

## **India Is Positioned to Become One of the World's Largest Hotel Markets**

India's hospitality sector is witnessing rapid expansion, with domestic players scaling up and global brands strengthening their presence. Strong demand across weddings, MICE, corporate and leisure travel is expected to keep occupancies stable at 72–74 percent in FY26, with room rates remaining elevated.

However, industry experts warn of a growing leadership gap beneath this momentum. While hotel pipelines are expanding, the development of experienced leaders is not keeping pace. Hotels rely heavily on skilled professionals shaped through years of operational experience — a process that cannot be fast-tracked.

The concern is further intensified by a weakening entry-level pipeline, with thousands of seats in hotel management institutes going unfilled. As fewer young professionals enter the sector, the future supply of General Managers and senior leaders comes under risk.

Stakeholders believe the issue is not just talent availability, but perception. Compared to other sectors, hospitality often struggles to attract youth due to concerns around work-life balance and starting salaries, despite offering strong long-term growth, global exposure and leadership opportunities.

With the industry largely relying on lateral hiring to fill gaps, experts stress the need for a collective effort to reposition hospitality as an aspirational career and strengthen the talent pipeline from the ground up.

As the sector grows more complex and competitive, addressing this leadership challenge will be critical to sustaining India's hospitality growth story.

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