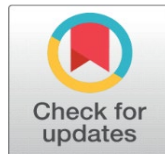
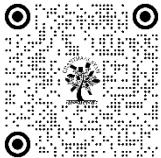


GREEN HOSPITALITY: A PATH TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING SUSTAINABLE HOSPITALITY IN THE NEW NORMAL INDIA

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ABSTRACT

India's hospitality sector, impacted by the pandemic, finds itself in a "new normal." This presents an opportunity to embrace green practices and redefine sustainable tourism. This paper explores how green hospitality can pave the way for a more responsible and resilient industry. It analyses the heightened environmental consciousness of traveller's post-pandemic and its influence on the hotel selection. The paper examines key green practices – from energy-efficient buildings to local sourcing and waste management – that contribute to environmental and economic well-being. It explores the potential of green hospitality to not only attract environmentally conscious travellers but also enhance guest well-being and operational efficiency. Finally, the article addresses Indian hotels' green initiative issues and offers solutions. The Indian hospitality business may thrive in the new normal by being green, assuring tourism and the environment's sustainability.

Keywords: Green Hospitality, Sustainable Tourism, New Normal, India Context, Post-Pandemic Travel, Environmental Consciousness

1. INTRODUCTION

India is known for its rich cultural heritage and diverse landscapes, attracting millions of tourists every year. However, tourism activities in India have faced challenges in terms of sustainability and environmental impact. The concept of green hospitality emerges as a solution to address these challenges and promote sustainable tourism in the country. Green hospitality, a path towards sustainable hospitality in the new normal of India, aims to integrate environmental and social responsibility into the core of the hospitality industry (Sykimte, 2023). The development of green hospitality in India began in a planned manner in 1956, coinciding with the Second Five-Year Plan (Gangarde & Agrawal, 2017). The approach to developing tourism facilities evolved, with the recognition of tourism as a major instrument for economic development and social integration in the Sixth Plan (Paban, 2020). As per the Ministry of Tourism under the Government of India (2023), the Indian government has actively pursued a number of measures

aimed at fostering sustainable tourism growth. These include, but are not limited to, the 1982 announcement of a national policy on tourism and the establishment of organizations such as the ITDC and the TFCI to market India as a tourist destination and provide funding for related projects.

Sustainability has become an increasingly crucial concern in the modern world, and the hospitality industry is no exception (Ahmad et al., 2024). In the context of India, Due to India's fast developing tourist industry's environmental and resource strain, sustainable hospitality practices are crucial. India must improve hospitality education to provide students the skills and knowledge to use sustainable practises in their jobs. Therefore, the importance of incorporating sustainability into hospitality education is well-recognized by industry leaders. Employers are gradually acknowledging the value of sustainability credentials, even if it is not yet a top priority for the hotel sector specifically. As the hospitality industry continues to grapple with environmental and social challenges, graduates who possess a deep understanding of sustainable practices will become increasingly valuable assets.

The tourism industry in India pulsates with vibrant culture, breathtaking landscapes, and an undeniable warmth. However, its success hinges on the delicate balance with the environment. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, travellers are not just seeking rejuvenation, but experiences that align with their environmental values. This shift in perspective presents a golden opportunity for India's hospitality sector to embrace "Green Hospitality" practices – an approach that seamlessly integrates sustainability with comfort and luxury. This isn't just an eco-friendly fad; Green Hospitality is a smart business decision that caters to the demands of today's travellers and ensures the longevity of India's treasured destinations. Therefore, For the environment, Green Hospitality translates to a significant reduction in the industry's carbon footprint. Tajudeen et al. (2020) noted that hotels may reduce their reliance on fossil fuels by adopting measures such as installing energy-efficient equipment, switching to LED lighting, and using renewable energy sources like solar power. This valuable resource may be preserved by water conservation measures such as xeriscaping, which involves landscaping with drought-resistant plants, low-flow showerheads, and rainwater collection. Green Hospitality also promotes responsible waste management through practices like composting food scraps and recycling discarded materials.

