

## Standards and Accreditation in Hospitality Industry: An Assessment of Tourist Establishments in Kerala

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### Abstract

Kerala is one of the most renowned tourism destinations all over the globe. Hospitality sector plays a vital role in the development and success of a tourism destination, as this sector cater the basic needs of the travellers such as accommodation, food and other travel related services. Indian hospitality is proficient to compete with the global leaders which resulted in the hike of tourist arrivals and demand for superior services. Accreditation for the compliance for the various industrial standards may strengthen the industry to lead safe, secure and sustainable growth. The broad objective of the study is to examine how far hospitality establishments are accredited for the compliance of various standards. The study also examines the issues involved for the non-compliance of industrial accreditation standards. This descriptive study relies on primary and secondary data, wherein primary data is collected by interviewing hoteliers in Kerala. The study reveals that majority of the establishments were non-accredited for the compliance of various industrial standards even after getting industrial status in the year 1986. Among those accredited establishments majority of the establishments are accredited for the compliance of ISO 14000 standards and few with ISO 9000 standards. Lack of industrial subsidies and incentives, and procedural hitches were the root cause for non-accreditation for the compliance of various industrial standards. Single window clearance mechanisms along with incentives and subsidies will favour the hoteliers to move in the path of accreditation and will strengthen sustainable tourism development in the state.

**Key Words:** Hospitality Sector, Accreditation, Standards, ISO 14001, ISO 9001.

### Introduction

Tourism is one of the most prominent service sectors accelerating steady growth over the past years in Kerala's economy. Tourism plays a vital role in the economic development of the state as its multifarious effect supports and sustains other industries and sectors. Hospitality sector is one of the most popular segments of tourism which supports the industry by providing basic needs of the travellers such as accommodation and other travel related auxiliary services. In Kerala, hospitality sector is highly fragmented and the major

service providers are hotels, resorts, homestays, lodges, Yathri nivas, guest houses, house boats etc. where in the major players are hotels, resorts and homestays.

A safe, secure, comfortable, clean and hygiene place to rest and stay is one of the basic need of a traveller. Hoteliers are obliged to ensure that the premises of the establishment are safe and secure from external attack and internal issues. To ensure safe and secure environment, adequate safety and security measures need to be convened by adhering stipulated

legal frame. Hoteliers are also obliged to preserve and conserve the environment and nature as tourism is routed in the natural environment. Being a part of service industry, accommodation sector too impact the natural environment if not managed effectively.

Accreditation to various industrial standards such as ISO 9001, ISO 14000, ISO 22000, HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) and OHSAS (Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series) 18001 will help the hoteliers to ensure a safe, secure and environmentally compatible sustainable industrial operation. Accreditation to these standards can be utilised as a promotional tool to attract customers as the present educated customers prefer to avail safe and environmentally friendly services.

### **Objectives**

The broad objective of the study is to examine how far hospitality establishments of tourism are accredited for the compliance of various industrial standards

The specific objectives includes,

1. To portrait the various industrial accreditation standards applicable to tourism industry in Kerala.
2. To assess the accreditation status for the compliance of standards by the hospitality establishments in Kerala.
3. To examine the issues involved by the hotelier for the non-compliance of industrial accreditation standards.

### **Methodology**

The study is descriptive in nature. The data needed for the study is collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data is collected by interviewing hoteliers by using questionnaire. Secondary data

needed for the study is collected from existing research studies, articles from journals, newspaper, magazines and internet, and official website of Kerala tourism and other industry stakeholders. The study covers the major players of the hospitality sector such as hotels and resorts. Stratified random sampling is used to select 247 samples (108 hotels and 67 resorts) from the total population of 691 hospitality establishments.

The study made an attempt to examine the application of industrial standards such as ISO 9001, ISO 1400 and various other industrial standards such as ISO 22000, HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) is being exempted as these certification comes under the purview of Food Safety and Security Act, which is mandatory for all establishments directly or indirectly dealing with food article business in India.

### **Accreditation of Hospitality Establishments**

#### ***ISO 9001***

ISO 9001 is an internationally accepted standards for quality management systems requirements applicable to industries and organisations regardless of size and nature. This aims at the continuous improvement of the overall performance of the firm by ensuring the customers are receiving produces and services of the right quality standards and all other stakeholders' expectations are fulfilled. ISO 9001 ensures customer satisfaction through constant supply of quality products and services by confirming legal requirements.

#### ***ISO 14001***

ISO 14001 provides requirements for environmental management system to enhance environmental performance in

industries and organisations. Organisations are provided with a framework of sustainable guidelines to protect environment and the changing socio-economic conditions. Skilful utilisation of environment, society and economy to preserve and conserve future demand without compromising present needs is the core of this international standards.

**OHSAS 18001: 2007**

OHSAS 18001 is an internationally accepted principle to ensure a safe and healthy workplace by managing the internal environment of the organisation. It is an occupational health and safety system continually measures and improves health and safety aspects of organisation to ensure safe working environment by controlling the risk.

**HACCP**

Hazard analysis and critical control points or HACCP is an internationally known risk management system for food safety which identify assess, evaluate and control hazards in the food production systems in

hospitality and other food related industry. The implementation of HACCP system enables organisation to anticipate and identifies the hazards and risks associated with food production and determines critical control points (CCP) to reduce food hazards and be followed with monitoring and auditing to ensure the food production system is within the critical limit. In Kerala, auditing and certification of HACCP system is provided by National Centre for HACCP Certification (NCHC).

