

Ecotel Concept and Green Practice Followed in Hotel Industry: With Reference to City Bengaluru

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Abstract

Hospitality industry is one of the leading growth sectors of the global economy bringing in billions of currency annually in developing countries along with an increasing amount of stress on the environment. Emergence of Bengaluru as the IT capital of India necessitated quality accommodation to service the needs of the industry in a big way towards beginning of the new century. The growth of Hospitality Industry in Bengaluru heading for the region representing threat to natural resources and energy. Ecotels are considered to be the best solution to conserve natural resources and energy in the city. The paper aims to find out the green initiatives that govern the effectiveness of the ecotels in areas related to environmental commitment, water conservation and preservation, energy efficiency and solid waste management by various hotels in Bengaluru and to understand the awareness about ecotels among the guests. Primary data was collected by questionnaires through field visits and direct interviews and secondary data was gathered by various magazines, journals and websites. The paper results that only basic measures are implemented by the hotels and suitable measures are not well implemented to protect the environment.

Keywords: Hospitality, Environment, Conservation, Ecotels, Solid Waste Management

Introduction

Hotel industry has progressed in recent years to implement the sustainability of the environment related issues while maintaining the integrity of the industry. Hotel industry is not typically considered as a major polluter especially when compared to automobile industry and other commercial industries however hotel operations are

showing a positive interest in incorporating the concept of green practices into daily operations. In the current scenario maintaining a hotel is very tough and satisfying guests is even more tougher especially when the outmost care is taken for sustainability of green practices in all possible ways and areas. Ecotels is an accommodation that has made imperative environmental improvements to its structure in order to reduce its impact on the environment. It is an environmentally responsible lodging that follows the practices of green living. All Ecotel certified hotels must pass a detail inspection and satisfy stringent criteria set by environmental experts. The ecotel certificate is based on five areas of environmentalism, each of which is designated by a five globe awards. These Globes are: Energy conservation, Water conservation, Solid waste management, Employee environmental education, Environmental commitment.

The silicon valley of India, Bengaluru, has seen unprecedented expansion in hotel development in the last few years. Development has been so fast that nature has not had time to adapt to these changes, and to human necessity and greed. Our growing consumer economy and industrialization have led to the creation of huge megalopolises and human activities are causing an irreversible damage to the global environment due to extensive emission of greenhouse gases. To reduce carbon footprint in city concept of ecotels came in the market to save the environment and energy. Following sustainable practices in the organization not only saves the environment, it also help the organization to save money. Sustainable practices means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet there own needs.

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To mention examples of Ecotels, Movenpick hotel and spa Bangalore in India, has recently been awarded Green glob certification. This makes it the first five star hotel in the country to be Green Globe Certified. In line with the corporate philosophy, Movenpick Hotel and Spa Bangalore has been dedicated to the preservation of a safe and healthy environment for the years. The core value of property includes a firm commitment to conserving resources, preventing pollution, and to act with integrity. The hotel uses green energy, provided by wind, and LED lighting is installed throughout all areas of the property. Waste volume, weight and reduction goals are specified, garbage is being segregated per the waste management policy of movenpick. A reuse and recycle policy is in place and packaging is reduced to a minimum. Suppliers adhering to environmentally friendly practices, organic and certified products are favored.

If we compare ecotels with normal hotel, Normal hotels emit more carbon footprint which effects our environments. They also use all branded products and lighting system which consumes more energy which again effect our environment. Therefore, there has been an evaluation with regards to ecotels. A lot of importance has been given to adopting such green practices. In parallel, green marketing is effectual. When customers have effective optimistic perception, concept and recognition towards green hotel they can be fascinated by the green hotel concept and participate in environmental protection themselves. It is very advantageous that a hotel would be able to provide a better environment while enhancing customers educational level at same time.

Objectives

To find out whether the hotels are implementing the various practices leading to green initiatives that govern the effectiveness of the ecotels in areas related to environmental commitment, water conservation and preservation, energy efficiency and solid waste management in hotels.

To know the awareness of ecotels among guest residing in hotels.