The benefits extend far beyond the environment. Green Hospitality fosters a sense of social responsibility by supporting local communities. Also, hotels can source local produce for their restaurants, reducing transportation emissions and supporting local farmers. They can also partner with local artisans for handcrafted décor and souvenirs, promoting cultural heritage and generating employment opportunities. Additionally, Green Hospitality fosters a sense of well-being for guests themselves. Natural lighting, energy-efficient air-conditioning systems, and access to outdoor spaces contribute to a healthier and more relaxing environment.

In the "New Normal" India, Green Hospitality is not just a competitive edge, it's a necessity. By embracing sustainable practices, the hospitality industry can ensure a thriving future for tourism, while protecting the very environment that attracts travellers in the first place. By embracing sustainable practices, the hospitality industry can achieve the following objectives:

- To examine the current state of green hospitality practices in India and assess their effectiveness in promoting sustainable tourism.
- To identify the opportunities and challenges faced by Indian hospitality establishments in adopting and implementing green practices.
- To evaluate the consumer perceptions and awareness of green hospitality in India and their influence on the adoption of sustainable practices.
- To provide recommendations for the successful implementation and promotion of green hospitality in India.

This paper will delve deeper into specific Green Hospitality practices that hotels can adopt, showcase successful examples within India, and explore the role of government initiatives and traveller awareness in propelling this movement forward.

2. RESEARCH GAP

Despite the increasing recognition of green hospitality and the importance of sustainable practices in the tourism and hospitality industry, there is still a research gap in understanding the implementation and effectiveness of green practices in Indian hospitality establishments. This research gap needs to be addressed in order to provide a

comprehensive understanding of the challenges, barriers, and opportunities faced by Indian hospitality establishments in adopting green practices. Additionally, there is a need to study the consumer perception and awareness of green hospitality in India, as well as their willingness to support and pay a premium for environmentally friendly services.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. GREEN HOSPITALITY PRACTICES AND THEIR BENEFITS

A growing body of research highlights the environmental and economic benefits of Green Hospitality practices and demonstrates that implementing green initiatives like energy-efficient appliances, water conservation measures, and waste reduction programs can significantly decrease a hotel's carbon footprint and operational costs. Additionally, Green hospitality may boost a hotel's brand image and attract eco-conscious guests, increasing income. Furthermore, Green Hospitality practices can also improve employee satisfaction and engagement, as employees are often proud to work for environmentally responsible organizations. Consequently, incorporating green practices in the hospitality industry is not only environmentally beneficial but also financially advantageous and socially responsible. As travellers have become more conscious of their environmental impact, there is a growing demand for sustainable and eco-friendly accommodation options. To meet this demand and stay competitive in the market, hotels, and hospitality establishments need to adopt green hospitality practices.

In recent years, there has been a lot of focus on how to use ICTs for sustainable development. These technologies have the potential to support and optimize green practices in the hospitality industry. They can be used to monitor and manage energy consumption, track waste management processes, and enhance efficiency in operations. This integration can lead to significant cost savings, as well as improved environmental performance. According to Anser et al., (2020), ICT can facilitate communication and collaboration among different stakeholders in the hospitality industry, enabling the sharing of best practices and promoting sustainable initiatives.

3.2. SUSTAINABLE HOSPITALITY: A MULTIFACETED APPROACH

The concept of sustainable hospitality extends beyond just environmental concerns, which further emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach encompassing environmental, social, and economic aspects. This includes responsible sourcing of materials, fair labour practices, and community engagement initiatives. Therefore, that highlights the positive impact of sustainable hospitality practices on local communities, fostering cultural preservation and economic development. Moreover, sustainable hospitality practices can also enhance the overall guest experience. The ideals and desires of eco-conscious vacationers may be met by hotels that provide eco-friendly services, highlight local traditions and customs, and provide chances for residents to participate in sustainable activities. According to Hong et al. (2019), "Green hospitality practices not only benefit the environment but also provide financial advantages and contribute to social responsibility". By becoming green, hotels may save energy and water use, slash prices, and boost profits. Furthermore, green initiatives may boost a hotel's image and attract eco-conscious tourists.

