POST-COVID 19: CHANGES IN STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE OF THE HOUSEKEEPING DEPARTMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON ECO-FRIENDLY SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

[1]Kumari Shiwani, [2]Vikas Singh*, [3]Mohammad Soyav, [4]Arvind Kumar and [5]Tanuja Kaushik

[1,3]Amity University, Gurugram, Haryana, India

[2]School of Hospitality & Tourism, Galgotias University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India

[4]Student Welfare & International Relations; Head, Technology Business Incubator, G.D Goenka University, Gurugram, Haryana, India

[5]Chandigarh Engineering College Jhanjeri, Mohali, Punjab

ABSTRACT

The planet is threatened by the novel coronavirus (COVID 19). COVID 19 pandemic is changing the Perspective the hotel industry is looking at. This paper will be focusing on the issues of COVID 19 in India and its impact on the hotel industry and changes in standard operating procedures, and their impact on sustainable and environmentally friendly practices; the paper has some significance, as the hotel industry is greatly affected by the COVID 19 crisis worldwide. The study will assess the impact of COVID 19 and the standard operating procedures made by the hotel housekeeping, and its impact on eco-friendly sustainable practices with particular reference to India. The research study will assess & analyses the effects of COVID 19 on eco-friendly and sustainable practices with specific regard to the India Pre & Post Pandemic. The study will explore the load on the environment after this COVID 19 and what steps we can take to preserve our environment for our future as it is now a challenging task to protect our environment because hotels have to work more on this aspect.

Keyword: COVID 19, Hotel Industry, Eco friendly, and Sustainable practices, Standard operating procedures

INTRODUCTION

(Abhimanyu, 2020) explained how the world's economies have been harmed by covid-19, with India's economy no exception. Lockdown and Covid-19 have various effects on the hospitality industry, particularly in India, with a few notable outcomes including lower GDP, lost revenues, the unexpected closure of businesses, loss of tourism, and, most importantly, a negative impact on citizens' and international travellers' health. The issue of Eco friendly and Sustainable practices came into existence on the agenda of international policymakers since the Rio Conference through three limply marked stages. The initial stage was in the 1990s focused heavily on the encouragement of cleaner and more well-organized processes for industrialized buyer supplies (Hertwich 2005). The second stage, in the early 2000s, drew awareness moved to "greener" forms of family consuming goods supported by plans and policies consumers awareness, by creating such eco-labels on goods packaging, and motivating consumers to make accountable purchases (Matthias et al., 2016; Sunstein 2015). The third stage, in the later period of since 2008 when there was the start of worldwide fiscal catastrophe going on, there was a visible emergence of the need in the communal and organizational preparations that be responsible for modern commercial based need and buying behaviour so that there might be a shortfall in the habitual consumption patterns (Cohen 2019; Foden et al. 2019; Akenji et al. 2016).

(Wadim, 2020) discussed that the devastation caused by COVID-19 pushed the world to devise a revival plan for hospitality & tourism businesses. Advanced technology for countering the spread of covid-19 is already in place, and the same must be utilized relatively, as is the case with the healthcare system. In counties like Hong Kong, bracelets are being used to track & quarantine travellers arriving post the spread of covid-19. This could be indeed a contemporary standard operating procedure for hospitality operations. (Kalina, 2020) discussed that for attaining and ensuring the guests' arrival into the hotels, it is essential for hospitality organizations to focus on the management of solid waste as hotels, if used as quarantine centres, are expected to be cleaned and sanitized the way hospital is.

This article aims to identify the key operating procedures applied by hotel housekeeping brigades and departments, changes that have been made concerning routine operating procedures in these hotels due to COVID-19, and mediating the employees' behaviour post-COVID-19 at their workplace post-COVID -19. Executive Housekeepers and hotel housekeepers who are managing hotel operations and while COVID-19 devastation is going on were also probed to identify key operating procedures and changes applied by

hotels housekeeping brigades and departments, changes which have been made concerning routine operating procedures in these hotels due to COVID-19. The study also questioned various housekeeping staff members and hotel managers from the housekeeping department across Delhi-NCR who are managing hotel operations and while COVID-19. The objective of the investigation is:

- Analyze standard operating procedures made by the hotel housekeeping team to protect the environment.

