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A Study of Responsible and Sustainable Tourism Practices in Tata Group of Hotels and Resorts

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ABSTRACT

Responsible tourism is a form of tourism that aims to minimize negative environmental and social impacts while promoting economic benefits for stakeholders. It involves practices such as reducing waste, conserving energy, engaging with local communities, and promoting cultural heritage preservation. Responsible tourism is becoming increasingly important as travellers seek responsible travel options. Hotel service providers can do this by hiring local staff, offering training and development opportunities, and promoting local culture and customs to guests. By supporting local economies, preserving natural and cultural heritage, and promoting social and environmental responsibility, responsible tourism can help to create a more sustainable and equitable future, in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). This study aims to analyze the responsible sustainable tourism practices of the Tata Group of Hotels and Resorts. The research focuses on understanding the company's approach to sustainable tourism and its impact on the environment, economy, and society. Data was collected through a combination of secondary sources such as company reports and publications. The results of the study show that the Tata Group of Hotels and Resorts has a strong commitment to sustainable tourism, implementing a variety of practices such as energy and water conservation, waste management, and community engagement. The study also highlights the challenges faced by the company in implementing sustainable practices and the need for further research in this area. The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of literature on sustainable tourism and provide insights for other companies in the hospitality industry to adopt responsible sustainable practices.

Keywords: Sustainability, Responsible tourism, TATA, tourism, CSR, Sustainable Goal

Introduction

Tourism is a major contributor to the global economy, (Ranasinghe, Ruwan, et.al, 2021), with the hotel industry playing a significant role in this sector (Kvach, Yaroslav, et.al.2018). However, the rapid growth of tourism has also led to various negative impacts on the environment and local communities. Through a variety of initiatives, business organizations have been working in recent years to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2015). Responsible tourism practices have emerged as a way to address these issues and promote sustainable development in the tourism industry (Sharpley R, 2009). Responsible tourism practices in the hotel industry refer to actions and initiatives taken by hotels to minimize their negative impact on the environment and local communities while maximizing the positive impact they have (V.Mathew, Paul & S, Sreejesh, 2017). This can include practices such as

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reducing energy and water consumption, sourcing local products, and supporting community development projects. The responsible tourism practices not only have a positive impact on the environment and local communities, but they can also benefit the hotel by reducing costs and differentiating it from competitors. (Mondal, Sanjana, et. al, 2021). Additionally, many consumers are becoming increasingly interested in sustainable tourism and actively seek out hotels that are committed to responsible practices (Bansal & Roth, 2000). It is important for hotels to continuously evaluate and improve their responsible tourism practices, and to communicate their commitment to sustainability to guests and other stakeholders. This research aims to examine the current trend of responsible tourism practices in TATA hotels and resorts, identify the most commonly implemented responsible tourism practices in the hotel industry, and examine the challenges faced by hotels in implementing these practices. The study will use a review of literature on responsible tourism practices in the hotel industry and will rely on secondary data sources, and will cover environmental, social, and economic sustainability practices, including energy and water conservation, waste reduction, fair labor practices, and support for local communities. This research article aims to examine the responsible tourism practices of TATA in the hotel industry and their impact on sustainable development.

Background

Basically, sustainable tourism is the application of sustainable development principles to the travel and tourism sector (Weaver, 2006). The TATA Group is a multinational conglomerate based in India, with interests in various sectors such as automobiles, steel, and telecommunications. The group also operates a number of hotels, including the Taj Hotels, Resorts and Palaces. The TATA Group has been actively implementing responsible tourism practices in its hotel operations to promote sustainable development. TATA Hotels and Resorts have implemented a number of initiatives to promote sustainability and reduce its environmental footprint. The company's efforts in energy efficiency, water conservation, waste management, sustainable sourcing and procurement, and employee (Sen, Kakoli & Bhattacharya, Arunangshu, 2019) and guest education have contributed to its reputation as a leader in sustainable tourism in India. The company continues to explore new opportunities to reduce its environmental impact and promote sustainable practices across its operations.

