Post pandemic protocols & practices adopted by housekeeping in Five Star hotels

Dr. Jitendrasinh Jamadar
Research Guide, Mahatma Gandhi Mission’s Institute of Management and Research, MGM University, Aurangabad, Maharashtra, India
Email: jitendrasinh.jamadar@mgmiom.org

Aarohi Zade
Research Scholar, Mahatma Gandhi Mission’s Institute of Management and Research, MGM University, Aurangabad, Maharashtra, India
*Corresponding author email: aarohideshpandeparimal@gmail.com

Abstract—Cleaning is an unavoidable yet unattractive element of hotel administration, despite being labor-intensive and time-consuming. The workforce must be well-organized and constantly trained to reduce accidents and other hazards. Since Covid 19, many five-star hotels have introduced new practises and ideas. This helps check the hotel’s quality and avert environmental damage. Hotel management has changed recently. This is a fluid scenario that will likely evolve over time. Several additional safety safeguards at luxury hotels will remain in place. Non-invasive thermal screenings will be required of all hotel guests, health declaration forms must be filled out, and the hotel and its eateries must be farther apart. There is now a system that divides and categorises the hotel’s public areas, such as the lobby, reception area, banquet rooms, and elevators, according to the threat they provide owing to foot traffic and proximity to other guests. Reception, foyer, and banquet rooms are public areas. Daily cleaning of 70-100 guest room touch points. Housekeepers must wear masks, gloves, and other safety gear. PPE is the selection of items a person needs wear to protect themselves. Arogya Setu can be utilised on a smartphone or tablet, per Indian government guidelines.

Keywords—COVID-19 pandemic, hospitality industry, protocols, practices, housekeeping.

Introduction

To keep a hotel running smoothly, it needs a reliable crew who accepts responsibility for their duties. Hotel employees. Each hotel has its own unique
collection of facilities, services, and amenities. Standard of hospitality and facilities varies widely between hotels. Every hotel has its unique pricing system to attract a specific customer. Hotels can refer to several different forms of lodging. "Hotel" can mean hostels, motels, inns, resorts, service apartments, boutique hotels, apartment hotels, and more. They're worldwide. Each customer who books a hotel stay has unique needs and expectations. Hotels advertise deals, discounts, and special prices online to attract customers. The changing world has impacted the hotel industry. People are starting to think about travelling and living in unknown environments now that access to formerly restricted areas has been restored. This affects the front desk, valets, and bellhops. Tidiness is essential for maintaining security, so housekeeping is its foundation. The hospitality industry depends on hotel cleaning services. The epidemic has raised awareness of healthy living factors and hotels will need to offer additional proof that their rooms are safe and clean. COVID-19 must be controlled and eradicated from public places for the nation’s health, safety, and economy. (1-3).

The health officials in Wuhan, China, said on the 8th of December, 2019, that they were treating dozens of new cases of coronavirus disease. (COVID-19). Since then, COVID-19, a new strain of SARS (SARS-CoV-2), has emerged and become a pandemic all over the world. The respiratory ailment known as COVID-19 is very contagious and spreads when a person has prolonged and intimate contact with another person who is afflicted with it. There are a number of symptoms associated with this condition, including a high fever, coughing, and shortness of breath. Up to forty percent of people who are infected with the virus do not exhibit any indications of sickness. Other factors that might contribute to the spread of a disease are as follows:

- The rapidity and effectiveness with which COVID-19 can be passed on;
- The transmission of the virus through the air;
- The close contact between infected and non-infected individuals;
- The susceptibility of Immunocompromised individuals who suffer from specific underlying health conditions (such as hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, or respiratory problems);
- The susceptibility of individuals over the age of 65; and
- The contact with individuals who have travelled to areas with a high number of cases.

This analysis aims to grasp existing studies on the hotel industry and COVID-19. During COVID-19, a thorough study of published literature was used to find and organise hotel-related research. A systematic review aims to find, summarise, and evaluate all papers that address established study goals. In the hotel sector, a systematic examination of the relevant literature is customary practise. During the COVID-19 outbreak, no such study was done. Yu et al. investigated abusive surveillance in hospitality and tourism. After analysing the available literature, Gorska-Warszewicz and Kulykovets picked 26 studies to examine hotel brand loyalty. The records were analysed for bias using the Joanna Briggs Institute's standards. Sharma et al. analysed 403 published papers on eco-friendly hotel processes. The pieces appeared in 13 industry magazines. Using eco-innovative methodologies, the authors identified seven research themes. These topics will
provide a conceptual framework. Chi et al. studied AI’s potential in hospitality service provision. After analysing 63 writing samples, seven themes emerged. In their analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers conducted a thorough literature review to gather and assess all pertinent research. De Pablo et al. analysed SARS-effect CoV-2’s on medical personnel’s health. All 115 grey literature papers were available on Web of Science until April 15, 2020. Luo et al. analysed the mental and behavioural effects of COVID-19 in the general population, healthcare professionals, and patients at increased risk. (4, 5).

