

A STUDY ON GUEST PERCEPTIONS ON ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY HOTEL PRACTICES**Author****Mrs. Madhuri D Patil**Asst. Professor BVDUIHMCT, Pune
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ketki.kanitkar@bharativedyapeeth.edu**ABSTRACT**

There is an increasing concern amongst society and hospitality industry for ecological issues. Over the years there are efforts taken by the hotel industry to reduce the damage caused to the environment by following various eco-friendly practices. Green hotels also known as Ecotel or environment friendly hotels are becoming popular amongst travelers. Increased competition with change in consumer taste and need for guest satisfaction is driving service organizations to go green. New properties are being built from sustainable resources—tropical hardwoods, local stone—and designed to better blend in with their environment. In addition, they are also being run on eco-friendly principles, such as serving organic or locally grown food or using natural cooling as opposed to air conditioning, low flow showers, occupancy sensors in guest rooms to control the lighting, using durable products over disposable products and reuse of towel and linen. A deeper understanding of customers' desire for participation in green activities can lead to organizations designing more efficient and effective green programs. The study aims to identify awareness amongst consumers and benefits of adapting eco-friendly practices in hotels. A descriptive and exploratory design is used for this study. Primary data is collected by surveying 100 Indian guests from different states. Secondary data is collected from various articles, e-newspaper and journals. The study revealed that majority of the respondents are aware about the green hotels and encourage eco-friendly practices followed by hotels. Guests are willing to pay more to support the green practices and will recommend green hotels to their family and friends.

Keywords – Green Hotels, Eco hotels, Sustainability, Tourism, Eco labels, certification, Hospitality Industry, Natural Resources.

INTRODUCTION

An eco-friendly hotel is one that is fully integrated into the environment without damaging the environment, contributing in some way to progress and improvement of the local community and sustainable growth of the tourism industry. The term has been used on a more regular basis as new websites devoted to the subject become more prominent and hotel owners became interested in protecting the areas their guests have come to visit. New properties are being built from sustainable resources—tropical hardwoods, local stone—and designed to better blend in with their environment. In addition, they are also being run on eco-friendly principles, such as serving organic or locally grown food or using natural cooling as opposed to air conditioning, low flow showers, occupancy sensors in guest rooms to control the lighting, using durable products over disposable products and reuse of towel and linen.

Hotels are practicing green mission statements and strive to achieve green certification to target the eco-conscious guests. Ecolabels are labelling systems that show the environmental impact of goods and services within regions around the world. Currently, the world is facing environmental issues, which include global climate change, ozone depletion, pollution, high consumption of resources and increasing amounts of solid waste. Hotels, as part of the tourism industry, exert a significant impact on the environment as it uses tons of water, electricity and generates huge amount of waste, hence it becomes their social responsibility.

“Ecotel is a certification that allows hotels to be sustainable”. “Ecotel certification measures hotels by employing five parameters, known as ‘The Five Globes’: → Sustainability Commitment, → Waste Management, → Energy Management, → Water Management, and Employee Education and → Community Involvement.”. Sustainability is crucial for business as well as guests hence sustainable tourism is in demand. Various factors influence the extent to which green practices are followed by hotels, such as government policies, local environmental regulations and legal concerns. Chain hotels are better adaptors of environmental practices than standalone hotels due to finance, training of the employees and exposure to green initiatives. Hotels are conducting tree plantation drive, using natural fibers in hotel linen, waste segregation, recyclable furniture, environment friendly cleaning agents, chemical free room fresheners for fragrances and use of organic food grown without use of fertilizers for guest meals.

