Implications of Green Practices in the Hotel Industry: A Study in Jaffna District

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Abstract - This study aims at implication of green practices in current hotel industry in the Jaffna district and perception of industries regarding green practices in hotel management in Jaffna. It is well known that the environment is an important resource for the hotel industry, and so the acquisition and application of new technologies that contribute to environmental protection. In some sectors of the hotel industry green aspect has been a priority for hoteliers and as well as customers of accommodation structures. Researchers led a qualitative approach by running in-depth interview method by using open ended questions with the manager of Tilko hotel and Green grass hotel in Jaffna. The results showed that the main reason why hotels become green is because of the pressure the stakeholders and rules and regulations of Government. More over this research identifies what are the green practices that are taken by the hotel Tilko and Green grass in Jaffna, and what are the practices have to be taken in Jaffna. The main steps hotels followed to achieve this objective is not easy; hotels have to spend big cost associated to become green. At the end of the study, some suggestions will be given to hoteliers as well as some suggestion for future researchers.

Keywords - energy usage, green hotel, water usage, waste management

I. INTRODUCTION

World is focusing its attention on corporate environmental responsibility than ever before. Expanding economic activities has been accompanied by growing concerns about global warming, climate change, energy security and scarcity of natural resources. While hotel industries are showing greater interest in environmentally doing their activities and are undertaking a number of corporate social responsibility initiatives, a quantum leap in improving environmental performance cannot be observed, due to the incompatibilities between expected business performance & initial investments needed in achieving such a goal. These incompatibilities may serve as obstacles for corporations' response to ecologically sustainable business practices.

Green practices are those things that organizations can do to minimize their carbon footprint and the negative impact that their organization has on the environment. Some of the practices that are often recognized by the public as green or environmentally responsible are: saving water, saving energy, and reducing solid waste [1]. Often these practices go unnoticed by the public as they are behind the scenes types of things. What distinguishes a no green restaurant from a green restaurant focuses on 3 R's- reduce, reuse, and recycle and two E's- energy and efficiency [2].

Eco-hotels or green hotels represent a term used to describe a hotel or other form of accommodation that has adapted to the variations of the environment and has undertaken a series of fundamental changes that are meant to minimize the impact over the environment.

A green hotel is a form of accommodation that works with little impact on the environment, observing the rules of the so-called "green living". These hotels must have a certification issued by the national organizations in charge or by those responsible with the environmental protection. It is encouraging that more and more accommodation structures adopts such a direction, so that prospective visitors can choose exactly those structures that meet their requirements.

II. RESEARCH GAP

A variety of researches related to green hotel aspects are there, but lack of studies in Jaffna district regarding green hotel aspects. Still, in a deep manner researchers have neglected some topics like; what are the practices they are following as green practices, how extend Jaffna hoteliers are following these green aspects and customers expectation regarding green aspects in Jaffna hotels.

III. RESEARCH PROBLEM

In Sri Lanka there is little improvement in hotel industry in Jaffna district in post war. Even though, Jaffna hoteliers need to improve green practices

in their hotel practices. We have to enhance the environmental performance of Jaffna hotels and to increase their market acceptance by promoting them as green hotels by improving energy, water and waste management systems and reducing operation costs. Now a day hoteliers need to improve their activities based on going green, otherwise they couldn't achieve their goals in the business world.

In Jaffna the hospitality sector ranks as one of the most energy intensive and has a high-energy cost. Similarly, the use of water and other natural resources, and the generation of waste, are all high. While becoming resource-efficient, meeting the diverse requirements of customers is a challenging task. Through an increasing awareness about the global environmental crisis, it has become essential for the Jaffna hotel sector to implement appropriate energy, water and waste management systems, and to adopt environmental best practices.

The hoteliers have some gaps in doing green practices in Jaffna district, it is a need to find out or explore that what green practices are being followed by the hoteliers in Jaffna in current situations and what green practices have to be followed in future by the hoteliers.

IV. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

According to the concern discussed in the introduction, the aim of this research is to look at the way on the green practices that are adopted in the hotel industry currently in Jaffna to identify what practices are to be recognized and followed, to explore how these practices are being taken by the hoteliers and what green practices are expected on consumer point of view and also how they are utilized it also in the Jaffna District.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

Christmann (2000)[3] emphasizes that before deciding on environmental strategies, firms need to examine their existing resource base and capabilities. Firms should select environmental practices that fit with their existing resources and capabilities. Because complementary assets are created in a firm's business strategy, the starting point for the formulation of an environmental strategy has to be a business strategy and the resources and capabilities it creates. Firms that lack capabilities for process innovation and implementation may be better off implementing environmental strategies later than other firms, so that they can learn from early implementers and imitate successful environmental practices.