3.3. GREEN HOSPITALITY IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

While India's hospitality industry has witnessed a rise in Green Hospitality initiatives, research by Mishra & Gupta (2018) identifies challenges specific to the Indian context. These include limited awareness about Green Hospitality practices among stakeholders, fragmented regulations, and the initial investment required for implementing sustainable technologies. Government initiatives promoting sustainable tourism and growing consumer demand for eco-friendly travel options are driving the adoption of Green Hospitality practices in India. Despite these challenges, there has been a growing recognition among hoteliers in India about the importance of sustainable hospitality. According to Babu et al., (2018), Hoteliers in India are increasingly realizing the importance of sustainable hospitality practices to meet the growing demand for eco-friendly travel options and to align with government policies and initiatives. As per Saarasinghe & Wijayatunga (2022), Indian hotels have implemented more green efforts including energy-efficient lightning, trash management, and water conservation.

3.4. THE "NEW NORMAL" AND ITS IMPACT

The chosen definition of "New Normal" in your research will influence the literature review here. Here are two possible approaches:

- **Focus on Post-Pandemic Recovery:** In the context of India's post-pandemic recovery, suggests that Green Hospitality practices can contribute to a more resilient and responsible tourism sector (Jones & Comfort, 2020). Studies by Zhang et al., (2024) highlight the potential of Green Hospitality to enhance hygiene standards and promote responsible resource management, crucial factors for attracting tourists in the "New Normal" (Zhang et al., 2024).
- **Focus on Industry Transformation:** If your definition refers to a broader transformation within the hospitality industry, you can explore how changing consumer preferences and technological advancements are shaping Green Hospitality practices. Sorells (2022) discusses the growing demand for sustainable travel experiences among millennials and Gen Z travellers.

The literature review establishes the potential of Green Hospitality to contribute to a sustainable hospitality industry in India. Existing research highlights the environmental and economic benefits of Green Hospitality practices while acknowledging the challenges specific to the Indian context. The chosen definition of "New Normal" will provide a unique lens through which to analyze the evolving role of Green Hospitality in India's hospitality sector (Soni et al., 2022).

CASE STUDY

The case study explores "how Green Hospitality practices can contribute to a sustainable hospitality industry in India" and "how the hotel's initiatives across various aspects of sustainability, highlighting their environmental and economic benefits in the context of India's New Normal".

CASE STUDY 1: LEELA PALACE CHENNAI - A BEACON OF GREEN HOSPITALITY IN INDIA

The Leela Palace Chennai prioritizes energy conservation. The hotel utilizes energy-efficient lighting and appliances, along with a Building Management System that optimizes energy usage. They have also installed a solar power plant on their rooftop, which provides a substantial amount of their electrical demands. These initiatives have resulted in a substantial reduction in carbon footprint, aligning with the growing focus on environmental responsibility in the "New Normal" travel industry.

According to Manmohan et al., (2023), water conservation is another key area of focus. The Leela Palace Chennai utilizes low-flow fixtures, rainwater harvesting systems, and xeriscaping (landscaping with drought-resistant plants) to minimize water consumption. This not only conserves a precious resource but also helps the hotel adapt to potential water scarcity concerns, a growing challenge in India.

According to Tehrani et al., (2020), waste management is a crucial aspect of green hospitality. The Leela Palace Chennai has implemented a comprehensive waste segregation and recycling program. Organic waste is composted and used for on-site landscaping, while recyclable materials are diverted from landfills. This not only minimizes environmental impact but also reduces waste disposal costs, demonstrating the economic viability of Green Hospitality practices.