Major hotel chains such as Hilton International, Inter-Continental Hotel Group (IHG), Accor, among others, have shown some concern about the environment. IHG, in conjunction with the World Travel and Tourism Council, pioneered the implementation of sustainable development principles (Middleton & Hawkins, 1998) The PLANET 21 program, developed by one of the largest hotel chains in the world, is an outstanding example of environmental management strategies and presents 21 actions for a sustainable development, among them:

- Health: 63% of the hotels use products with eco-labels (maintenance products, paints or coatings to the floor); 55% of the hotels offer balanced meals in their restaurants; 78% of hotels organize prevention training for staff;
- Nature: 84% of hotels have showers with water flow regulators; 68% of hotels adopt a recycling program; 197 hotels participate in reforestation project;
- Carbon: 88% of the hotels use low consumption lamps in permanent lighting; 93% of hotels follow up and assess energy consumption every month; 27 hotels utilize renewable energies and 20 of those have solar thermal panels;
- Innovation: 91 hotels have at least 3 ecological elements in their rooms (bed sheets, bath towels or paper, for example);
- Local development: In France, Germany, United Kingdom, Portugal, Switzerland and South Africa, hotels offer hot drinks (tea, coffee, chocolate) with the fair trade label; More than 5000 employees received training on combating child sex tourism; 60% of hotels purchase and use food from the region; 71% of hotels preserve local ecosystems by avoiding the consumption of endangered sea products;

There has been a growing concern for a 'green' hotel in the view of customers as they experience an increased awareness of environmental damage and excessive consumption natural resources. Promoting green practices creates a positive brand image in the market. Guests are supporting the ecofriendly practices followed by hotels and share their experiences on social media. According to the survey conducted by Booking.com, **in its Sustainable Travel Research Report** 91 per cent of Indian travelers wish to travel sustainably in the upcoming months and they feel sustainability is crucial factor due to climate change. The pandemic of Covid -19 has made everyone realize the many previously ignored aspects of life such as personal health and environment. During the pandemic as international borders were closed, tourist learnt new ways of travel to domestic destinations and learnt about state of those destinations. As stated by CEO of Tamara leisure experience private limited, Indian hotels can offer turnover service on demand, control food portions, install outdoor lights which are sensitive to the local wildlife and landscape with indigenous plants to protect the local eco system. Hospitality industry should provide reusable canvas shopper bag with eco-friendly bamboo cutlery, metal drinking straws, glass jar and bottle. as part of zero-waste plastic-free initiative. Tamara Leisure has a policy to hire 50% of the staff locally who can offer their local knowledge of culture and surroundings. WestinSohna Resort and Spa in India offers 'Go Local: Farm to Table' for in-house guests where they can experience the concept of sustainable eating and village culture. Guests interact with the local farmers and work on the field, planting and plucking their own fresh produce. They learn vermicomposting, beekeeping, rain water harvesting and grey water filtration. This involvement of the guests with the nature and local community gives them out of the box experience and creates environmental awareness. The top 09 ecofriendly hotels are per the survey conducted in year 2021 in India are situated in states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Ladakh, Pondicherry, Goa, Uttarakhand and Delhi with one of a kind accommodation with holistic sustainable practices and have established benchmark in the hospitality industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Miriam Mbasera (2016): the purpose of this study was to identify the eco-friendly techniques used by hotels in South Africa and Zimbabwe and to ascertain the contribution that hotels were making to the reduction of harmful environmental effects. The findings of the study indicated that some hotels adopted green management, but no policies exist. Some hotel managers don't apply green management to reduce environmental impacts. This reveals a deficit in managers' knowledge of environment-friendly hotel procedures, emphasizing a need for green management training.

Esperanza Gil-Soto (2019): The study explored the eco-friendly practices of star category hotels in Lucknow and the challenges they faced implementing green practices. The information was gathered through a well-structured questionnaire from the hotel staff. Garbage disposal, sewage treatment plants, dual flush toilets, electronic key cards, and energy-efficient lighting are common practices carried out in Lucknow's star hotels. Initial investment costs for green setup are high, which is a challenge for hotels implementing green practices.

OrieBerezan (2011): This study analyzed social media reviews of hotels' environmental practices by guests. Although customers perceive green efforts in six areas (Energy, Water, Purchasing, Waste, Site, and Education & Innovation), they do not perceive hotels' level of environmental commitment. Moreover, guests' perceptions of hotel efforts in environment friendly practices do not differ by travel mode or reviewer experience on travel platforms. In order to benefit from these efforts, hotel managers must redesign and intensify their communication about eco-friendly practices

AkramAtefRawashdeh (2021): This study aimed to determine which sustainable hotel practices guests prefer and what motivates them to participate. The study examined sociocultural differences in respondents' willingness to pay more for an eco-friendly hotel. In Mexico, tourists collected data revealed that management should consider guests' sociocultural backgrounds and may have to educate them on the advantages of balancing social conscience with guest service expectations.

