

# Hospitality Going - Green with Ecofriendly Hotels

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## Abstract

The awareness of green practices in the hospitality industry is at the forefront, a larger chunk of hospitality outlets are following certain sustainable practices. Hotels are going for certifications like ISO 14000:2008 and LEED. These certificates add value to the brand and promote conscious customers to be loyal to such brands. Only the customers who are environmentally conscious are ready to pay a higher cost. Although the link between environmentally sustainable programs and improved customer satisfaction is weak compared to standard drivers like facilities, room, and food and beverage quality, hotels are increasingly expected to maintain sustainability programs as a regular feature of their business. The awareness of protecting the environment and reducing pollution and carbon foot print is taking a forefront; hospitality industry should try to embrace it. Hospitality industry has taken up with the certifications like, ISO 14000:2004, LEED etc. The customers are able to categorize these hotels in a different cadre due to certifications which tell that we are pro environment. This paper puts some light on what steps are taken by the hospitality industry to protect the environment.

**Keywords:** Growth of Hospitality, LEED Certification, ISO 14000:2004, Ecofriendly Hotels, Guest Participation

individual accommodation: the hotels, motels, youth hostels and dormitories, apartments, tourist shelters, as well as the private sector involved in the tourist accommodation. [1] Hospitality industry is growing at a faster pace. India is a huge contributor to this in all the forms, may it be economy or natural beauty. Generally, economical growth of the hospitality industry is the result of the significant natural beauty of the place. Speaking particularly of India, the scenic beauty is in abundance and encompasses of the cultural variations present in the region. Not to forget the hospitality in the blood of our ancestors who inculcated the idea of “Atithi Devo Bahva” in us. So, India with its rich heritage of hospitality stands up high with its diversity in natural beauty, culture and tradition - a bouquet of treat for the tourists. As the income of people all around the world has increased, they move around as tourists all around the globe, and are more aware what countries are doing for protecting the environment and want to stay in places which are pro-environment. They want to be a part of hotel which uses green marketing, green brands, environmentally friendly products, socially accountable, all-natural, they themselves also work towards becoming a conscious customer by protecting the environment.

## Growth of Hospitality Industry

As shown in fig 1 Over 7.1 million foreign tourist arrived in 2015 (January to November). Foreign tourist arrivals increased at a CAGR of 7.1 per cent during 2005-25. By 2025, a foreign tourist arrival in India is expected to reach 15.3 million, according to the World Tourism Organisation. As shown in fig 2 Foreign arrivals are rising. During January - September 2015, foreign exchange earnings from tourism were US\$ 15 billion as compared to US\$ 19.7 billion in 2014. Foreign exchange earnings increased at a CAGR of 10.9 percent during 2006. The

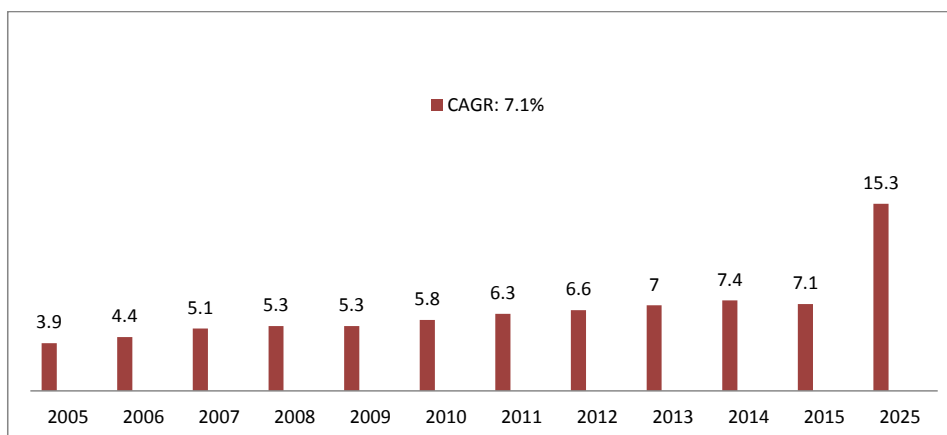
## INTRODUCTION

Hospitality industry can be defined as an economic activity that includes the provision of services and the organization of short-term accommodations in the hotels, motels, campsites and other accommodation facilities for a fee. Nowadays, the hospitality industry is a powerful system of the regional economy and tourist center and an important component of the tourism economy. The hospitality industry is different means of collective and

