

EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF HOSTELS AS ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION AND THEIR POPULARITY AMONGST THE MILLENNIALS

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to identify the importance of alternative accommodation in hostels and its popularity amongst travellers, especially the millennial market. This paper seeks to find out current trends and the best practices followed by hostels and analyse and discuss how this segment of the hospitality industry fulfils the present demand created by the Millennials market. For this study, information was collected through books, research articles and the Internet. This paper is centred on a conceptual approach based on desk research. The results of this study denote that recently hostels have evolved as an alternative accommodation to contemporary accommodation, which was available early. Millennials are one of the largest growing populations globally, and to cater to their needs, hostels have come up with new and innovative concepts to fulfil their demands. Today's Millennials are a different breed of populations who, while staying like to meet their friends and relatives, as they are today's young generation they engage in various activities and events, and like to have local experiences, be relaxed and comfortable, and like the feeling of home, they are always looking for good value for their money at the same time enjoy the ease and convenience provided by the hostels. The growth of hostels in recent times has happened because currently, hostels play a significant role in the hospitality industry by satisfying the needs of travellers, especially the Millennials. Hostels provide them with good functional facilities and an interactive atmosphere, offering them the central location, well-planned events and activities with personal treatment. This research paper is one of the uncommon kinds of writing which describes the behaviour of Millennials towards the services of hostels

Keywords: Hospitality Industry, Millennials, Hostels, Alternative Accommodation.

Introduction

A hostel primarily is for the budget-friendly type of accommodation nowadays. Many travellers are budget conscious, especially the middle-class population, and solo travellers, students and young Millennials under 35. Today, the whole concept of hostels has changed, making them luxurious and stylish like boutique hotels today's modern. The design of Hostels creates such an environment that it resembles to be social hubs that enable you to have an enjoyable experience with the other travellers. Currently, hostel owners organise many fun events and activities, usually kept complementary, like surfing classes to rooftop yoga sessions, picnics on the beach, sightseeing, bus parties and nightly family dinners, movie nights, sunset cycling tours, pool parties and food tours for their guests. Today's modern hostels come with loads of exciting activities to name some include hostel roof terraces (and rooftop bars) with pizza and beer complimented with a swimming pool, bar, plenty of deck chairs, many exciting activities like climbing rock, tasting of wines, screening of

night movies, pub creep, and adventurous bungee jumping along with space for daily yoga for the health-conscious guest.

Many hostels also are equipped with spacious shared bathrooms to accommodate a lot of backpackers. During the stay in the hostel's toiletries, hairdryers, hair straighteners and full-length mirrors are also provided to the travellers to add to this, stylish regular chill-out hammocks and swinging hammocks are also made available to the travellers to view nature, jungle and greenery at the hill station, and beaches hammock at the rooftop with a cocktail party with live music hotspots is also available especially to young Millennials.

The laundry facilities are also available, which mostly is a paid facility which is open to the guests staying in hostels; many hostels have swimming pools to make the travellers relax with their friends at the poolside, hostels which are situated at the beachside comes with a lot of inflatables, games, seating areas bar, food and drink.

Many hostels offer a complimentary breakfast comprising local food, tea bread and butter, toast, fruit, and cereal. One of the attractions of hostels is that it also offers free or

economically priced weekly events, such as pasta night, homemade cakes or cooking and baking classes to surprise the traveller's barista coffee and vegan curries. Many hostels also offer weekend Barbeques and delicious authentic continental and oriental food; one of the unique features of some hostels is that you can cook and store your food in the fridge and cupboards. Some hostels also have the provision of their garden from where one can pick fresh vegetables. Many hostels also provide free Wi-Fi and desktop in the communal areas, which comes free of charge. One of the unique features of hostel accommodation is that it helps the Solo travellers socialise and create a homely atmosphere by creating a feeling of home away from home.

Since today's Gen Y are very conscious about nature, they are always on the lookout for Eco-friendly and sustainable hostels situated around the world. Considering this, many hostels have been practising sustainable practices to attract and retain these Millennials travellers.

Other novel features that the hostel's practice offers a holistic experience to their guest by providing sunrise and sunset yoga classes daily, accompanied with meditation. This helps them unwind from life's stresses and surfing. Authentic jungle adventure and campfire or dancing in open-air nightclubs and surfing are also organised to rejuvenate themselves.