M. Rosario González-Rodríguez, (2020): This paper investigated the influence of customers' environmental concerns, perceptions of a hotel's environmental practices, and the hotels' environment friendly images on clients' willingness to pay a price premium to reside at ecologically friendly hotels.

Customers' environmental concerns explain their willingness to pay a price premium more than their perceptions of hotels' environmental practices. In addition, the mediates the effects of hotels' eco-friendly image and environmental practices have similar causal effects.

Luekveerawattana R. (2018): It aimed to determine why tourists choose eco-friendly hotels. This study should help hotel and accommodation marketers plan and make sustainable tourism policies. This study surveyed 400 foreign tourists. Purposeful sampling was used. Analysis used logistic regression. The study found that tourists' attitudes, age, educational level, reasons for travelling, especially from Europe and North America, and family travel affect their decision to stay at environmentally friendly hotels. The paper's findings have managerial implications for hotel managers around the world

HyeRyeon Lee (2016): this study examined how hotel guests perceive green practices and how hotels inform customers via TripAdvisor. This study used content analysis to examine hotel guests' awareness of green practices through social media. The results suggested that the majority of guests respond favorably to green initiatives when they can identify them, such as conserving electricity and water. Guests may feel uncomfortable during their stays if they are unaware of the green practices of hotels. In addition, the survey revealed that few hotel managements respond to unfavorable TripAdvisor reviews to tell consumers about the hotels' green initiatives.

Sungpo Yi (2016): The major objective of this study was to analyse the content of internet hotel reviews to determine how guests perceive green hotels. Most hotel green practices are seen positively, according to the results. Hotel guests regard a storm water drainage system, and client orientation as serious green efforts by hotels and they complement them. Some hotel visitors say hotels may be exploiting green initiatives for marketing or financial gain. low water pressure, and biodegradable utensils are not well received. Our results highlight how hotel owners should apply green practices to establish environmentally friendly branding strategies.

Heesup Han (2018): This study examined the role of hotel water conservation and waste reduction management in increasing hedonic and utilitarian values, as well as the influence of such relationships on guest participation intention in green practices and loyalty intention, with environmental concern serving as a moderator in the green hotel context. Vietnam conducted a convenience sampling field survey. This study demonstrated that hotel water conservation and waste reduction practices increased values and pro-environmental intents, with hedonic and utilitarian benefits of green hotel stays serving as mediators. Environmental factors also moderated.

Melissa A. Baker (2013): The purpose of research was to study Eco-friendly attitudes, participation barriers, and behaviour differences at green hotels. This research demonstrates that visitors' estimate of environmental value affects their inclination to stay in a green hotel. Inconvenience, perceptions of cost cutting, and lower elegance are all customer barriers to participation, which affect consumers' decision to stay at a green hotel or pay more for a room there. Customers agree hotels should have certain green practices, but they don't consider it important to remain in a hotel that maintains the thirteen green policies examined here.

Customers are more environmentally responsible at home than in a hotel. These findings suggest that hotel managers' messages and actions should be relevant to guests' concerns by educating customers, making green initiatives more convenient, and reducing cost-cutting perceptions

Capterra Hotel Management Blog (2017): in their research reviewed that change in Menu and Food Disposal helped. We all know about buying organic food, the absence of pesticides is both good for hotels and the environment, organic food is often fresher. Buying local also fosters relationships with food vendors in hotel area and cuts down on carbon emissions that come with long-range transportation.

norazilamohdnoor (2014):in his research reviewed the influence of ecofriendly attitudes and environmentally friendly activities on tourists' intention to choose green hotels as their preferred accommodation.