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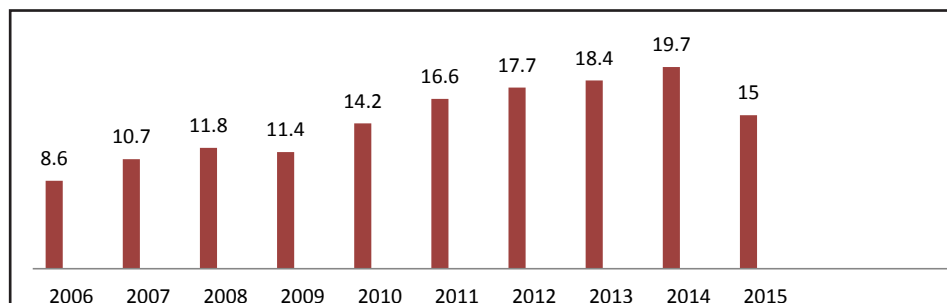
tourism and hospitality industry of India has been one of the few globally, which has bucked trends in recent times

and has been clocking healthy growth rates, despite the impact of recent global economic upheavals.



**Fig. 1: Foreign Tourists Arriving in India**

Source: World Travel and Tourism Council’s Economic impact 2016, Ministry of Tourism, TechSci Research 2015 CAGR- compound annual growth



**Fig. 2: Foreign Exchange Earning from Tourism in India (US \$billion)**

Source: Ministry of Tourism, TechSci Research Note 2015- Jan to September 2015 CAGR- compound annual growth

## The Origins of Hotel Sustainability

Hoteliers have known the importance of environment for the growth of their business since long and hence, have been giving emphasis on it since long as shown below:

- 1960s and 1970s - Inception of Modern environmental movement.
- 1980s and 1990s - Introduction of sustainable development by United Nation Commission.
- 2000 to Present - Widening the scope of sustainability with CSR, ISO 14000:2004, LEED green building program.
- 2008 to 2009 - Cost Control measures got importance [3].

## Need of Going Green

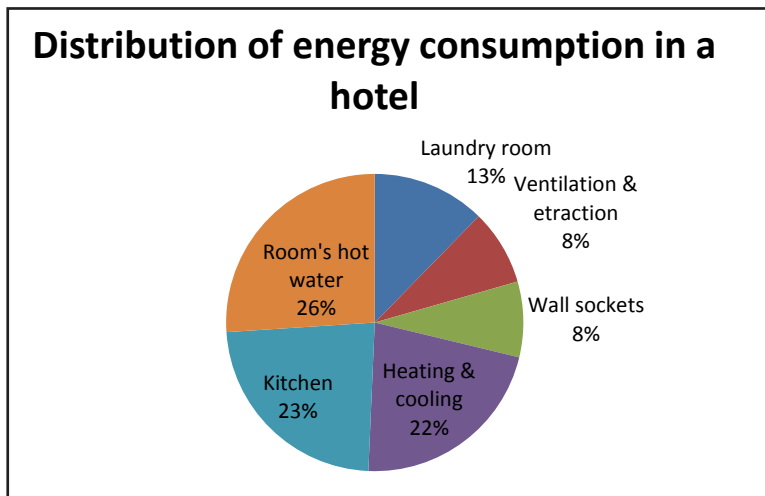
The need of growing green is not just the choice of the hoteliers but also a mandate of the government. It comes with a few benefits that have provoked the sustainability development of this hospitality industry to be a choice of business owners and managers. The factors could be enthralling as they save the cost and improve the customer experience. We know that service industry that runs on experience and memorabilia, sustainable growth factors are liked by the customers as they add value to their experience. A few factors could be as follows:

- **Cost Saving:** Though the cost of developing a sustainable property costs more but the developers

know that the cost benefits that are accrued in the long run cannot be ignored. With many opportunities available to save cost by waste management and water conservation and recycling.

