

RE-BUILDING STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR IN THE POST COVID 19 PERIOD

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ABSTRACT

Background: *The Novel Coronavirus shock affected impacted the entire world. It affected the hospitality sector badly during the pandemic situation. The hotel industry adopted various strategies to overcome this pandemic situation.* **Objectives:** *The study attempts to find out the conditions and the re-building strategies adopted by the hospitality industry such as the amenities and facilities provided to the guest and also the safety measures taken by the hotels during the pandemic situation.* **Methodology:** *The study is descriptive in nature. During the pandemic situation there were several problems faced by the hotel industry. The various problems were discussed with the operating departmental heads and the other hotel staff such as executives, associates and job trainees. The primary data was collected from the hotel staff through questionnaire method using the online platforms like Google forms and it was send to the respective persons. 250 samples were taken for the study which included core departmental heads, employees and the trainees of the hotels. Stratified random sampling techniques were used for collecting the data. The data collected was classified and tabulated. The data was analyzed by using different statistical techniques like percentage analysis, Correlation analysis with the help of IBM SPSS Version 23.* **Results:** *Safety measures taken by the departments included restaurants being sanitized; rearranging the furniture for maintaining a social distancing; the kitchen staffs getting properly sanitized; wearing mask and gloves. Sterilizing and sanitizing the guest and their belongings before rooming the guest. The billing system was shifted more towards the electronic mode. The staff guided the guests to follow the instructions during their stay in the hotel.* **Conclusion:** *The hotel premises including the public areas and the lobby were sterilized and sanitized every two hours in most hotels. The workers were asked to work in staggered shifts. The guest who come to visit and stay in the hotel were made to feel safe and comfortable with the services.*

Key Words: *Epidemic, Pandemic situation, Social distancing, Sterilized, Sanitized*

INTRODUCTION

The economic system of the country is connected with the different sectors. The Novel Corona virus highly affected sectors like service and manufacturing industry. The Honorable Prime Minister announced the lockdown from 20 March 2020 onwards in all states and it was informed to all the Chief Ministers. During the initial period of lockdown, a large number of people were in a panic mode. These people thought that there were chances of shortage for food items and FMCG products so they rushed to purchase and stock the essential items. The Government of India announced that there were no chances of shortage and the Finance Minister also provided some financial assistance for those who suffered loss of jobs, especially daily wage workers. The Government asked the banking sector to give a relaxation for paying the interest for the loan taken. The Government also provided the necessary items through public supply distribution center to reach to the needy. The Ministry of Health suggested the people to add more nutritional value in their diet plan and also take safety precautions and personal hygiene. People were also advised to wash their hands every twenty minutes.

The entire world passed through the great disaster. There were two major problems that Indian economy faced. First important thing was controlling the chances of spreading Corona virus. The other problem was to save the economy from financial crisis. Some of the Information Technology based companies asked their employee to start work from home from March 20 onwards. The companies wanted to make a conscious effort to 'break the chain' of the virus. During this pandemic situation the economy suffered huge losses.

The corona virus largely affected the hospitality and tourism sector all over the world. The Hotel business strategy for the rest of 2020 and 2021 was to help the guests have the most convenient stay in a safe and secure environment. During this pandemic situation there were many problems that affected the economic system of the nation, specially in the hospitality and tourism sector. The hospitality and tourism sector lost its business opportunities and lost the market share as travel came to a standstill (World Health Organisation, 2021).

The hotels, in order to bring their business back, devised user friendly electronic gadgets. They also provided a centralized service which brought a digitalized communication system between the hoteliers and their guests. Apart from this, the services providing system was designed to give all the general information about the hotel regarding the rules and regulation

and its services. The gadgets were also used for the central booking tools of hotel services such as hotel restaurants, swimming pools, and spas, and each one is integrated with the central server. Digitalized guest directory should be maintained in the hotels and replace the traditional system of record keeping.

The hotels also took various safety measures for offering the room to the guest. The guests were provided with automated electronic equipment such as keyless entry through a mobile application. Contact less valet parking was offered by the hotels by using an e- valet ticket for parking.

