

A STUDY ON SAFETY MEASURES IMPLEMENTED BY LE ROMA GARDENIA RESORT (VRS INFRA) DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected almost all businesses but the impact of Covid-19 on the hospitality industry has been much more severe. According to JLL's Hotel Momentum India (HMI) report, Consultancy firm ANAROCK estimates that the sector was faced with a revenue loss of approximately Rs 90,000 crore in 2020. The pandemic has confronted the hospitality industry with a whole host of unexpected challenges. The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of Covid-19 on the Hospitality sector in general with a special focus on Le Roma Gardenia Resort - which in spite of COVID related difficulties has risen to be one of the fastest growing wedding venues in Bangalore. The study shall reveal the challenges faced and safety measures implemented by Le Roma Gardenia Resort in order to ensure the safety of customers and create a pleasant hospitality experience for them. It will also look at the internal operations of the resort, staff and employee policies and what measures have been taken to ensure all around safety and health for everyone involved.

Keywords: Explore the concept, impact of Covid-19, safety measures implemented, challenges faced during pandemic.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic, also known as the coronavirus pandemic, is a worldwide coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic caused by coronavirus that causes severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-CoV-2). The virus was originally discovered in Wuhan, China, in December of this year. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, which was subsequently upgraded to a pandemic on March 11, 2020. COVID-19 has been linked to more than 183 million confirmed cases and 3.97 million confirmed fatalities as of 5 July 2021, making it one of the worst pandemics in history.

COVID-19 symptoms vary greatly in severity, ranging from undetectable to life-threatening. COVID-19 individuals who are older or have specific underlying medical problems are more prone to develop severe sickness. COVID-19 is spread via the air when drops and tiny particles pollute it. Breathing them in is most dangerous when individuals are close together, but they may also be breathed across greater distances, especially indoors. Transmission may also happen if you are splashed or sprayed with infected fluids, or if you get it in your eyes, nose, or mouth, or if you come into contact with contaminated surfaces. People may be infectious for up to 20 days after contracting the virus, and they can transmit it even if they don't show any symptoms.

COVID-19 has a highly negative economic effect. No one has been spared from the consequences. Economies in over 100 nations have been devastated, with some of them seeking

financial assistance from the IMF. Businesses in the hotel, entertainment, and aviation industries, among others, have suffered significant losses. "The lockdown has severely impacted the hospitality sector...We are seeing a significant decrease in new bookings, an increase in cancellations, etc," said Cygnett Hotels and Resorts founder and MD Sarbendra Sarkar. In 2021, the hotel industry is in for another wave of misery. Nearly all industries have recently stepped up the pace as the economy shows indications of recovery. Even the hardest-hit industries, such as aviation, which came to a halt for two months, have recovered, with airlines reporting capacity utilization of over 60% on the domestic market. According to the study, the Indian hotel sector was still doing well in January. From February onwards, the sector began to show indications of revival. The study said, "Unfortunately, business during the second half of March seems to have fallen off a cliff, pretty much across the board."

The Covid-19 epidemic has impacted virtually all companies, but the hotel sector has been hit particularly hard. According to JLL's Hotel Momentum India (HMI) study, the industry would lose about Rs 90,000 crore in revenue by 2020, according to consultancy company ANAROCK. In order to thrive in this climate, the hospitality sector must deal with unpredictability. The epidemic has presented the hospitality sector with a slew of unanticipated difficulties. Hotel reservations have suffered significantly as leisure travel has plummeted. Even in business, self-employed individuals and small company owners are arranging trips that are shorter in length and do not need them to stay in hotels.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of literature helps to understand various theories related to the research project. It displays how many reviews and references are taken by the researcher in order to present in his paper. The following references were referred for the review of literature.

1. "COVID-19 cripples Global Restaurant and Hospitality Industry", K.Dube, _Nhamo, D. Chikodze 2021.

Using data from OpenTable and other sources, this research examines the effect of COVID-19 on the worldwide restaurant sector. According to the research, when governments across the globe implemented social distancing measures, mobility restrictions, and lockdowns, sit-in visitors decreased to nil in several nations. COVID-19 also resulted in enormous job and revenue losses, resulting in the loss of millions of jobs and billions of dollars in potential income. Extraordinary financial and other assistance measures for the industry are recommended in the report. As the sector progressively reopens, it also advises a slew of safety and health measures.

2. Kaushal, S. Srivastava - *International Journal of Hospitality Management 2021, "Hospitality and tourist sector during COVID-19 pandemic: Perspectives on problems and learnings from India."*

The study covers two main concerns: the first is the significant difficulties that the hospitality and tourist sector confronts in today's environment, and the second is the critical learnings for the industry. The research is based on 15 interviews with top executives in the hotel sector, as well as tourism and hospitality education services. The content analysis of the interview responses yielded 27 sub-themes, which were then condensed into four main themes.

