

How Do Domestic and Foreign Tourists Understand the Concept of ‘Green Hotels’ and its Practices in India?

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Abstract

The term "Green Hotel" is still not very widely known among local, tourist, and even tourism industry professionals, as well as among many individuals who are unaware of its meaning and use. In India, the government and the private sector continue to place a high priority on green hotels because of their contribution to environmental preservation and a reduction in the effects of global warming. The implementation of the green hotel idea still raises both advantages and disadvantages due to certain onerous criteria for business actors. The majority of them believe that staying at a green hotel is expensive and uncomfortable for tourists. In spite of the fact that many tourists require green hotels, not all tourists are aware of this concept, particularly in India. This paper looks at studies on green hotels that have been carried out in other nations and relates with India. The case of India's Delhi shows how tourists can not completely grasp the idea of green hotels.

Keywords: Green Hotel, Practices, Domestic Tourist, Foreign Tourist, India.

JEL Classification: F64, M21, O13, P18, P28, P36, P48, Z32, Q56, O13, Q01, Q32, Q25.

Introduction

The awareness of environmentally friendly development has risen steadily over the last several years (Chan & Chan, 2013; Behera, 2020b). Consumers are becoming aware of the Green Hotel, commonly referred to as an environmentally friendly hotel (Behera, 2023). The reputation of green hotels can't be detached from the growing environmental damage caused by tourism which contain hotels that have problems with labor, overbuilding, energy use, overuse of non-durable goods, and waste disposal, which pollutes water, soil, and air. (Sonya Graci & Kuehnel, 2011; Behera & Singh, 2022).

Several media then published the effects of global warming in relation to this issue. The community will then begin to understand the significance of green management, which is defined as organizational procedures and methods for minimizing, eradicating, and avoiding adverse effects on the environment from all operations conducted. (Akehurst, Afonso, and Gonçalves, 2012; Wolok, 2019; Behera, 2018a; Behera & Singh, 2022). Later, as this situation developed, it ushered in the period of "New Tourism," which encouraged environmentally conscious consumer to grasp and embrace

environmentalism philosophy in the 1990s, which led to the global expansion of this ideology (Behera, 2018b). Consumers are starting to choose eco-friendly items in this context, even while using lodging or hotels.

According to Mensah's (2014) study, 90 percent of hotel tourists choose to stay at establishments that care about the environment. According to the "North America Hotel Guest Satisfaction Survey" conducted by JD Power & Associates in 2007 and other studies, seventy-five percent of guests are eager to engage in the hotel's environmentally friendly activities (Butler, 2008). In the meantime, a survey was conducted in Macau by Penny (2007) on a large number of hotel managers found that 65 percent of those who were questioned felt that well-managed green management may increase a hotel's reputation and competitiveness. Actually, the facts and figures mentioned above provide sufficient context to explain the idea of a green hotel as well as its significance for the direction that tourist dynamics are taking. The green hotel is often associated with "less comfortable," despite the fact that its form is frequently that of a premium hotel. As compared to non-eco-label items, consumers may have little interest eco-label items because of high price, unappealing products with an environmental label (Johri & Sahasakmontri, 2016; Behera 2018a; Behera, 2015). Manaktola and Jauhari (2007) expressed the view that consumers would not generally be prepared to pay more for items with an eco-label.

As the concept and standards for green hotels are still not well-known and accepted by all

parties involved in the hotel business, the practise of green hotels has not gained much popularity in India. Yet, everyone has seen the trend towards the hotel's adoption of green measures, particularly the tourists. Just the argument for and against green hotels suggests that operating costs are often a hindrance to practise in the industry. The objective of this paper is to provide an assessment to individuals, mostly tourists, on how the green hotel concept has been used in India. A case study was carried out in order to corroborate the impressions held by both domestic and foreign tourist with relation to the understanding of the concept of 'green hotels' and its operation of green hotels. This case study was carried out in Delhi, which is widely regarded as one of the India's most well-liked tourist spots.

Materials and Methods

The sample was collected from National Capital Territory of Delhi of India. The presumption employed is that NCT of Delhi is one of India's most well connected area for most well-known tourism attractions. According to the National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry (nidhi.nic.in), the NCT of Delhi now has a sizable hotel population of 402 hotels. Foreign and domestic tourists who stay in Delhi are the target responders. 150 tourists were surveyed, including both domestic and foreign tourists. The survey was carried out between 15 December 2022 and 15 February 2023. The method employed was simple random sampling, which gives every member of the population an equal chance to be sampled without respect to demographic strata. The field research technique used was

a questionnaire with a number of interview questions with tourists. SPSS was used to analyze the data and calculate descriptive statistics. The data have been evaluated and presented using descriptive statistics like frequency and percentage. Cross tabulations were also employed to produce a contingency table for two categorical variables i.e. domestic and foreign tourists.

