

## HYGIENE AND SANITATION - SMILING BEYOND THE MASKS

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### Abstract:

*Sanitation and hygiene play a pivotal role in the Hotel industry. Hotels typically have strict sanitation protocols in place to maintain high standards of cleanliness and hygiene. Hotel employees are trained in proper sanitation practices and are responsible for maintaining a clean and healthy environment for guests. Poor sanitation and hygiene practices in hotels can spread diseases, poor customer satisfaction, and damage the hotel's reputation in turn they can even lose the guest's goodwill. In addition to regular cleaning and disinfection, many hotels have opted and implemented the many induced new normal sanitation practices during and after the post covid pandemic. The study involves recording the primary data from the hoteliers and secondary data from various literature and presents the practices and procedures of new normal sanitary and hygiene practices in the hotel industry. The article highlights an overview of the current state of sanitation and hygiene practices, including the challenges faced by hotels in implementing effective sanitation and hygiene policies and also explores the impact of good sanitation and hygiene on guest satisfaction and loyalty, as well as the potential benefits for hotel staff and the environment.*

**Key Words:** *Guest Satisfaction; Hotel Industry; Housekeeping Department; Sanitation and Hygiene*

### Introduction:

Sanitation and hygiene are both essential aspects related to maintaining cleanliness and preventing the spread of diseases. While they are related, they refer to slightly different things. Sanitation refers to the process of promoting and maintaining clean and healthy conditions, particularly with regard to water supply, sewage, and waste management. It includes measures to ensure safe and clean water, proper disposal of human waste, and the proper management of solid waste.<sup>1</sup> Hygiene, on the other hand, refers to the practices that help maintain cleanliness and prevent the spread of disease. This includes personal hygiene practices such as hand washing, bathing, and brushing teeth, as well as

environmental hygiene practices such as cleaning and disinfecting surfaces, particularly in high-traffic areas or areas where infectious diseases can easily spread.<sup>2</sup>

Sanitation and hygiene are essential in the hotel industry. The hotel industry accommodates a various range of customers internally or internationally, poor sanitation or hygiene practices can lead to many sets of problems finally the property may even miss their clients. Hence sanitation and hygiene practices play a very important role in the hotel's reputation, as customers are more likely to choose hotels that prioritize sanitation and hygiene.<sup>3</sup> Several studies have highlighted the importance of sanitation and hygiene practices in the hotel industry. Poor sanitation and hygiene practices in hotels can lead to the spread of diseases, resulting in a negative impact on customer satisfaction and the hotel's reputation. The study recommended the implementation of best practices, staff training, and regular monitoring to improve sanitation and hygiene practices in hotels.<sup>4</sup> The hotels that prioritize sanitation and hygiene practices have a positive impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Proper sanitation and hygiene practices ensure that the hotel environment is clean, healthy, and safe. This includes maintaining the cleanliness of guest rooms, common areas, and food preparation areas. In addition to the health and safety benefits, maintaining high levels of sanitation and hygiene can also have a positive impact on the guest experience. A clean and well-maintained hotel creates a positive impression, enhances the guest's comfort, and can lead to repeat business and positive reviews.<sup>5</sup> The housekeeping department plays a crucial role in maintaining sanitation and hygiene practices at hotels. This department is responsible for ensuring that all areas of the hotel are clean and well-maintained, including guest rooms, public areas, and back-of-house

areas. Housekeeping staff are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting guest rooms, including changing linens, cleaning bathrooms, dusting, and vacuuming.<sup>6</sup> They also clean and maintain public areas such as lobbies, elevators, and hallways, as well as back-of-house areas such as employee break rooms and storage areas. In addition to cleaning and disinfecting, housekeeping staff also play a role in preventing the spread of illness by following proper sanitation and hygiene practices. This includes washing their hands frequently, wearing gloves when handling soiled linens, and using disinfectants to clean high-touch surfaces such as doorknobs and light switches.<sup>7</sup>