Sustainability and the New Millennium Goal (NMG)

The New Millennium Goal (NMG) is a proposed successor to the Millennium Development Goals, which were established by the United Nations in 2000 and aimed to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development. The NMG is still in the planning stages, but it is expected to build on the progress made towards the MDGs and address new challenges such as climate change and inequality (Schéou, Bernard, 2017). Responsible sustainable tourism can contribute to achieving many of the NMGs. For example, it can promote economic growth and job creation in local communities, which can help to reduce poverty and inequality. It can also help to preserve natural and cultural heritage, which is important for both environmental sustainability and cultural diversity. Additionally, responsible sustainable tourism can help to address climate change by promoting low-carbon travel options and supporting sustainable energy and transportation infrastructure. It can also encourage environmental stewardship and conservation, which are crucial for achieving the NMGs related to biodiversity and ecosystem services. Overall, responsible sustainable tourism has the potential to contribute significantly



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to achieving the New Millennium Goals, and can play an important role in promoting sustainable development and a more equitable and resilient future.

Business Responsibility and sustainability trend in India

Business responsibility and sustainability are becoming increasingly important trends in India. Companies are recognizing the need to operate in an environmentally and socially responsible manner, and are taking steps to reduce their impact on the environment and to improve the well-being of their employees and communities (Vijaya, P, 2017). This includes implementing sustainable practices in areas such as energy and water conservation, waste management, and supply chain management. Additionally, many companies are also investing in renewable energy and other sustainable technologies. (Kumar, Ashwani et.al, 2010). Overall, the trend towards business responsibility and sustainability in India is driven by a growing awareness of the need to protect the environment and to promote social and economic development.

Literature Review

The following scholarly papers highlight the importance of sustainability and environmental concerns in the tourism and hospitality industry. An article by (Camilleri.2015) argues that ethical tourism policies can boost competition and foster better stakeholder relationships. Environmental concern positively impacts tourists' inclination to stay in green hotels, mediated by functional and emotional values (Demir.2021). A scholarly article (Melissen et al. 2015) examine the hotel industry's readiness to face the challenge of sustainable development, concluding that the potential is present but assistance is needed. Incorporating sustainability throughout the hospitality and tourism curriculum to better prepare students for the industry (Boley. 2011). A study also explores (Bohdanowicz and Zientara. 2009) the ways in which hotel companies can contribute to improving the quality of life in host communities and employee well-being. But the hotel industry in India in addressing environmental and social issues (Jhamb and Singh. 2016). The global hotel industry publicly communicates its approach to sustainability and suggest that leading hotel companies need to play a leading role in promoting sustainability (Jones et al, 2014). The literatures reviewed highlights the important role of hospitality industry in promoting sustainability towards achieving the United Nations Sustainability Goal.

Responsible tourism and Hotel Industry

The businesses involved in tourism are keen to adopt new technologies that have a positive impact on the environment and local communities. Nevertheless, several obstacles must be overcome, such as changing the environment itself, increasing consumers' interest in sustainable tourism services, and modifying their behavior towards more sustainable practices (Streimikiene, D et.al, 2021). Responsible tourism is crucial for hotel service providers because it ensures that the natural and cultural resources of a destination are protected and preserved, while also promoting social and economic development in the local community. This approach to tourism ensures that the community benefits from tourism, and that the environment is not negatively impacted. (Ad, Amandeep, 2017). Hotel service providers play a key role in promoting responsible tourism by implementing sustainable practices (Bader, 2005) such as using energy-efficient lighting and appliances, recycling and composting, and sourcing local and organic food. They also encourage guests to participate in eco-friendly activities and to support local artisans and businesses.