- Investigate out the changes made concerning routine operating procedures due to COVID 19.

- Analyze the employees' behaviour post-COVID 19 at their workplace.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employees' Behaviour & Hospitality Industry

(Kalina, 2020) suggested that the hotel top management, Head of the departments, and superiors of the line staff must take great care of employees' perception and their need for security from damage from workplace injury from the use and exposure of new chemicals and infection COVID-19 working in the hotels. The study also revealed that if employers care about employees' security & safety concerns, it ensures that they are motivated and finish assigned work in time and adhere to the standard.

(Nhamo, 2020) suggested that the international level of standards of safety about reviving hospitality and tourism sector must be executed to and it also helps to boost employee morale and guests, assuming more secure and safe under these. If this happens, employee performance and wellbeing will surely improve in the Indian hospitality sector along with guest increased guest footfall.

Sustainable Hotel Operation & Inclined Hotel Business Opportunity- A Perspective

(SHT, 2020) discussed that the airline sector & hospitality industry affected by COVID-19 are finding it challenging to understand likely strategies for extenuating the menace of COVID-19. Communal estrangement, hygiene of hands with some other set of rules must be sternly enforced until a vaccine is contrived. (Folinas, 2020) discovered that the COVID-19 affected environment has provided a new opportunity and inclination of industrial possibility for the hotel business, as customers isolated due to COVID-19 symptoms remain in hotels.

The major result of COVID-19, according to (Kumar 2020), is disturbing the whole human race. Countries are even attempting to address it and reacting with various essential programmes and endeavours. Nonetheless, the reaction is dependent on governments' intentions, scientific discoveries, and society's support for actions and laws designed to combat COVID-19 and stop its spread. Technological advances may help significantly in the functioning and developing the new service protocols as it has helped manage and maintain the medical system.

(Stefan, 2020) discussed that there may be a change in the traditional perception and definition of tourism, the economy, and society due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the study, the authors also advocated and emphasized the development of new infrastructure of sustainable tourism models- and suggested picking up the pace for the makeover of tourism for being more sustainable. COVID-19 has also grown a viewpoint to make another study of the worldwide tourism system conversion.

Curtailing close interactions and contacts of human beings with each other and reinvention of the service delivery system will be a new normal post-covid-19. Due to social distancing, the food & beverage outlets will redesign seating standards to ensure a safe distance between the tables. Hotel guests will prefer food being cooked in front of them like gueridon service or cooking in a separate zone such as live cooking zones or counters. Automatic drink pourers, housekeeping staff training for appropriate sanitization techniques, more strict laws about staff health monitoring, cleaning, hygiene, sanitization and safety certification are few to be motioned new normal post-covid-19 (Jain, 2020). Singh (2020) states that food plays a vital role in guest attraction and satisfaction.

The de-globalization occurred due to COVID-19 developed an opportunity for the tourism industry to re-structure– and correct the tourism policies supporting the belief system of sustainability tourism (Piotr, 2020).

Hotel Operating Procedures- Protecting The Environment

COVID-19 affected the Indian tourism industry; the infectious virus has quickly infected towns and cities in the entire nation. Tour operators and hotels had to suspend their operations and close momentarily or, in some cases, abridged their hotel processes and inventory of the Room. The federal government, business enterprises, and other stakeholders must tender monetary support to the hospitality and tourism industry. Hospitality & tourism organizations must respond rapidly and tune such solutions, which can control and help monitor employee arrangement and cost control. It is significant for hospitality organizations to preserve a chart of all categories of prices in this disaster to stay competitive. To do such a definite respite on duties and impositions of taxes on these industries, providing easy loans with low-interest rates is also essential for improving and boosting these industries (Kumar, 2020).

