



Green Practices for Sustainable Tourism: Factors Influencing its Adoption in Hotels

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays huge efforts have been made to create awareness regarding green practices and to increase the total number of businesses that implement green practices in the hotel industry. The reason behind this is the negative environmental footprints caused by hotel units. So, due to competition in the tourism sector and changing tourists' destination preferences hotels are grabbing the opportunity to protect nature, and simultaneously, they are taking advantage of green practice adoption in hotels. However, even though hotels benefit from the adoption of green practices participation the number of hotels implementing these practices is very low. A variety of factors influence a hotel's decision to adopt green practices. Thus, this study aims to identify various green practices and analyze various factors influencing the adoption of green practices in hotels.

KEY WORDS

Green Practices, Tourism, Environment, Hotels.

INTRODUCTION

The global hotel industry, comprising various facilities, constitutes one of the most important sectors of the tourism industry. Hotels provide accommodation and offer high level of resources for utilization including energy, water, and consumables. Hotels and other supplementary accommodations are an integral part of Kerala's infrastructure, which is essential for tourism development. A large number of tourists are attracted to Kerala because of its natural beauty. Kerala is also

well known for its hospitality in tourism. Kerala's tourism industry is growing and the hotel sector will also rise in the future. However, the hotel's environmental footprint is typically larger than that of other types of buildings of the same size. Hotels are large users of consumer goods and waste generation is one of the most visible impacts the hotel industry has on the environment. A typical hotel produces in excess of 1 kg of waste per guest day, which, for a typical facility, results in many tons of waste each month (Bohdanowicz, et al,2005). These figures reflect that there is an urgent need for more environmentally sound practices and products in the hotel industry. Like in any other developing country, hotels in Kerala consume huge amounts of energy and water, hence discharging a lot of waste into the environment. Waste afflicts the environment in the form of water pollution, air pollution, and energy-induced emissions. As environmental resources constitute a major part of tourism development, it is important to address the waste and pollution problem. Over the years, there has been an increased environmental awareness among the general public and the development of the concept of green consumerism has flourished. Most hotels in the recent past have been paying attention to environmental responsibility, which has increasingly emerged as a corporate issue. So, hotels started adopting various green practices.

The inevitable link between tourism and the physical and social environments implies that tourism's survival depends highly on its ability to minimize its negative impacts on the environment and society. As tourism increases the hotel industry in Kerala grows and becomes very complex, it has become necessary for hotels to monitor their activities and implement appropriate programs in order to safeguard the environment. Otherwise, the quality of tourist' interaction will be diminished considerably, if the natural setting of a tourism activity is polluted, degraded, or loses its aesthetic qualities as a result of a poorly planned tourism development. Similarly, the destination may lose its tourist appeal. Therefore, it is necessary for hotels to adopt various green practices. As environmental resources constitute a major part of tourism development, it is important to address the waste and pollution problem. But in Kerala hotel's approach towards green practices is not appreciable. Although there are already many hotels adopting various green practices procedures, they still represent a minority because of various factors.

Objectives

1. To study the green practices in hotels.
2. To study the factors influencing the adoption of green practices in hotels.

Methodology

This study is purely based on secondary data and for that various article from journals, websites, reports from newspapers and financial institutions have been used. This is a descriptive study.

Green Practices

Green Practices means the practice of creating structures and using processes that are environmentally responsible and resource-efficient throughout the life-cycle of development, including buildings, from siting to design, construction, operation, maintenance, renovation, and deconstruction. Green Practices expand and complement the classical building design concerns of economy, utility, durability, and comfort (Law Insider,n.d.).

Green Practices in Hotels

Hotels adopt various green measures that can be classified into the following:

1. Energy Conservation Measures

Hotels consume a lot of energy for their smooth functioning. Therefore, energy conservation in the hotel is considered one of the most important areas of environmental management in this sector. Some of them are given below:

- In low-crowded areas install motion sensors or timers.
- Use electronics and electrical equipment with energy-saving stars and features.

