

Eco-Friendly Practices in Star Category Hotels of Lucknow: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

Hospitality industry especially hotel industry consumes natural resources and produces waste products. There are very limited resources of energy on earth because of which energy conservation has become a vital part of each and every industry and hospitality industry is not left behind. To conserve the energy, hotel industry have started using green practices such as linen reuse program, adjustable temperature control, occupancy sensors, recycling programmes and many more. Popularity of environmental concerns continues to increase in hotel industry because of increased awareness about environmental issues. Acknowledging this very fact, the present study focuses on exploring the eco-friendly practices exercised in star category hotels of Lucknow and as well as the challenges faced by the hotels in the implementation of green practices in their operations. A well-structured questionnaire was developed to collect information from the hotel personnel. The results indicated that there are certain eco-friendly practices like garbage disposal, installation of sewage treatment plant, usage of dual flush in bathrooms, electronic key cards and energy efficient lighting are mostly exercised practices in all the star category hotels of Lucknow. The findings also revealed that initial investment cost for green set-up is very high which is one of the prime challenge faced by the hotels in the implementation of green practices.

Keywords: Hospitality Industry, Eco-Hotels, Green Practices, Sustainable, Natural Resources

Introduction

Green or eco-friendly hotel is defined as the hotel which provides services and amenities focussing on conserving the environment, energy saving and reduction of carbon emissions (Lee & Cheng, 2018). Green hotels generally exercise environmental guidelines and procedures and

implement sustainability in their daily operations (Green Hotels Association, 2018). There are many factors which influences the hotels to adopt eco-friendly practices like governmental policies, local environmental associations and legal concerns (Zhu & Sarkis, 2006; Setthasakko, 2007; Kasim & Ismail, 2012). Hotels where eco-friendly practices are implemented in their daily operations tend to have a positive image on customers in the market place as compared to their competitors (Iwanowski & Rushmore, 1994). The hotel industry consumes large amount of natural resources like water and energy and generates heavy amount of waste. Thus, it becomes mandatory for hotels to reduce this burden to the environment as part of their corporate social responsibility (Chand & Garge, 2017). The reasons to go green also include financial benefits, strengthening employee commitment, improved customer loyalty and goodwill of the organisation (Gan, 2006; Juholin, 2004).

The hotel industry has undergone a tremendous change over the past decade in terms of their environmental concerns. The most implemented green practices in hotels include water and energy saving practices, recycling of products and conserving air quality (Dangelico & Pontrandolfo, 2010). The hotels may be considered green if they practice water and energy conservation, maintain indoor air quality and reduces water and land pollution by recycling and reusing of products (Saini, 2013). Higher facilities and amenities related to sustainable practices of hotels like green open space, landscape and availability of smoking rooms are directly linked to customer satisfaction and revisit intention of the guest (Supriadi et al., 2017). Large numbers of hotels are using durable service items rather than disposable products and makes the customers aware about recycle products and encourage linen reuse

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programs. Hotels are increasing plantation for improved air quality, usage of natural fibres for linen and special bins for recyclable items in guestrooms. Other measures include energy-saving lighting systems and recycled paper/products/furniture, environmental friendly cleaning supplies and room fragrances without harmful chemicals and serve locally grown organic produce free from pesticides or fertilizers (GHA, 2011; Han et al., 2009, 2011; Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007; Pizam, 2009). Green hotels not only benefits the environment but also reduces the operational cost. Advertising eco-friendly methods adopted in hotels can create positive brand image in the market and attract new consumers who want to buy products and services from an environmentally friendly business. Hotels exercising sustainable green practices tend to perform much better than their competitors and have more chances of long term success (Amandeep, 2017).

Chain hotels are better adopters of eco-friendly practices than independent hotels due to better financial positions, extensive training to their employees and exposure towards latest green practices where as small and independent hotels have budget constraints (Rahman et al., 2012). Hotels are required to be made aware about the potential financial and non-financial benefits of green practices and should be encouraged to develop an appropriate recycling and reusing system. Hotels may further improve their waste management system by having effective systems for recycling. Waste management and recycling of products must be done effectively to contribute towards better environment (Singh et al., 2014).