3. Dr. Amit Kumar 2020, "Disastrous Impact of Coronavirus (COVID 19) on Tourism and Hospitality Industry in India."

The aim of this study is to examine how the Coronavirus pandemic has negatively impacted the tourist sector. The tourist sector has been crippled throughout the nation as a result of the shutdown. This has resulted in a job crisis for the 38 million individuals employed in the sector. The tourist sector employs millions of people in India, either directly or indirectly. Many airlines and travel firms had already put over 35% of their workers on unpaid leave before the shutdown.

4. "The COVID-19 problem and the hotel industry's long-term viability," Peter Jones, Daphne Comfort 2020.

Following the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, this study examines and comments on some of the changes in the connections between sustainability and the hospitality sector. The article provides a short overview of the issue, emphasizes the importance of hospitality in daily economic and social life, and examines some of the changes that have occurred in the hospitality sector as a result of sustainability. This is not a typical academic article in the sense that it is neither empirical or conceptual, but it does attempt to rehearse and reflect on the debates surrounding the evolving connections between sustainability and the hotel sector. The article does, however, provide a brief literature review on sustainable development, crisis management, consumerism, and neoliberalism to reference and contextualize the topics discussed.

5. Pravin Kumar Patel, Dr. Shivali Kharoliwal, Dr. Jaya Sharma, and Dr. Prashant Khemariya, "IJERT-The Effects of Nobel CoronaVirus (Covid-19) in the Tourism Industry in India", Pravin Kumar Patel, Dr. Shivali Kharoliwal, Dr. Jaya Sharma, and Dr. Prashant Khemariya, "IJERT-The Effects of Nobel CoronaVirus (Covid-19) in the Tourism Industry in India."

This study project has shown the long-term impact on the country's economy as well as the global economy. The effect is expected to last for some time, which has been a major source of worry in recent years. Covid-19 seems to be affecting travel agencies, as countries have imposed a shutdown to prevent the spread of the virus. The Coronavirus has also made it possible for the tourist sector to face a significant danger, as well as an economic downturn. As a result, it is thought to be having an effect on the tourist sector. Despite the fact that measurements were made, it seems that they were ineffective in preventing the spread of coronavirus.

6. P Foroudi, SAH Tabaghdehi, R Marvi 2021, "The darkness of the COVID-19 shock in the hotel industry: A study of customer risk perception and adaptive belief under the black cloud of a pandemic".

This study makes two key points: (i) the hospitality industry is built on customer trust by supporting and resourcing customers' self-protection behavior and adoptive belief, and (ii) the restaurant industry's economic influence, continuous uncertainty, and transformation necessitate the enhancement of localization strategies, practices, and performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. *Research Methods:*

Research methodology is the way in which research problems are solved systematically. There are various methods of studying a research problem. In this research exploratory and descriptive research methods are applied.

1. Exploratory Research Method is a study when there is no clear idea about the particular problem. This research is used when the problem or topic is new. It is the best method in understanding the problem. It helps in understanding the depth and the implications implied within the topic of study.

2. Descriptive Research Method is a common tool in problem analysis. Considering the above objectives mentioned in the study, this method is adopted. Descriptive research is used to describe characteristics of population or phenomenon being studied.

B. *Sampling:*

The term "population" refers to a group of people who satisfy a set of criteria for a study. When a small group is selected from these population sizes, the group is referred to as a sample, and each member of the sample is referred to as a participant. Sampling is the process of selecting a group of people from a population to form a sample. In this investigation, Simple Random Sampling was used as the sampling method. Simple random sampling is a kind of probability sampling in which a researcher chooses a subset of a population at random. Each person in the population has the same probability of getting chosen. For the research, about 85 consumers and staff of Le Roma Gardenia were sampled.

Results and Discussion

Summary of findings from the data analysis of the responses presented by employees of Le Roma Gardenia.

- It is clear that there is massive gender bias within the gender distribution of the workforce at Le Roma Gardenia with 85% of them being male and 15% being female. Being in the hospitality industry, these types of gender distributions are not uncommon as it's easier to find and hire male workers for the types of jobs required than female workers.
- Overall, the respondents are in their mid-late twenties and early thirties, with the bulk of them in their mid-late twenties and early thirties. This implies that the workforce of Le Roma Gardenia is, on average, very young and thus extremely productive.
- It makes evident that around 60% of the present employees at Le Roma Gardenia are fairly new and have only been there for a little over a year, or, in some cases nearing two years. Around 25% of the employees have been working here for over 2 years and these are the same employees who now hold more senior positions in their respective departments.
- The Housekeeping department stands out in this histogram analysis as the department with the most number of employees.
- With regards to the current city that the respondents live in, naturally more than 80% of the respondents live in Bangalore, since the employees all work locally at Le Roma and live on-site as well at the resort, which is located in Yelahanka, North Bangalore.