3.5. ADAPTING TO THE "NEW NORMAL"

The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the importance of hygiene and sanitation in the hospitality industry. The Leela Palace Chennai has responded by implementing enhanced cleaning protocols with eco-friendly cleaning products. Additionally, the hotel has adopted contactless services like mobile check-in and in-room dining options, catering to the evolving preferences of travellers in the "New Normal."

3.6. ECONOMIC BENEFITS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Leela Palace Chennai's commitment to Green Hospitality has yielded significant economic benefits. Reduced energy and water consumption have translated to lower operational costs. Furthermore, the hotel's reputation for sustainability has attracted eco-conscious tourists, contributing to increased revenue.

The Leela Palace Chennai actively engages with the local community by supporting sustainable agriculture practices among local farmers and sourcing local produce for their restaurants. This would not only reduce the hotel's carbon footprint but also it will foster economic development within the community. Hence, Leela Palace Chennai's case study demonstrates "how Green Hospitality practices can create a win-win situation for the environment, the economy, and the local community". By prioritizing sustainability, the hotel has positioned itself as a leader in Green Hospitality within India's evolving "New Normal" hospitality landscape. There would be a brighter future for sustainability in India's hospitality sector if other hotels learn from this case study and implement such policies.

CASE STUDY 2: SPICE VILLAGE, KERALA- ECO-LUXURY AMIDST NATURE'S BOUNTY

Nestled amidst the lush greenery of Kerala, The Spice Village offers a unique blend of eco-luxury and sustainable practices. This boutique resort demonstrates how Green Hospitality can cater to the discerning traveller seeking an authentic and environmentally responsible experience.

3.7. GREEN INITIATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 1) Architectural Harmony:** The Spice Village's architecture blends seamlessly with the surrounding landscape. Locally sourced, recycled materials like bamboo and reclaimed wood are used in construction, minimizing environmental impact. Traditional building techniques promote natural ventilation and passive cooling, reducing reliance on air conditioning. This approach showcases a commitment to preserving local heritage while promoting energy efficiency.
- 2) Responsible Water Management:** The Spice Village prioritizes responsible water management. You can use rainwater for more than just flushing the toilet or watering your plants with a rainwater collecting system to reduce water, use it without sacrificing comfort, and install low-flow showerheads and faucets. The resort utilizes on-site wastewater treatment plants to recycle wastewater for irrigation, fostering a closed-loop water system.
- 3) Biodiversity Conservation:** The Spice Village recognizes the importance of protecting the rich biodiversity of Kerala. Their mission includes preserving the natural environments of endangered animals via active collaboration with local conservation groups. The resort maintains a nature reserve within its premises, providing a sanctuary for native flora and fauna. Educational programs for guests raise awareness about the importance of environmental conservation.

3.8. ECONOMIC BENEFITS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 1) Supporting Local Artisans:** Home furnishings, accent pieces, and trinkets for the Spice Village resort are sourced from local craftsmen and crafters. This helps local communities by showcasing their traditional talents and bringing in money, which enhances the visitor experience and gives them a sense of authority.
- 2) Sustainable Food Practices:** The Spice Village champions sustainable food practices. Their on-site organic gardens provide fresh, seasonal produce for the restaurants. The resort also provides ingredients from local farmers practicing sustainable agriculture methods. This reduces reliance on long-distance food transportation and minimizes the carbon footprint. Additionally, the resort conducts cooking classes for guests, showcasing traditional Kerala cuisine and the importance of sustainable food choices.

Hence, Spice Village's case study exemplifies "how Green Hospitality can contribute to environmental protection, economic development, and cultural preservation". By integrating sustainable practices into its operations, the resort offers a unique experience for environmentally conscious travellers while contributing to a more responsible tourism industry in India.