The food industry had huge increase in the demand for the packed food. In response to this global epidemic, the corona virus affected all aspects of the world economy. The hotels had to use more digitalized technology. Once the business restarted, the staff had to be more cautious about the safety measures to be followed. The MICE activities took a much longer time to open for the guests. Now a days, the majority of the conference has shifted to online platform. The hotels were expected to sell their rooms and the restaurant to get some dines – in business where the staff and the guests had to strictly follow the safety protocols. As the number of diners in hotels and restaurants came down, focus shifted towards take away and home delivery. Several measures had to be taken here as well. While receiving the food, sanitizers were provided to the delivery person. After every delivery, the vehicles and delivery person had to be sanitized before the next delivery. Before delivery, it had to be ensured that the food packets were sealed properly and packed in a carry bag. Due to shortage of services delivery person and also because of increasing the home delivery, a number of hotels or restaurants decided to hire the services people on the basis of weekly or daily basis. Most of the food outlets in India followed this system to make a prompt delivery of food to customer at the right time and in the right place. There was a huge demand for the online home delivery or take away orders. The food outlets started business with the help of joint ventures with Zomato, Swiggy etc. to cope up with the increase in the home delivery orders (Aday & Aday, 2020).

The Indian economy had been hardly affected by COVID-19. By proper screening and lockdown procured, efforts were made to eradicate the virus. The pandemic badly affected the room sales. The hotel industry introduced new strategies like food packages for the guest, reduce the manpower for running the hotel, cut down the room tariff rate to attract the guest. The Hotel authorities were following the rules and regulations implemented by the

Government of India. The hotel provided services to the guest through electronic equipment during this pandemic situation.

The purchase department made conscious efforts for purchasing the raw materials for the food production department. The purchasing department had to purchase the raw materials from the well known places that followed all the standard operating procedures. The Food and beverage Production department ensure that all the areas in the workplace were cleaned and sanitized properly. The Kitchen staff had to go through sanitizing process followed by the hotel before they entered the workplace. The kitchen staffs were to wear mask and gloves when they were working in the kitchen area. The kitchen staffs had to follow the rules and regulations of the Food and safety department. They had to do regular medical checkup in government hospitals. The Kitchen supervisor or Chef de parties had to ensure that the cleaning area and production areas are sanitized every two to three hours and that should be documented and should be signed by the executive chef or the kitchen in charge. During the COVID-19 period the food had to be produced according to need and preferences of the customers. The Kitchen supervisor or Chef de parties had to ensure that staff members are following the same recipe as mentioned in their SOPs.

The Food & Beverage department staffs had to keep social distancing regulation in the workplace with their co-workers as there was limited space in the restaurant and bars. The rules had to be followed more strictly during the business hours such as breakfast, lunch and dinner time. During the time of delivery and services the staff should have personal hygiene and he/she should follow the protocol. The guests visiting the hotels avoided the restaurant area or refrained from leaving the hotel to eat out altogether. This presented an opportunity for hotels to earn revenues from In Room Dining facilities. The bills were sent through the electronic gadgets provided by the hotel to the guest.

The Front Office staffs had to welcome the guest with face to face interaction by keeping social distancing. After the guest's arrival at the hotel, he/she had to go through the sterilizing, sanitizing procedures and their luggage's had to be kept outside in a area where it was sanitized and the luggage was handed over to the guest and the bell boy were not allowed to enter the guest rooms.

The hotel management had fear that housekeeping staff can easily spread the virus. As they moved from room to room, there were chances to get infected easily. The Housekeeping

departments had to provide PPE kits, proper sanitization facilities to sanitize the room after the guest had checked out. Even the electronic keys, lights switches were to be sanitized. The housekeeping department should be made available for the intermediate services such as replacement of the towels, shampoos and soaps, which should be kept outside the room. The staffs should not go for deep cleaning, while the guest is staying in the room.