Mohinder Chand (2017): The purpose of this article was to investigate the prevalent eco-friendly methods in the Indian hotel business. To gather information from hotels, a standardized questionnaire was designed. There were 265 usable responses; the data were analyzed using factor analysis. The findings reveal that eco-friendly activities are prevalent in the Indian hotel business, and a subset of these practices has emerged as crucial for the organization's future growth.

Amandeep Ad (2017): This paper seeks to comprehend eco-friendly hotels, i.e., the most recent trends and best practices. It will also attempt to provide an overview of government policies and legislation pertaining to hotels in India, as well as simple tactics and procedures that hotels can use for Eco-Friendly Hotel Operations.

Mustafa Demir (2021): The purpose of this work was to investigate the effect of consumers' environmental consciousness on their intention to visit green hotels in north Cyprus, as mediated by consumption values. Conventional hotels do not provide consumers with environmental knowledge and consumption values, according to eco-friendly hotel research. However, it is possible that these benefits do not appeal to the hotel's potential customers. The study suggests that hotel managers in north Cyprus will find the research useful in understanding the significance of improving consumers' green consciousness and marketing it to customers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample:

The population for the study identified was guests from India. There was only one sampling frame designed to carry out this research. Respondents were from different age groups.

Sample Size:

Estimated population size was infinite. The sample chosen was general consumers who travel to other cities, states and countries. Around 100 samples were surveyed.

Scope of the study:

1. The study analyses awareness and acceptability of eco-friendly practices amongst consumers.
2. The scope of the study includes Indian guests.

Limitations:

- The researcher has collected data by distributing questionnaire online/by e-mail, thus data collected is more or less quantitative and less qualitative.
- Data is collected from Indian travellers only.
- Sample size is not too large to generalize results.
- Limited information is provided by primary and secondary data.

Research Instrument:

A structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data by distributing it online.

Sources of Data:

- **Primary data:** The study was conducted in distinct phases using a questionnaire: A sample questionnaire survey of 100 guests who were randomly selected on the basis of simple random sampling. Data was then analysed keeping in mind the objectives of the study.
- **Secondary Data:** Secondary data was collected through extensive review of literature on the topic. Research papers from reputed academic journals (Print and online versions) and databases, published articles, newsletters and internet websites pertaining to Tourism and Hospitality sector were referred.

OBJECTIVES

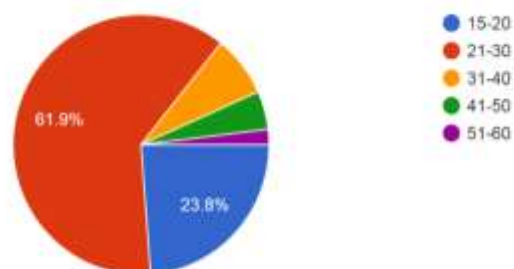
1. To identify and understand the eco-friendly practices adapted by guests in hotel.
2. To understand the awareness and benefits of adopting eco-friendly practices in the hotels by guests.
3. To analyse the acceptability of eco-friendly practices by the guest.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data was collected and analyzed using basic and advanced analytical tools which include the detailed analysis of data which was conducted with the set purpose of attaining the objectives of research. Mentioned below is the analysis which can be presented graphically, through the help of collected data which was done by drawing inference from the collected facts. This survey was conducted to understand the guest views about adopting eco-friendly practices by hotels. This was done by circulating questionnaires to various consumers setting various parameters. The respondents were from different age groups and profession so that feedback can be obtained from all classes of people.

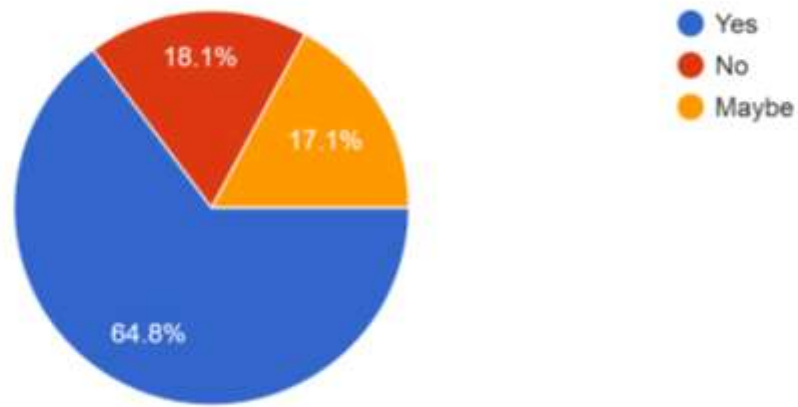
The following are the analytic data which was taken from the consumers:

CHART 1 AGE OF THE RESPONDANTS



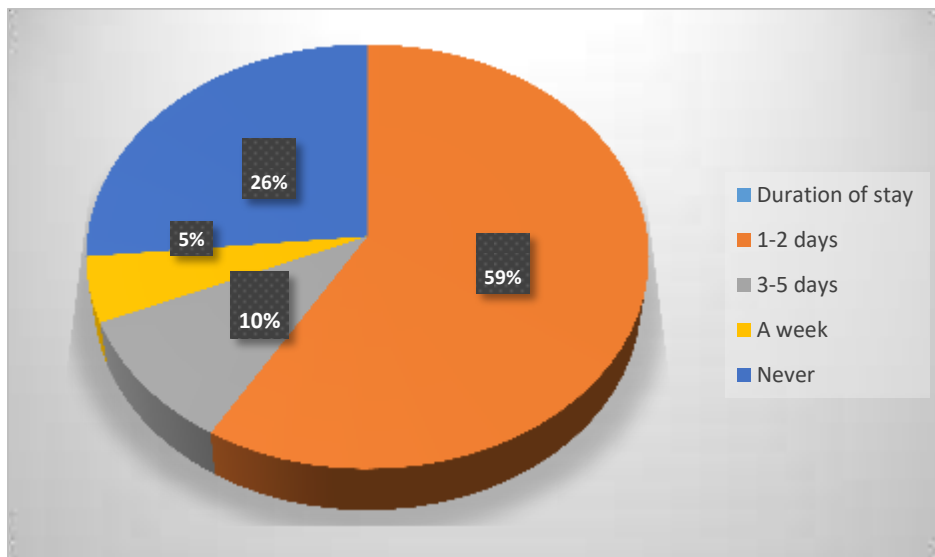
INTERPRETATION: This response was taken from different age groups so that feedback can be collected from people of different age groups. There were 5 different age groups which included 15-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60 to know which age group likes environmental friendly practices adopted by hotel, 23.8% people are from the age group 15-20, 61.9% people are from the age group 21-30, 8.3% people are from age group of 31-40, 4% people are from age group of 41-50 and 2% people are from age group of 51-60.

CHART 2 AWARENESS ABOUT ECO-FRIENDLY HOTELS



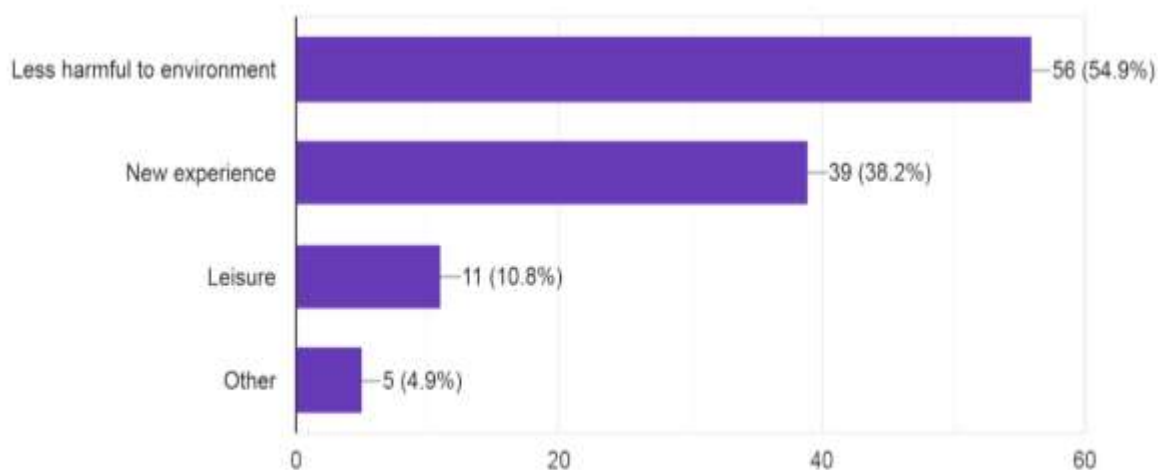
INTERPRETATION: This response was taken from customers that if they were aware of eco-friendly hotels. 64.8% respondents are aware of eco friendly hotels, 18.1 % don't have information about ecotels.