Environmental pollution is also caused by the hotels & tourism industry. This reveals the value of green innovation and its possible strength in developing sustainable tourism and hospitality operations based on innovative green procedures (Asadi, 2020). Several obstacles may create hurdles in the process of implementation of green initiatives and sustainable tourism practices and are well-known as after-sales service in with the element of domination, precincts about the management of workforce, essential preliminary help from bureaucrats' and governmental offices, lack of green knowledge and green network confined due to monetary limitations of organizations and it is one of the prime and unavoidable elements for creating new guest understanding and ecological achievability efforts of the hospitality organizations (Chan, 2020).

Hygiene and protection from COVID-19 are the primary expectation of guests due to the ongoing pandemic caused by COVID-19, so hospitality organizations are anticipated to provide guests with the facilities with the assurance of the same into all their new processes and operating procedures post-covid-19. The hotel industry has dipped into chasm extensively and pessimistically due to COVID-19. Advanced technology coupled with substantial contact between hotel

staff and guests is the right combination in the present scenario to develop tremendous guest service protocols of guest service (Awan, 2020). This may be provided with the help of innovation about technological advances. Technological advances may help attain and maintain the distance between guests and hotel staff, boosting hygiene, protection, and spotless guest rooms, public areas and developed for new and expected guest exposure, post COVID-19 era (Shin, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

Approximately 150 hospitality staff (Head of the department, managers and essential staff of housekeeping department) who have been working in the hotels as and when needed during the covid-19 pandemic were invited to participate in the study, and 38 of them accepted the invitation. Further, the above discussion in the literature review have been included in the survey conducted, and received responses from hospitality staff were measured on four critically important parameters. This multi-parameter approach helps interpret the results with more clarity and in an objective manner. A short, focused, structured questionnaire for all hospitality staff working in housekeeping departments in a different hotel in Delhi-NCR, i.e. Head of the department, managers and essential staff of the housekeeping department, was prepared. The questionnaire was validated before circulation.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section responds to the objectives that had been established for the investigation.

- Finding standard operating procedures made by the hotel housekeeping team to protect the environment.

From the survey, the necessary standard operating procedures identified by Executive housekeepers, housekeeping managers, and other mid-level management staff of the housekeeping department were average PH level of chemicals, washed and dumping of cleaning products volatile organic compounds (VOC) in cleaning products, and transportation schedules of chemical delivery (see Table I) that were recognized as necessary from their Perspective. In-room guest amenities and supplies were environment-friendly post-COVID-19 as from the survey key initiatives as identified and strongly agreed by housekeeping staff were waste containers made of non-disposable materials in holes for disposing of covid-19 related waste, pencil used in the guest rooms are woodfree, the scribbling pad and other printed collaterals were made from recycled paper, use of non-disposable dispensers in the hotel and guest rooms, post covid-19, disposal of used soap & bath amenities from the guest room post-covid-19, used the mini-bottles or soap bars in the hotels guest room post-covid-19, used the sachets of amenities which were provided on guest request only, to manage the waste like the leftover of used amenities and supplies from guest room post-covid-19 and segregating of waste originated from COVID-19 infected rooms at the origin itself (see Table II).

	Questions	Total	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Standard operating procedures made by the hotel housekeeping team to protect the environment	The standard PH level of chemicals was an important criterion to select the chemicals post-covid-19.	38	2.63%	5.26%	10.53%	23.68%	57.89%
	The cleaning products are washed and ensured that they are not dumped into natural streams, and rivers post covid-19.	38	2.63%	10.53%	7.89%	18.42%	60.53%
	Hotels have ensured that volatile organic compounds (VOC) in cleaning products do not affect air quality as they also affect and become part of outdoor smog, post-covid-19.	38	2.63%	10.53%	10.53%	34.21%	42.11%
	Hotels have ensured that transportation schedules of chemical delivery are planned so that it saves on too much vehicle transportation, which may lead to carbon emission otherwise, post covid-19.	38	0.00%	5.26%	21.05%	23.68%	50.00%