- Safety measures taken by the delivery department was to sanitize the delivery vehicle and properly pack the food.
- Safety measures taken by the Food and Beverage department was to make payment of bill through electronic mode and sanitize the area regularly.
- Safety measures taken by the Food and Beverage Production department was to provide safe food to the guests.
- Safety measures taken by the Front office department were sanitizing the guest luggage, sanitizing the guest and the payment of bill through electronic modes and also provide gloves and mask to the guest.
- Safety measures taken by the Housekeeping department were to provide sanitized rooms.

The hotel industry had decided to reduce the manpower to run the hotel. The hotel companies decided to cut down the salary of the staff. The various factors that affected the staff were factors like financial problems, family issues etc. that created stress. These problems led to absenteeism, mental illness of the hotel staff etc.

(Andrews, 2020) The researcher conducted study about the impact of COVID -19 on the hotel industry and suggested for post –pandemic recovery. The study focused on the impact of Covid-19 and the possible recovery of the Indian hotel Industry. In his study, he concluded that the hotel business will slowly tread to reopen.(Kaushik, 2020) In the article, COVID -19, an impact on Hospitality sector said that the economy shows sign of improvement in all the sectors. The hospitality sector continues to turn round under the impact of COVID -19. In the pre COVID times, there is a growth in the field of travel industry was directly related with the growth of the hospitality sector.(Khan, 2020) In his article, the author on stated that the business and leisure tourism came to standstill because of the pandemic situation. The

pandemic and the restrain measures resulted in a fall down in foreign and domestic travel across the globe.

Objectives of this study were:

- To study about the cause and effect of corona virus in the hotel industry.
- To identify the re-building strategies adopted by hotels.
- To identify the amenities provided to the guest during the time of the novel corona virus.
- To study about the safety measures taken by the hotel during this pandemic situation.
- To provide suggestions and recommendations for the smooth working of the hotels during this pandemic situation.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The study was conducted to formulate and implement the rebuilding strategies adopted by the hotel in the post Covid 19 period. The primary data was collected from the hotel staffs. The study is descriptive in nature. The data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected from the departmental heads, staffs and the trainees. The secondary data was collected through various sources like internet, articles, journals and edited books.

Locale: The sample of the study was collected from the various part of the South Kerala.

Sampling Design: 250 samples were taken for the study. The respondents included the Department Heads, employees and trainees from the hotel industry. Stratified random sampling techniques are used for the research study.

Tools and Technique: The data was collected by using a questionnaire on Google forms. The Google form was sent to the respondents. The data was classified by using Likert Scale for rating the responses of the respondents.

Data and Statistical Analysis: The primary data collected have been processed, classified and tabulated by using statistical methods such as percentage analysis, correlation analysis with the help of IBM SPSS Version 23.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data shows that, novel corona virus badly affected the hospitality, majority of the respondents used highly agree i.e. 35.2% (n= 250) of the respondents, 30% of the respondent have agree, 23.6% of the respondent neither disagree nor agree, 6.8% of the respondent disagree and only a minority of 3.6% highly disagree.

Table 1: Novel Corona Viruses was badly Affected the Hospitality Sector

Responses	Frequency (n)	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Highly disagree	9	3.6	3.6
Disagree	17	6.8	10.4
Neither disagree nor agree	59	23.6	34.0
Agree	77	30.8	64.8
Highly agree	88	35.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

Table 2: Novel Corona viruses reduced the Turnover of the hotel industry

Responses	Frequency (n)	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Highly disagree	24	9.6	9.6
Disagree	81	32.4	42.0
Neither disagree nor agree	71	28.4	70.4
Agree	33	13.2	83.6
Highly agree	41	16.4	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

The data in Table 2 shows that, novel corona virus reduced the turnover of the hotel industry, majority of the respondent 32.4% responded that they disagree, 28.4% of the respondent have neither disagree nor agree, 9.6% of the respondent highly disagree nor 13.2% of the respondent agree and 16.4% of the respondents highly agree.

Table 3: Hotel Industry can overcome this Pandemic Situation

Responses	Frequency (n)	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
No	23	9.2	9.2
Yes	227	90.8	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

The above data shows that the hotel industry can overcome this pandemic situation. 90.80% of the respondents have an opinion that the hotel industry can overcome this pandemic situation and only minority of 9.20% says that there is no hope for the hotel industry to boom.