- Some other respondents felt that COVID 19 presented challenges around bookings and guest interactions, where guests had very high expectations from the resort and low budgets (due to COVID hampering their disposable incomes perhaps).
 - Common safety measures undertaken by the resort included Sanitizers installed at various touch points, the use of masks and regular fumigation of the resort. 100% of the respondents unanimously agreed that the safety measures taken by the company were effective and worked well. This is quite a good sign not only from an internal perspective but also for the brand image of the company.
 - Almost 95% of the workforce at Le Roma Gardenia felt that it's a safe place to work, which is a very good sign for the company and speaks positively to all the safety measures planned and laid out at the resort.
 - The self assessed health scores have a wildly varying range. About 1/3rd of the respondents claim to be in excellent health. These respondents could most likely hail from the housekeeping, gardening etc. functions which generally require more manual, body based labor leading to high levels of physical activity.
 - As noted by the employees at Le Roma Gardenia, most customers visit quite often. In fact 25% of the customer base visits almost on a daily basis and 65% of the customers visit a few times a week. This means that the COVID protocols and safety measures laid out by the company are working well and customers feel safe to keep coming back to the venue for more stays, entertainment and wellness themed retreats.
 - It is heartening to see that 95% of the employees feel that Le Roma Gardenia is a safe place to host guests in, with all its preventive measures and COVID related safety protocols in place.
 - While the overall business of the resort was surely brutally affected and negatively impacted during lockdown periods, it is good to see that 95% of employees were paid their full salaries, even during lockdowns.
- Summary of findings from the data analysis of the responses presented by customers of Le Roma Gardenia.
- Le Roma Gardenia as a resort destination is more popular with males than females. Because, out of all the respondents, 60% are male. Le Roma Gardenia is more popular with younger, new age, millennial audiences who are able to appreciate its beauty better. As usual, most of the respondents (customers of the company) reside actively in Bangalore - around 50% of the total judging from this histogram analysis.
 - On a very positive note, around 62.5% of the respondents claimed that Le Roma Gardenia is a safe place to visit during the pandemic. This means that the safety measures implemented by the resort have been well perceived and well appreciated by most customers.
 - This pie chart analysis from the raw data collected from respondents reveals that around 72% of the customers visit the resort around once a month. The balance 25% visit a few times a month with a negligible amount of 3% visiting a few times weekly.
 - Most of the respondents have heard about Le Roma Gardenia from social media sources with Google coming in a close second. The fact that around 34% of the respondents claim to have arrived at the resort through Google augur well for the company and its brand. It means that their brand and website is easy to find online and that the resort is ranking well in Google

for their target market. Interestingly, 25% of respondents found Le Roma through a wedding portal. That means that there is a strong perception in the market that the resort is more of a wedding venue where weddings can be held.

- Based on the pie chart analysis, there seems to be a lot of diversity in the types of events hosted at the resort. Weddings and wedding related events seem to be a major theme. Over $\frac{1}{3}$ of the events happening at Le Roma are weddings, with birthday parties being the next in line and staycations also featuring for less than 10% of all types of events. The pie chart analysis reveals that 50% of the respondents thought that the safety measures and COVID prevention protocols implanted by the Le Roma Gardenia management were excellent. Another 50% felt that the safety measures implemented were moderately good with slight room for improvement.
- The histogram analysis reveals that most customers come to the resort in search of an exotic and nice ambience. Almost 47% of the respondents found the hospitality at the resort to be excellent, far outweighing the other options. From a business perspective, the high rate of recommendation is quite good as it will lead to more brand awareness through word of mouth.
- The majority of the respondents at around 75% agree that the resort is fairly affordable and represents good value for money, even during these tough COVID induced lockdown periods. A few respondents felt that the resort was perhaps overpriced and not very affordable. When asked if they would like to visit again, most customers came back to say that YES, they would certainly visit again. This is quite good news for the brand as it means that more customers will purchase again, leading to repeatable business for them and better income.

CONCLUSION

After doing a thorough study of the subject matter, the conclusion is clear. Le Roma Gardenia has been able to survive successfully during the COVID induced lockdown period and subsequently has not been as negatively affected by the COVID induced business uncertainties as some of its other peers and competitors. Part of the success of Le Roma Gardenia being able to survive and thrive during a highly difficult time lay in the fact that the resort itself is quite picturesque. The greenery and dense vegetation and nature has served as a focal point to keep customers coming back to the resort - those looking for a respite from their busy yet monotonous work from home schedules. The study revealed the challenges faced and safety measures implemented by Le Roma Gardenia Resort in order to ensure the safety of customers and create a pleasant hospitality experience for them. It looks at the internal operations of the resort, staff and employee policies and what measures had been taken to ensure all around safety and health for everyone involved.

In a surprising revelation, in spite of a negative impact during strict lockdown periods, Le Roma Gardenia actually performed well throughout the entire duration of the COVID-19 period. There were several factors contributing to this. The company adopted strict COVID-19 preventive measures which helped regain the trust of customers. Additionally, the idyllic environment of the resort coupled with natural greenery led to it being looked at as a great getaway destination for professional living in Bangalore. Added to this, from the questionnaire and subsequent response analysis using histograms, pie charts and other techniques, the general consensus is that Le Roma Gardenia is a safe and COVID free environment in which

to live, work and play. The employees, on the whole, feel content with the safety measures implemented and were even paid full salaries during the lockdown period, despite sluggish business performance. This probably suggests that whatever on ground measures have been implemented to combat COVID have been effective and are working well to ensure that customers and employees alike feel safe, secure and comfortable.

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