Difference between a hostel and hotel

Staying in a hostel is economical as compared to staying in a hotel vast amounts of money can be saved by the traveller when a hostel is chosen over a hotel whether it's an extended stay or a long weekend another reason why travellers prefer to stay in hostels is not always the price. Still, it's also the people, the reason being that the social atmosphere created by the hostels is unique in itself, making hostelling very addictive. Humans are social animals; they like to interact, stay together, meet new people, make new friends, cook together, drink together, and go on adventure activities with each other. This is a major difference between staying in a hotel and hostels unique and innovative.

Various types of Rooms Provided by Hostels

Dorms

Dorms are usually large rooms that allow multiple people to share the accommodation. Dorms are available in various sizes and shapes, which comes in both primary and cheap variety with different types and styles of beds and mattresses in most hostels dorm beds are fitted with reading light. A power socket is made available for charging gadgets. A privacy curtain is also made available to the traveller; dorms are mostly more helpful for those who share their rooms as sharing rooms makes them more economical. A very important feature of a dorm room is that it gives the facility a portion of the price for each night, which is not available in other types of accommodation. When there are people with large numbers, it helps to share the dorm with others. This helps to make a cheaper deal. Many hostels provide separate accommodations to ladies called female only dorms. The management of such hostels must ensure that this should be displayed for people while making the bookings.

Private Rooms

Some People are not aware that apart from dorms, hostels also provide private rooms. This is for travellers looking for their individual space, for which they don't want to without sacrificing the privacy and fun they expect from a hostel only. Private rooms are preferred mainly by elderly travellers and couples who would like to have more privacy. These private rooms of hostels tend to be a bit expensive than dorms but are cheaper compared to star hotels. And other accommodation, when it comes to facilities, private hostel rooms are on par with the hotels, and it also comes with excellent social areas. These events are free combined with like-minded travellers. Hostels today are developed all over the world. Hostels as an alternative accommodation have long been famous in Asia, Africa, Australia and South America.

Charges of staying in the hostels

As hostels provide sharing your space with others, a general rule of thumb is that hostels are more economical and cost much less than other accommodation types, including hotels.

Even a private room in a hostel can save on money on the introductory price of the room and also on additional facilities provided such as free Wi-Fi, events, and communal kitchen, pricing of a hostel depends on the destination one is travelling, no. of travellers and how many are going to share the rooms with you, if a traveller wants to get a good deal than the best way is to book the hostel in advance, this is especially when peak season is on and when lots of hostels get fully booked.

Safety of travellers staying in Hostels

Hostels are as safe as hotels or any other type of accommodations because one has to share space with lots of other travellers when it comes to hostel accommodation. This also means that many people will be around most of the time and ensure that only travellers who stay in the hostels can check out the hostel. Some of the hostels are provided with a reception desk along with security staff. This is made available 24/7. Nearly all the hostels are equipped with good lockers in the dorms to keep their valuables safe when they are out.

Popularity of Hostels

Millennials are the ones who are also known as Generation Y; they were born between the 1980s and 2000s. They are different from their previous generations, i.e. (Gen X and Baby Boomers). When it comes to lifestyle or behaviour, it is believed that Millennials are the ones who are disrupting many economic and social dimensions. Millennials have prioritised various choices such as lifestyle preferences, the option of housing and changed travelling patterns. Today Millennials are considered an essential component of the market with peculiar consumer behaviour patterns, as the hospitality industry is catching the attention of these Millennials by redefining brands, adapting to services, and novel concepts of hostels have started to flourish to cater to the needs of today's Millennials.

As per a recent survey, the value of the hostel sector is around \$5.2 billion when it comes to the revenue generated through accommodation. In the future, it is projected to grow around 7 to 8 % every year. The growth has occurred mainly because of the millennial travellers aged some were between 18-35). Today's

Millennials like to spend more money. Like longer trips, they also prioritise having more social interactions and adventures with friends who have been newly found/newfound friends for which they prefer to stay in hostels rather than other conventional accommodations. The first hostel was developed for the students to accommodate them when they were on educational trips. Today the hostel market is being set and diversifying its services. For a long time, hostels were considered to be known for a low fare, economy accommodation known to be quiet on quality and services provided by the hostels, but presently this scenario is changing. Modern, classy hostels, with artistic design and eco-friendly practices, are examples of how hostels are changing themselves and erasing the stigma of low-quality behind and showcasing it as a modern and relaxed alternative accommodation. Hostels offer lodging with communal facilities at an affordable price in a unique social environment. The main characteristic of hostels conceptually is their collaborative environment with separate rooms for males and females.