Literature Review

Many research studies have found that hotels have started plans for adoption of green practices and also continuous

efforts are undertaken by them to improve upon the environmental issues. Several studies have made it evident that introduction of green practices and ecotel concept has impacted all spheres of the society at global level with hospitality and tourism as no exception. A leading international hotel chain J.W Marriott has understand the need for environmental sustainability and outlined that the hotels having a brand name of Marriott will reduce energy and water consumption 20% by 2020 resulting in water consumption 20% per occupied room. They are the first major chain hotel to calculate carbon footprint and launch a plan to improve energy, efficiency and in 2011 was named the "Greenest" hotel company in UK. In India, the ITC Gardenia, a luxury hotel in Bangalore, was awarded the US Green Building Council LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) platinum rating, making in the first hotel in India to achieve the highest rating for green building. ITC Gardenia manages to use 40% less energy as compared to other luxury hotels. The ITC's waiting lobby is designed to be open air without A/C. The ITC Gardenia is synonymous with its beautiful vertical garden wall that incorporates 'Green' right into the hotels waiting lobby. At the time of construction, 60% of trees that were originally in the area were protected and those that had to be uprooted were transplanted carefully ensuring little impact on the site. Bader (2005), in his study found that the solar panels can generate around 25% of the energy that a hotel needs to operate. More than 99% solid waste generated by the hotel is either reused or recycles through recycling programs or converted into manure by its Organic Waste Converter. Yong Han Ahn and Annie R Pearce (2007), simply orienting a building to capture insulation can save on energy use. Green building has become an important component of the whole construction market for future changes in the industry in coming years. Hatem (2010), found that most hoteliers are more willing to enact small scale waste reuse practices rather than larger practices that would require changes on operational level. J. Shanti (2016) found that there is a growing base of environmentally conscious consumer who want to protect the environment and make this world as better place to live in. The hotel guest are also keen to contribute positively to the environment. Hilton Europe and Africa wide sustainability initiative was launched in 2006 in order to conserve energy (Environmental Leader, 2008). These hotels have been interested in the reduction of solid waste, water consumption and energy consumption in order to comply with environmentally friendly efforts.

In order to monitor and improve energy saving, a hotel needs a energy management program that includes temperature controls, motion-sensitive lighting system, and energy star rated device and Appliance. The design and operation of a hotel facility can never eliminates environmental impacts. Thus, the adoption of environmental values would require a continual search for improvement of exiting practices and there would be an environmental operation that would educate the surrounding community and achieve greater environmental success through cooperation and increased market share (Papiya Deb and Mahdev. N., 2011). In today's world lot of hotels have shifting from normal hotel to ecotel hotels, so it helps in ecological balance as the ways and practice as justified. It is very clear that ecotel hotels concentrate more being friendly towards environment and customer satisfaction at the same time making cost or profit maximization (Manjunatha B, Srinivas TR, Ramachandra CG, 2015). It is very helpful that a hotel would be able to provide a better environment while enhancing customers educational level at the same time. In fact the concept of green hotel has become an irreversible trend and it will become one of the key indexes for anti-greenhouse effect in the near future. Travel is an important part for people in the modern society so choosing a green hotel to stay might be the best way to connect consumers and environmental protection (Leena N, Suriya S, 2014).

While the green building was a fairly new concept to hospitality industry, it had become a goal for many hoteliers and others in charge of building hotels. As local governments led the way toward leadership in Energy Environment Design (LEED) Certification, many hotel properties and corporate offices strove for their own LEED certification for both personal and economic reasons (Heisterkamp, 2009). Walsman (2014), 93 LEED certified hotels found that certified hotels displayed better financial performance than a large sample of non certified ones. Many of the bigger cities had a growing mass of hotels competing for the LEED certification so they would be considered a green hotel and had informed customers that these hotels weren't just saying it anymore, they meant business (Horobin H, & Long. J (1996). According to

Godwin-Charles Ogebide, consumers seem ready to incorporate "green" hotels into their travelling excursions. Based on his study, consumers has a positive perception of green hotels. However, Hoteliers should be prepared come up with some form of incentive to motivate some consumers to support their green practices. In addition, hoteliers should adopt green practice as an organizational culture and fine ways to promote their green practices as a competitive advantage.

Sustainability for the hotel industry, in general is not an overnight process, requiring a huge initial investment and an efficient team work. The researcher found that the hotel chains have put thought into saving millions of dollars daily by adopting various operational sustainability practices including environmental committees at the property level to aid reinforcement and to improve waste management.