- Use more energy-saving bulbs like CFL.
- Use solar energy equipment and other renewable energy sources.
- Timely evaluate ceiling insulation.
- Install more ceiling fans to reduce the use of air conditioning.
- Use reminder cards for hotel members and hotel guests to turn off electronic equipment when leaving a room.
- Construct buildings in such a manner that brings light and air.

2. Water Conservation Measures

Hotels consume large amounts of water for their day-to-day operation. Water usage in a hotel is based on the size, guest capacity, star category, nature and standard of services, etc. Some of them are:

- Install water-saving shower heads and taps.
- Post posters advocating water saving in different areas of the hotel.
- Adopt line and towel options for hotel visitors.
- Check for any water leaks and timely repair them.
- Use the coolest water temperature for washers, dryers, and dishwashers.
- Regularly check the hotel's irrigation system to prevent wasting water.

3. Waste Management Measures

The hotel industry generates a large amount of waste and is considered a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Environmentally conscious hotel operators have started adopting various green practices to reduce hotel waste and properly dispose of them. Green practices that aim at reducing hotel waste are given below:

- Segregate hotel wastes by using properly labelled bins and containers.
- Buy products that contain organic and recycled content. For composting waste keep organic kitchen wastes in separate containers.
- Don't issue newspapers to each guest room unless requested.
- Encourage the use of e-files for office work rather than paper.

4. Other Measures

- Use more trees and plants on the landscape that can survive different climatic seasons.
- Reduce the use of chemical fertilizers, cleaners, and laundry detergents with phosphates and use organic ones.
- Instead of using herbicides pick weeds by using your hand.
- Instead of using strong pesticides and chemicals for controlling ants and cockroaches use traps, containerized baits, gels, etc.
- Use rechargeable batteries instead of a disposable alkaline battery.
- Encourage staff to use bicycles, public transportation, carpooling, vanpooling, etc. Use bikes or walk to perform local errands.
- offer shuttle service to and from airports.
- Train the staff to adopt an environment-friendly purchasing policy.
- Prefer vendors selling eco-friendly products and buying locally grown organic items.
- Use durable goods and furniture for long-term use.

Influencing Factors

- 1. Attitude of Managers:** Businesses reflect the values and commitment of their owners or managers. Environmental concern and willingness to adopt green practices in hotels largely depend on its owner's attitude towards a sudden change in management practices, awareness regarding green practices, knowledge regarding advantages of green practices, perception regarding various external factors, etc.
- 2. Employee support:** Employees of an organization play a significant role in ensuring the implementation and success of green practices. Before implementing green practices in hotels, the managers should create awareness among their employees regarding the merits of these practices and should provide them with adequate training. A simple instruction to turn off any energy-consuming devices when nobody is using them might act as a first step in creating awareness among their workforce. Without giving adequate awareness most managers simply promote environment-friendly practices among their workforce by using eco-friendly products in their day-to-day operations. Lack of awareness and training regarding green practices is a major challenge faced by employees in adopting them. This is because the majority of the workforce is not made aware of this new practice by their managers. Younger and better-educated personnel are more knowledgeable regarding green business practices. This is because they have already been given basic awareness regarding environmental issues and green practices during their academic years. If hotel management makes a greater effort to explain the advantages of green practices to their workforce, it will create basic awareness among those who lack it. Not only creating basic awareness but further training and monitoring are also necessary for motivating their workforce to follow green practices. Usually, the majority of the workforce knows that there is a link between their routine job in a hotel and its operating cost. And most of them are very much aware that every small work of utility that they do in a hotel involves cost. If these workforces are aware that green practices could reduce hotel's operating costs then they may show greater interest in strictly following green practices.
- 3. Customer/Guest support:** Earlier most of the guests or consumers were not aware of the greening efforts taken by the hotels. Even though they have waste recycling practices in their own homes most of the people avoid the option to stay at hotels that follow green practices. Because such customers in hotels prefer daily washing and changing of hotel linen which is not allowed in hotels following green practices. Most of them think that it's their right to use fresh linens each day because they pay for them. But this attitude of guests started to change over time. Nowadays hotel guests are more aware of the environmental consequences of the luxuries they are experiencing at hotels. so, they have demanded the accommodation facilities to be more conscious of the environment. So, only with the support of the hotel's guests hotels can implement green practices.
- 4. Behavioural Intention of Customers:** Customers' readiness to pay a particular range of prices for goods and services is known as behavioural intention. This behaviour is demonstrated by their positive review regarding goods or services. The main stakeholders in hotels are guests, who like dealing with accommodations that minimize their impact on the environment. Guests who are willing to pay more prices for eco-friendly accommodation are often more educated and have various levels of concern regarding environmental issues (Lita et al., 2014). These clients respect the benefits that eco-friendly hotels offer. Individuals who are more experienced with the hospitality of hotels are more aware of sustainability therefore hotels experience more pressure on their business to attain environmental responsiveness (Anuwichanont et al., 2011).
- 5. Environmental Concerns of Customers :** Hotel guests' environmental concerns can be characterized as their individual orientation towards environmental consequences. Recently more people and communities have started paying more attention to the need for adopting eco-friendly practices in hotels. When customers are more concerned about environmental issues it increases the hotel's