Results and Discussion

How important the hospitality sector is to the tourism sector, it can be seen from the amount of money tourists spend when visiting a location or tourist destination. More than half of the money that tourists spending goes towards the hospitality sector, namely on lodging services (Behera, 2013). The tourism and hospitality industry is growing steadily and makes up 7.5 percent of the country's GDP. According to a report by KPMG, India's hospitality industry is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 16.1 percent and reach Rs 2,796,900 crore in 2022(<https://kpmg.com/xx/en/home.html>).

In India, there were more than 144 thousand hotel rooms as of the 2021 fiscal year. By the financial year 2026, it was anticipated that this would rise to above 180,000. The top three cities in this category in 2021 were Bangalore, New Delhi, and Mumbai. According to various socio-economic subgroups, it was predicted that the room supply will expand nationwide, but especially in the tier 2 and 3 cities. There were 152,945 hotel rooms in India for the fiscal year 2022. According to projections made by Statista for India, the number of hotel rooms will reach

195,569 in the fiscal year 2027. By 2023, India will have up to 256,000 units of the 2,400 hotels in total, with an average occupancy rate of 52 percent. The hotel industry will become a key source of income for the nation (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/722490/number-of-hotel-rooms-india/>). There are several obstacles with relation to the implementation of green practices such as the insolence that hotel staff performs their jobs less consistently, lack of understanding among tourists, a lack of socialization, and the conviction that adopting green hotels really does cost a lot of money (Behera, 2020a). The hotel sector as a whole is starting to see this as a widespread issue. People think that building a green hotel will cost more than building a regular hotel, even though they know that running a green hotel will save money on energy and water costs in the long run (Sonya Graci & Kuehnelt, 2011; Behera, 2013).

There are about nine ECOTEL-certified eco-friendly hotels in India. One of them is the Lotus Suites in Mumbai. Another is the Uppal's Orchid in New Delhi. Those lead the hospitality sector in environmental conservation and preservation are awarded the ECOTEL accreditation. The Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) has registered 170 facilities and 17 green structures, all of which are pursuing LEED certification. There are hardly many green hotels worldwide. There are already some of these facilities, such as the Orchard Garden Hotel in San Francisco, but experts predict that the number will increase in the future (FIRST INDIAN

GREEN HOTEL |.TR (tourism-review.com)).

Nowadays, everyone wants to live more sustainably including in India, where the country will soon open its first green hotel. Hyderabad, the capital of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, will be the location of The Park Hotel. Midway through 2009, this hotel with 280 rooms is expected to open. It was around 15 percent more expensive than the price of a typical hotel, costing about \$70 million. A green hotel must be distinguished from an eco-friendly hotel. Although the latter is made of recyclable materials, the first one is built to save energy. As was already indicated, the Park Hotel costs around 15 percent more, but it is predicted to save about 34.7 percent of energy expenditures. Air-handling systems for smoking and non-smoking areas are another interesting part of this building. The hotel will be 90 percent smoke-free. Authorities from the Park Hotel want the Hyderabad location to acquire LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environment Design) gold accreditation and US Green Building Council (USGBC) certification. Pune will get a new facility. The organisation plans to construct another green facility on the 90,000 square feet it has obtained here. Just a LEED certification is intended for this hotel (FIRST INDIAN GREEN HOTEL |.TR (tourism-review.com)).

In order to reduce the effects of global warming, various eco-friendly practices by business sector must be carried out. These actions range from those taken by the "Green" movement to those made by hotel

industry participants who are dedicated to putting the principles of environmental friendliness into practice through water-saving programmes, energy-saving measures, the use of environmentally friendly products, and the reduction of solid waste (Behera, 2020; Behera & Singh, 2022). The extensive Indian area and the various circumstances of different regions make it difficult to apply Green Hotel rules uniformly throughout the country. As a means of refining this research, referring to perceptions as well as the practice of green hotels, a survey consisting of 150 domestic and foreign tourists to Delhi was carried out. The respondents were asked about their experiences staying in different hotels of India. The findings of this survey led to a variety of different perspectives, which are outlined in Table 1.

According to Table 1 of the data, 94 (62.7 %) domestic tourist surveyed and the 56 (37.3%) foreign tourists surveyed, the majority of foreign tourists (68.5%) were aware of Green Hotel, while 31.5% were unaware. The majority of domestic tourists (74.6%) are unfamiliar with Green Hotels, and just 25.4% are aware of them; 26.8% of foreign tourists tend not to wish to stay in ecologically friendly lodging (green hotels), whereas 60.7% of them do; When asked if they would want to stay in ecologically friendly accommodations, smaller number of domestic tourists (20.2%) respond "do not know" or in a cautious manner, while 56.2% express a lack of interest and 23.6% express a desire for environmentally friendly hotels.

