

Guests' Perspective on Establishment of Green Hotels in Nainital, Uttarakhand

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is an attempt to understand the concern of the guests visiting Nainital towards the implication of Green Hotel concept from the socio-environmental point of view. The regular degradation of environment in Nainital, a hill district of Uttarakhand, has impacted the arrival of guests in the Hotels of the area. It has also a direct bearing on the local market affecting the income of the locals who depend on tourism for their livelihood. The tourist or guests that visit the area for a change have also been influenced by the environmental hazards ruining their holidays. Before the town faces a low frequency of tourist turnover, it is important to look into the problem and find some restoration solution. A part of the restoration process is the Green Hotel practice that helps in reducing the addition of pollutants, making up for the shortage of water and wastage management. The present study was conducted to observe the willingness of the guest in implementing Green Hotel practices in the area as it is a cost effective process having a direct bearing on the Guests too. The implication of Green concept in hotels also influences the sustainability of hotels in Nainital. The study has suggested that the environmental concerns along with socio economic factors and behavioral factors are critical in the implementation of Green practices in the Hotels in Nainital District of Uttarakhand.

Key Words: Green Hotels, Nainital tourism, environment degradation, Water Conservation, Uttarakhand tourism, sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

The sight of hill stations fully packed during the hot summers and even cold winters is very encouraging to the Hoteliers in Nainital. It impacts the economy of the place directly and also increases the sale of local goods and products thus providing year round livelihood to the locals. However, the same sights becomes ravaging for the people of Nainital as they face water shortage and have to bear with electricity problems and pollution too. The sad sight of the plastics and glass bottles, polythene and packets leave the beautiful town with nothing but miserable looks as noticed in 2021 when the flooded lake water receded after the erratic rains. The government alone cannot help to solve the problem. Hence a survey was conducted to find out whether the guests were ready to step forward to establish the Green Concept in the Hotels while they enjoy the cool climate and natural beauty of the area.

Green Concept is a multiple term used to practice water conservation, encourage saving electricity, provide biodegradable products and encourage wise use of the environment in order to prevent its further depletion. Green Hotel practice is related to the Hotels that strive to be more environmental friendly through the efficient use of water, energy and reuse of materials while providing quality services. It is an eco friendly venture of the hospitality sector for guests who are or should be made aware of the consequences of playing unfair game of adventure with the environment.

Nainital is a small hill station in the Northern Indian state, Uttarakhand. It has been a famous tourist spot since a very long times. The British used it and developed it into a hill station and educational hub. The peaceful and serene view and cool climate during the summers attract tourist from all over the world. They enjoy and leave the place after a day or two's recreation. Then the burden on the locals falls with water and electricity shortage. The flooding of the lake in 2021, landslides during rainy season and the badly used remote and jungle sides where the tourist goes to recreate are miserable sights to remember and ponder. Thus a need to turn the Hotels environment friendly and ecologically safe is the prime concern of the hour. One way to achieve it is through Green Hotel Practice. However, Green Hotel is a project requiring a huge investment which will have its bearing on the guests as well. Keeping this in mind a survey was

done through a questioner to find out whether the guests visiting Nainital are aware of Green Hotel Concept and willing to accommodate a little to save water and electricity. The survey was done from March to May through collection of secondary data.

The present study deals with three concepts to see whether the guest actually desires Green Concept or simply supports it without making some adjustments during his stay in a Hotel. The main areas covered are demographic survey, acceptance to water conservation and their view on prevention of electricity wastage as well as their socio ecological responsibility towards preservation of Nainital and its people's requirement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Green Hotel concept came into emergence through Green Revolution in several countries across the world. A Green Hotel is a hotel or accommodation that has made important environmental improvements in its structure in order to minimize its impact on environment. (Amandeep ad, Feb. 2007). Going green is the latest trend in many hotels not just for brand image but for the socio environmental purpose as well. A large number of Hotels in India have developed the green practices of low-flow showers and toilets occupancy, sensors to control lighting and air conditioner requirements and the common place practices like linen and towel reuse policies. Green Hotels strive for Green Certificates like LEED, Green Key, and Earth Certificate etc by using techniques that help to enhance their productivity and sustainability. Sustainability in turn attracts huge cost in order to bring changes in the infrastructure that encourages green practices. This therefore involves the guests too as they have to pay a part in the structural overhaul. The customer's willingness to pay for the eco friendly practices thus becomes a priority to know before venturing into this aspect of development. (Rehman and Reynold's 2016). A Green label may also be helpful in improving the Hotel's brand image in order to gain a future competitive advantage as shown by Ladhari 2009.