Research Methodology

The research methodology used is exploratory in nature. The target population of this study was various registered hotels, staffs working there, residents and guest staying in these hotels. 100 registered hotels were surveyed randomly. Total 200 close ended questionnaires were circulated, 100 for hotels (to know the implementation of green practises) and 100 for guests residing in these hotels during March 2017-May 2017. The questionnaire designed were divided into 2 parts: Part I for the(hotels) only to find out the implementation of various green initiatives that govern the effectiveness of the ecotels in areas related to environmental commitment, water conservation and preservation, energy efficiency and solid waste management and Part II for guest to understand the awareness about ecotels among the guests of Bangalore. Interviews of various Executive Engineers and Executive Housekeepers of these hotels were also considered during this research and the results depicted are shown in percentage with the help of pie graph. Demographic profile of respondents from guests residing in the hotel surveyed are as follows:

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Guest Respondents

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Distribution of Answers</i>
Gender	Female: 44 %; male: 56%
Age	15 – 24: 19%; 25 –44: 50%; 45 – 64: 28% ; older than 65: 3%
Educational qualification	Elementary: 6%; Secondary: 43%; College or higher: 51%
Tourist's nationality	Indian tourists: 95%; Foreign tourists: 5%
Tourist's marital status	Married: 57%; single: 43%
Tourist's occupation	Government employee: 30%; businessman: 35%; any other: 35%

Findings and Discussion

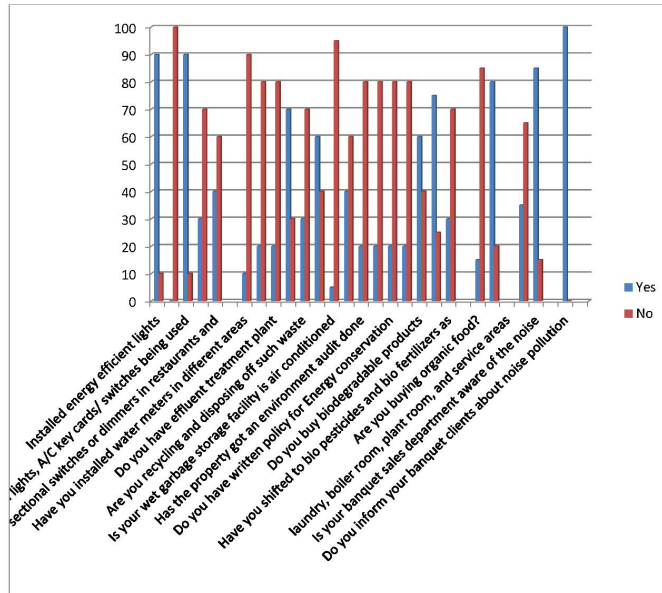
Table 2: Implementation of Green Practices in Hotels

<i>Green Practises</i>	<i>Yes (%)</i>	<i>No (%)</i>
Installed energy efficient lights	90	10
Has the hotel installed sub meters in different functional areas	0	100
Single point room lights, A/C key cards/ switches being used	90	10
Are you using any renewable energy source	30	70
Do you have sectional switches or dimmers in restaurants and other areas to switch off or dim lights in unused, low use area	40	60
Have you installed water meters in different areas	10	90
Do you have system of rain water harvesting	20	80
Do you have effluent treatment plant	20	80
Are you separating plastic, metal, glass, and other solid waste	70	30
Are you recycling and disposing off such waste	30	70
Do you separate wet and dry waste in kitchens/restaurants	60	40
Is your wet garbage storage facility is air conditioned	5	95
Does the hotel have an environment policy	40	60
Has the property got an environment audit done	20	80
Do hotel have status of ISO14000 certification	20	80
Do you have written policy for Energy conservation	20	80
Do you have written policy on Water Management	20	80
Do you buy biodegradable products	60	40
Do you have the policy of recycling papers and envelopes	75	25
Have you shifted to bio pesticides and bio fertilizers as against chemical pesticides and fertilizers	30	70
Are you buying organic food?	15	85
Do you have both fresh air and exhaust systems in kitchen, laundry, boiler room, plant room, and service areas	80	20
Do you have separate no smoking rooms and floors	35	65
Is your banquet sales department aware of the noise pollution rules and standards	85	15
Do you inform your banquet clients about noise pollution levels and timings as applicable in your area	100	0

N=100

As per the gathered data following are the findings :

1. Implementation of Green Practices in hotels: The first objective of this study was to find out the implementation of green initiatives that govern the effectiveness of the ecotels in areas related to environmental commitment, water conservation and preservation, energy efficiency and solid waste management in various registered hotels.