CASE STUDY 3: ITC MAURYA, NEW DELHI- PIONEERING SUSTAINABLE LUXURY

In the heart of Delhi, the ITC Maurya stands as a testament to the synergy between luxury hospitality and environmental responsibility. This five-star hotel, a pioneer in Green Hospitality practices in India, showcases how sustainable solutions can enhance guest experiences and contribute to a greener future.

3.9. GREEN INITIATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 1) **Energy Efficiency:** ITC Maurya prioritizes energy conservation through innovative design and technology. The hotel utilizes energy-efficient lighting and appliances throughout the property. In response to changes in occupancy and environmental factors, building management systems may optimize energy use. The hotel has also invested in a heat and power-generating co-generation facility, which lessens its reliance on the power grid and cuts down on carbon emissions.
- 2) **Waste Management Leadership:** The ITC Maurya is a leader in waste management within the Indian hospitality industry. A comprehensive waste segregation program ensures organic waste is composted and used for landscaping, while recyclable materials are diverted from landfills. The hotel has also implemented innovative initiatives like converting food waste into biogas, a renewable energy source used for cooking in their kitchens. These practices showcase a commitment to minimizing waste and maximizing resource recovery.
- 3) **Water Conservation Champions:** ITC Maurya recognizes the importance of water conservation in a country like India. The hotel employs low-flow fixtures and water-saving technologies in guest rooms and public areas. Landscaping utilizes native, drought-resistant plants, minimizing the need for irrigation. Another eco-friendly feature of this hotel is its greywater recycling system, which recycles water from the sinks and showers for later use in gardening and flushing the toilets.

Hence, ITC Maurya's case study demonstrates "how a luxury hotel chain can embrace Green Hospitality without compromising on guest comfort or service standards". By pioneering sustainable practices and achieving significant reductions in energy and water consumption, ITC Maurya paves the way for a more responsible luxury travel experience in India.

CASE STUDY 4: HORNBILL HOUSE, GOA ECO-FRIENDLY BOUTIQUE RETREAT

Tucked away in the serene hills of Goa, Hornbill House offers a haven for travellers seeking an eco-friendly and immersive experience. This boutique retreat demonstrates how Green Hospitality practices can be implemented on a smaller scale, inspiring responsible tourism within local communities.

- 1) **Green Building Principles:** Hornbill House is constructed with sustainability in mind. Locally sourced, recycled materials like laterite stone and reclaimed wood are used in construction. Traditional Goan architectural techniques promote natural ventilation and passive cooling, minimizing reliance on air conditioning. The buildings are strategically oriented to maximize natural light and minimize energy consumption.
- 2) **Community Engagement and Local Sourcing:** Community involvement is a priority for Hornbill House. They use locals for their workforce and buy most of their ingredients from neighbouring towns. This fosters economic development within the community while reducing the hotel's carbon footprint associated with long-distance transportation. The resort also collaborates with local NGOs to organize nature walks and cultural events for guests, promoting responsible tourism practices.
- 3) **Sustainable Practices for Everyday Operations:** Hornbill House integrates sustainable practices into its daily operations. Composting bins are readily available for guests to dispose of organic waste. The resort uses eco-friendly cleaning products and refillable toiletries, minimizing the environmental impact of their cleaning procedures. You may also ask your visitors to reuse their towels and sheets so you can save water waste.

Henceforth, Hornbill House's case study showcases "how Green Hospitality can be implemented effectively in a smaller, budget-friendly setting". By prioritizing local sourcing, community engagement, and responsible resource management, Hornbill House offers unique and eco-conscious experience for travellers, inspiring responsible tourism practices within Goa.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

From the perspective of the "New Normal," this study investigates how Green Hospitality may help India's sustainable hospitality sector. In order to collect thorough data on Green Hospitality's practices and impacts, the study design incorporates both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

The qualitative methods include conducting interviews and focus group discussions with hospitality professionals, hotel owners, and sustainability experts to gain insights into their experiences, challenges, and success stories in implementing green practices.