Tourism and Hospitality businesses’ response to COVID-19

Numerous studies illustrate how the worldwide tourist sector reacted to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the SARS pandemic in 2003, and the 2008 global economic crisis. Examined news and TV coverage of the 2009 SARS epidemic in the Netherlands. Some find the media’s coverage of the disaster overwhelming, disturbing, and dangerous. Media reports and academic studies confirm COVID-19’s impact on the hotel industry. Aviation and hotels like Marriott and Hilton have all lost jobs due to COVID-19’s spread. Hospitality and tourism had the highest workforce turnover, according to Gossling et al (2020). Hilton International proposed a $1.75 billion revolving loan in March 2020. This proposal was made so the company could save money and keep its flexibility "in light of global market difficulties." The epidemic has had a negative impact on the hotel industry worldwide. Several companies have rules on layoffs, pay freezes, and telecommuting. They emphasise using innovative marketing methods during the pandemic. As a result of COVID-19, events were cancelled. This shows that firms may choose to lower salaries, change working hours, or delay incentive and reward payments during economic uncertainty. Hotels must also conduct health screenings on their staff, develop contingency plans, and maintain clean and sanitary practises to deal with contagious diseases. During the COVID-19 outbreak and other crises, protecting personnel’s health and safety is crucial. (6, 7).

COVID-19 has pushed several small firms to lay off employees. Due to illness, several employees at the indicated firms have decreased their hours. Some restaurants are employing online marketing and local delivery to make up for pandemic-related revenue losses. Several restaurants are enforcing cleanliness and food safety requirements, training their personnel in sanitation and hygiene, and using social media to notify customers about their efforts to enhance health and hygiene standards. Hospitality firms must have strong demand for their services and commodities to profit. Digital products and services, product redesign, alternative distribution methods, digital product design, and collaboration with ecosystem experts are vital for combating this pandemic. As part of China’s efforts to improve performance and protect staff and consumers, the hotel industry has emphasised social responsibility. (8).

However, despite the significance of the tourism industry to Egypt’s overall economy, very few studies have been conducted to investigate the potential effects of COVID-19 on the country’s tourism and hospitality industries. In an attempt to prevent the further spread of COVID-19, hotels cut down on their staffing levels, closed unused rooms, and placed a higher emphasis on the safety and cleanliness
of its patrons. The government has demanded that all hotels comply with their stringent restrictions in order to safeguard the general population’s health. According to the opinions of several experts, the only way for businesses to continue existing is with the assistance of the government and working together. This is based on a literature review of crisis management tactics that are used by governments as well as the tourism and hospitality sector, especially in light of the current COVID-19 health pandemic. Because of this, it is becoming more difficult for businesses in some countries to remain profitable. It’s conceivable that they’ve never been in a serious predicament before, in which case they have no clue what to do. 2008, 2011, 2013, and 2015 were all years that presented the Egyptian government with substantial problems on both the political and economic fronts. It is important to look at the COVID-19 responses provided by Egypt’s hotels, especially those belonging to hotel chains with five-star ratings.

**COVID-19 and the accommodation sector**

Customers and employees communicate back and forth often with one another in two-way interactions at hotels and other comparable enterprises. Accommodations for visitors, the services that go along with them (such as food and drink, cleaning, activity planning, and so on), and the interactions that occur between guests, employees, and personnel are all important factors that require careful thought. In order to stop the transmission of the COVID-19 virus, staff members should maintain high standards of personal cleanliness, keep their personal space clear, refrain from touching their faces, and cover their mouths and noses when they cough or sneeze (respiratory hygiene). In addition to this, they should stay indoors if they have been told to do so, wear masks if they have been given them, and seek medical assistance if they develop symptoms that are typical of COVID-19 (9-11).

