

## ABSTRACT:

The hospitality sector presents a variety of environmental aspects that, depending on the activity, may have a significant impact on the environment. Its users are consuming resources such as energy and water on a daily basis and generating a great deal of solid waste and effluents. The hotel industry, banking sector and hospitals are examples of some of the sectors that provide us with more information on this issue. This work discusses the main environmental impacts generated by the hospitality sector and highlights the possible environmental strategies that can lead to improvements in environmental management in this particular activity.

## INTRODUCTION:

Most people are aware that there is a need for all of us to take care of the environment, if we are not to threaten the ability of the earth to support future generation. Some aspects of the environment are very obvious from our day to day lives, such as increasing traffic levels, together with the associated air pollution and loss of green belt. Environmental issues, particularly the relationship between our actions and the environmental impacts in terms of primary, secondary and tertiary effects. ( Kirk 1996).

Environmental impacts is a study of all the factors which a land development or construction project would have on the environment in the area, including population, traffic, schools, fire protection, endangered species, archaeological artefacts and community beauty. In another way possible adverse effect caused by a development, industrial, or infrastructural project or by the release of a substance in the environment. This also increases the need of sustainability development. It is a development that meets present needs without endangering the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is contrasted with other modes of development that lead to social and ecological damage, at both the local and global levels (Harris et al 2002). According to Jan Peter Bergkvist, Director of Environmental Sustainability, Scandic xix. "There are three prime reasons for putting effort into sustainability: first, it preserves our environment for future generations; second, it adds that extra dimension to guest satisfaction, which in turn makes us a more attractive company; and third, it saves costs and improves profitability."

## AIM:

The aim of the position paper is to critically analyse and discuss the environmental impacts and its effects on the hospitality industry. This position paper will also explain the various positive and negative effects of environmental impacts of the hospitality industry and the methods, strategies adopted to control them.

## MAIN BODY:

### TOURISM, HOSPITALITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT-

To say, an environmental impact is the negative aspect of human activity on the biophysical environment. Increasingly consumer attitudes are favouring environmentally responsible businesses. This has extended to travelling where consumers are considering environmental issues when making travel plans and purchases. A reflection of this is seen in the growth of ecotourism, which has grown by 30% worldwide in recent years compared to 8% for traditional tourism. The Conference Board of Canada's long term forecast shows that the accommodation industry will experience an annual growth of approximately 3% between now and 2015 (Eco efficiency centre). This arises sustainability development in the hospitality industry also. The concept of sustainable development has been expanded to cover seven key aspects. They are futurity, inter-generation equality, participation, the balancing of economic and environmental factors, environmental capacities, emphasis on quality as well as quantity and compatibility (David Kirk). Environmental pressures have affected a much wider range of industries. Initially the concern was related only to the industries which caused direct pollution of the environment. But now it has become a wider issue and relates not only to the outputs but also to the whole operation. The hospitality industry also becomes a core industry to be discussed in this issue of environmental factors, as it exposes many of the conflicts which arise in implementing environmental policies. Many hotels and restaurants are situated in the areas of outstanding natural beauty, in historic cities and in regions with a delicate ecological balance. So there might be a question whether this addition of new facilities will destroy the uniqueness or its habitat which is already suffering from too much of development and tourism. But the hospitality industry is linked with various other industry which cooperates together to bring in a successful business which is mainly focused on profit. The hospitality industry is also a major customer oriented industry. So we must also consider customers, many of whom seek as part of the hospitality experience to be pampered with lashing of hot water, high pressure showers, freshly laundered linen, an ample supply of towels, copious supplies of food and drink, the availability of swimming pools and saunas and the limousine to take them to the airport. Whatever we do to reduce the environmental impact of hotels can only be either with the consent of customers or taking the main consideration as customer satisfaction. Many hospitality organisations are situated on a location where that is suitable for the customer or according to the customer needs. And it is therefore not situated in a place where there will be minimal effects from traffic, cooking smells and the noise of the disco and other adverse outputs. This kind of local pollution is not considered to be a big issue, but it does affect people's attitudes towards the industry (David Kirk).

The hospitality industry does not cause gross environmental pollution nor it consume vast amounts of non-renewable resources and therefore it may not be in the front line

of environmental concern. The industry is made of relatively large number of small operations, each of which consumes relatively small amounts of energy, water, food, paper and other resources, and which add only a small amount of pollution to the environment in terms of smoke, smell, noise and chemical pollutants. The industry employs 10% of the population and can have a major impact in developing awareness and good practice (David Kirk). According to Goodno "the push of legislation and the pull of consumer pressure groups, compounded by the cost savings which can result from reducing waste, many companies are now taking environmental management seriously".

The main environmental impacts due to the hospitality industry are CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, CFC emissions, noise, smoke, smells, health of staff, waste energy, waste water, waste food, waste disposal, agricultural ecology, purchasing policies, transportation policies, sale of souvenirs made from endangered species, location of hotels in fragile locations. According to the Annual report of the world travel and tourism environmental review "there is a recognition that environmental issues will become much more prominent as a factor which influences consumers, regulators, pressure groups and destinations and that the tourism industry will need to show increasing concern for these issues. The WTTC have developed a strategy, known as the "GREEN GLOBE", in order to promote environmental management among hotel and travel environment. These vary from waste management to the development of eco-hotels and the classification of hotels on the basis of environmental impact (David Kirk).

## Environmental impacts of the hospitality industries-

### **Positive impacts**

- It sometimes educates the public about the local environment and the importance of protecting the environment, eg the Great Barrier Reef.
- The tourism and hospitality industries often create employment and business opportunities in an area, contributing to the local economy.
- Hospitality and tourism buildings and venues are being designed and/or redesigned so that their impact on the environment is reduced and they merge in with the local environment better.
- Many enterprises are now employing more sustainable practices in order to promote a green image that appeals to consumers, eg using organic products, recycling, using less toxic chemicals and using more energy and water efficient fittings.

### **Negative impacts**

- The presence of buildings and tourists may destroy the local environment and habitat of native animals.

- The hospitality industry contribute to waste issues, eg food scraps, oil and chemical disposal.
- Many hospitality venues are noisy.
- The hospitality and tourism industries consume a lot of energy and water, eg electricity for air conditioning, refrigeration ([www.hsc.csu.edu.au](http://www.hsc.csu.edu.au)).

The environmental impact is broadly classified as:

- AESTHETIC IMPACT
- CULTURAL IMPACT
- ECOLOGICAL IMPACT
- SOCIAL IMPACT
- POLITICAL IMPACT

Aesthetic impact means causing destructive image of a surrounding by various factors such as development etc. The image of a destination possesses importance from a practical marketing perspective for many reasons.

Often hospitality industry fails to integrate its structures with the natural features and indigenous architectural of the destination. Large, dominating resorts of different design can look out of place in any natural environment and may clash with the indigenous structural design. A lack of land-use planning and building regulations in many destinations has facilitated sprawling developments along coastlines, valleys and scenic routes. The sprawl includes tourism facilities themselves and supporting infrastructure such as roads, employee housing, parking, service areas, and waste disposal ([www.gdrc.org](http://www.gdrc.org)). Examples include lakes around Rotorua, New Zealand, that have suffered from blue-green algae and, on occasion, have been closed for recreational activities (Journal of sustainable tourism).