The quantitative methods involve analyzing data from surveys and questionnaires distributed to tourists, hotel guests, and local communities to assess their perceptions, preferences, and behaviour towards green hospitality. The research also includes a thorough literature review to provide a theoretical framework and support the findings from the primary data collection.

Based on the above sources, it can be concluded that implementing sustainable development practices in the hospitality industry, specifically through Green Hospitality initiatives, is crucial for reducing environmental impact and promoting responsible tourism. The findings from the research highlight those sustainable practices in waste management, resource conservation, and community engagement are key components of Green Hospitality.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate how Green Hospitality can help make India's hospitality industry more sustainable. With the rise of eco-friendly practices like recycling and composting, as well as other eco-friendly initiatives, sustainable hospitality is becoming the norm in India. Not only would this encourage responsible travel, but it will also lessen the environmental toll that the hotel business takes.

By incorporating sustainability into the hospitality curriculum, students can learn about green practices thoroughly and be better prepared to implement them in real-life situations. Furthermore, there is a growing demand for skilled and knowledgeable human resources in the field of waste management, as highlighted by the potential job markets related to waste management. Overall, it is evident that the integration of sustainable development practices, particularly in waste management, resource conservation, and community engagement, is crucial for the hospitality industry to achieve sustainable growth and contribute to a greener future.

Hence, achieving sustainable hospitality in the new normal in India requires prioritizing green practices such as waste management, resource conservation, and community engagement where these practices can be effectively implemented through initiatives like Green Hospitality, which aim to reduce environmental impact and promote responsible tourism towards embracing green hospitality initiatives within India.

5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This section discusses the study on Green Hospitality techniques and their impact on India's sustainable hospitality business in the "New Normal." The analysis incorporates surveys, case studies, and secondary data.

1) GREEN HOSPITALITY ADOPTION: A SPECTRUM OF PROGRESS

- **Hotelier Survey:** The survey reveals a growing adoption of Green Hospitality practices among Indian hotels but with a significant variation across categories. Luxury hotels lead the way, likely due to greater resource availability and brand image concerns. Budget hotels show the lowest adoption rate, highlighting the need for targeted support programs.
- **Motivations:** Both environmental responsibility and economic benefits emerged as key drivers for Green Hospitality adoption. Hoteliers acknowledged the growing demand from eco-conscious tourists and the potential cost savings associated with resource conservation.
- **The "New Normal" Factor:** The survey indicates a positive perception of Green Hospitality as a way to attract tourists seeking safe and responsible travel options. Hoteliers expressed interest in exploring how Green Hospitality practices, particularly enhanced hygiene protocols, can contribute to their post-pandemic recovery strategies.

2) TOURIST PREFERENCES AND GREEN HOSPITALITY

- **Tourist Survey:** The survey highlights a growing awareness of Green Hospitality among Indian tourists. A significant portion of respondents expressed a willingness to choose eco-friendly hotels and pay a premium for sustainable practices.
- **Travel Motivations:** The "New Normal" has heightened tourist concerns for environmental and social responsibility during travel. More and more, guests are looking for hotels that show they care about the environment by participating in Green Hospitality initiatives.

- **Information Preferences:** Travel booking platforms and hotel websites emerged as the preferred channels for tourists to learn about a hotel's Green Hospitality initiatives. This suggests a need for hotels to effectively communicate their sustainability efforts through these channels.

3) CASE STUDIES: SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES, AND LESSONS LEARNED

The case studies showcase how hotels of different categories are implementing Green Hospitality practices with varying degrees of success. Common themes emerged:

Benefits

- Reduced energy and water consumption, along with waste minimization, resulted in significant cost savings for the hotels.
- Promotes positive associations with the business and draws in environmentally aware visitors.