Currently, the hostel is considered as a new business because few only hostels have been in business for more than a decade at present; today, travellers are expecting something different which is local and not offered by the star category hotels is because of this gap that hostels can keep on flourishing since there has been an increase in the private, independent hostels the market has been ignited. However, there has been an unbranded development segment of hostels recently, but stand-alone hostels are still the famous and first choice of customers. Today's hostels are being internationally recognized for their excellence.

Growth of Hostels in India

As per a recent survey done in the metros of India, it was found out that there is growing popularity and increase in the preference of hostels amongst Indian travelers. This according to a survey conducted around 48% travellers who were surveyed preferred to make a booking with alternative accommodation, such as homestays, villas, apartment hotels, cottages and farm stays in future. Indian Millennials travelling abroad are also preferring alternative accommodation in India as well as abroad.

With the changing trend, alternative accommodations are becoming the first choice amongst the travellers and hostels being one of the critical components of it is here to remain as a first choice for many Indian travellers out of which hostels are the most preferred by the millennial travellers. This survey also further showed that 70 percent of Indian travellers are more price-conscious while planning to travel in the future.

Objectives of the Study

- 1) To study and understand the reasons for the growth of Hostels in recent times.
- 2) To find the reasons for the popularity of Hostels amongst the Millennials.

Research Methodology

This is desk research based on secondary data collected through books, Research Journals, Articles, and Websites. This study will benefit those who are planning to start a hostel business. At the same time, it will also help the travel agencies understand the concept of hostels as an alternative accommodation to guide their travellers.

Findings

It was found that more than 70 percent of hostel-goers throughout the world were particularly passionate and determined to revisit the hostels on their next trip. Research showed that amongst various travellers, Millennials were the ones travelling, especially when it comes to outbound. It was discovered that more or less 48% of travellers preferred alternative accommodation, i.e. hostels, during their trip. As per the report, it has been seen that there has been growing popularity and increasing preference of alternative accommodations amongst travellers and hostel accommodation is one of them which has become very popular amongst the Millennials in recent times. Currently, the trend of alternative accommodation is playing a significant role in meeting the growing demands of these young travellers. The present study also reveals that this segment of alternative accommodation is increasingly gaining recognition in the market. In India, travellers, especially when it comes to millennials, have shown higher liking towards booking hostels when they go out for travel. As

per the findings of this study, 55% of the Millennials surveyed have switched from booking a conventional hotel to a hostel during their last trip.

Discussion and Conclusion

Hostels have emerged and developed as an affordable staying option, high-speed Wi-Fi with no security deposits, and a safe, comfortable, productive and social lifestyle. Hostels are getting more popular among leisure and business travellers in recent years; the hostel industry has become more structured and focused. Today even smaller properties are being empowered by technology. Companies with a bigger brand are entering into Hostel Business and making a large number of investments in this sector; they are also coming up with attractive marketing strategies to highlight hostels as companies have also made a pronounced entrance into the game, bringing along well-funded marketing campaigns that pitch hostels as a healthy alternative to the hotels. The changing customer choices have given rise to generate scope for the demand of hostels and its success, because today the young generation is the most important source of leisure and business travellers.

Though they don't possess a lot of disposable money as other corporate travellers, Millennials are known as better spenders than money-savers. This is also one of the reasons why hostels are seen as an alternative to traditional hotels, especially amongst many young travellers aged 18 to 35. Millennials prefer to stay in hostels because of their low cost, convenient locations, and friendly and no-frills accommodation with good value for money. Today's modern hostels have a provision of private rooms along with the dorm rooms and shared rooms, apart from this a range of offer range of other facilities like a free Wi-Fi, on-site service of food and beverage on-site, provisions of library and media centre for reading along with the facility of bicycle on rents.

Millennials are driving the growth, preferring city and authentic experiences where they can 'live like the locals' rather than spend whole days on a group tour visiting guidebook sites. Convenience and good value for money

have become essential aspects of hostels. To have differentiation between hotels and hostels is blurring now with the evolution of budget hotels, limited service hotels and various lodging concepts. The demand for alternative

accommodations is fast changing to meet the needs of these young millennials; hence, the market for hostels will increase in the future. Therefore we can summarise that today hostel brands are all in expansion mode.

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