Literature Review

Yusof et al. (2017) stated that eco-friendly practices in the hotel industry have a direct relation with customer satisfaction and revisit intention. Therefore, hoteliers, of both a green and a non-green status, must participate in conserving the environment by adopting eco-friendly practices to survive in a competitive environment. Can et al. (2014) in their research paper concluded that the compatibility of hotels architectural design with natural environment and energy saving electronic key cards and recycling products are some of the green practices which leads to customer satisfaction in hotels. Noor and Kumar (2014) in their paper expressed that guest having environment friendly behaviour and attitude are more willing to stay in green hotels and this study also indicated

positive relationship on eco-friendly activities and guest revisit intention. Nowadays customers are becoming more aware about the benefits of engaging in eco-friendly practices in the accommodation industry. The positive attitude towards the environmental friendly practices has a strong relationship with customer choosing green hotels (Jauhari & Manaktola, 2007). Gagić et al. (2013) stated that hotels sustainable operations helps to get the attention of the guest and also concluded that energy-efficient technology initially might be expensive but in the long run reduces the daily operational cost of the hotels. Huh and Chang (2017) indicated in their study that Generation Y consumers are more concerned about recycling and waste disposable programmes. They also stated that hotels green certification and visible green advertising are the main two motivators for their revisit intention. Berezan et al. (2013) pointed out that sustainable practices framed in the hotels should be convenient and comfortable to the customers and stated it has a positive relationship on customer satisfaction. Secondly the study also stated that importance of green practices varies according to the nationality of the guest. Manaktola and Jauhari (2007) mentioned that hotels green practices should include recycling programs like linen reuse, renewable energy and use of eco-friendly products in different departments of the hotel to encourage practices on sustainability.

Malindretos et al. (2014) revealed in their study that there is need for tourism policies and procedures and formulation of new sustainable strategies in the hospitality industry to meet up the challenges faced by the hotels. Singh et al. (2014) stated that hotels must exercise recycling practices more rigorously not only to help the environment, but it also has monetary benefits. Satchapappichit et al. (2020) explained that attitude and behaviour of the owners and managers towards environmental awareness and competitors in the market highly influenced the adoption and implementation of green practices in hotels daily operations. Government of India must develop policies and schemes in favour of green hotels and lodging accommodations to encourage the green practices (Amandeep, 2017). Erdogan and Baris (2007) explained that hotels must follow environmental conservation programs and practices, such as waste management and energy consumption by installing efficient lighting system, air conditioning, and water use, by making purchasing decisions on green appliances. Martinez et al. (2018) explained that green customer perceptions of green

practices have a direct positive effect on a hotel's green image, and image has direct positive effects on customer behavioural intentions toward certified green hotels. The researchers also stated that more environmental concerns of customers, more their intention to stay, to share positive word-of-mouth and to pay a premium for environmentally certified hotels.

Mensah, (2006) stated green activities which are generally practiced by the hotel industry are use of energy-efficient light bulbs and not changing used linen and towels daily. Alexander et al. (2002) expressed that hotels should formulate operating procedures and tracking systems to inspect the usage and wastage of natural resources and must implement practices like switching off lights and taps when not in use. Ogbeide et al. (2012) in their study revealed that water and energy conservation practices are considered to be one of the most significant and prominent practices in the hotel industry. For maintaining healthy air quality, it is recommended to have green landscapes and natural vegetation in the hotel premises (Dangelico & Pontrandolfo, 2010; Supriadi, 2016). The above statement is also supported by (Nafi, 2017; Kaur, 2014 and Albino, 2009). Supriadi et al. (2017) in their study concluded that in order to increase the efficiency of the hotel, it is essential to implement sustainable practices such as recycling programs, water and energy saving methods.

Chan (2013) stated that to promote sustainable green initiatives hotels should emphasis on various certification programs like ISO 14001, LEED certifications (Leadership in energy and environmental design). Muñoz & Rivera (2002) pointed out that significant share of the tourist market is willing and able to pay for accommodation services that go beyond standards in environmental terms and therefore hotels must go for green certification from the established environmental agency. Jhawar et al (2012) stated that hotels must undergo for green certification programs and must promote their eco-friendly practices for guest awareness as it helps to build a positive image and attract potential (Mensah, 2006).

Objectives of the Study

After a comprehensive review of literature, following objectives have been formulated:

- To explore the Eco-friendly practices exercised in star category hotels of Lucknow.

- To identify the challenges faced by the hotels in the implementation of green practices in their operations.

Research Methodology

Sampling and Data Collection

Data were collected from the managers of star category hotels of Lucknow. A survey was conducted using a self-structured questionnaire in star category hotels of Lucknow. The questionnaire was framed with closed-ended questions and was filled up by the respondents in person. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section consisted of the demographic profile of the managers. The second section consisted of various closed ended questions on green practices followed in hotels like waste management, water conservation, energy saving, Eco-friendly room supplies and cleaning agents, green banqueting and the challenges faced by the hotels in the implementation of eco-friendly practices. Star category hotels were identified through various important sources like Ministry of Tourism website, FHRAI website and rankings given by Online Travel Agencies. The primary sources of data collection was self-structured questionnaire and secondary sources of information were from published research articles, theses, books, websites, magazines, newspapers, national and international journals and government reports etc.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows information on sustainable eco-friendly practices being followed in the daily operations of star category hotels of Lucknow. After a comprehensive hotel survey and meetings with General managers, department heads and chief engineers of different star category hotels of Lucknow, it has been found that all star category hotels makes noticeable efforts to exercise green practices in their operations.