Given the fragile condition the natural ecological balance and the limited nature of most energy sources of the earth - each individual, has a responsibility to take care of the environment- the large producer and consumer of natural resources even more so. The hospitality sector presents a variety of environmental aspects that, depending on the activity, may have a significant impact on the environment (Dogru T., Bulut U., Kocak E., Isik C., Suess C., & Sirakaya-Turk E. (2020). Its users are consuming resources such as energy and water on a daily basis and generating a great deal of solid waste and effluents.

The concept of a Green Hotel starts from the construction stage (Isik C., Dogru T., & Turk E. S. (2018), the hotel which has the features and equipment's incorporated that help in saving energy and water and reduces waste, can be done only in the project stage. The second point, the hotel policies and procedures have to be fine-tuned keeping environmental factors in mind. Third, the management has to take this message forward to its internal and external customers. An already running hotel may also turn the hotel into an environmentally friendly hotel, what is required is obtaining management commitment towards environmental, sustainability, recording current and chronological usage, establishing baselines, benchmarks and targets, prioritize action plan, monitor and measure proper education and motivation of the staff members. Before actually involving the Guest to share the brunt of making renovations to turn the Hotels in Nainital into Green Hotels it is wise to understand whether the Guest is aware of the term and how it functions and willing to participate in it.

In-order to know the guests perspective and his awareness towards Green Hotels followed with the commitment to practice Green Hotels' norms, a survey was conducted on the guests visiting the hotels at Nainital charging above 15000 per room/night. The survey was done through secondary data obtained through a questioner circulated via social media and whatsapp groups. The factors that were taken into consideration were demographic and eco socio responsibility as well as willingness to accommodate to meet the Green Concept requirements. 200 Guest visiting top luxury hotels were sent the data as questioners out of which 123 responded. These guests visit two major Hotels not named here from privacy point of view. However, these are hotels of great repute. The data were based on demography related to age and sex. Maximum responses were received from people of 21 to 25 years of age and here females outnumbered the males in response. As far as their view on water conservation is concerned during their stay in Nainital, all found it very important and so was their view on energy conservation. The majority even voted for waste reduction during their stay in the hill station of Nainital. For personal use it was found that they showed interest in reuse of linen and towel during multiple night stay. Low flow showers and low flush toilets were also a welcome. A Majority appreciated the Green Hotel Concept and is ready to stay in Hotels marked as Green Hotels.

This shows that where guest like the idea, they are happy to accommodate in Green Hotels.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

With the now published long reports of Nainital becoming prone to environmental hazards, heavy impact of pollution and desolate signs during rainy season, it is high time that the Green House concept be implemented in various Hotels at Nainital. The main purpose of this study was to see the willingness of the Guest to implement Green Hotel concept in Nainital. The work here was to know the Guest perspective towards Green Hotel implementation. The present study is explorative and conceptual in nature, data have been collected from secondary sources such as online platforms like whatsapp groups and Face book as well as messengers by posting a link of questioners of Google Form and reading research journals, websites and newspaper articles and conclusion of the study has been supported by observational facts. The data was analyzed on the basis of a) Demography b) Acceptability to conserve natural resources and willingness to sacrifice a few things like linen and towel during multiple night stays and c) Responsibility of guest towards environmental issues.

Demographically, out of the 123 people who responded to the questionnaire, 53.7% were between 21-25 years of age followed by above 40 years. Among these the maximum response of 58.5 % was received from the female guests.