Excessive energy use is extremely costly and with minor adjustments, it can lead to massive cost savings. "The average energy consumption per bed per night in hotels might be in the order of 130 Mega joules. Hotels generally use more energy per visitor than local residents, as they have energy intense facilities, such as bars, restaurants, and pools, and have more spacious rooms". Studies have determined that a hotel emits an average 20.6 kg of carbon dioxide per night [4].

Today, we are living in a society where firms are judged on their business ethics, social accountability and socio-economic awareness as well as financial outcomes. As public understanding grows about global warming and climate change, the public, including stakeholders, employees and customers, expect hotels to act on their understanding.

However, hotels that conserve and preserve by saving water, reducing energy use, and reducing solid waste are defined as **"green hotels"** [5]. Alexander describes this term as hotels that strive to be more environmentally friendly through the efficient use of energy, water and materials while providing quality services. We believe that this definition includes a big range of hotels that can be defined as "green", so for this reason, we consider in this study the hotels that are trying in some sense to respect the environment. From this research we only exclude hotels that do not attempt to develop environmental practices.

Alexander (2002) [5] found some benefits related to these practices, like reducing costs and liabilities, high return and low-risk investments, increased profits and positive cash flows.

One example that illustrates the kind of practices we can find in a green hotel is the Sheraton Auckland hotel and Towers, which realized that the daily washing of sheets, towels, flannels, table cloths and other linens accounted for 35% of the energy consumed in the laundry process, while drying consumed 65%. The hotel simply changed the temperature of the wash from 85 degrees Celsius to 65 degrees Celsius. This change saved $2,000 in energy costs in the three first months [5].

VI. METHODOLOGY

As this research focuses around the concept of green hotels in Jaffna, Methodology of this research is qualitative exploratory research. Qualitative research is empirical research where the data are not in the form of numbers [6]. The lack of research studies and very few qualitative experiential studies of green with regards to hotel industry in Jaffna led to take the study of green hotels in Jaffna. Two interviews were carried out in order to gain an understanding of the green practices initiatives of the hotel in Jaffna. The interviews were structured and unstructured in nature. Prior to conducting the visits, the hotel's official web site was explored. Also, other web sites and documents relevant to the subject area were referred to, which enabled an understanding on green practices and benchmark standards.

In addition to interviews, the researchers also visited the hotel's power plants, water treatment plants, solar power panels, the bio mass boiler, the garden, guest rooms, stores, laundry, etc. Observations made were matched with the descriptions and explanations given in interviews.

Population and Sampling

Polit and Hungler (1999)[7] refer to the population as an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications. The target population for this research was the all hotels in Jaffna. The process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population is known as sampling [7];[8]. Qualitative sample size may best be determined by the time allocated, resources available and study objective[9]

Qualitative research uses a purposive sampling method which a researcher purposefully focuses on particular subset of a population. Purposive sampling involves selection of informants based on an important characteristic under study, such as where they live, position in society or specific cultural knowledge. Only two hotels in Jaffna were chosen as purposive sampling for this study.

Instrument

Qualitative researchers usually employ "semi structured" interviews which involve a number of open ended questions based on the topic areas that the researcher wants to cover. The open ended nature of the questions posed defines the topic under investigation. Based on research objectives the interview questions are formulated by the researchers and in-depth interviews were conducted by researchers.

Data Collection

Data collection in qualitative descriptive studies is typically directed toward discovering who, what, and where of events or experiences, or their basic nature and shape. Data collection techniques usually include minimally to moderately structuring open-ended individual and/or focus group interviews. Focus groups can usefully be viewed as the qualitative counterpart to the quantitative survey, in that they are typically used in qualitative research to obtain a broad range of information about events. Data collection techniques may also include observations of targeted events.

Data collected through the individual in-depth interviews with manager of the particular two hotels in this research. According to Patton (1990) [9] there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. In-depth information from a small number of people can be very valuable, especially if the cases are information-rich. An appropriate sample size for qualitative study is one that adequately answers the research questions [10]. The sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from new sampled units; thus redundancy is the primary criterion [9]. The interviews conducted

were more than 45 minutes with a person. Through the interview the researchers collected information that they needed, and the research objectives could be achieved.

Validity and Reliability

Validity in research is concerned with the accuracy and truthfulness of scientific findings [11]. A valid study should demonstrate what actually exists and a valid instrument or measure should actually measure what it is supposed to measure. There are many types of validity and many names have been used to define the different types of validity. Campbell and Stanley (1966) have defined two major forms of validity that encompass many types.

- Internal validity is the term used to refer to the extent to which research findings are a true reflection or representation of reality rather than being the effects of extraneous variables.

- External validity addresses the degree or extent to which such representations or reflections of reality are legitimately applicable across groups.