Table 1: Star Category Following Eco-friendly Practices (In Percentage)

Practices	Not Followed	Very Few	Practices Easy to Implement	Followed
Eco-friendly practices followed	0	0	0	100

Table 2 indicates the various parameters related to green practices. The findings concluded that 83% of the hotels have written policy document on green practices, 100% star category hotels provide training on green practices to their employees, 100% hotels surveyed made initial investment at the time hotel construction for following environment-friendly norms and 100% hotels incur expenditure annually for implementation of eco-friendly practices. 83% of the hotels mentioned that following eco-friendly practices improved their productivity level and reduced their operating cost. It has also been found that none of the hotel gets any financial support from the government. 83% of the hotels specified guests involved in sustainable green initiative, 83% of hotels carry out initiatives to popularize environment-friendly ways in the community as part of Corporate Social Responsibility activities and 100% hotels surveyed mentioned that their hotels are following air pollution control practices in Kitchen, laundry and guestrooms. The last finding of the table indicated that only 33% of the hotels are awarded with any green certification program.

Table 2: Parameters for Sustainable Green Practices (In Percentages)

Sr. No.	Practices	Yes	No
1.	Does hotel have a written policy document on green practices	83	17
2.	Is the staff given training on implementation of green practices	100	0
3.	Has the hotel made any initial investment at the time hotel construction for following environment-friendly norms	100	0
4.	Does the hotel incur expenditure annually for implementation of these practices?	100	0
5.	Overall improvement in productivity level and reduction in operating cost after following the green practices	83	17
6.	Financial support from the State/Central government	0	100
7.	Are the guests involved in sustainable green initiative?	83	17
8.	Does the hotel carry out initiatives to popularize environment-friendly ways in the community as part of Corporate Social Responsibility activities?	83	17
9.	Does the hotel follow air pollution control practices in Kitchen, laundry and guestrooms	100	0
10.	Hotel awarded with any green certification program	33	67

Table 3 indicates the list of various green practices under different categories exercised in hotels.

Category A: Waste Management incorporates the exercises and actions required to deal with waste from its inception to its final disposal (United Nations, 2016). This includes the collection, transportation, treatment and disposal of waste, together with monitoring and regulation of the waste management process. Waste management practices in hotels includes vermi composting, garbage disposal produced on daily basis, usage of wall fixed refillable dispensers for shampoos, body wash and conditioners, reducing the number of paper products, installation of sewage treatment and bio gas plants.

- The findings of category A states that out of the surveyed hotels only 17% follows vermin composting, 83% hotels follows garbage disposal, 50% hotels have wall fixed dispensers, 67% hotels recycles paper, 83% hotels have sewage treatment plant and none of the hotel have bio gas plant.

Category B: Water conservation incorporates all the approaches, methodologies and exercises to sustainably deal with fresh water resources to safeguard the hydrosphere and to meet the future human requirement. Waste management practices in hotels includes recycling of grey water from the bathrooms and laundry, linen recycling programs in rooms, no installation of bathtubs in washrooms, water sprinklers in hotel landscape, rainwater harvesting and usage of dual flush in bathrooms.

- The findings of Category B states that out of the surveyed hotels 83% hotels follows water recycling, linen recycle program and rain harvesting systems, 33% of hotels uses no bathtub to save water, 67% of hotels uses water sprinklers in the hotel landscape and 100% hotels use dual flush systems in bathroom for water conservation.

Category C: Energy conservation practices is defined as minimising the requirement for energy services and can result in increased environmental quality, national security, individual monetary security and higher savings of the organisations (Zehner, 2011). Energy conservation practices in hotels include installation of solar panels, usage of electronic key card for guest rooms, in-built guestroom occupancy sensors, usage of energy efficient bulbs and appliances and maximum use of natural lighting in daytime.

- The findings of Category C concludes that out of the surveyed hotels 33% hotels have installed solar panels, 100% hotels uses electronic key card, energy efficient lighting, use of natural lighting and 50% hotels uses occupancy sensors in the guest room as part of energy conservation practices.