responsibility to implement eco-friendly, economically, and socially responsible hotel services (Chen, 2015).

6. **Customer Attitudes of Preferring Natural Resources:** Today's customers choose natural and environment-friendly factors over artificial methods for leisure in hotels. This has a positive impact on sustainability and results many environmental, economic, and social benefits (Yusof and Jamaludin, 2014). Local and natural building materials like bamboo, wood, and clay are used extensively in hotel buildings because they provide the buildings with a pleasing aesthetic appeal. Whereas, customers who favour eco-friendly practices are increasingly requesting that daylight should be used in place of artificial lighting sources, so the hotel's architecture includes more glass walls.
7. **Cost:** Many hotel owners believe that adopting green practices would be expensive and the cost was considered a major challenge. Purchase of eco-friendly products, certification expense, training employees, conducting environmental auditing, and improving other facilities aiding in the implementation of green practices involves huge expenses. But in reality, sustainability or implementing green practices is not a risk for hotels because adopting green practices will reduce the hotel's operational costs leading to revenue growth in the long term. Eco-friendly products are made from renewable materials and their waste can be recycled. Eco-friendly hotels also attract more tourists which will cover the initial expenses incurred for implementing green practices.
8. **Perceived Benefits:** Implementation of green practices offers several monetary and non-monetary advantages for hotels. These advantages include increased profits, reduction in operating cost, competitive advantage, better efficiency, and enhanced goodwill. Apart from these advantages green practices ensures a much cleaner and better working environment to employees and reduces pollution of natural resources and its consumption. Once the management of the hotel is aware of these benefits, they won't be hesitated to adopt green practices.

CONCLUSION

Kerala tourism is dependent mainly on its natural beauty and if it gets depleted the tourism sector will be negatively affected. So, Kerala must adopt eco-friendly practices to promote tourism. The study reveals that to a large extent, the adoption of green practices is based on various factors like the attitude of managers, cost, employee support, guest support, and perceived benefits. These factors are very crucial for hotel managers to efficiently manage their hotels and attain better growth in this highly competitive world. Green practices help hotels to increase their revenue. However, a lack of awareness regarding its long-term benefits hinders managers from adopting these practices in their hotels. So here the Government should take proper measures, frame policies, and offer more incentives to enhance awareness regarding green practices among businesses. Government and other organizations dealing with environmental issues should give more practical knowledge to create awareness among employees and owners. The Government should encourage hotel and tourism activities to implement more green practices and appreciate those who achieve green certification standards. Hotels that adopt sustainable practices effectively tend to achieve financial and non-financial gains in terms of cost-savings for the hotel, improve the hotels' image with the general public, and above all, safeguarding environmental resources. It is therefore necessary for hotels to explore the benefits of adopting green practices in a country which is blessed with abundant natural resources to attract tourists.

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