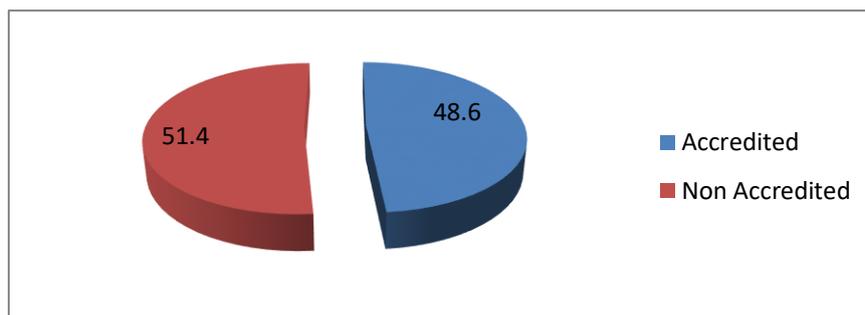
**ISO 22000**

ISO 22000 comes under the family of International Standards which emphasis food safety management. ISO 22000 certification provides a framework for the organisation for managing the food safety responsibility in the best manner. This certification is applicable to organisations which are involved in any aspects of food trade. This certificate can create confidence and assurance to the customers that the organisation is following food safety policies and standards.

**Table No. 1  
 Accredited for Compliance with Standard**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	120	48.6	48.6	48.6
	No	127	51.4	51.4	99.6
	Total	247	100.0	100.0	

Source: Sample Survey



**Figure No. 1 - Accredited for Compliance with Standard**

The table shows that among the total establishments, 48.6% establishments are accredited for the compliance of standards

and 51.4% of the establishments are non-accredited for the compliance of standard.

**Table No. 2**

**Accreditation Frequencies**

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Accreditation	ISO 14001	119	76.8%	100.0%
	ISO 9001	36	23.2%	30.3%
	OHSAS 18001	0	0%	0%
Total		155	100.0%	130.3%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Source: Sample Survey

The analysis reveals that out of the 120 accredited establishments 155 individual observations arrived. Among the 155 individual observations, 76.8% respondents confirmed their establishment is accredited with ISO 14001 and 23.2% responds accreditation of their establishment with ISO 9001.

All establishments accredited with ISO 14001 is accredited with ISO 14001 only, whereas among those establishments accredited with ISO 9001, only 30.3% of the establishments were accredited with ISO 9001 only and the remaining 69.7% have accreditation in both ISO 14001 and ISO 9001.

**Issues involved in the compliance of Industrial Standards**

Even after attaining industrial status, hospitality establishments shows reluctant approach to the compliance of industrial standards. The various issues involved in the compliance of various standards examined for the study includes seasonal variation in demand, cost involved, lack of incentives and subsidies, administrative delay and procedural difficulties.

The issues involved in the compliance of industrial standards are analysed as follows,

**Table No. 3**

**Discriminant Analysis and Tests of equality of group Means – Issues Involved in the compliance of Industrial Standards**

	Hotels			Resorts		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Effect	Mean	Std. Deviation	Effect
Seasonal variation in demand	2.322	.9668	Low	3.791	.9776	Low
Procedural difficulty	4.400	.7138	High	4.493	.5037	High
Cost	4.533	.6883	High	4.239	.6298	High
Administrative delay	2.744	.8398	Low	2.716	.7747	Low
Lack of Incentives and subsidies	4.961	.1939	High	4.910	.2877	High

Source: Sample Survey

Discriminant analysis has been performed to examine the issues involved in the compliance of industrial standards in hotels and resorts. The result shown below:

Seasonal variation in demand as an issue involved in the compliance of industrial standards is low in hotels (2.322) and resorts (3.791). Procedural difficulties in the implementation as an issue in the compliance of industrial standards are high in hotels (4.400) and resorts (4.493). Cost involved in the implementation as an issue in the compliance of industrial standards is high in hotels (4.533) and resorts (4.239). Administrative delay as an issue involved in the compliance of industrial standards is low in hotels (2.744) and resorts (2.716). Lack of incentives and subsidies as an issue involved in the compliance of industrial standards found high in hotels (4.961) and resorts (4.910).

From the analysis, it is clear that the procedure involved in the accreditation is complicated and a single window clearance mechanism would be highly appreciable to encourage hoteliers to move

on accreditation. The cost involved in the accreditation is found high and lack of incentives and subsidies for accreditation is another issues opined by the hoteliers. Supports in the form of incentives and subsidies along industrial line will be favourable for hoteliers to initiate accreditation process.

### Conclusion

A safe, secure, hygiene and healthy place to rest and relax is the right of a traveller. The hoteliers are obliged to ensure these as the industry is competing in the international market. Accreditation to the compliance of various standards may strengthen the hoteliers to render hassle free service and to compete in the global market. Accreditation to the compliance of various standards can be strategized as promotional instrument as the present educated customers prefer quality standard services. The government need to initiate or activate subsidies and incentives to the hoteliers to motivate them to move on accreditation as the cost involved is seemed to be high.

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