Challenges

- The initial investment required for implementing certain Green Hospitality practices was identified as a barrier, particularly for budget hotels.
- Lack of awareness and training among staff regarding Green Hospitality practices was another challenge highlighted in some cases.

Lessons Learned

- **Tailoring Practices:** Successful implementation involves customizing Green Hospitality initiatives to the specific context and resources of each hotel.
- **Guest Engagement:** Actively engaging guests through composting bins, educational activities, or showcasing local sustainability efforts can enhance their experience and foster a sense of shared responsibility.

4) THE "NEW NORMAL" AND GREEN HOSPITALITY'S FUTURE

- **Secondary Data Analysis:** Green Hospitality practices provide an emphasis on visitor well-being and resource conservation, and according to industry sources, the COVID-19 epidemic has hastened the implementation of contactless technology and hygiene regulations within the hospitality sector.
- **Technological Advancements:** As smart building technology and renewable energy solutions advance, Green Hospitality may become more accessible and affordable for hotels in India.

6. ANALYSIS

The "New Normal" presents both challenges and opportunities for Green Hospitality in India. The increased focus on hygiene and sanitation aligns well with some Green Hospitality practices. However, overcoming challenges related to initial investment costs, staff training, and wider industry adoption will be crucial for its success.

1) FOSTERING GREEN HOSPITALITY: A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

- **Government:** Implementing policies that incentivize Green Hospitality practices, such as tax breaks, grants, or low-interest loans for hotels, particularly for budget categories.
- **Industry Associations:** Providing educational workshops, sharing best practices, and facilitating knowledge exchange among hotels.
- **Travel Booking Platforms:** Highlighting hotels with strong Green Hospitality credentials through certifications or badges, making it easier for eco-conscious tourists to find sustainable travel options.

Therefore, Collaboration among stakeholders is crucial for creating an ecosystem that supports the widespread adoption of Green Hospitality within the Indian hospitality industry. By working together, they can create a supportive environment for hotels to implement Green Hospitality practices, ultimately contributing to a more sustainable future for Indian tourism. Hence, the research findings paint a promising picture for Green Hospitality as a path towards a sustainable hospitality industry in India. Embracing Green Hospitality practices offers hotels economic benefits, aligns well with the evolving needs of tourists in the "New Normal," and contributes to environmental protection. Overcoming implementation challenges through targeted support, technological advancements, and stakeholder collaboration will be key to unlocking the full potential of Green Hospitality in India. By standardizing on Green Hospitality practices, the

Indian hospitality sector will undergo a sea change, benefiting both the planet and the prospects for ecotourism in the years to come.

7. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The research findings presented a compelling case for Green Hospitality as a key driver of a sustainable hospitality industry in India, particularly within the context of the "New Normal." Here, we delve deeper into the discussion and propose recommendations for stakeholders to capitalize on this potential.

7.1. DISCUSSION

- 1) **Green Hospitality - A Win-Win Proposition:** The research highlights the dual benefits of Green Hospitality. Hotels can achieve cost savings through reduced resource consumption and attract a growing segment of eco-conscious tourists. This win-win scenario presents a strong incentive for wider adoption across the Indian hospitality industry.
- 2) **Challenges and Opportunities in the "New Normal":** The "New Normal" presents both challenges and opportunities. While initial investment costs and staff training remain hurdles, the increased focus on hygiene and guest well-being aligns well with Green Hospitality practices. Capitalizing on these synergies will be crucial for promoting Green Hospitality in the post-pandemic era.
- 3) **Technological Innovation as a Game Changer:** Recent developments in smart building technology and renewable energy sources provide hope for lowering the barrier to entry for Green Hospitality in India's hotel industry. Green Hospitality adoption may be sped up considerably by promoting investment and information exchange in these areas.