- **Government Regulations:** The government of India has Representative Fiscal and Economic Incentives Provided for Development of Green Buildings like Tax credits, Waiver of development fees, Cash incentives for achieving certification, Public investment in new or improved, infrastructure Grants to cover the soft costs associated with, green design Low interest loans, Expedited plan review by building departments, Permissions for additional density
- **Brand Image:** The luxury brand hotels are benefited from the environmentally consciousness attitude. It has become a trend in the customers' mind to stay in eco hotels. The brand name is associated with a good attitude towards the nature and hence, gets loyal customers.

- **Guest Experience:** The new generation of 'intelligent' HVAC systems and energy management devices, coupled with a properly managed maintenance regime, can result in significant improvements in thermal comfort and indoor air quality – for both guests and employees. Improvements can also be realized in the indoor acoustic environment, where noise from building equipment such as fans, boilers and compressors can negatively impact the guest experience.
- **Competitive Edge:** With the growing green giant of green revolution in this industry the hotels are getting a cut above others due to the certifications of going green. They are able to create an image in the minds of the customers that they are a conscious property taking care of not just their customers but also the environment. The nature loving customers like them on their sites and bring in more customers similar to them in this property. More over nowadays we find many customers searching for eco hotels and wanting to stay in such hotels.



**Fig. 3: Distribution of Energy Consumption in a Hotel**

Source: Intelbat, 2005

### Energy Best Practices

Use of solar energy/green energy has helped the hotels to reduce cost. Reduction of solar rays entering into the hotels also helps. In tropical areas solar control film, a polyester layer is used to coat windows. It is highly beneficial, because it can be retrofitted into existing hotels at low cost. It saves a lot of energy almost 155kWh of electricity per year. Simply orienting a building to

capture (or avoid) insulation can save on energy use. The purchasing of green products for cleaning and training the employees for being environmentally responsible has changed the attitude and shown a massive improvement in the awareness of environment. Recycling is a popular practice, perhaps because many recycling methods have a short payback period and can yield significant savings. Some hotels have switched to refillable dispensers for bathroom amenities, but others repurpose their tiny

amenity containers by donating them to shelters and charities.

A few steps used for energy best practices are:

- Use of green energy
- Low flow shower heads
- Basic sealing of windows and doors
- Switching to CFLs
- Monitor regular consumption
- Energy efficient equipments and appliances
- Faucets aerators
- Window covering to reduce solar gains
- Dual flush toilets
- Grey water and rain water harvesting
- Regular inspection and maintenance program
- Employ local employee to support local economy
- Solid waste management
- Purchase green products
- Lenin reuse program
- Use local products
- Green training for employees