Category D: Eco-friendly supplies are those products that provide environmental, societal and financial advantages while ensuring general wellbeing and protection of environment from the first phase of product till its final disposal. Eco-friendly supplies and agents in hotels include usage of eco-friendly cleaning agents and room amenities, placement of refillable thermos flasks and recycling bins in guestrooms, installation of temperature control devices, and window films to lower heating in guestrooms.

- The findings of Category D states that 100% of the surveyed hotels uses eco-friendly cleaning agents and room amenities, 83% uses refillable thermo

flask, adjustable temperature control, 33% of hotels uses recycling bins in guestrooms whereas 67% of hotels uses window films to reduce heating guestrooms.

Category E: A green banqueting is a concept based on the use of sustainable products and services for the guests where the arrangements are done to decrease the negative impact on ecology. Green banqueting includes the practices like no usage of disposable crockery, usage of recyclable products, green menu offering organic and locally procured food, donating leftover food to NGOs, usage of insulated food holding cabinets and composting biodegradable waste.

- The findings of Category E states that 100% of the surveyed hotels uses disposable crockery in the banquet, 67% hotels use recyclable products, green menu, insulated food holding cabinets whereas 33% hotels donates leftover food to local NGOs and compost waste into useful manure.

Table 3: Green Practices under Various Categories (F: Followed, N.F.: Not Followed, All Data in Percentage)

Category A: Waste Man- agement	Vermi Composting		Garbage Dis- posal		Wall Fixed Dispensers		Paper Recycling		Sewage Treatment Plant		Bio Gas Plant	
	F	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.
	17	83	83	17	50	50	67	33	83	17	0	100
Category B: Water Con- servation	Recycling of water		Linen recycling		No bathtubs		Water Sprin- klers		Rainwater harvesting		Dual flush in bath- rooms	
	F	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.
	83	17	83	17	33	67	67	33	83	17	100	0
Category C: Energy Con- servation	Solar panels		Electronic key card		Occupancy sensors		Energy ef- ficient lights		Energy ef- ficient appli- ances		Natural lighting	
	F	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.
	33	77	100	0	50	50	100	0	83	17	100	0
Category D: Eco-Friend- ly supplies and agents	Eco friendly cleaning agents		Eco friendly room amenities		Refillable ther- mos flasks		Temperature control		Recycling bins in guestrooms		Window films to lower heating in guestrooms	
	F	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.
	100	0	100	0	83	17	83	17	33	67	67	33
Category E-Green Banqueting	No disposable crockery		Usage of recyclable products		Green menu : Organic/local- produce		Leftover food to NGOs		Insulated food holding cabinets		Composting biodegradable waste	
	F	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.	F.	N.F.
	100	0	67	33	67	33	33	67	67	33	33	67

Table 4 discusses about the challenges faced by the hotel while implementing green practices in their daily operations. Out of the surveyed hotels 17% hotels mentioned that there are lack of training programs for employees related to green practices, 83% hotels

mentioned high initial cost of investment for implementing green set-up, 50% hotels lacked awareness, 50% hotels mentioned that there are no specific guidelines by government agencies and 33% hotels specified that there is inadequate infrastructural support in the hotel.

Table 4: Challenges Faced by the Hotels in the Implementation of Green Practices (In Percentage)

Challenges Faced by Hotels	Lack of Training		High Initial Cost		Lack of Awareness		No Specific Guidelines by Government Agencies		Inadequate Infrastructural Support		Others
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Lack of Trained Vendors
	17	83	83	17	50	50	50	50	33	67	

Conclusion

The results of the above findings reveal that there are set of eco-friendly practices followed in star category hotels of Lucknow which justify our first objective of study. These practices include waste management, water conservation, energy conservation, eco-friendly supplies and cleaning agents, green banqueting. The result indicated that under waste management practices garbage disposal and usage of sewage treatment plant are the most commonly used practices in the hotel. Water recycling, linen reuse, rain harvesting system and usage of dual flush in the bathrooms are commonly used practices under water conservation. Electronic key card, energy efficient lighting and maximum usage of natural lighting are most practiced under energy conservation. Usage of eco-friendly cleaning agents and room amenities are mostly used practice. Under green banqueting category, most hotels do not use disposable crockery to save the environment. The second objective of the study was to identify the various challenges in the implementation of green practices in star category hotels. Out of various challenges, initial investment cost for the green practices set-up is the biggest challenge for star category hotels.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Since the research has been conducted in the star category of hotels of Lucknow and mostly data has been collected from 4 and 5 star hotels, therefore the results cannot be generalised for the other category of hotels of Lucknow and other cities of Uttar Pradesh. Therefore, it

is recommended to conduct research on non-star category hotels of Lucknow. The study further suggests that the research can be conducted in other hospitality segments such as local restaurants, retail shopping mall etc.

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