

Cauvery College for Women (Autonomous)
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Factors involved in Selection of Equipment

A number of factors have to be considered before purchasing equipments for a catering establishment so that the investment made on them does not go in vain. The following are some of the major factors that should determine the selection of various equipments for a facility.

1. Size and type of establishment

Size refers not only to the spatial measurement of the structure or premises for food preparation and service activity but also to the number of customers that must be catered to at one time. Thus, selection of equipment is directly affected by the volume of food prepared, as this is related to the size or capacity of the particular piece of equipment. Too large an equipment in relation to turnover expected will lead to underutilization and inefficiency, while too small a capacity will not be able to meet the demands of the customers. The smaller the size of the establishment the more important it becomes to select equipment which is mobile and has the ability to be dismantled and stored when not in use.

The type of establishment reflects the extent of service offered to customers in terms of the quantities and different types of foods prepared and served at a time. Heavier serving equipment of larger capacities would be require for facilities like college hostels when compared to a coffee shop where the menu prepared is of short order.

2. Menu

Equipment also depends on the methods of cooking required for u dishes planned on the menu, For instance, if a canteen menu consist mainly of fried snacks and beverage, the selection will be between in- vesting on a fryer or a simple 'kadai". On the other hand, if the menu consists of ready baked items, sautéed or shallow fried snacks and sandwiches a fryer would be unnecessary.

3. Food purchased

The form in which the food is purchased will further influence the selection of equipment for any establishment. For example, if ready idli, vada, dosa mixes are purchased for preparing the dishes for a particular menu, then there would be

no need for a wet grinder which would be necessary if the mixtures were prepared from raw ingredients. It is also better to choose multifunction equipment in order to have flexible menus.

4. Usage

Every equipment selected must be able to fulfill a specific purpose, be it efficiency of production, profitability, convenience or customer satisfaction in terms of aesthetically presented wholesale meals, greater value for money or comfortable serving and dining.

5. Utility of design

The design of a piece of equipment has to be considered in terms of the results desired. For example, it is very important to know if an equipment is actually maintaining the temperature necessary for keeping food safe while holding it or in storage. But it is very difficult to know this in the case of certain equipment unless the manufacturer indicates clearly the temperature at which the equipment is designed to operate.

6. Frequency of use

The selection of an equipment will be affected by its frequency of use. For instance, there is no point going in for a wet grinder if items of food requiring wet grinding are placed on the menu once in a fortnight or a month. It would be wiser to select a kitchen machine which can be used for wet grinding when required and for blending, grating and other functions as well.

7. Price

The materials of which an equipment is made, affects its price which is always determines buying choice. Every equipment depreciates at a different rate and therefore the rate of depreciation along with its impact on environmental sanitation, satisfaction in use, and suitability in terms of hard wearing qualities all affect selection. The investment of time and effort saved in using it for better production in terms of quality and quantity of the product and the rate of return on investment cost of an equipment has to be weighed very carefully against the Co are both very crucial considerations.

8. Ease of installation, maintenance and operation

Selection of equipment must be guided by simplicity of construction, ease with which it can be operated using existing skills of catering staff and the factors which are important to hygiene and safety of both equipment and its environment. Such factors are the material from which the equipment is made, the nature of construction in terms of rounded edges, proper insulation, earthing and plumbing as the case may be. It is more expensive to buy equipment which needs a specialist's attention each time something goes wrong.

9. Safety

Since catering involves dealing with heavy equipment, sharp tools, glass and cutlery, large volumes of food, electricity, gas, steam, hot and cold water, it is extremely important to select equipment that is guaranteed for safety while in operation and when not in use. All sharp edges and movable parts should be provided with safety guards. There should be no crevices which may harbor dust, dirt and microbes, endangering the safety of environment and the food produced

10. Economy

Economy refers to the amount of fuel in terms of electricity, gas, kerosene and coal, which an equipment may require for functioning. The operating costs of piece of equipment is an important consideration in its selection. In certain areas, for example, electricity may be cheaper as cooking fuel than gas or coal. In such cases it would be better to select electrically operation equipment rather than gas ranges. Some equipment to consider in terms of energy saving would be pressure cooking equipment, convection and microwave ovens for quick cooking and even heating.

In addition, the costs of installation, maintenance and operation will determine the selection. It would be wiser to select equipment with higher initial costs and lower maintenance costs that to go for cheap models which have higher recurring costs.

11.Ease of cleaning

Selected equipment should be constructed with the materials which are non-corrosive, non-toxic, stable to heat and moisture and non-absorbent. All equipment should have smooth surfaces, not requiring any special detergents for its cleaning. Too many shiny chrome on equipment looks attractive when new but involves extra effort and time in wiping and polishing.

12.Attractiveness

The aesthetic quality of equipment attracts a worker's attention to it and can create a desire for using and looking after it. Attractiveness is therefore a factor that can positively influence a worker's attitude towards work especially in areas where the work seems to be very uninteresting and unrewarding.

13.Source of supply

Equipment must be procured from reputed manufacturers and suppliers so that they are backed up with a proper guarantee. They also ensure prompt after sales service and maintenance when required. It is also advisable to check and compare with other manufacturers and sellers before making the purchase.