

# Review of the eco-friendly initiatives implemented by the Indian Hotel Industry in association with the Ministry of Tourism

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## Abstract

<sup>1</sup> The tourism industry can make a significant contribution to the economic recovery post-COVID-19, as it is projected to grow at an annual rate of 8.5% and generate a revenue of Rs 5,500 crore for the state's GDP. Despite this, the industry is facing job losses of about 2.8 lakh due to the pandemic. In this research paper, the need to support and strengthen this sector through 'green hotel' policy by government has been highlighted. There is an increasing trend of eco-consciousness in the hotel industry as awareness about environmental issues is rising. This study aims to examine the environmentally friendly practices being implemented in star-rated hotels.

**Keywords:** Hospitality Industry, Eco- Hotels, Green practices, Sustainable, Natural resource, star category hotel.

## Introduction

The Indian hotel industry has been motivated to embrace sustainability in the post-COVID era due to various factors such as social responsibility, environmental awareness, government regulations, and long-term economic benefits. The concept of "green hotels" refers to establishments that prioritize environmental conservation through the efficient use of energy, water, and materials, while maintaining high standards of service. By implementing eco-friendly practices, green hotels are able to reduce costs, minimize liabilities, increase profits, and achieve positive cash flow. This recognition of the benefits of going green has led to a growing trend of hotels adopting more sustainable practices.

## Objectives

1. The objective of this paper is to highlight and analyses various trends and methods for achieving sustainable goals and certification.
2. To explore the Eco-friendly practices exercised in star category hotels.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

<sup>2</sup> All five-star hotels in the city will take a number of environment-friendly steps to cut power and water consumption by September 30. The steps include setting up of dedicated sewage treatment plant and solar water heating system.

<sup>1</sup> [https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/hotels-/restaurants/maharashtra-announces-criteria-to-give-hospitality-sector-a-boost/articleshow/82479774.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/hotels-/restaurants/maharashtra-announces-criteria-to-give-hospitality-sector-a-boost/articleshow/82479774.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)

<sup>2</sup> MoU - India Environment Portal - India Environment Portal <http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in>

- <sup>3</sup> As many as 32 five-star hotels on Monday signed a memorandum of understanding with the Delhi government expressing their commitment to comply with the Green Hotel Guidelines.
- <sup>4</sup> ISO 14001 is a certification system used by business to certify that the site has an environmental management system. LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design – is a rating system for construction
- <sup>5</sup> Borroughs Green Initiatives Protecting, conserving and reducing natural resources is one of our top goals at Borroughs Corporation. Our company meets all Federal, State, and Local environmental regulations. We’ve received two environmental compliance awards from the city of Kalamazoo – the site of our manufacturing facility.

## Research Methodology: Qualitative Analysis

### Data Collection

The present study focuses on exploring the eco-friendly practices exercised in star category hotels. The data have been collected from secondary sources such as research journals, websites and newspaper articles and conclusion of the research have been supported by observational facts. The qualitative data is analyzed to understand the certification Standards for the hotel industry. The data collected by referring various hotels case-studies.

### Theory overview

<sup>6</sup> The process of creating a green hotel begins with its construction, where the building and its equipment are designed to conserve energy, water, and reduce waste. The second step involves aligning the hotel’s policies and procedures with environmentally conscious principles. The management must also communicate these practices to both internal and external customers. Even an established hotel can transition to becoming eco-friendlier by gaining management commitment to sustainability, recording usage patterns, setting targets and benchmarks, developing a prioritized action plan, monitoring progress, and providing proper education and motivation to staff members.

<sup>7</sup> The modern business traveler is increasingly seeking out hotels that offer eco-friendly features and practices, such as in-room yoga mats and green energy policies. This is backed up by a 2008 survey of 1,000 American business travelers by Deloitte, which found that 95% believed the hotel industry should be adopting green initiatives, and 38% took steps to determine if a hotel was environmentally conscious. In order to meet this demand, hotels are turning to green practices to balance the services they offer with their impact on the environment. By adopting environmentally responsible business practices, these green hotels are able to harmonize tourism with environmental sustainability, which is especially important given the popularity of ecotourism. Properties are adapting to meet the needs of

<sup>3</sup> *Hotel\_Guidelines\_From\_19-01-2018.pdf - Ministry of Tourism*<https://tourism.gov.in/sites/default/files/Hot>

<sup>4</sup> *LEED and ISO 14001: Working Together - FacilitiesNet*<https://www.facilitiesnet.com/green/article/LEED->

<sup>5</sup> *Built Environment Plus*<https://builtenvironmentplus.org>

<sup>6</sup> *Hotel\_Guidelines\_From\_19-01-2018.pdf - Ministry of Tourism*<https://tourism.gov.in>

<sup>7</sup> *Op.cit*

environmentally aware and health-conscious guests by saving water, reducing energy use, and recycling waste. While most of the green initiatives taken by hotels are behind the scenes, they can result in cost savings, including lower water and electricity expenses. With the help of guests, these hotels can also reduce the amount of waste going to landfills and increase the amount of waste recycled. The Indian government recognizes the significance of hotels as a component of the tourism product, and has granted industry status to the hospitality sector to improve the quality of facilities and services offered. There is also recognition for certification of green hotels in India.