**Management team**

The management has to make sure that everyone is aware of the appropriate safety procedures in order to protect the health of the staff as well as the consumers. For instance, if they experience signs of COVID-19, they need to stay at home and consult a doctor as soon as possible. Frequent informative briefings should be held by management in order to keep staff informed on the most recent developments about COVID-19 and how they may defend themselves against the virus. When an infected individual is quarantined (either while waiting for an ambulance or in line with national policy), it is possible that training in particular procedures, such as the Standard Operating Policy (SOP), will be required (12).

**Reception and concierge**

To prevent themselves from being infected with COVID-19, those at the front desk need to use good judgement and stick to the established safety procedures. When there is a high risk of widespread COVID-19 transmission and it is not practicable to have a physical barrier of at least one metre in place, the World Health Organization advises individuals to use fabric masks. This guideline is for workplaces where there is a high probability that employees will have regular encounters with one another (13).
Restaurants, breakfast and dining rooms and bars

Wait staff at restaurants, cafeterias, and bars should practise basic hygienic precautions such as washing their hands and keeping a safe distance from clients in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In order to comply with WHO COVID-19, which instructs food businesses on how to keep their food safe, the staff at restaurants, breakfast and dining rooms, and bars should regularly wash their hands, take care of their breathing, and clean and disinfect work surfaces and areas that people contact. In addition, the staff should pay attention to areas that people contact. Gloves are permitted to be used, but they need to be changed often and the hands need to be cleaned both before and after putting on a new pair. Those who work in the food industry should not use disposable gloves in lieu of washing their hands after handling food. Individuals have a false sense of security when they use disposable gloves, which may cause them to refrain from washing their hands as often as they should be. Instead of wearing disposable gloves, it is recommended to often wash one's hands in order to avoid illness (14).

Gym, beach, swimming pool, spa, sauna and steam bath facilities

The fitness centre, the beach, the swimming pool, the spa, the sauna, and the steam bath facilities may be utilised, but only under certain conditions, as specified by the applicable national rules. In particular, the following safety precautions must to be in place:

- In order to ensure that each individual has sufficient room for their own belongings and comfort, the number of guests must be capped. The maximum number of people who are permitted should be clearly displayed for everybody who visits or patronises the establishment.
- All customers should comply with any relevant national or local legislation regulating the use of fabric masks in public places, and all establishments should put the recommendations in the text into practise in order to enhance their ventilation and air conditioning systems.
- Because the ventilation in most steam rooms is subpar, it is essential to maintain a high standard of personal hygiene, thoroughly clean and disinfect all surfaces, and limit the number of people who may use the room at the same time.

Recreational areas for children

Those who are responsible for children should be on the alert for any symptoms of COVID-19 and should immediately inform the child’s parents of any findings. They should also, if it becomes necessary, follow the processes that the hotel has for dealing with suspected situations. In accordance with national recommendations, venues where children play will be required to implement infection prevention and control measures, the specific nature of which will be determined by the amount of community transmission (15).
Cleaning and housekeeping

Because cleaning and housekeeping staff have direct contact with guests while cleaning rooms and performing other housekeeping duties, they are required to comply with basic protective measures and precautions against COVID-19. These measures and precautions include washing hands frequently and wearing gloves.

Cleaning and disinfection

High-touch surfaces in public areas should be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis in order to stop the spread of SARS-CoV-2. As a routine preventative measure against the transmission of germs, restrooms, halls, reception areas, corridors, and elevators should all be cleaned and disinfected regularly. It is essential to disinfect surfaces that are used regularly, such as doorknobs, elevator buttons, handrails, switches, and other similar items. Dispensers also need to be cleaned. This is something that the employees responsible for cleaning should be taught on. The World Health Organization (WHO) has established guidelines for cleaning the environment and disinfecting surfaces in the context of COVID-19 in non-health care settings. A disinfectant and its concentration need to be carefully chosen in accordance with these guidelines in order to prevent or reduce the likelihood of damaging surfaces and harmful effects. In order to get the most desirable outcomes, one must strictly comply with the established cleaning protocols and regulations for the environment (16-18).

Availability and use of cleaning materials and personal protective equipment

The individuals in charge of cleaning should have an adequate supply of disinfection solutions and other supplies, and they should ensure that they utilise these products in accordance with the guidelines provided by the manufacturer to avoid any potential hazards. The appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn by the staff at all times while working with chemicals. When it is required, the employees in charge of cleaning should be instructed on how to properly utilise the following disinfectants and safety equipment:

- Rubber gloves
- Impermeable apron
- Closed shoes
- Eye protection and medical or fabric masks (if procedures like washing surfaces generate splashes).
Waste management

The personnel responsible for cleaning should get training to assist ecologically responsible waste management in order to minimise damage to the environment and adverse impacts on human health caused by pollution of the air, water, land, and food chain. The cleaning personnel need to be encouraged to adhere to particular national guidelines for waste management in connection to COVID-19 as well as WHO guidelines for waste management in relation to the virus (SARS-CoV-2) (19).