Table I: standard operating procedures made by the hotel housekeeping team to protect the environment

covid-19	Questions	Total	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Questions	Total	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Waste containers are made of non-disposable materials in holes for disposing of covid-19 related waste.	38	0.00%	13.16%	18.42%	31.58%	36.84%
The pencil used in the guest rooms is wood free. If not, other provisions ensure environmental friendliness by choosing the right kind of pencils being used.	38	0.00%	7.89%	18.42%	28.95%	44.74%
The scribbling pad and other printed collaterals were made from recycled paper.	38	0.00%	10.53%	13.16%	26.32%	50.00%
Non-disposable dispensers were used in the hotel and guest rooms, post covid-19.	38	2.63%	7.89%	26.32%	23.68%	39.47%
Waste management- The housekeeping department threw the used soap & bath amenities from the guest room post-covid-19.	38	5.26%	5.26%	26.32%	23.68%	39.47%
Waste management- The housekeeping department used the mini-bottles or soap bars in the hotel's guest room post-covid-19.	38	7.89%	15.79%	15.79%	23.68%	36.84%
Waste management- The housekeeping department used the sachets of amenities provided on guest request only to manage the waste like the leftover used amenities and supplies from guest room post-covid-19.	38	2.63%	7.89%	26.32%	21.05%	42.11%
Waste management- Hotel, if used for quarantine centre, managed their waste generated from covid-19 infected rooms by segregating it at the origin itself.	38	5.26%	2.63%	28.95%	15.79%	47.37%
Carbon footprint- Due to the guest rooms' extended cleaning and disinfestation processes, housekeeping HLP(Heat, Light, Power) consumption reduced in context with its duration of use & cost impact?	38	0.00%	7.89%	18.42%	31.58%	42.11%

Table II: standard operating procedures made by the hotel housekeeping team to protect the environment- In-room guest amenities and supplies

- Finding out the changes made concerning normal operating procedures due to COVID 19.

From the survey, the fundamental changes which have been made concerning routine operating procedures due to COVID-19 identified by the housekeeping staff were the provision of PPE (personal protective equipment) post-covid-19 to the housekeeping staff, change in PH level of chemicals used for sanitization of COVID-19 infected rooms, change in routine cleaning procedures, regular shampooing of carpets in the guest room if the Room was used for quarantine or guest was found infected with covid-19, change of mattress protector regularly, sanitization of rooms being used as quarantine rooms- the frequency of cleaning and turnover of the Room was minimum 24 hours for next arrival and handling of the guest requests for emergency items only about providing occupied room service during covid-19 (see Table III).

		Questions	Total	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
made concerning routine operating procedures	due to COVID 19	All housekeeping staff was provided with PPEs post-covid-19.	38	0.00%	7.89%	31.58%	21.05%	39.47%
		The changes in Room cleaning SOPs for Disinfecting surfaces post covid-19 were based on the PH level of chemicals.	38	0.00%	7.89%	34.21%	13.16%	44.74%
		There were changes in Room cleaning SOPs for routine cleaning post-covid-19.	38	5.26%	2.63%	21.05%	15.79%	55.26%

	Questions	Total	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	In-Room cleaning SOPs for carpet cleaning, post-covid-19 carpets were regularly shampooed if the Room was used for quarantine or the guest was infected with covid-19.	38	0.00%	5.26%	21.05%	18.42%	55.26%
	Room cleaning SOPs for mattress protector change frequency, was regularly, post covid-19?	38	0.00%	5.26%	18.42%	26.32%	50.00%
	Sanitization of rooms being used as quarantine rooms- the frequency of cleaning and turnover of the Room was a minimum of 24 hours for the next arrival.	38	2.63%	2.63%	10.53%	34.21%	50.00%
	Guest request handling- housekeeping staff was briefed to handle the guest requests for emergency items only about providing occupied room service post covid-19	38	2.63%	2.63%	15.79%	36.84%	42.11%

Table III: the changes which have been made concerning routine operating procedures due to COVID- 19

- Mediating the employees' behaviour post-COVID 19 at their workplace.