No.	Certification Name	Organization	Description	Source
1.	Gold Certification	Earth Check certification	Earth Check is an international leader in environmental benchmarking and certification.	<a href="https://earthcheck.org">https://earthcheck.org</a>
2.	The Indian Green Building Council (IGBC)	The Confederation of Indian Industry and the Godrej Green Business Centre	The IGBC is making ongoing efforts to promote the widespread implementation of green building practices in India. Over the past decade, they have registered or certified over 687 projects under their green building guidelines in India. Additionally, they encourage and certify hotels that incorporate minimum environmentally-friendly practices into their operations.	<a href="http://www.igbc.in">www.igbc.in</a>
3.	ECOTEL certification	HVS	The ECOTEL certification is a pioneering program that integrates the principles of sustainability with a focus on environmental protection. The program emphasizes the education of employees and involvement of the community in promoting an environmental management system through the creation of a green team and staff training. Over time, the ECOTEL program has shifted its focus to India.	<a href="http://www.ecotelhotels.com">www.ecotelhotels.com</a>

No.	Certification Name	Organization	Description	Source
4.	Sustainable Tourism Eco-Certification Program (STEP)	Sustainable Travel International	The certification program for tour operators, hotels, attractions, transportation, and the cruise industry is focused on environmental sustainability. It includes guidance, a self-assessment tool, and a 2 to 5-star eco-logo rating system. Additionally, a separate certification is available for luxury accommodations.	www.sustainabletravel.org
5.	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)	U.S. Green Building Council	The LEED certification verifies that a building has been constructed with environmental sustainability in mind, such as energy conservation. Developed by the US Green Building Council in 2000, the LEED certification provides commercial buildings with a scorecard for meeting standards in areas like location and transportation, materials and resources, water efficiency, and others.	www.usgbc.org
6	ISO 14000 certification	International Standards Organization	The International Standards Organization established a standard for organizations to follow in 1996 for implementing environmentally friendly operations. This standard acts as a guide for organizations to implement a consistent program for environmental management. After the program is in place within the organization, ISO will send auditors to assess the entire program, evaluating aspects such as energy consumption and recycling efforts, with the goal of granting certification.	www.iso.org
7	Green Key Global	Hotel Association of Canada, LRAWorldwide, Inc	Environmental certification program for hotels. Provides technical guidance. Participating facilities are awarded	www.greenglobe.com

Source: All above organizations websites

## **Finding based on Case-study of some Hotels**

The above finding reveals importance of certification to hospitality industry which justify our first objective of the study. It proves to be a motivational factor for the hotels. The following are the secondary data collected regards to certification received by esteem hotels in India for maintaining the required standards of Environment.

The ITC Gardenia, a luxurious hotel located in Bangalore, has earned the platinum rating from the US Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) program, becoming the first hotel in India to receive the highest rating for green buildings. All of ITC's luxury hotels, including the ITC Windsor in Bangalore, ITC Mughal in Agra, ITC Sonar in Kolkata, ITC Kakatiya in Hyderabad, ITC Grand Central and ITC Maratha in Mumbai, and ITC Maurya in New Delhi, now have a platinum rating. The Pune Marriott Hotel and Convention Centre has been awarded gold certification, while the Leela Palace Hotel in New Delhi has earned a platinum certification. Several hotels, such as Piccadilly Hotels for its upcoming Hyatt Regency properties in Gurgaon and Ludhiana, are registered for LEED certification with the aim of achieving a gold rating.

### **<sup>8</sup> Case-study on Taj Hotels also holds the highest number of Earth Check certifications in India.**

In 2018, Taj Hotels Palaces Resorts Safaris made a significant accomplishment by earning Gold Certification from Earth Check for 67 of its hotels out of 79 total Earth Check-certified hotels. Earth Check is a prominent organization in environmental certification and benchmarking. Through Earth Check's certification program for green initiatives, these certified hotels have accomplished a reduction in: • 925 million mega joules of energy, equivalent to the energy consumption of about 286,000 households (typical of 4-person households) • 191,000 tons of carbon dioxide, equivalent to taking over 64,000 cars off the road • 3 billion liters of water, equivalent to 963 Olympic-sized swimming pools • 6 million liters of waste, equivalent to 182 standard 20-foot cargo containers The certification program not only helped set and achieve targets for reducing waste, water consumption, emissions, and energy, but also improved the environmental footprint of these certified hotels by 5%.

## **The Results**

The findings of this study reveal that star-rated hotels follow a set of eco-friendly practices, which align with the second objective of the study. These practices include waste management, water conservation, energy conservation, use of eco-friendly supplies and cleaning agents, and green banqueting. The results showed that the most common waste management practice is garbage disposal and usage of a sewage treatment plant. Water conservation practices include water recycling, linen reuse, a rain harvesting system, and the use of dual flush in bathrooms. Energy conservation practices include electronic key cards, energy-efficient lighting, and the maximum use of natural lighting. The use of eco-friendly cleaning agents and room amenities is also a widely adopted practice. In the green banqueting category, most hotels do not use disposable crockery to conserve the environment.

## Outcome

<sup>9</sup> Starting on April 1st of this year, all star hotels that are registered with the tourism ministry have been eligible for tariffs, duties, and taxes on electricity, water, property, development, and non-agricultural taxes at the same rates as industrial properties.

## Further study in tourism

It is important to investigate customer purchasing habits regarding environmentally-friendly practices in the Indian hotel industry. The water and sanitation situation in India are dire, and the tourism industry must adopt sustainable business practices for long-term success. Incorporating green practices as a preferred business model is crucial.

## Conclusion

The Indian hospitality industry must also improve its positive social impact by incorporating eco-friendly sustainable practices, which can only be achieved with a clear understanding of how to implement and manage these practices. This is becoming increasingly important as more and more hotel and hospitality organizations around the world adopt sustainable practices.

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