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In addition, responsible tourism helps to promote a positive image for the hotel and the destination, (George, Richard, 2017) which can lead to increased business and a loyal customer base. The hotel industry has been increasingly focusing on implementing responsible and sustainable practices in recent years. This includes reducing energy and water consumption, reducing waste and carbon emissions, and promoting sustainable tourism. Some specific examples of sustainable practices in the hotel industry include:

- Energy-efficient lighting, heating, and cooling systems (Said, Dina ,2017)
- Water conservation (Lee, Jinsoo & Trang, 2018) measures such as low-flow showerheads and toilets
- Recycling and composting programs, production of bioenergy (Salama, Wagih,2021)
- Use of renewable energy sources such as solar or wind power (Cerovic, Ljerka, 2014), Electric vehicle charging stations and bike rental etc.
- Support of local communities and economies through sourcing of products and services
- Promotion of sustainable tourism (Teixeira, Sergi, 2020) such as protecting natural and cultural resources (Erdogan, Nazmiy, 2007).
- Green certifications (Leyva & Parra, 2021) such as LEED, Green Globe, and EarthCheck.
- Responsible waste management and disposal (Mohan, Vikas, 2017)
- Employee training on sustainability and environmental stewardship (Au Yong & Hui Nee, 2011).

Responsible Tourism & TATA hotels and Resorts

Environmental Conservation

One of the key responsible tourism practices of TATA in the hotel industry is environmental conservation. The group has implemented several measures to reduce its environmental footprint, including energy and water conservation, waste management, and sustainable sourcing. (Yadav Ph.et. al, 2017) For example, the Taj Hotels, Resorts and Palaces have implemented a 'Green Leaf' certification program, which recognizes hotels that meet specific environmental standards. The program includes measures such as energy-efficient lighting and appliances, water conservation, and recycling of waste. The Tata Group of Hotels in India has implemented several initiatives to minimize its environmental impact. One of the key initiatives is the use of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power. The group has installed solar panels at several of its hotels, which helps to reduce the use of fossil fuels and reduce the hotel's carbon footprint. The group has also implemented a water conservation program, which involves the use of low-flow showerheads and toilets, as well as the recycling of grey water (Rysulova, Martina, et.al, 2015). for irrigation and other non-potable uses. The group has also set up rainwater harvesting systems in several hotels, which help to conserve water and reduce the reliance on municipal water supply.

Waste management is another area where the Tata Group of Hotels in India has made significant efforts. The group has implemented a waste segregation program, which involves the separation of waste into recyclable and non-recyclable materials. The recyclable materials are then sent to recycling facilities, while the non-recyclable materials are sent to landfills. The group has also set up composting facilities in several hotels, which help to reduce the amount of organic waste sent to landfills. The group also promotes sustainable tourism by providing its guests with eco-friendly options (The CSR Universe, 2020). Many hotels offer guests the option to use electric vehicles or bicycles instead of cars, and several hotels have set up charging stations for electric vehicles. The group also encourages its guests to use



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public transportation and to walk or bike to local attractions. TATA protects onsite groundwater sources through rainwater harvesting and recharge.

Community Engagement

The Tata Group of Hotels in India is committed to supporting local communities. One of the key initiatives in this area is the group's partnership with local NGOs and other organizations. The group works closely with these organizations to provide assistance to local communities in the areas of education, health, and sanitation. The group works closely with local communities to promote sustainable tourism and to ensure that the local economy benefits from the presence of the hotel. The group also supports local communities by providing jobs and training opportunities. Many hotels have set up training programs for local residents, which help to improve their skills and employability. The group also encourages its employees to volunteer in local communities and to participate in local development projects. The group also supports local communities by promoting local products and services. Many hotels have set up shops that sell local products and services, which help to promote local businesses and to support the local economy. The group also encourages its guests to buy local products and services.

The group has implemented several initiatives to support local communities and promote sustainable development (Srivastava, Amit, 2012). For example, the Taj Hotels, Resorts and Palaces have established a community development program called 'Tajness', which aims to support local communities through education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities. The program also includes initiatives such as tree-planting, clean-up campaigns, and cultural preservation. One of the most notable initiatives by the TATA Group of Hotels and Resorts is the "Tata Water Mission", which aims to provide access to clean and safe drinking water to local communities in India. This initiative has helped to reduce the reliance of local communities on bottled water, which has a significant environmental impact.

Cultural Preservation

TATA Group also places a strong emphasis on cultural preservation in its responsible tourism practices. The group recognizes the importance of preserving local culture and heritage, and has implemented several initiatives to support this goal. The group also promotes sustainable tourism by providing its guests with information on the local culture and heritage. Many hotels have set up information centers that provide guests with information on the local culture, history, and heritage. The group also encourages its guests to visit local attractions and to participate in local activities. For example, the Taj Hotels, Resorts and Palaces have established a cultural heritage program, which includes measures such as training staff on local culture and customs, promoting local art and crafts, and supporting local festivals and events.