Table 4: Cross Tabulation Hotel industry can overcome this pandemic situation with Strategies adopted by the hotel industry

Count						
		Strategies adopted by the hotel industry				Total
		Introduction of new packages	Reduce the manpower	Cut down the room tariff	No stipend to trainees	
Hotel industry can overcome this pandemic situation	No	23	0	0	0	23
	Yes	46	82	44	55	227
Total		69	82	44	55	250

From the Table 4, it is interpreted that the hotel industry have to introduce new strategies like packages for the guest, reduce the manpower for running the hotel, cut down the room tariff rate to attract the guests. Majority of the respondents, responded that hotels need to reduce the unnecessary man power and 55 respondents have opinion that no stipend should be given to the job trainees. 46 respondents said that the hotels have to introduce new packages like couple package, holiday package, special package special persons and 44 respondents suggested to cut down the room tariff rates.

Table 5: Hotel authorities are following the rules and regulations implemented by the Government of India and the effectiveness of break the chain concept

Correlations			
		Hotel authorities are following the rules and regulations implemented by the Government of India	Effectiveness of break the chain concept
Hotel authorities are following the rules and regulations implemented by the Government of India	Pearson Correlation	1	.438**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	250	250
Effectiveness of break the chain concept	Pearson Correlation	.438**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	250	250
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

There is a positive correlation between the Hotel authorities following the rules and regulations implemented by the Government of India and the effectiveness of break the chain concept.

Table 6: Hotel lost their business opportunities during this pandemic situation

Responses	Frequency (n)	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
No	6	2.4	2.4
Yes	244	97.6	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

The above data shows that 97.60% of the respondents have an opinion that the Hotel lost their business opportunities during this pandemic situation and only minority of 2.40 % says that there is no loss for the hotel industry during this pandemic situation.

Table 7: Hotel provided services to the guest through using electronic equipments during this pandemic situation

Responses	Frequency (n)	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
No	10	4.0	4.0
Yes	240	96.0	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

The above data shows that 96 % of the respondents have an opinion that the hotel provided services to the guest through using electronic equipment during this pandemic situation and only minority of 4 % said that the hotel is not using electronic equipment.

Table 8: Hotel maintain any digitalized guest directory

Responses	Frequency (n)	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
No	57	22.8	22.8
Yes	193	77.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

The above data shows that 77.20 % of the respondents have an opinion that the Hotel maintain adigitalized guest directory and only minority of 22.80 % said that the hotel is not using digitalized guest directory.

Table 9: The Delivery vehicle is sanitized before and after the order placed

Responses	Frequency (n)	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
No	3	1.2	1.2
Yes	247	98.8	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

The above data shows that 98.80 % of the respondents have an opinion that the delivery vehicle is sanitized before and after the order placed and only minority of 1.20 % disagreed.

Table 10: Food outlets have high demand during this pandemic situation

Responses	Frequency (n)	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Highly disagree	27	10.8	10.8
Disagree	59	23.6	34.4
Neither disagree nor agree	66	26.4	60.8
Agree	62	24.8	85.6
Highly agree	36	14.4	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

The above data shows that, food outlet have high demand during this pandemic situation, majority of the 26.4% respondent neither agree nor disagree, 23.6% disagree, 10.8% of the respondent highly disagree and 14.4% of the respondents highly agree.

Table 11: Safety measures taken by the delivery department

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Sanitized the Delivery Vehicle	150	60.0	60.0
Foods should be properly Packed with a paper bag	100	40.0	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

The above data depicts the safety measures taken by the delivery department 60% of the respondent sanitized the delivery vehicle and 40% of the respondents said that food should be properly packed with a paper bag.

Table 12: Safety measures taken by the Food & Beverage department

Opinion	Frequency (n)	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Rearrange the Furniture to make a Social Distance	90	36.0	36.0
Clean and Sanitized the Restaurant in every hour	132	52.8	88.8
Payment of Bill through Electronic Media	28	11.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

The above data shows that safety measures taken by the Food and Beverage department, 52.8% respondent responded clean and sanitized the restaurant in every hour, 36% respondents state rearrange the furniture to make a social distance and 11.2% respondents opted for payment of bill through electronic media.

