



Role of Housekeeping Cleaning Equipment and Agent in the world of Hospitality Industry

Pritesh Chatterjee

Assistant Professor, Amity School of Hospitality, Amity University, Kolkata, West Bengal, India.

ABSTRACT

Nothing attracts customers more than a spick and span hospitality environment. No standard of service, courteousness or glamour can equal the happiness a customer has upon entering a spotless, clean, and conveniently arranged room and amenities. Management and guests both agree that maintaining a clean and tidy room environment is a pre-requisite to command a fair compensation and get repeat business, hence, creating a loyal customer base and increased profits. The Housekeeping Department of the Hotel Industry stands for one motto- 'Creating a home away from home'. The Housekeeping Department takes immense pride in maintaining the utmost standards of cleanliness and quality. The target of all accommodation establishment is to offer their clients with hygienic, pleasant, serene, and welcoming surroundings that offer complete value for client's money. Housekeeping department in hotel plays a vital role in providing guests a delightful experience by ensuing innovative trends & practices. These trends & practices helps in creating a niche for hotels in this competitive market of hospitality. The main goal of housekeeping and management business is to meet customer needs while achieving profile targets. The customer satisfaction is the very important factor for the housekeeping and management business. The major indoor, residential, and commercial housekeeping service sustain cost effectiveness, save time, improve service quality, and improve efficiency of department. The target of all accommodation establishment is to offer their clients with hygienic, pleasant, serene, and welcoming surroundings that offer complete value for client's money. The sale of the rooms and services constitute a minimum of 50% of all sales, making it a major constituent of the hotel's margin of profits. Now, the effort and hard work that the housekeeping department makes in giving their clients a desirable experience often has a direct bearing on the guest's stay in the hotel. Hotel rooms and suites are the heart of a hotel. And the housekeeping department not only prepares tidy and comfortable guestrooms on a regular basis for arriving clients, but also cleans and maintains a certain quality of rooms in a hotel so that the surroundings look as fresh as new and attract customers to stay longer or choose the services again in future. Thus, Housekeeping is an ancillary department that is committed to devoting its services in a huge way towards the overall reputation and success of the hotel industry.

Keywords: Housekeeping department, Equipment, Hospitality industry, Hotel, COVID-19

1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To understand the significance of innovative practices followed while choosing cleaning equipment in hotels.
- To study the innovative trends of the cleaning equipment that will be beneficial for the hotel and hospitality industry.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research paper is mostly based on secondary data sources. Secondary data were collected through various sources such as Website reports, hotels brochures etc. Secondary Data was also collected for this paper from Reports of the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India 2019, Statistical Handbook of India, and other related information has been collected from the policy papers as well as research papers published in various journals. All collected data was analyzed with the help of trend line analysis. The data is also collected from research journal, magazines & internet websites.

3. INTRODUCTION

It is often said that the job of housekeeping department is a well-rounded operation that tirelessly works for a time frame of 24 x 7 x 365. Other than the hotel industry, professional housekeeping personnel are highly in demand in cruise liners and luxury settings. Since several such organizations prefer to outsource housekeeping functions, contract housekeeping is becoming an extremely popular choice these days. To achieve the highest quality and standards effective cleaning is required which is done now a day by using the modern cleaning equipment and cleaning agent. The efficient and effective cleaning and maintenance will depend upon highest quality cleaning equipment and agents by using them correctly. Selection of the appropriate cleaning equipment and agents play an important role in the entire cleaning process because only five to ten percent of the overall cost incurred on cleaning is accounted for by cleaning equipment and cleaning agents. There are often being various methods of doing any cleaning task and various type of cleaning equipment that can be used for the same. It is the duty of the Executive Housekeeper to select the most appropriate piece of cleaning equipment and