7.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR HOTELIERS

- **Conduct a Green Hospitality Audit:** Identify areas for improvement and prioritize cost-effective Green Hospitality practices that fit the hotel's specific context and budget.
- **Invest in Staff Training:** Educate staff on the benefits and implementation of Green Hospitality practices to ensure their active participation and guest awareness.
- **Leverage Technology:** Explore cost-effective smart technologies for energy and water management, and consider renewable energy solutions for long-term sustainability.
- **Effectively Communicate Green Initiatives:** Highlight Green Hospitality practices through hotel websites, booking platforms, and guest communication channels to attract eco-conscious tourists and showcase their commitment to sustainability.

7.3. FOR GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

- **Develop Targeted Support Programs:** Offer financial incentives, knowledge-sharing workshops, and technical assistance, with a specific focus on budget hotels, to overcome initial investment barriers and facilitate Green Hospitality adoption.
- **Promote Green Certifications and Standards:** Establish clear and recognized Green Hospitality certifications for Indian hotels, providing a benchmark for tourists and encouraging continuous improvement in sustainability practices.
- **Facilitate Collaboration within the Industry:** Establish forums to facilitate the sharing of information and exchange of best practices among hotels of varying classifications, promoting a cooperative approach to implementing environmentally sustainable practices in the hospitality industry.

7.4. FOR TRAVEL BOOKING PLATFORMS

- **Implement Green Hotel Search Filters:** Develop search filters on travel booking platforms that allow tourists to easily identify hotels with strong Green Hospitality credentials.
- **Promote Sustainable Travel Options:** Highlight hotels with Green Hospitality initiatives in marketing campaigns and promotional materials to cater to the growing demand for eco-friendly travel experiences.
- **Collaborate with Sustainable Hotels:** Offer preferential placement or marketing benefits to hotels that demonstrate a commitment to Green Hospitality practices.

By adopting Green Hospitality practices, the Indian hospitality industry can secure a more sustainable future. Collaboration among stakeholders, combined with technological advancements and targeted support programs, will be instrumental in overcoming challenges and unlocking the full potential of Green Hospitality. With the widespread adoption of Green Hospitality practices, hotels, the environment, and eco-conscious travellers will all reap the benefits, leading to a brighter future for India's tourism industry.

8. CONCLUSION

The research on Green Hospitality in India's "New Normal" paints a compelling picture of a transformative force shaping the future of the hospitality industry. Green Hospitality practices offer a win-win proposition – environmental responsibility coupled with operational cost savings and the ability to attract a thriving segment of eco-conscious tourists. While challenges remain, particularly regarding initial investment and staff training, the "New Normal" presents a unique window of opportunity. The heightened focus on hygiene and guest well-being aligns perfectly with core Green Hospitality practices like enhanced cleaning protocols and resource conservation.

Unleashing the full potential of Green Hospitality hinges on a collaborative approach. Hoteliers could take a proactive role by performing Green Hospitality audits, making investments in staff training, using cost-effective technology, and successfully publicizing their sustainability initiatives. Government and industry groups may have a significant impact by offering specific assistance programs that concentrate on budget hotels, creating well-defined Green Hospitality certificates, and promoting the sharing of information within the sector. **Travel booking platforms** hold significant power by implementing search filters for Green Hotels, promoting sustainable travel options, and partnering with hotels demonstrating a strong commitment to Green Hospitality.

Embracing Green Hospitality offers the Indian hospitality industry a roadmap to a more sustainable future. By actively implementing these practices, hotels can contribute to environmental protection, enhance guest experiences, and ensure their long-term success. As Green Hospitality becomes the norm, it will transform the industry, leaving a lasting positive impact. The environment will benefit from reduced resource consumption and waste generation. Tourists will enjoy a wider range of sustainable travel options, fostering a sense of environmental responsibility. Ultimately, Green Hospitality holds the potential to reshape the Indian tourism landscape, ensuring its continued growth and prosperity in a way that is environmentally conscious and future-proof. This transformation will not only benefit the industry and the environment but also empower tourists to be active participants in creating a more sustainable travel future for India.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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