Table 13: Safety measure taken by the Food & Beverage production department

Opinion	Frequency (n)	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Kitchen should cleaned and sanitized properly	28	11.2	11.2
Kitchen staffs have go through sanitizing properly.	178	71.2	82.4
Kitchen staff have to wear mask and gloves	44	17.6	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

The above data shows that safety measures taken by the Food and beverage Production department, 71.2% respondents responded Kitchen staff have go through sanitizing properly, 17.6% respondents said that the kitchen staff have to wear mask and gloves and 11.2% respondents said that kitchen should be cleaned and sanitized properly.

Table 14: Safety Measure taken by the Front Office Department

Opinion	Frequency (n)	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Sterilized and sanitized the guest and belongings	68	27.2	27.2
Kept the luggage outside for an hour and it should be sanitized	108	43.2	70.4
Payment should be made through e payments	34	13.6	84.0
Provide gloves and mask to the guest	40	16.0	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

The above data shows that safety measures taken by the Front Office department, 43.2% respondents opted to keep the luggage outside for an hour and sanitize, 27.2% respondents said to sterilize and sanitize the guest and belongings, 13.6% respondents opted for payment of bill through electronic media and 16% chose to provide gloves and mask to the guest.

Table 15: Safety Measures taken by the Housekeeping Department

Opinion	Frequency (n)	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
The Housekeeping should open the windows before the guest arrives	80	32.0	32.0
Room should be properly sanitized and sterilized	134	53.6	85.6
Instruction to be given to guest while staying in the hotel rooms	36	14.4	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

The above data shows the safety measures taken by the Housekeeping department, 53.6% respondents said that the rooms should be properly sanitized and sterilized, 32% respondents were of the view that the housekeeping staff should open the windows before the guest arrives and 14.4% respondents said that instruction have to be given to the guest while they stay in the hotel.

CONCLUSION

The Novel Corona Virus has caused an unpredictable market crisis in the hospitality sector. The Hospitality and tourism sector has been affected more in the pandemic situation. The Hotel industry had to adopt certain strategies to overcome the novel corona virus during the POST COVID-19. The main challenge faced by the hotels was to maintain the demand for their services and service providers. Decline in the productivity ultimately affected the profitability making it a very dangerous situation to run the business. The management had to reduce the manpower. In this pandemic situation the hotel structures became more difficult. Those who were working in the hotel had to maintain social distancing with the guest and all the services had to be provided at the right place and at the right time through the help of electronic gadgets. Many of the routine activities started steadily and slowly with electronic gadgets and less personal contacts. The hotels shifted to automated technology. The hotels have to adapt the new technology to avoid personal contacts. They have to spend more money to invest their modern automated technology and serving the customer to make them feel safe and have a comfortable stay in the hotel. It is very difficult time for the hospitality industry everywhere to serve the guest who visits the hotel. Doing so it will help the hotel to build a valuable relationship with the guest and will retain the guests. The hotel should reopen by following the rules and regulations laid down by the government. During this pandemic situation the hotel staff should be very alert in their job and they have to be very

cautious about the health of the guest. The management has to give instruction for running the hotel by providing standard services to the guest. The core and ancillary department have to implement their rules and regulation given by the head of the department or the authority. The department heads have to brief the workers about the precautions while they are working at the workplace. The workplace should be kept always neat and clean. During the time of this pandemic situation, the hotels have introduced new package for guest. The novel corona virus have reduced the turnover of the hotel industry, the hotel industry have adopt some strategies such as food outlets should be opened for 24 hours and provide home delivery to customers. The hotel industry has introduced new techniques to reach the customer like food on delivery for the customer. The hotel industry has to cut down the salary of the staff to overcome this pandemic situation Introduced new packages to the guest when they stay in the hotel package like sightseeing provide vehicle to visit the tourist destination etc. The hotel industry has to strictly implement the new policies for the protection of the staff and the guest. The hotels have started joint venture with popular food outlet like Zomato, Domino's pizza. The food should be packed properly with paper bag.

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