As far as awareness towards energy conservation, water conservation and stress on waste reduction is concerned, the majority thinks it as a very important issue. Here the parameters set were categorized as very important, somewhat important, rarely important and not important or strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, disagree, strongly disagree to neutral approach.

When it came to personal use, a positive reaction was submitted by the Guests. For reuse of towel during multiple night stay the results were laid between agree and somewhat agree, when it came to choose the same linen during multiple night stay, again the demarcation of agree and somewhat agree was found. The choice of putting low flush toilets to high flush toilets was again found to range between agree and somewhat agree and 17.9% also disagreed to it. Although a majority of 60% agreed to the idea of implementing the green house practice to show their socio environmental responsibility towards protection of Nainital it was found that when asked whether they will choose only a green hotel, the guests gave response from agree to somewhat agree.

Demography Profile I

Characteristics	Percentage
Sex	
Male	41.5%
Female	58.5%
Age	
Under 20 years	17.9%
21-25 years	53.7%
26-30 years	0%
31-40 years	0.8%
Above 40 years	27.6%

From the first finding, the results state that the female guests between the age group of 21 to 25 years are more active towards Green Hotel practices and ready to share their views.

Table 2: Consumers’ perceptions of a green hotel (Percentage)

Characteristics	Percentage
1.Importance of water conservation	
a) Rarely important to not important	
b)Somewhat important to very important	89.4%
Total	10.6 %
2. The importance of water conservation	100%
a) Rarely important to not important	
b) Somewhat important to very	

important.	12.2%
3. The importance of waste reduction	87.8%
a) Rarely important to not important	
b) Somewhat important to very important	8.1%
4. General Importance and preference to green Hotels and practices.	91.9%
a) Rarely important to not important	
b) Somewhat important to very important	
6. Preference to low flow toilet flush to high flow toilet flush	9.61
a) Strongly Agree to Somewhat agree	90.39
b) Disagree	
c) Neutral Approach	
7. Preference of Low flush toilets to High flush toilets	
a) Strongly Agree to somewhat agree	62.6%
b) Strongly Disagree to somewhat disagree	6.5%
	30.9%
7. Preference to Green Hotel over non green practices in Hotel	75.6%
a) 6-10 points	
b) 0-4 points	24.4%
	96.8%
	3.2%

The Table 2 shows the guests perception on the green hotel practices. It was found that above 80% found it important to somewhat important when it came to water conservation and energy conservation practices. Above 90% considered it essential to have waste reduction in Nainital through Green Practices. Above 90% found it somewhat important to very important to prefer Green Hotels practices during their stay in Nainital and 96.8% gave preference to stay in Hotels showing Green Practices.

The results thus show that in this particular study women were more efficient in answering to the queries related to Green Practices as compared to the males. The hoteliers must understand this and try to reach the women folk to become more aware regarding Green Hotel Practices. The age groups should also be taken into consideration.

As far as the willingness of guests to endure and patronize Green Practices is concerned, it is found that a majority is willing to do so. However the information is restricted to only the desire of the guest.

Through table 2 we can understand the willingness of the guests for multiple night stay to reuse his towel and linen. Here around 64 percent people agree to reuse the towel and 82.9% strongly agree, agree and somewhat agree to reuse the linen. When it comes to choose low flow shower heads 62.6 % agree or somewhat agree and 30.9 % are neutral in their approach. In the same way when a choice between low flow toilet flush to high flow toilet flush is considered 75% guests strongly agree to somewhat agree to it. This shows the willingness to conserve water. In a choice to consider

Green Hotel to a Hotel with non green practice, it was found that 92% somewhat agrees to strongly agrees to using Green Hotel Practices and the guests choose 6 to 10 points for Hotels with Green practices.

However, there are several limitations to the research with respect to time and approachability.

From the results the hoteliers can understand that people are aware of the damages that take place every year in Nainital and many attribute it to improper practices. Green Practices in hotels save a lot of water, energy and prevent further damage to the environment. It is therefore necessary to take further steps to incorporate green practices in the different Hotels of Nainital.

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