CHART 3 DURATION OF STAY IN ECO-FRIENDLY HOTEL

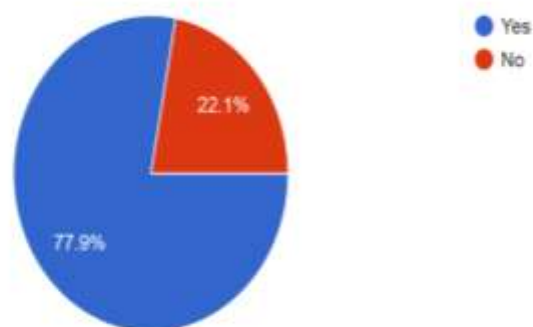


INTERPRETATION:59% of the respondents book their stay in eco friendly hotels for 1-2 days, whereas only 10% of the guests stay for 3-5 days. 26% of the respondents never stay in green hotels.

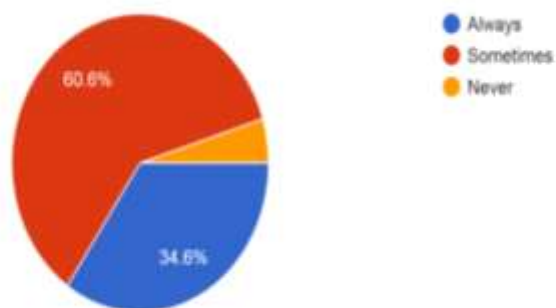
CHART 4 REASONS TO PREFER AN ECO-FRIENDLY HOTEL.



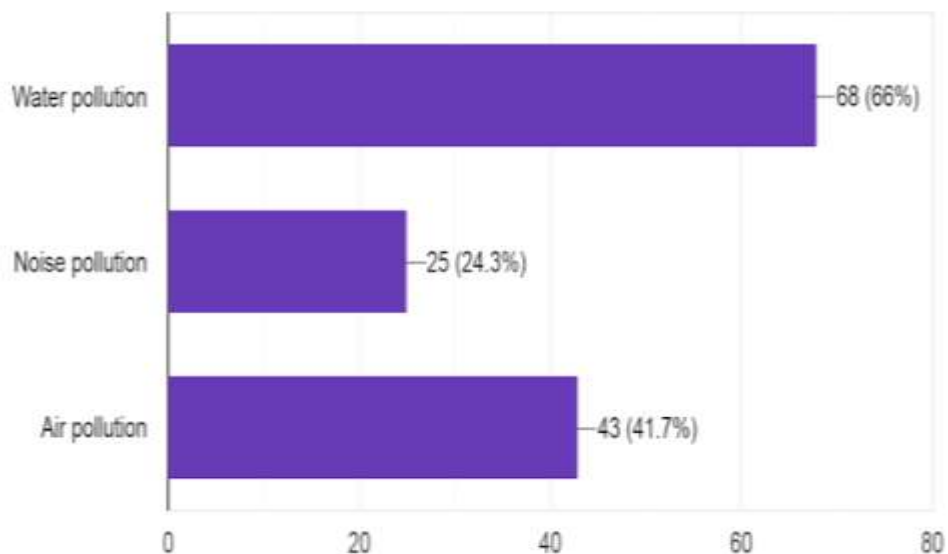
INTERPRETATION:These responses were taken from different group of people so that feedback can be collected for their preferences. According to response 54.9% people prefer ecotels as it is less harmful for environment and according to 38.2% of respondents it is new experience. 10.8% of the respondents visit ecotel for leisure. Few of the guests i.e. 4.9% prefer ecotel due to adventure sports, to connect with nature and for pilgrimage.