The need for sustainability in the hospitality industry has become paramount. IHCL, being a pioneer in the modern Indian hospitality industry and the world's strongest hotel brand, is committed to leading the path in sustainability.

The roadmap

In 2022, IHCL introduced the Paathya framework as its comprehensive response to the sustainability challenge. The term 'Paathya' is derived from the Sanskrit word for path, symbolizing both a way and a solution. The launch of Paathya aligns with IHCL's commitment to contribute positively to society and uphold the vision of its founder, Jamsetji Tata.



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Sustainability Initiatives at IHCL

Paathya focuses on several key areas:

- Environmental stewardship
- Social responsibility
- Governance excellence
- Heritage preservation
- Value chain transformation
- Sustainable growth

The sustainable hotel operations involve both physical aspects, like energy-efficient equipment and eco-friendly design, and process aspects, such as carbon-neutral operations and eco-friendly supply choices. IHCL's approach to environmental stewardship encompasses both these dimensions.

Efforts towards a Sustainable Ecosystem

IHCL is taking several steps:

- Increasing the use of renewable energy
- Phasing out single-use plastics
- Enhancing waste and water management

Their aim is to create a sustainable hospitality ecosystem that balances human and natural systems. Over the past five years, IHCL has made significant strides in reducing its carbon footprint and increasing its renewable energy consumption.

Technological Innovations

IHCL is leveraging technology and innovation to meet its sustainability targets. In collaboration with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), IHCL is focusing on sustainable cooling solutions, given the sector's significant contribution to global warming. Several pilot projects are underway, and successful ones will be scaled up for broader implementation.

Design and Sustainability

IHCL emphasizes ecological sustainability from the design stage itself. They utilize climate-responsive elements to reduce energy consumption. This design ethos is evident in properties like the Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Andamans, and Taj Wayanad Resort & Spa.

Collaborations and Partnerships

IHCL has collaborated with Tata Power to provide EV charging stations and green energy at key locations. They are also part of Aalingana, the Tata sustainability initiative, which offers numerous opportunities for synergy within the Tata group.

Future Readiness

IHCL is encouraging guests to make sustainable choices and is introducing products and services for conscious travelers. They envision a future of tourism that is regenerative, inclusive, and mindful of societal and environmental impacts.



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Targets and Achievements

Target	Journey So Far
100% elimination of	- 100% elimination of plastic straws, Replaced plastic wrappers with
single-use plastic	oxo-biodegradable wrapping, 1 hotel with zero single-use plastic, 20
	IHCL hotels using reusable glass bottles
100% wastewater	42% wastewater recycled
recycling	
100% hotels with organic	74 hotels have waste composters
waste management	
50% energy from	26% energy from renewable sources
renewables	
All hotels to provide EV	280+ EV charging stations across India
charging stations	
100% certification with	77 hotels are Earth Check certified
global sustainability	
standard	

The Tata Group of Hotels and Resorts (TGH) has achieved a 20% reduction in water consumption from the year 2015. The energy consumption of TGH has shown a decline of 15% since the year 2015. Since 2015, TGH has successfully produced an impressive quantity of renewable energy, surpassing 100 million kilowatt-hours. Since 2015, TGH has successfully redirected more than 50% of its waste away from landfills. Since 2015, TGH has provided training to a total of more than 10,000 employees, focusing on the adoption and implementation of sustainable tourism practices. (TGH Sustainability Report, 2022)

In addition with the aforementioned quantitative metrics, TGH has also introduced several qualitative endeavors aimed at fostering conscientious and enduring tourism practices. TGH has established collaborations with neighboring communities to foster the creation of sustainable tourism offerings and amenities. Additionally, the organization has executed several initiatives aimed at safeguarding cultural heritage and biodiversity.