Cleaning and disinfection when guests or employees are identified with COVID-19

When visitors or staff are ill during their stay, or when someone is discovered to have COVID-19 within a few days of leaving the facility, a particular cleaning and disinfection plan should be in place as part of the action plan for COVID-19 for lodging establishments. Cleaning, solid waste management, and personal protective equipment (PPE) are all topics that should be addressed in written suggestions for improved sanitation. Places where COVID-19 has been confirmed need the following:

- If the toilet, hand washing basins, and bathtubs have been in touch with the ill person(s) or their surroundings, clean and disinfect them using a home disinfectant solution or 0.1% sodium hypochlorite (household bleach, diluted if necessary, depending on the product). After one minute, rinse a surface with clean water to eliminate any leftover 0.1% chlorine. First clean, then disinfect.
- Service employees may require specialised training to properly handle, apply, and store these goods (mostly bleach, which may be at a higher concentration than usual). The cleaning staff must know how to identify the
minimal contact duration and how to properly rinse the solution if needed (20).

- 70% alcohol or a coronavirus-specific disinfectant may be used if bleach is impracticable or hazardous (such as on telephones and remote-control equipment).
- Always use disposable cleaning materials. Any reusable material should be nonporous and cleaned with 0.1% sodium hypochlorite before being utilised in other rooms to avoid the spread of dust and contamination of surfaces and persons. This prevents surface and person contamination. Please offer warm-water washing directions for standard detergents (between 60 and 90 degrees Celsius). Properly discarding obsolete objects might reduce disease spread. Towels, gloves, masks, and tissues are examples of disposable products that should be disposed of according to the hotel’s waste management strategy and local standards.
- It is not necessary to undertake additional cleaning and disinfection in public locations where a person with COVID-19 has passed through or spent short time (such as hallways), provided there is a system for periodic cleaning and disinfection of high contact surfaces.

Monitoring of sick guests

Employees in the housekeeping department have a duty to communicate any noteworthy discoveries, such as the presence of a sick guest, to the front desk or to management. During the time when management and the medical team are determining the most appropriate next step, this information must be kept secret.

New Products that are currently introduced by Hotel Housekeeping

Napisan’s liquid sanitization additive, Hygiene Spray, Aerosol Spray, Disinfection Cleaner, General Purpose Cleaner, All-Purpose Cleaner, Mold-Free Cleaner, Dettol’s surface cleaner and multi-purpose cleaner, Lysol’s all-purpose cleaner in lemon breeze, cherry blossom, pomegranate, and hibiscus, and crisp Linen’s disinfectant spray. In addition to the aforementioned goods, constant video monitoring, ultraviolet (UV) illumination, coir sanitizers, touch less solutions, surface cleaning, and hand washing are all standard operating procedure (21).

Water disinfection

The levels of disinfectant that must be maintained in swimming pools and spas, as well as water that is intended for human consumption, are those that fall within the parameters established by national norms and regulations.

Dishwashing and laundry equipment

Check to see that the washing machines and the dishwashers are both set to the appropriate temperature and that the proper amount of detergent as well as bleach or another kind of disinfection is being used. This can be found on the data plate of the machine.
Ventilation and air conditioning

One of the most significant things that can be done to prevent the COVID-19 virus from spreading is to ensure that there is enough ventilation. The following are some suggestions for enhancing the circulation of air within. Before you do any of these actions, it is highly recommended that you consult with a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) specialist.

Dispensers

Soap and alcohol-based hand rub dispensers, hand dryers, disposable tissue dispensers, and other similar equipment should be checked regularly. Defective devices should be replaced quickly. In the hotel’s action plan, alcohol-based hand rub dispensers should be placed in guest and employee restrooms and other high-traffic areas including the dining hall, restaurants, and bars (22).

Handling COVID-19 cases in hotels and accommodation establishments

In the event that a visitor or employee becomes ill with symptoms that are similar to those of COVID-19, immediate action should be taken to prevent the sick individual from coming into contact with as many additional guests and workers as is humanly practicable. The COVID-19 action plan includes a series of activities that other hotel workers, including those at the front desk, should carry out.