agents according to the requirement of the hotel. A few large pieces of cleaning equipment may be considered as fixed assets, whereas many types of cleaning equipment that falls under the category of recycled inventory items. The appropriate choice of good quality cleaning equipment can be very useful as it could save costs due to breakdown, reduces fatigue and tension and ensure overall efficiency in handling operations. Equipment used in the cleaning of surface, various furniture and fittings in a hotel building include both manual and electrical cleaning equipment. Manual cleaning equipment does not require electricity to function whereas mechanical equipment do not function without electricity. That is the reason mechanical cleaning equipment are also known as electrical cleaning equipment. As the days are passing people are paying more attention towards housekeeping department, for example the room attendants are also given training as how to handle the cleaning equipment efficiently as more and more use of electrical and mechanical equipment are increasing these days. Similarly, in hotel public areas more use of sophisticated mechanical cleaning equipment is used now a days and in the on-premises hotel laundry. In five-star hotels in recent times, the robot cleaner is being introduced. Also, as we are passing through the COVID-19 pandemic period, there has been a notable change in the standard operating procedures while cleaning and using the cleaning equipment in the hotel and hospitality industry. For example, cleaning tasks are carried out by wearing masks and personal protective equipment (PPE Kits) by room attendants and public area attendants at all-star category hotels. Special attention is also given on the health-related issues of staff and guests. Only fully vaccinated housekeeping staff are being allowed to enter the hotel premises and use the cleaning equipment in the guest rooms and public areas of a hotel.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Identifying classification and function of various cleaning equipment for efficient cleaning and maintenance are dependent upon high quality cleaning equipment, correctly used. Though only 5 to 10 % of the overall cost incurred on cleaning is accounted for the cleaning equipment and agent, selecting the ideal equipment plays a major role in the cleaning process. Equipment used in the cleaning are broadly divided into two categories, manual and mechanical cleaning equipment. As the first impression of a guest about the hotel entirely depends on the functioning of the housekeeping department, so the role of cleaning equipment is enormous. Proper selection of cleaning equipment, modern and new technology used in the cleaning equipment is the latest trend followed by the manufacturers of cleaning equipment like Diversey, Jangro, Charnock and so on as it is in demand in the hotel and hospitality industry. This research paper mainly focusses on the attention of the hotel and hospitality industry to the new technologically advanced cleaning equipment which most of the five-star hotels are using or are very keen to use after assessing their advantages and disadvantages. Since Housekeeping department is the backbone and often referred to as the nervous system of the hotel industry, the responsibility of this department is huge. This research paper also tries to highlight the importance of cleanliness and the reason for which it is often said that "cleanliness is next to godliness". The words like cleaning, maintaining hygiene, sanitation may sound simple but it's having the highest importance to every individual because nobody will ever want to stay in an unclean or shabby environment. So, it is eminent that without technologically advanced cleaning equipment, a hotel cannot achieve its basic objective of providing a clean, hygienic, safe, and sanitized environment to its guests. The main purpose of this research paper is to highlight the role and strengths of the effective usage of cleaning equipment in hotel and hospitality sector. Apart from this, the Research Paper also focusses on the correct ergonomic techniques required to be followed by the housekeepers for using the cleaning equipment in the hotel industry because incorrect usage might lead to Musculo skeletal disorder or Musculo skeletal injuries.

Manual and Mechanical cleaning equipment in housekeeping

Cleaning is the process of removing stains and dust particles from the materials and surfaces with the help of a particular cleaning equipment and cleaning agent. In the hotel, the guest attitude towards it is determined by the neatness of the surroundings and cleaning has a high impact. Cleaning helps to provide a hygienic environment and it is a task done to preserve the life of building, furniture, linen, and equipment, it also helps to prevent bacterial infections. As mentioned already, cleaning equipment are of two types: namely manual and mechanical. Manual equipment is that equipment which are used by the housekeeper by their own hands and not by electricity, petrol, or gas thereby the energy of the worker affects the standards of cleanliness required from the equipment as well as the knowledge of the worker. The manual cleaning equipment are categorized as Brushes and brooms, Mops and cleaning cloths, Containers, and miscellaneous equipment.

Cleaning equipment, both manual and electrical are both widely used in all fields of hospitality industry namely hotel, airline, hospital, resorts, flotel, motels, management offices, multinational companies and so on. So, it can be now understood that the equipment that helps in cleaning is called cleaning equipment. These tools are necessary for the accommodation operations department as cleaning equipment is one of the prime products of this department. The desk control must also be careful as these products requires a lot of expenses. As far as the latest trends and development is concerned in cleaning equipment, there are a series of manual equipment used now in hospitality industry for efficient cleaning like bucket, bowls and basin, dustpans, sanitary bins, polish applicator tray, brushes and brooms, dry mop, wet mop and box sweepers whereas as far as the mechanical cleaning equipment are concerned there are machines like vacuum cleaner, scrubbing machine, carpet shampooing machine, hot water extraction machine and so on. There are many organizations who are constantly doing their research for the development and the modernization of housekeeping cleaning equipment, and they are also manufacturing the same. Some of the famous organizations like Diversey, Jangro, Ecolab, Haylide are manufacturing innovative cleaning equipment and nearly all sector of hospitality industry is using their products. Despite new development in cleaning equipment, training must be given to the people and staff who handle them otherwise wrong use or misuses can damage the equipment or the environment. Since aspect of cleaning is done keeping in mind about guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry, utmost care should be taken while handling this equipment because effective cleaning will lead to guest satisfaction and profit maximization.