Reliability is concerned with the consistency, stability and repeatability of the informant's accounts as well as the investigators' ability to collect and record information accurately [12].

The researchers made first coding line-by-line analysis based on recording of interview then identified important concepts from transcribed interview answers, then the researchers done second coding and assembled them into same concepts, finally the researchers have formulated the proper concepts. According the concepts the final conclusion was made by the researchers.

Data Analysis

In-depth interviews were digitally recorded, translated, transcribed and finally coding was done by researchers.

Open coding –in vivo codes (actual languages were used by the respondents)

First order categories (underlying similarities between them)

Axial coding schemes searched for relationships between and among the first-order categories, and assembled them into second-order themes [13].

Second-order themes were used to understand the emergent framework [14].Based on the results from this study, hoteliers are having positive perception of the green hotels. This research discussed some main greening methods that included water conservation, energy conservation and waste reduction and so on. In addition, hoteliers should adopt green practices as an organizational culture and find ways to promote their practices as a competitive advantage.

The main practices are about different areas: recycling, energy savings, water saving, healthy food providing and local market preferences [15].

> *"Yes, we are practicing some sort of environmental friendly activities. We are adopting these activities step by step. Currently we are using solar power system in our hotel, even though it's not adequate for all purposes and systems. Costs are too much for us to provide the solar facilities for the entire department"*

According to the hotel manager's statement, energy efficiency structures are really costly, especially when it comes to the heating and cooling systems. Fortunately at present, there are many ways of preserving energy. Such as energy efficient bulbs, electronic devices like; key card system to power on and off, and automatic smoke alarm and solar usage for certain needs. Having this in sight, a great attention must be paid from the very beginning to the design of these structures. Worldwide hotels are much and much aware of the opportunities offered by the use of the energetic efficient system [16].

> *"We have more concern on power wastage management. We don't need staff monitors for check the electricity wage or wastage levels. Currently we are providing automatic key card system for all our rooms' customers; it helps to control power wastage level. Because, it will keep lights off in the rooms whenever guests are not present."*

The Jaffna hotels are engaging their employees in

supporting the more towards going green. There is a new concept called as "green employees." According to this concept, Jaffna hotels are following green aspects into their employees' relationship.

"We've happy employees ever, because of our attractive salary scale systems and good relationship practices. We are providing enough training to our staff in addition with safety working environment. One of the most important things is staff's guide book. It will help to guide our staffs very well, they are following this guidance very well and staffs are our key resource."

According to the above statement of the hoteliers, researchers can have a conclusion that in Jaffna hoteliers are having considerable employees' maintenance as green. Employees play an important role in implementing the green practices. For example: in the case of recycling of waste. Hoteliers agree on the importance of the employee's involvement and their commitment.

Based on the hoteliers' statement, there is more and more concern on plantation. But still there is no enough space for big scale of plantation. Even though, they are having better rules for plantation maintenance. Employees have more responsibility for gardening. It leads to cool environmental situation outside of the hotel buildings. As part of this matter, there is another important thing like "green building" concept adopted by them.

"We are having strict rules for developing plantation in hotel as our boss preference. Employees in hotel who cut trees will be terminated and construct the building around the trees without destroying trees"

Researchers have found another important thing from hoteliers' in depth interview; not only the strict rules from hotel managers, but also from tourism development authority board, government, UC are recommending some basic requirements to maintain environmental friendly activities.

"Tourism development authority

recommended that all hotels should have some basic requirements to get license or renew license such as; waste water purification plant, proper wastage disposal system and preventing environmental pollution and so on…"

Moreover, Jaffna hoteliers have accountable ways to keep green environment in to their day to day activities and also into their future plans.

VII. Conclusion

The outcome of this study shows some limitations of this study that research is based only on the interview of hotel managers. Therefore, the fact from this study might be a little bit biased by the manager's particular view points towards the perceptions of greening in hotel. It is possible that there may be gaps in information that can be filled in by asking questions from the employees of the hotel, customers of the hotels and general public, because the answers by them might be different. Therefore, one possible future study would include the employees, customers and general public.

Another limitation is that this research considers only the greening in hotels in Jaffna district. The research result states that the potential researchers should consider other industries in Jaffna district while evaluating the green concept.

One more limitation is that the sample is limited. The research has been done only in two hotels in Jaffna district, because there are some more guest houses in Jaffna district. But according to the conditions regarding hotels, there is only two hotels in Jaffna district. It can be done in other parts of the country.

In the modern world, green concept has been concerned all over the world as well as in Sri Lanka. In that way, all the hotels which are in Jaffna district are doing some sort of greening activities such as water purification plant implementation, solar and technology usage for reducing electricity, recycling wastage, sound management system and also proper disposal of wastages.