Guest with COVID-19 symptoms

- Infected guests should not remain longer than required if they have COVID-19. If the person’s room isn’t shared, they risk being left alone until local health officials arrive.
- A sick guest’s room should never be shared. Guests will be transferred if there aren’t enough beds in the patient’s room. If that’s not feasible (maybe because the patient is a youngster), further safety steps must be taken to prevent the virus from spreading. We’ll separate this contact from other visitors and employees to look for COVID19 symptoms. Decision-makers must contact public health specialists in their areas and national standards to determine the best course of action. Guests with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed diagnosis should be relocated to a different facility as soon as possible to permit isolation measures and clinical treatment. The hotel coordinates a transfer strategy with local health authorities.
- If a patient’s transfer to a medical institution is delayed, their treatment will comply with public health authorities and national standards.
- Increase mechanical ventilation to 60 l/s/person, or 6 air changes/hour (ACH). Changing the supply and exhaust air flow rates in each zone to create noticeable pressure changes moves clean air (23).
Identification and management of contacts and non-affected guests

As soon as health authorities suspect a case has been introduced into a company, they will do contact tracing and advise patrons who have not been sick. The hotel employees must cooperate with local health officials and follow their instructions.

Suppliers of goods and services

Safe methods of work and measures to avoid the spread of COVID-19 should be implemented by all contractors and suppliers.

Worker with COVID-19 symptoms

Any person who shows COVID-19 symptoms must cease working and seek medical help. Every ill employee must wash their hands, wear a surgical mask, and isolate themselves until medical help comes. Those in isolation while waiting for a medical test or assessment should have access to trash cans and tissues. Staff members who report COVID-19 symptoms at home should rest and seek medical help immediately. A home test for COVID-19 must be followed by a healthcare practitioner. If doctors determine hospitalisation isn’t necessary, the patient may be told to rest at home. WHO standards determine whether a COVID-19-quarantined individual may resume routine activities (24).

Hotel and accommodation establishment staff taking part in the evacuation of a suspected case

- If instructed to do so by the hotel’s management and the local health authorities, guests exhibiting symptoms must leave the hotel. This lessens the likelihood that other visitors or employees may get ill.
- Infection prevention and control practices in accordance with WHO recommendations on personal protective equipment (PPE) should be used while assisting in the transfer of a visitor who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 to an ambulance (25).
- It is recommended that people and health professionals change their PPE between each suspected case transfer to prevent cross-contamination. They should store the used PPE in sealed containers and dispose of them according to the hotel’s action plan and local regulations concerning infectious waste.
- Hotel management is responsible for cleaning and sanitising the room in accordance with the action plan and the cleaning and sanitising standards for rooms with cases after the sick visitor has been removed. In the absence of this option, the on-duty housekeeper should be instructed to clean and disinfect the ill person’s room in accordance with the standard operating procedures for cleaning and disinfecting rooms containing cases.
- To ensure optimal performance, it is recommended that you follow the manufacturer’s instructions and set the HVAC system to maximum outside airflow for two hours before and after occupancy (26-29).
Summary and Conclusion

The hotel industry revolves upon the guest. In order to increase profits, hotels are exploring novel approaches to customer care. The fundamental policies and procedures inside the hotel business have remained the same. The hospitality sector still places a premium on the finer aspects of service, such as customization and a focus on the individual needs of customers. The trend of recovery is readily apparent now that the Covid-19 has disappeared from most of the planet. The first domestic trips and luxury vacations also started being taken. As a result of the CoVD-19 epidemic, the hospitality industry has taken a major hit. Inns who lost business during the epidemic need to recover their losses as quickly as possible. It’s useful to see how various hotel chains and brands are handling the crisis and what they’re doing to recover. Many modern cleaning methods, materials, and techniques have emerged in recent years. The rehabilitation process is being aided by the innovative products and procedures of leading hospitality firms.

Because of the difficulties they encountered during the epidemic, guests have developed new perspectives on how things should be conducted. The hotel industry would benefit greatly from meeting these expectations, since doing so might increase revenue following Covid-19. There is a growing emphasis on installing voice-encrypted kiosks, contactless check-in stations, and chat bots across hotels to ensure the safety of its guests. Hotels are using not just voice-recognition technology in elevators, but also robot butlers and cutting-edge cloud computing. It’s crucial to know what’s going on in your sector, whether you’re a tourist who wants to spend his money on experiences or a company owner who wants to keep ahead of the competition. The industry has suffered greatly from the pandemic, but the path to recovery is almost complete. Although the virus has made it seem like an endless black tunnel, the industry is now beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

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