### **COVID-19 Pandemic Challenges over Sanitation and Hygiene**

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected over 200 countries globally, leading to over 200 million confirmed cases and over 4 million deaths as of August 2021. India has been one of the worst-affected countries, with over 31 million confirmed cases and over 400,000 deaths. The pandemic has exposed the vulnerabilities in India's healthcare system, infrastructure, and socio-economic conditions.<sup>8</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the hotel industry worldwide, and India is no exception. The hotel industry has been hit hard due to the pandemic, with a sharp decline in visitors and occupancy rates. The lockdowns and travel restrictions have also severely impacted the hotel industry.<sup>9,10</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on sanitation and hygiene practices at hotels. To prevent the spread of the virus, hotels had to adopt new and more rigorous cleaning and sanitation procedures, as well as implement new hygiene protocols for guests and staff.<sup>11</sup> Hotels have also implemented new hygiene protocols for guests, such as requiring the use of face masks in public areas and providing hand sanitizer stations throughout the hotel. Some hotels have also introduced contactless check-in and check-out procedures to minimize contact between guests and staff.<sup>12</sup> In addition, many hotels have updated their food safety protocols to ensure that food is prepared and served safely. This may include implementing

new cleaning procedures for kitchen areas and equipment, as well as offering contactless food delivery options. This has resulted in additional expenses, such as the cost of personal protective equipment, sanitation equipment, and staff training.<sup>13</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a new normal in the hotel industry regarding sanitation and hygiene practices.

**Enhanced Cleaning and Sanitation:** Hotels have implemented enhanced cleaning and sanitation protocols in all areas of the hotel, including guest rooms, public areas, and back-of-house spaces. This includes the use of hospital-grade disinfectants, increased frequency of cleaning, and more attention to high-touch surfaces such as doorknobs, light switches, and elevator buttons. To minimize contact between guests and staff, hotels have implemented contactless services such as contactless check-in and check-out, room service delivery, and keyless entry to guest rooms.<sup>14</sup> **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Staff members are required to wear appropriate PPE, such as face masks and gloves, while interacting with guests and while cleaning and sanitizing hotel spaces. Hotels have implemented social distancing measures, such as reduced capacity in public areas, spacing of tables and chairs, and floor markings to encourage guests to maintain a safe distance from each other. Hand sanitizer stations have been installed throughout the hotel in high-traffic areas such as lobbies, elevators, and restaurants. Some hotels have implemented health screening protocols for guests, including temperature checks and health questionnaires.<sup>15</sup>

**Personal hygiene and staff training:** Staff working in all departments should maintain proper personal hygiene by washing their hands frequently, wearing clean uniforms and aprons, and keeping their hair tied back or covered. All staff should receive training on proper sanitation and hygiene procedures. Training should be ongoing to ensure that staff is up to date with the latest safety protocols.<sup>16</sup>

The new normal in the hotel industry involves a heightened focus on sanitation and hygiene, with a greater emphasis on guest safety and

well-being. These new practices are likely to remain in place even after the pandemic is over, as guests will continue to expect a high level of cleanliness and safety in hotels. By implementing these measures, hotels can maintain a clean and safe environment for guests and staff. Regular monitoring and auditing of these procedures can also help ensure that standards are being met consistently.

**Conclusion:**

Sanitation and hygiene practices are crucial in the hotel industry to ensure the health and safety of guests and staff. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a renewed focus on these practices, leading to the implementation of enhanced cleaning and sanitation protocols, contactless services, personal protective equipment, social distancing measures, hand sanitizer stations, health screening protocols, and food safety measures. These practices not only protect the health of guests and staff but also help to build trust and confidence in the hotel industry. As such, hotels must continue to prioritize sanitation and hygiene practices even after the pandemic has ended. By doing so, they can provide a safe and welcoming environment for guests while also ensuring the long-term sustainability of the industry.

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