Source- Field Visit

Fig. 1: Green practices followed in hotels

2. Awareness about Green practises and Ecotels among guest: The second objective of this study was to

understand that whether the guests residing in these hotels are aware about ecotels and various green practises or not. Demographic profile of the guests were :

Table 3: Awareness Percentage about Ecotels Among the Guest

Awareness among guest about green practices in hotel	Respondents in %
Yes	30
No	70
Total	100

N=100

Results shows that 30% of the guest were aware of the importance of green practises and ecotel whereas 70% of the respondents were not aware about the effectiveness of ecotels and green practises. This implies that there might be an increase in awareness programme for green practices in hotels.

Figure 2- Awareness among guest about green practices in hotel

3: Uniqueness of Ecotels or with Other Hotel: Ecotels or the hotel who followed green practices have advantage over hotels who do not follow the green practices which are shown in the table 4.

Table 4: Ecotels Uniqueness with Those in Non-Ecotels

	Non-ecotels	Ecotels	Benefits (Ecotels)
Meaning	A hotel is an organization that provides paid lodging, typically on short term basis.	Ecotels hotel is an organization that has made important environment improvements to its structure in order to minimize its impact on the environment.	It conserve energy and save from pollution. Eg: Movenpick hotel & Spa in Bangalore becomes the first five star hotels in India to be Green Globe Certified. The core value of property include a firm commitment to conserving resources, preventing pollution and to act with integrity
Main Aim	Main objectives to maximize profit for the organization with customer satisfaction	Main objective is to save environment and natural resources with profit maximization and customer satisfaction	It helps to conserve water, electricity and save from air pollution also. Eg:- Our native village ecotel in Bangalore most of the water they use for their property is comes from rain water harvested by them and they generate 70 to 80% of electricity from wind mill.

Product used	They mostly use all branded product to maintain their standard	They mainly use those products which cause minimal harm to the society and environment	Product used by the ecotel is directly comes from nature which helps save the environment from harmful chemicals. Eg:- Shops and shampoo used in our native village is 100% natural and they use shikakai to wash utensils so that they can reuse this water for kitchen gardening
Waste management	Usually waste generated in the hotel is throw away as a garbage and there is recycle and reuse system followed	Ecotels hotels follow the waste segregation system there organization so that they can easily reduce, reuse and recycle the waste	It helps to minimize garbage in the city and also minimize disease caused due to this garbage. Eg: ITC gardenia follow waste segregation system in their organization so that they can reuse and recycle the waste. From wet waste they make compost for their gardens.
Construction of hotel	Constructed based on posh look or outside decor	Ecotels are constructed based on eco friendly norms and also cause minimal harm to nature	Natural raw material used to construct ecotels helps the organization to save energy. Eg:- Fly ash bricks, double-sandwiched cladding glass, huge roof gardens and use of eco friendly piping used while constructing ITC Gardenia Building. This eco friendly system help the organization to save 42% energy compare to other hotel of its size.
Effect to the environment	Non-ecotel hotels indirectly cause harm to the environment	Ecotel hotels always protect the ecology	It helps to save and prevent from pollution. Eg:- Ecotels give main focus to grow more trees. At the time of construction, 60% of trees that were originally in the area were protected and those that had to be uprooted were transplanted carefully ensuring little impact on the site

Conclusion and Suggestion

On the basis of data interpretation The conclusions and suggestions drawn on the basis of data it is being drawn out that in Bengaluru only few hotels are implementing the green practices to deal the environmental issues. Many of them have implemented only basic measures by installing lights, using electronic key cards, separating garbage on the basis of metal plastic and other whereas no or very little measures have been taken regarding water conservation system and usage of chemical and hazardous system which can lead to degrading the environmental system. It is also observed that even guest are also not familiar about the various practices to be followed in hotels for sustainability. However following these green practices can emerge as brand image for the hotels along

with less disturbing the environment. Government should also take initiatives to ensure that hotel should go for green practices to the extent and hotel should also come forward with all these steps. Thus it is suggested that right adoption and implementation of tools for green practices in hotel industry are always benefit driven and will come up with a big difference with an aim of sustainability of resources for the future.

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