Training session for housekeeping staff

Training and motivating employees is the basic and most essential equipment in the present case. The increased use in mechanical equipments in housekeeping operations has placed managers of housekeeping in a position to training to its staff, maximum and proper use of equipments, supply and manpower to increase efficiency in operational work. The housekeeping job is going too mechanical gradually and providing trainings are a basic requirement to maintain highest level of performances and productivity standard. It is the need of the hour to have collaborated efforts required between the hotel housekeeper and hotel management institution for theory and practical knowledge for overall developments. As the new types of cleaning equipments are coming to the industry (Manual and mechanical cleaning equipment), proper training and guidance to the staff must be given as in how to operate the same, otherwise mishandling of equipment may damage the surface, or damage the equipment also. As the equipments are very costly, it may result in direct revenue loss for the hotel. So, it is understood that proper training is necessary for the staff otherwise proper revenue generation and guest satisfaction for the hotel cannot be achieved. Grooming and hygiene of staff is very important as all employees must present themselves in a tidy neat and manner matching with the physical environment where they are working. It is mandatory for all employees to wear company uniform on duty. Vacant room must be serviced properly as guest room has to be properly clean at every given time.

Using cleaning equipment for Cleaning and maintaining housekeeping standards during COVID-19 pandemic period

As because housekeeping and cleaning staff are always in direct contact with guests and other staff members as they clean rooms, public areas and conduct other housekeeping duties, they must follow and comply with basic protective measures and precautions against COVID-19 disease. Special emphasis and attention have been given on cleaning and disinfection by all hotels. This is done to reduce the potential risk of SARS-CoV-2 contamination in public settings, different high touch surfaces must be cleaned, sanitization and disinfection to be carried out frequently. Cleaning and disinfection must be carried out exhaustibly at frequent intervals in common areas that must include washrooms, conference or banquet halls, reception area, lobby, terrace, garden area, swimming pool side corridors escalator railings, lifts to be cleaned as a general preventive measure. Any surface or an Object that are frequently touched like handles, lift buttons, handrails, switches, door locks, doorknobs and dispensers, should receive special attention and cleaning plus sanitization must be done here regularly. Housekeeping Cleaning staff must be instructed accordingly. In line with World Health Organization (WHO) advice for environmental cleaning and disinfection of surfaces in the context of COVID-19 in non-health care settings, the disinfectant and its concentration of the cleaning chemical must be carefully selected so that the surfaces are not damaged and to avoid and minimize toxic effects. Ecology friendly cleaning principles and techniques must be followed as minutely as possible. Availability and use of cleaning materials and personal protective equipment that is the PPE kit must be adequate for all housekeeping staff members. A proper PAR stock for the same to be maintained. Housekeepers must always wear the PPE kit while cleaning the Guest room or public areas of hotel. Cleaning staff must get always required disinfectant solutions and other cleaning supplies and must follow the MSDS that is Material Safety Data Sheet to ensure that they are prepared and handling the cleaning equipment and cleaning chemicals safety. Staff should wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment to avoid chemical exposure and COVID 19 Virus infection. When required, relevant training to be given to cleaning staff on how to use the disinfectants and personal protective equipment like Rubber gloves, Impermeable apron, closed shoes, Eye protection and medical or fabric masks (if there are water or chemical splashes while washing surfaces).

In public areas, if a person with COVID-19 has passed through or has spent minimal time in (for example in lobby, lounge, restaurant, swimming pool area, health club or corridors) housekeeping cleaning staff should follow the process for routine cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces as per the set standard operating procedures.

5. MODERN CLEANING EQUIPMENT USED IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY (MANUAL AND MECHANICAL)



Figure 1. Modern Manual and Mechanical Cleaning Equipment



Figure 2. Latest Manual Cleaning Equipment used in Hospitality Industry



Figure 3. Latest Mechanical Cleaning equipment used in hospitality industry

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Cleaning is a method to remove unwanted particles, like dust, dirt, disease causing agents, and other impurities, from any object or environment. Cleaning happens in many ways and uses various methods. Without effective cleaning and proper hygiene no one will like the place whether it is the guest or the staff. In order to do the effective cleaning manual and mechanical cleaning equipment are used along with cleaning agents for creating a neat environment. So, it is easily understood that continuous research should be done for the development of different cleaning equipment so that more accurate results can be achieved. Many organizations are working on this context and many more organizations should come forward to achieve this task. Both national and International hotel chains like The Taj group of Hotels, ITC hotels, Hyatt Hotels, JW Marriott, Sheraton, Shangri-La, Radisson, Lemon Tree, The Lalit, W hotels, Hilton, Novotel, and so on are using this latest equipment in their different units. As and when new technology will emerge and development in this sector will take place, it will help not only the hotel sector but the entire hospitality world. As we are passing through and currently in the mid part of the COVID – 19 pandemics, so it also must be ensured that all housekeeping staff members to follow all covid 19 protocols as set by World Health Organization guidelines that includes wearing of PPE kits, maintaining social distancing, wearing of masks, using hand/foot sanitizers, washing of hands at regular intervals.

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