the most significant entrepreneurial attributes of small and medium-sized hotel operators. Risk-taking and innovation talents were evaluated badly, indicating that further attention was needed. v The majority of hotel operators (52 percent) obtained financial assistance from commercial banks to start or expand their operations. v Tourism and travel agencies assist small and medium-sized hoteliers in marketing their establishments.

v The majority of operators lack managerial skills and knowledge of tourism, as well as knowledge of how to obtain bank financing, tourist trends and opportunities, and marketing abilities.

v Hoteliers anticipate government assistance to help them enhance their business. Entrepreneurs will be trained in hotel operations, tourism infrastructure development activities, financial support for hotel growth, and marketing activities will be promoted. Among the aforementioned, financial and marketing assistance is critical.

- The government should establish training programmes for small and medium-sized hotel owners to help them enhance their skills and knowledge in hotel operations, customer relations, marketing, innovation, and risk management.
- To understand the many programmes available, governments should arrange interactive sessions between hotel operators and financial institutions.

- Each hotel should build a website in collaboration with travel providers and aim to gain business through online booking.

• Hoteliers may improve their business by keeping cleanliness and hygienic conditions. • Entrepreneurs can take required actions to develop their business by joining an association and frequently conducting meetings to evaluate emerging challenges that belong to their firm.

Conclusion: Because of the low entrance barrier, small and medium-sized businesses dominate the hotel industry. The most important features, such as self-confidence and interest, were also underlined in this study. SME's face a number of challenges, the most serious of which is a lack of organisation in terms of funding and product promotion. Statistics suggest that the number of travellers increases year after year, indicating that the lodging industry has a lot of potential. This survey yielded useful information, and based on that information, several business development recommendations were made. Governments must provide support and relief to real-life entrepreneurs who can have a big impact on prosperity, based on research questions and challenges.

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