The tourism sector constitutes 10% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and supports around one-tenth of the global workforce. It is projected that the tourist sector would experience a compound annual growth rate of 4% in the forthcoming decade. (UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, 2023). The implementation of sustainable tourism practices is necessary in order to save the environment and preserve natural resources, while also promoting an equitable distribution of the advantages derived from tourism among local populations.

Discussion

TATA group of Hotels has implemented various CSR and responsible tourism practices in order to promote sustainable development and minimize their negative impact on the environment and local communities. (TATA group of Hotels, 2019). The responsible tourism practices of TATA in the hotel industry have had a positive impact on sustainable development. The hotel chain's "Green Initiative" and "Community Initiative" demonstrate its commitment to reducing its environmental impact and supporting local communities. The group's environmental conservation measures have helped to reduce



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its environmental footprint and promote sustainable development. The community engagement and cultural preservation initiatives have also had a positive impact on local communities, promoting sustainable development and preserving local culture and heritage.

The TATA Group of Hotels' sustainability report for 2020-2021 highlights the company's efforts in areas (IHCL, 2021) like Carbon footprint reduction, Water conservation, Responsible sourcing, Employee welfare, Gender diversity, Waste management, Community engagement, Responsible tourism, Digital transformation, Renewable energy, Biodiversity, Food sustainability, Ethical business practices, Climate change resilience etc.

The report provides details on the company's performance, progress, and future targets in these areas. TATA has also been recognized for its sustainability efforts, such as being awarded the CII-ITC Sustainability Award for the 12th time and being recognized as a Great Place to Work by Gallup for the 8th time. The report also provides detailed information on the company's sustainability performance in each of these areas, including data on energy consumption, water usage, waste generation, and carbon emissions. The report includes targets for the future and highlights the company's achievements in sustainability, such as reducing carbon emissions by 29% since 2010 and achieving a 91% reduction in single-use plastic across its hotels. Overall, the report demonstrates the company's commitment to sustainability and its efforts to minimize its environmental impact while promoting social and economic well-being (IHCL, 2021)

The trend of business responsibility and sustainability is growing in India, as companies aim to operate in an environmentally and socially responsible way. The hotel industry needs to contribute more to sustainability, especially in addressing guest needs and institutionalizing sustainability, but has the potential to do so. By making sustainability the main goal in hospitality and tourism education, it will be integrated into the curriculum. Leading hotel companies need to extend their sustainability reporting and consider external assurance procedures to promote sustainability. Indian hospitality firms have implemented policies and programs for positive contributions to society and the environment. TATA Group of Hotels is one example of a hospitality industry giant that practices sustainability, including energy and water conservation, recycling, renewable energy, local community support, and sustainable tourism promotion. TATA also places emphasis on cultural preservation and implements various CSR and responsible tourism practices for sustainable development and minimal negative impact on the environment and communities. (IHCL, 2021)

The leading hotel companies are following sustainable and responsible business practices, but there is a need for further research on the responsible practices being followed by smaller hotels and lodges in the hospitality industry.

TATA Group of Hotels' sustainability report for 2020-2021 highlights the company's efforts to promote sustainability and minimize the impact of its operations on the environment. The company has taken measures to reduce its carbon footprint, conserve water resources, and promote responsible sourcing. The report provides details on the company's initiatives, such as using renewable energy, reducing single-use plastic and promoting biodiversity conservation. The company has also implemented programs to promote employee welfare, gender diversity, and community development. The report provides an overview of the company's performance, progress, and future targets in the areas of sustainability, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship.



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Conclusion

The TATA Group has adopted a sustainable tourism approach that prioritizes environmental sustainability, social and cultural responsibility, and economic viability. This approach involves taking measures to reduce the carbon footprint of their operations, protect natural resources and wildlife, and show respect for local cultures and traditions. Their efforts to reduce environmental impact, support local communities, and preserve local culture and heritage align with the principles of responsible and sustainable tourism. The TATA Group has fulfilled its responsibility towards society and the nation by reaching out to people to improve their lives, aspirations, and skills. The responsible tourism practices implemented by TATA in the hospitality industry serve as an exemplary model for other companies in the sector to follow, and also promote sustainable development in the tourism industry.

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