The respondent felt that due to hotel training and care towards housekeeping employees during COVID-19, the critical employee behaviours were on-time reporting. Still, more leave requests post-covid-19 (hotel manager mediated housekeeping employees for this), employee wellness issues (in this case respondents were of mixed opinion as the equal number of respondents felt strongly agree as well agree), display of interest to assigned extra duties post covid-19, support and efforts of housekeeping employees in following the new cleaning guidelines and downfall in the way employees used to behave earlier with guest, post covid-19 (see Table IV).

	Questions	Total	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Mediating the employees' behaviour post-COVID 19 at their workplace	The employee reported on-time post-covid-19.	38	2.63%	0.00%	18.42%	26.32%	52.63%
	Employee Leave records- the housekeeping staff put more leave requests post-covid-19.	38	5.26%	2.63%	28.95%	23.68%	39.47%
	There were many employees wellness issues about workplace injury due to new chemicals used post-covid-19.	38	2.63%	7.89%	21.05%	34.21%	34.21%
	The employee displayed an interest in assigned extra duties post covid-19.	38	0.00%	5.26%	18.42%	26.32%	50.00%
	The employees made efforts to follow the new guidelines post-covid-19.	38	2.63%	0.00%	23.68%	15.79%	57.89%
	There was a downfall in the employees' behaviour while interacting with guests, post-covid-19.	38	5.26%	7.89%	18.42%	34.21%	34.21%

Table IV: Mediating the employees' behaviour post-COVID 19 at their workplace

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This article has explored the importance of core operating procedures for environment protection, keeping COVID-19 in the discussion, change made to standard operating procedures during COVID-19, and various key employee behaviour aspects mediated by housekeeping managers. These must be developed and improved to the next level due to changing coronavirus strains (COVID-19). The paper also reported on the views of hotel housekeeping staff that have successfully developed housekeeping practices useful for hotel operations during and post COVID-19.

To advance on guests' security concerns and endow with superior and improved measures of guest and staff safety, it is of utmost importance and prime priority to conduct potential exploration and research that delves into enhanced advances of technology to fight COVID-19. This will also impact employee psychology positively if they feel that there are no safety concerns in the workplace.

The way organizations deal with the threat of COVID-19 plays a vital role in delivering the expected output and generation of revenue. So, a detailed analysis based on research focused on management practices and actions taken by organizations and their contributing effect on business

processes and further revenue generation is of paramount significance and required.

One of the significant challenges posts COVID-19 is managing and handling medical waste and other solid waste. The debris from hospitals' isolation wards, centres used to quarantine needs to be taken carefully and differently, while regular waste may be managed per the standard waste handling provisions. As anticipated, the use of plastic will increase due to the excess use of personal protection kits and healthcare items, and not much can be done to stop it. However, the apt handling of existing handling facilities can be avoided, with severely harmful effects.

REFERENCE

1. Akenji, Lewis, Magnus B, Raimund B, Arnold T, and Heinz S, (2016), "Ossified Materialism: Introduction to the Special Volume on Absolute Reductions in Materials Throughput and Emissions. Journal of Cleaner Production 132: 1–12.

2. Asadi, S., Pourhashemi, S. O., Nilashi, M., Abdullah, R., Samad, S., Yadegaridehkordi, E., & Razali, N. S. (2020), Investigating influence of green innovation on sustainability performance: A case on the Malaysian hotel industry. Journal of cleaner production, 120860.