CHART 5 WILLINGNESS TO PAY MORE FOR ECO-FRIENDLY HOTELS

INTERPRETATION: These responses were taken from the people willing to pay for eco-friendly practices. 77.9% respondents are willing to pay more and 22.1% are not willing to pay more.

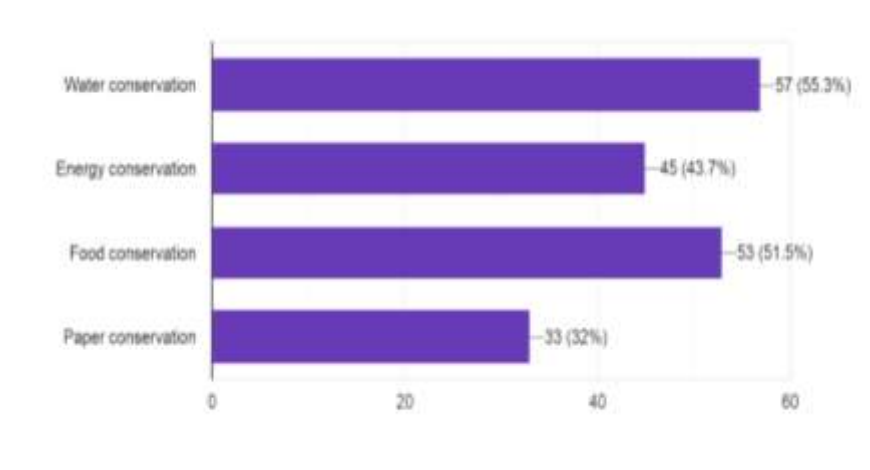
CHART 6 PREFERENCE OF ECO-FRIENDLY HOTEL OVER OTHER HOTELS

INTERPRETATION: These responses were taken from the people if they prefer a green hotel or other hotels. 60.6% respondents sometimes prefer a green hotel, 34.6% customers always prefer green hotel over any other hotel and 4.8% people never prefer green hotels.

CHART 7 POLLUTION CAUSING DAMAGE TO NATURE.

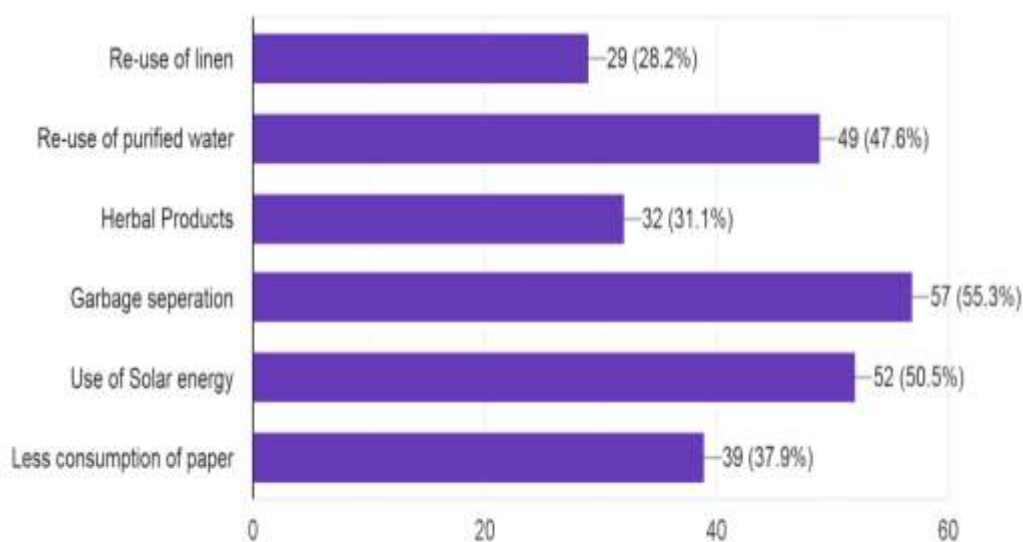
INTERPRETATION: This response was collected in order to understand the awareness of guests about types of pollution affecting the nature.

