

## **1. THE ROLE OF HOUSEKEEPING IN HOSPITALITY OPERATION**

Housekeeping is an operational department of the hotel. It is responsible for cleanliness, maintenance, aesthetic upkeep of rooms, public areas, back areas and surroundings.

Other than hotels, professional housekeeping service is very much in demand in hospitals, cooperate buildings, airports, airlines, cruisers, banks shopping arcade. Since most such organizations prefer to outsource these functions, contract housekeeping is becoming a lucrative entrepreneurship venture these days.

A hotel survives on the sale of rooms, food, beverage, and other minor services like laundry, health clubs, health spa, sightseeing, shopping arcades etc. The sale of rooms constitutes a minimum of 50% of these sales.

Thus a major part of hotels margin of profit comes from room sales because a room once made can be sold over and over again. However, the days when the room remains unsold there is a total loss of revenue. To this extent, rooms are more perishable than food. The housekeeping budget typically accounts for 20% of the properties total operating expenditure. The largest element of operating cost in the housekeeping department is labour. The effort that the housekeeping department makes in giving a guest a desirable room has a direct bearing on the guest experience in the hotel.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF HOUSEKEEPING DEPARTMENT**

- Cleanliness of all front of the house and back of the house areas such as Lobby, guest rooms, restaurants, banquet halls, bar, employee changing rooms, employee dining area etc EXCEPT kitchen and dish wash which is handled by Kitchen Stewarding department.
- To achieve maximum efficiency in maintaining **care and comfort of guests**.
- To establish a welcoming atmosphere and ensure **courteous/reliable** service from the entire staff of the department.
- Purchase, repair, washing and ironing of all hotel room linen – bed sheets, pillow covers, bath towels etc & F & B linen – table cloths, buffet sheets, napkins, wiping sheets etc.

- Purchase, repair, washing and ironing of all employees uniforms
- To cater to the **laundry requirements** of hotel linen, staff uniform and guest clothing.
- To provide and maintain **floral decorations** and maintain the **landscaped areas** of the hotel.
- To **select right contractors** and ensure that the quality of the work is maintained as at the beginning of the business.
- To **co-ordinate renovation** of the property as and when in consultation with the management and interior designers.
- To coordinate with the **purchase department** for the procurement of guest supplies, cleaning agents, cleaning equipments etc.
- To deal with **lost and found** articles.
- To ensure training, control and supervision of all the shifts attached to the department.
- To establish a good working relationship with other departments.
- To ensure that safety regulations are more known to all the staff of the department.
- To keep the general manager or administration informed of all the matters requiring attention.
- Maintaining the Façade & surroundings of the building.
- Handling all Lost & Found articles in the hotel.
- Pest control in the hotel.
- Coordinating with hotel engineering department for all repair works.

### **GUEST SATISFACTION**

The aim of all Hotels or establishments that offer accommodation is to provide their customers with clean, attractive, comfortable and welcoming surroundings that offer value for money. Nothing sends a stronger message than cleanliness in a hospitality industry. No level of service, friendliness or glamour can equal the sensation a guest has upon entering a spotless, tidy and conveniently arranged room. Both management and guest consider

keeping the place clean and in good order a necessity, for a hotel to command a fair price and to get repeat business.

The hospitality industry is a service industry. Unlike goods sale, the service is intangible (cannot be seen, tested, felt or heard before purchase), inseparable (services cannot be separated by their providers), variable (quality of service depends on the provider) and perishable (cannot be stored). Hence, for guest satisfaction, the product room is valuable only if it is clean, comfortable and makes him relax and feel at home. This service is housekeeping's responsibility.

### **REPEAT BUSINESS**

Hotel industry gains goodwill and guest by word of mouth. No amount of advertisements can build a reputation that a guest can build by his word of mouth. Guest Rooms are the heart of the hotel. Unless the décor is appropriate, the air odour free, furnishing and upholstery is spotlessly clean the hotel may lose a guest as a potential customer. The housekeeping department not only prepares the clean guestroom on a timely basis for the guests who are arriving but also cleans and maintains everything in the hotel so that the property is fresh and attractive as the day it opens for business.