The purpose of adopting these greening aspects into

their hotel activities is not only the requirements of tourism development authority but also getting benefits from greening. However, fully greening is impossible due to lack of technology and proper environmental situations. When a hotelier with few resources wants to become green, first of all to define specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time sensitive goals [17].

The main barrier that difficult the greening process is the cost and time. Most important factor that makes difficult to implement is the cost associated to the introduction of new machines, organic food, ecological products, fully solar project, etc.

VIII. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION

Researchers explore the following implication that can help for hoteliers for becoming more greener. There is positive opinion about green practices for hotel, but the levels of experiences with these practices are in lower level. Hotel managers need to take a closer look at guest opinions on green practices and can get more benefits through the customers' perception regarding green aspects [18]. And also another recommendation is that the hotels can play a role in educating public about water issues, and green or environmental friendly activities to get better benefits for their good and healthy survival for encouraging society people [19]. Another implication of the study is that the University and educational institutions want to introduce a course or unit or subject in relation to green practices in hotel industry. It will help to create the understanding about greening importance and gaps in real practices as well as sustainability of hotel industry._Taking steps toward sustainability doesn't just save natural resources; it also boosts a hotel's bottom line [20].

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Q1: Can you ensure whether Hotels in Jaffna try to adopt green practices in their activities and to what extent these practices would fulfill your greening activities?

1ˢᵗ coding	2ⁿᵈ coding	Concept
1. Step by step 2. UC rules 3. Every month collection 4. Gardening 5. Can't cut the trees 6. Staffs handout book 7. Customer can pre check 8. Employee relationship 9. Proper communication 10. Employees financial benefits 11. Solar usage for boiling 12. Green concept theory 13. Solar benefits 14. Five S system 15. Connection between global and greening 16. Standard 17. Different services 18. Tourism board 19. License 20. Jaffna water purification system 21. Swimming pool water sanitation system 22. Swimming pool length 23. Leading hotel in Jaffna 24. Yes, we're doing 25. Water waste 26. Water filtering 27. Garbage bin 28. Separate bins 29. Water bottle recycle 30. Organic fertilizer production 31. Maintenance of 5 S system 32. Employee training 33. Solar light 34. Electricity cost reduction 35. Government license 36. Future planning proposal 37. Rules and regulations 38. Sri Lankan tourist authority 39. No smoking 40. Smoke Alarms usage 41. Having special smoking rooms 42. Automatic switching off of lights 43. No power wastage 44. Maintenance 45. Knowledge about hotel management 46. Government rules 47. Customers having knowledge about greening 48. Web page 49. Guest requests	1. Starting from basic 2. Government intervention 3. Garbage disposal 4. Not cut down trees 5. Employee well being 6. Electricity cost reduction 7. Customer's concern 8. Clean water 9. Smoke control system 10. High standard	1. Adopting stage 2. Proper garbage disposal 3. Growing concept

Q2: How do you manage your daily activities without affecting the environment?

1st coding	2nd coding	Concept
1. Facilities	1. Giving better facilities	1. Getting advantages by greening
2. Tree cutting	2. Plantation development	
3. Recycle	3. Safety disposal	2. Environmental friendly activities
4. No wastage	4. Recycle	
5. Card system	5. Preference for local	3. Satisfy all
6. Solar usage for hot water	6. Activities without affecting environment	
7. Wastage verification	7. Reducing electricity wastage	
8. Certain time sound		
9. Smoke		
10. Recycling system		
11. Plantation		
12. Managing director likes		
13. Building around the trees		
14. Relaxation under the trees		
15. Jaffna local market		
16. Sri Lankan sea food		
17. Hiring local employees		
18. Cleaning		
19. No sound		
20. Hot water system		
21. Indoor plantation at the restaurant		
22. Country development		
23. Central environment authority		
24. Washing		
25. Vacuum cleaner		
26. Minimum polythene usage		
27. Supervisor		
28. Room key card		
29. Controlling system		
30. Expose fan		

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93

Q3: Are there any barriers while you are trying to implement green practices?

1st coding	2nd coding	Concept
1. Capacity	1. Lake of technology	1. More obstacles for greening
2. Railway station	2. Tough to adopt green fully now	
3. Still manual methods		2. Environmental affect by hotels
4. No finger print method	3. Affecting environment	
5. No indoor plantations	4. Not proper system for greening	
6. Hygienic food		
7. Fully green is impossible		
8. Not enough		
9. In north there is no 100% greening		
10. No proper drainage		
11. Kitchen heat		
12. Environmental affects		
13. Not enough space		
14. Distance		
15. Origin from Jaffna		
16. Basic starting		
17. Tourist earning		
18. 50,000 L water wastage per day		
19. Lack of technology		
20. Following next time		
21. Hotels registration		
22. We can, but it's too cost		
23. Limited solar usage		
24. Maintain standard		