

designed bathroom products. Presently, the Indian bathroom fittings market, which is pegged at ₹4000 crore, is one of the fastest growing bath markets in the world. "In recent times with changes in living styles due to global exposure, the Indian bath industry is graduating to higher levels of finesse. Coordinated bathing spaces are becoming a reality where all parts of the space have a common design language. From mere functional spaces, bathrooms have moved to being more of an experience zone," states Rajesh Mehra, director and promoter, Jaquar Group adding that, when it comes to bathroom fittings customised designs, green and low maintenance products top the chart of hotel requirements.

Moreover, hotels are also demanding good designs that carry the right functionality. There is an obvious expectation that the installed products should be user-friendly. "There is also a strong demand for products that are easy to maintain. Being a service industry, there is a strong pattern noticed among hotels of partnering with suppliers who have a strong service network to ensure a smooth and uninterrupted experience for customers," opines Pankaj Kumar, national manager, sanitary, Häfele India adding that the company has partnered with leading international manufacturers with specific expertise in different bathroom functionalities and has put together a super-premium range for the India market. Their super premium bathroom range includes bathroom faucets and beauty areas from Webert (Italy), a range of shower solutions from Edelbad (South Korea) and polyurethane wash basins from Boing (Spain).

The new age 'hotel bathroom' is now looked at in two distinct parts - the wet and the dry area. For the dry area, a majority of hotels are opting for wall mounted closets and counter top lavs. While in the showering area, customers look for bigger showers to enhance their showering experience. "More and more consumers



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these days are also opting for green products. Designers have shown a preference for more sleek and minimalistic lines," reveals Salil Sadanandan, managing director, Kohler Kitchen and Bath India adding that there is also a rise in demand for products and solutions, such as bidet seats, integrated toilets and premium, stylish showering products.

Planet friendly

There is significant opportunity and powerful financial incentive to reduce environmental impact related to energy consumption within the hospitality industry. Hence hotels are increasingly opting for energy-efficient bathroom fittings without compromising on the guest's desire for a comfortable bathroom that is environmen-

tally responsible. "Hoteliers are nowadays more conscious about the environment than ever before as it can cost far more to operate a lodging facility if it is not sustainable. Decreasing profits due to competition in this industry has also led hotels to innovate and implement cost effective measures beneficial to the hotel and guest. Hotels use huge amounts

of energy, therefore, investments in more efficient energy resources can lead to significant reductions in energy consumption, operating costs and energy bills. Some innovative energy management systems could cut energy costs for hotel owners by up to 65 per cent," asserts Ajay Dhar, executive housekeeper, Optus Sarovar Premiere, Gurgaon.

Keeping this in mind, Häfele India has selected their super-premium range of bathroom fittings based on advanced water-saving technologies without compromising on the actual functionality of the product. "Our products have integrated flow limiters and aerators along with control cartridges that enable us to save water consumption by 25 per cent to 30 per cent of normal use," boasts Kumar adding that bathroom accessory manufacturing companies are also integrating a series of showers and fittings that dispense less litres of water per minute, while also taking care of the inherent expectations of the users. As a company that makes products deliver water, Delta Faucet Company has developed two innovative technologies to enable its clients to save on water and cost. While the H2O kinetic technology controls the size and velocity of water to create a warmer, luxurious shower experience with five and half litres of water, the Touch2O technology is incorporated into their premium bathroom faucets which allow guests to turn the faucet on and off with a touch anywhere on the handle or spout thus ensuring minimal water wastage.

Likewise, to offer the concept of luxury without compromising on the sustainability aspect, Europe's largest sanitary fittings brand Grohe, also launched their Ecojoy product range which helps to save water up to 68 per cent. Grohe also offers a full-spectrum of water-saving products - for bath, shower and sanitary installations. For instance, Grohe thermostats ensure that the desired water temperature is reached within a fraction of a second and is reliably maintained for

the duration of the shower so that no water is wasted while trying to achieve the right temperature. Their faucets and flush systems have been designed with a focus on water-saving technologies and sustainable practices. For instance, Grohe offers single-lever basin mixers which feature a flow-limiting mousseur with aerator that reduces water consumption without compromising on user experience. The inclusion of a temperature limiter, which can be adjusted to meet requirements, can also reduce energy consumption. "Another way to save water is to install a toilet with a dual-flush cistern which lets the user choose how much water to use when flushing the toilet. By using a lower volume of water to flush the toilet, one can dramatically reduce annual water consumption and contribute to the conservation of this valuable natural resource," suggests Renu Misra, managing director, Grohe India.

As for Jaquar, conservation of water has long been the primary goal of their sustainability efforts. Their product range starts from entry level to super luxury level. "We can provide customisation in terms of design and technology essentially to support the green building requirements of

hotels. In fact, recently we introduced a self cleaning shower which is quite a rage in this segment," opines Mehra. Some of their innovative technologies for saving water include - flow restrictors that lets taps and showers save up to 80 per cent of water without compromising on the flow; air showers with a built-in air mixer helps save water up to 30 per cent without compromising on the showering experience; pressmatic faucets that allow only a fixed quantity (750 ml) of water to flow with every press of its knob; sensor faucets that allow water to flow only when you need it and shuts as soon as you move your hands away, resulting in zero wastage of water; and dual flush that enable hotels to use either a combination of 3/6 litres of water or 2/4 litres of water, depending on the water closet. Jaquar's beta valve is designed to save 50-60 per cent of water every day.

As for lighting in bathrooms, hotels are also moving from Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFL) to Light Emitting Diode (LED). Though initially more expensive than CFLs, LEDs are value for money since they are more durable, cool, mercury-free, more efficient and cost effective. "We are currently in the process of

upgrading to LED lights as they are high efficiency lights and this is also an effort on our part to help conserve and preserve the environment," says Sudesh. Likewise, to complement Starwood's core value of energy preservation and to reach their target of saving 30 per cent energy by 2020, The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace has implemented the use of LED spotlights in their bathrooms. "This has shown quite a difference in energy consumption over the testing phase. We are continuously working on saving energy in various areas," points out Mark Nicholas, director of rooms, The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace.

Flooring it right

The key factors influencing the use of floorings in hotel bathrooms are durability, cleaning products, time needed to clean the bathroom and the convenience of the guests in terms of slip-resistant floorings. Most hotels in India extensively use marble for floorings as they are easy to clean and maintain. For instance, Optus Sarovar Premiere, Gurgaon uses Bucchino marbles in all the guest bathrooms. "This marble flooring is elegant, waterproof and has natural and impervious finish.

It gels with our room's décor and ambience," mentions Dhar. Marriott uses high gloss marble since they are least likely to retain or absorb any soap residue. "To ensure added safety we use anti-slip mats in our bathrooms," adds Sudesh. As for The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace, "We understand the importance of balance between design and safety, hence we maintain a beautifully designed marble flooring with a special anti-skid coating for bathrooms and special mats that provide stability," boasts Nicholas.

Tapping business

It is estimated that in the next five years over 5000 hotels across two and three star categories in India like ibis, Holiday Inn and Ginger will be up and running in Tier I and II markets. Considering this tremendous influx of hotel rooms especially in smaller cities followed by an increasing demand for multi-functional and energy-efficient bathrooms, the growth of the bathroom fittings industry in India is on an upswing. Though the market leader in this segment continues to be Jaquar which presently holds 60 per cent of the market share, there has been many new entrants who over the last few months since