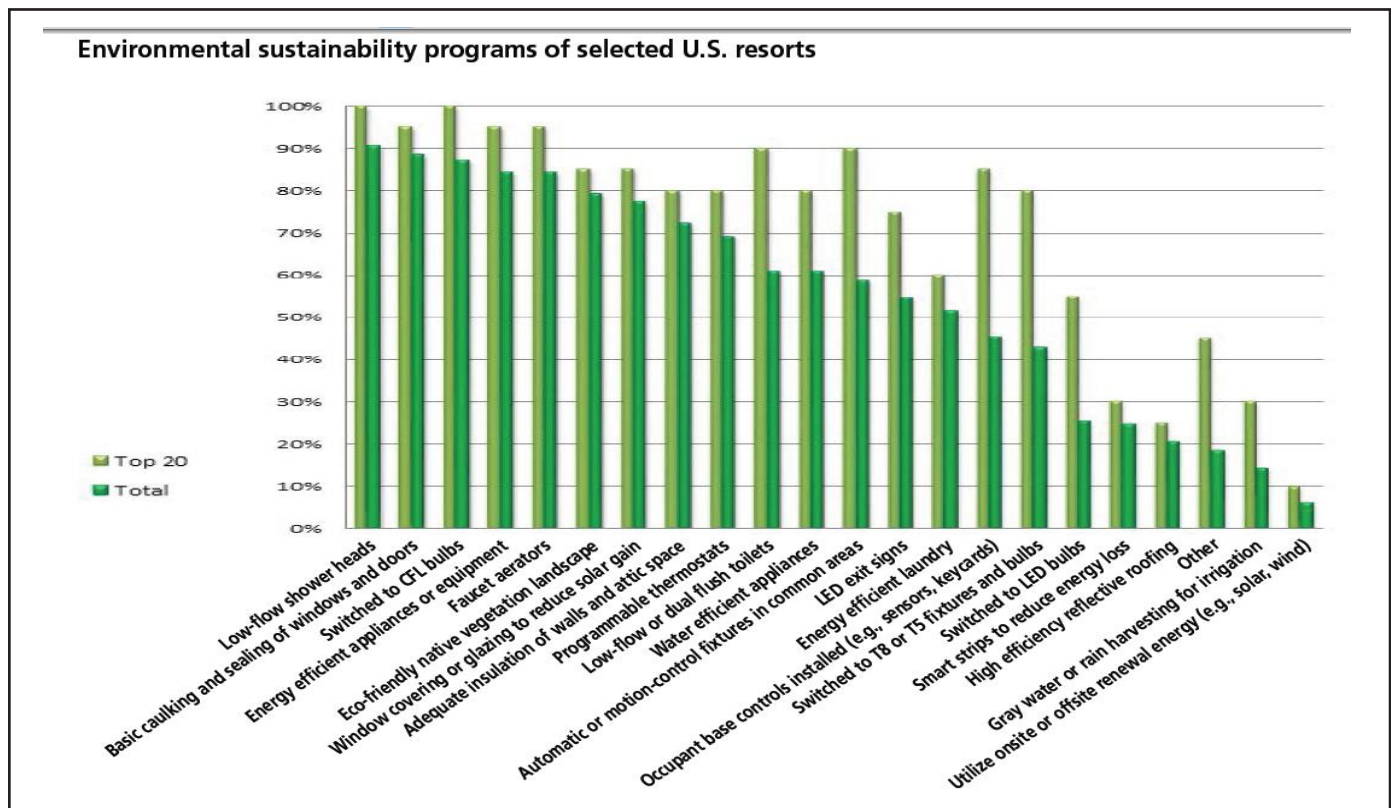


Fig. 4: Environmental Sustainability Programs of Selected U.S. Resorts

### LEED Certification

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings, and is administered by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC at [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)) But LEED has no product-specific requirements for hotels and one needs to be a natural innovator to save energy.

To earn LEED certification, there are certain criteria/benchmarks are put forward for the building. When the hotels fulfill these criteria they are awarded the certificate. Depending upon the fulfillment of these prerequisite criteria the building is certified with, Silver, Gold, or Platinum. The level of certification depends upon the number of credits or points achieved. Certain services as chemical-free landscaping, a pond (replete with swans) that uses recycled water, a guest van that uses alternative fuel, and storage for bicycles, a roof where lawn is put up

to reduce the heat etc are a few items which receive some LEED points [4] ITC chain has 11 LEED platinum rated properties in India. Five of the hotels operate on wind energy; the largest self owned wind farms (29.5 MW) by any hotel chain in the world, for captive consumption – ITC Gardenia & ITC Windsor, Bengaluru, ITC Rajputana, Jaipur, ITC Maratha, Mumbai and the all new integrated Luxury Hotel Complex in Chennai - ITC Grand Chola [5]

### ISO 14000:2004 Certificate

This is another certificate that adds value to the environmental aspect of the hotel. This also counts as to how much you are reducing the noise, air and water pollution level, how many steps have you taken to conserve the energy and whether you are using local products?

### CONCLUSION

Hospitality is a growing industry, and going -green is the buzz word of the era. It is a pull factor for the customers who are now a days becoming environmentally conscious. The properties have started to implement the use of

natural resources not as an option but as a need of the hour. Looking at the benefits that they reap from customer satisfaction to image building is tremendous, not to forget the customer experience.

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