Table 1. Viewpoints of Tourist on Green Practices of Hotels in Delhi

| Group of respondent | No. of respondent (%) | Viewpoint of Respondent | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--|-------|--|-------|-------------|
| | | Do you have any knowledge about the green hotel? | | Do you prefer environmentally friendly hotels? | | |
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No | Do not know |
| Domestic Tourist | 94 (62.7%) | 25.4% | 74.6% | 23.6% | 56.2% | 20.2% |
| Foreign Tourist | 56 (37.3%) | 68.5% | 31.5% | 60.7% | 26.8% | 12.5% |
| Total | 120 (100%) | | | | | |

Noted: Data taken by research at 2022-23.

The information above demonstrates that foreign tourists are better knowledgeable about green hotels. According to the findings of many surveys, the majority of foreign tourists have ever been in a variety of establishments dubbed "green hotels," making it possible to have a good sense of the level of treatment one can expect while staying there. While the majority of domestic tourists are unaware of green hotels because, in general, they cannot tell the difference between a hotel that offers actual services and one that is just not green.

Another statement is that, in general, foreign tourists are more inclined to book accommodations at eco-friendly hotels. They contribute to the reason why eco-friendly hotels are increasingly popular by being conscious of the significance of protecting the environment and minimizing the negative effects of hotels. Domestic tourists, on the other hand, are more likely to respond with "do not know" due to their lack of familiarity with green hotels and all of its facets, which makes it difficult for them to make a

convincing case for their choice of lodging. Table 2 has some more tourist figures about how they see green hotels.

Table 2 illustrates that both foreign tourists (75.3%) and domestic tourists (53.3%) agree that the hotel should practice environmentally friendly management where as 14.1% of foreign tourists and 34.0% of domestic tourists are disagreeing about the same. 68.2% of foreign tourists are aware that hotels may contribute to environmental pollution, compared to 20.0% who are unaware and 11.8% who aren't; The majority of domestic tourists (55.7%) do not realize that hotels may have an influence on environmental pollution, 25.6% do, and 18.7% have doubts about it; Most foreign tourists (33.9%) thought India's green hotel operations were good, whereas 58.9% thought they were enough and 7.2% thought they were not good whereas the majority of domestic tourists (64.9%) said that India's green hotel policies were evaluated as enough, while 22.3% ranked them as good and 12.8% as not good.

Table 2. Tourists' perspectives on green practices of hotels in Delhi

| Group of respondents | Respondent Opinion | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--|----------|---------|---|-------|-------------|---|--------|----------|
| | Are you in favor of requiring hotels to use environmentally friendly management? | | | Do you realize that hotels contribute to environmental pollution? | | | How would you rate Delhi's Green Hotel's practices? | | |
| | Agree | Disagree | Neutral | Yes | No | Do not know | Good | Enough | Not Good |
| Domestic Tourist | 53.3% | 34.0% | 12.7% | 25.6% | 55.7% | 18.7% | 22.3% | 64.9% | 12.8% |
| Foreign Tourist | 75.3% | 14.1% | 10.6% | 68.2% | 11.8% | 20.0% | 33.9% | 58.9% | 7.2% |

The aforementioned data demonstrates that although domestic tourists have the desire or incentive to assist the management of green hotels, foreign guests are more receptive of and knowledgeable about the idea of green hotels. When it comes to a visitor's understanding of a hotel's green ideals, the history and experience of its green accommodations are crucial. Domestic tourists are still wary of staying in green hotels because they lack expertise and knowledge about them. Foreign tourists, on the other hand, tend to be simpler to greet than domestic tourists. According to the survey's findings, there is a noticeable distinction in respondents' opinions of domestic and foreign tourists. It is obvious that local guests still don't fully get the green hotel, although foreign tourists do. These attitudes develop as a result of several factors, including prior experience and the volume of references to accommodations that have been made.

Conclusion

Green hotel practices aren't completely accepted in India yet, but there is a trend for hotel managers to keep putting the idea of a green hotel into practice not only in star hotels, but also non-star hotels, such as boutique hotels like Eco-lodge. The limitations of green hotel practices in India include a number of issues, including perceptions that green hotels are high-maintenance and high-cost establishments, lack of support from the government through an inadequate policy, and lack of understanding of green hotel practices. From a tourist perspective, there is a strong propensity to book hotels with a green hotel concept; nevertheless, many tourists are still unsure of what exactly a green hotel is. Foreign tourists are more knowledgeable about the concept of green hotel and able to accept environmentally friendly hotels, however domestic tourists are often still unsure and are unfamiliar with the idea of green hotels and its practices.

To raise tourists' understanding of how to live in a green hotel, the hospitality sector and the

government must play a part in teaching tourists about green hotels and its practices. Even if the hotel adopts environmentally friendly measures, it still has to ensure the comfort of tourists. One of the government's strategic moves to promote the green hotel concept and practices campaign by making a progress by adopting measures to encourage responsible travel and establish the nation as a leader in eco-tourism. This study hasn't completely revealed about the execution and utilization of green hotels in India. The terminology used to describe hotels' green practices can be very important, and it can be further developed through studies of how these practices are carried out in hotels in India' top tourist destinations.

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