According to data in chart, 66% damage is caused by water pollution, 24.3% damage is caused by noise pollution, and 41.7% damage is caused by air pollution to the nature. Hence, people are aware of the pollution by hotels which causes damage to the environment.

CHART 8 BENEFITS ACHIEVED BY ADOPTING ECO-FRIENDLY PRACTICES

INTERPRETATION:According to data in chart ,55.3% respondents are aware about water conservation,51.5% respondents are aware of food conservation, 43.7% respondents are aware of energy conservation, 32% respondents are aware of paper conservation. Hence, people are aware of benefits caused by eco- friendly practices.

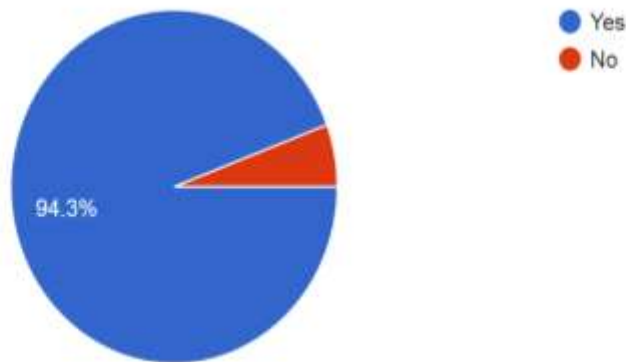
CHART 9 ECO-FRIENDLY PRACTICES APPRECIATED BY GUESTS IN HOTELS.



INTERPRETATION:As per the chart, 55.3% respondents appreciated garbage separation, 50.5% appreciated the use of solar energy, 47.6% appreciated re-use of purified water, 37.9% appreciated less consumption of paper, 31.1% appreciated herbal products, 28.2% appreciated re-use of linen. Hence, guests are aware of eco-friendly practices in hotels.

CHART 10 WOULD YOU LIKE TO VISIT GREEN HOTEL AGAIN

INTERPRETATION: 96.2% guests would like to visit green hotels and 3.8% does not wish to visit ecotel.

CHART 11 WOULD YOU RECOMMEND GREEN HOTELS TO OTHERS.

INTERPRETATION: According to data, 94.3% respondents would recommend a green hotel to friend or family members and 5.7% will not recommend.

FINDINGS

1. Majority of the respondents 61.9% belonged to the age group of 21-30 years.
2. Out of total responses 64.8% are aware of eco-friendly hotels and 18.1% do not know have information on eco-friendly hotels.
3. 59% of the respondents book their stay in eco-friendly hotels for 1-2 days, whereas 26% of the respondents never stay in green hotels.
4. 54.9% people preferred eco-friendly hotels because they are less harmful to the nature and 38.2 % prefer due to new experience.
5. 77.9% people are willing to pay more for eco-friendly hotels and 22.1% are not willing to pay more.
6. 60.6% people preferred green hotels over any other hotel and 34.6% preferred sometimes.
7. 66% of the respondents mentioned that water pollution caused by hotels causes high damages to the nature.
8. 55.3% respondents are aware about water conservation,51.5% respondents are aware of food conservation, 43.7% respondents are aware of energy conservation, 32% respondents are aware of paper conservation 55.3% respondents appreciated garbage separation practices and 28.2% liked the reuse of linen.
9. 88.6% respondents are of the opinion that eco-friendly practices should be followed in hotels.
10. 94.3% respondents would recommend green hotels to friends or family members.

CONCLUSION

The hospitality industry is increasingly burdened by solid waste and excessive energy and water consumption. In light of this, this study was conducted to determine awareness of environmentally-friendly practices adopted by hotels. Since a few years, it is abundantly obvious that guests have significantly increased their awareness regarding environmentally friendly measures that are carried out in hotels. Tourists are willing to spend a higher price for environmentally friendly products as they are aware that green hotels are less detrimental to the environment.

As consumers become more knowledgeable about water conservation and food conservation, they are more likely to believe that environmentally friendly practices should be adopted in all hotels and to be willing to promote green hotels to their friends, family, and co-workers.

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