3. Awan, M. I., Shamim, A., & Ahn, J. (2020), Implementing' cleanliness is half of faith in redesigning tourists, experiences and salvaging the hotel industry in Malaysia during COVID-19 pandemic, Journal of Islamic Marketing.

4. Awasthi A., Soyav M., Shiwani K., (2020), "Effect of Covid-19 on Tourism Industry", International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development, Volume-5, Issue-1, pp.857-859.

5. Chan, E. S., Okumus, F., & Chan, W. (2020), What hinders hotels' adoption of environmental technologies: A quantitative study. International Journal of Hospitality Management, 84, 102324.

6. Cohen, Maurie., (2019) "Introduction to the Special Issue: Innovative Perspectives on Systems of Sustainable Consumption and Production." Sustainability: Science, Practice, and Policy 15 (1): 104–110

7. Economic times. (2020, April 23). Indian tourism industry seeks immediate 'survival measures': FAITH. Retrieved from economictimes.indiatimes.com: https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/ hotels-/-restaurants/indian-tourismindustry-seeks-immediate-survival-measures-faith/articleshow/75319891.cms (assessed on 11 January 2021)

8. Foden, Mike, Alison B., David E, Leith S, and Matt W., (2019), "The Water-Energy-Food Nexus At Home; New Opportunities for Policy Interventions in Household Sustainability." Geographical Journal 185 (4):406–418.

9. Folinas, S., Duquenne, M. N., & Metaxas, T. (2020). Problems and Opportunities in the Hospitality Industry in a Masked and Rubber-Gloved World. Virtual Economics, 3(3), 7-24.

10. Hertwich, Edgar (2005), "Life Cycle Approaches to Sustainable Consumption: A Critical Review." Environmental Science and Technology 39 (13): 4673–4684.

11. Jain, D. (2020), Effect of COVID-19 on Restaurant Industry–How to Cope With Changing Demand. Effect of COVID-19 on Restaurant Industry–How to Cope With Changing Demand (April 16, 2020).

12. Justice after COVID-19, (2020), Tourism Geographies, DOI: 10.1080/14616688.2020.1757748

13. Kalina, M., & Tilley, E. (2020), "This is our next problem": cleaning up from the covid-19 response. Waste Management, 202-205,

14. Kumar, A. (2020), Disastrous impact of Coronavirus (COVID 19) on Tourism and Hospitality Industry in India. Journal of Xi'an University of Architecture & Technology, 12.

15. Kumar, V. (2020), Indian Tourism Industry and COVID-19: Present Scenario. Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Education, 10, 179-185.

16. Lehner, Matthias, Oksana Mont, and Eva Heiskanen. (2016), "Nudging: A Promising Tool for Sustainable Consumption Behavior?" Journal of Cleaner Production 134:166–177.

17. Nhamo, G.,(2020), Counting the Cost of COVID-19 on the Global Tourism Industry

18. Piotr Niewiadomski (2020), COVID-19: from temporary de-globalization to a rediscovery of tourism?, Tourism Geographies

19. Shin, H., & Kang, J. (2020), Reducing perceived health risk to attract hotel customers in the COVID-19 pandemic era: Focused on technology innovation for social distancing and cleanliness. International Journal of Hospitality Management, 91, 102664.

20. SHT, K. (2020), Impact of COVID-19 on Tourism Industry: A Review.

21. Singh, V., & Tharakan, Y. G. (2020). Marketing Trends in Food Tourism to Attract International Tourists in Delhi Hotels. Studies in Indian Place Names (UGC Care Journal) ISSN, 2394-3114.

22. Stefan Gössling, Daniel Scott & C. Michael Hall (2020), Pandemics, tourism and global change: a rapid assessment of COVID-19, Journal of Sustainable Tourism

23. Sunstein, Cass. (2015), "Behavioural Economics, Consumption and Environmental Protection." In Handbook of Research on Sustainable Consumption, edited by Lucia Reisch and John Thøgersen, 313–327. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar