Chapter 12
Green Practices in Restaurants: The Case of Eastern India

Saurabh Gupta
Banaras Hindu University, India

ABSTRACT

The prime purpose of this study is to identify and delve into the factors driving the adoption of environment friendly practices by the restaurants in eastern region of the country. It provides an introductory knowledge to the planner and policy makers regarding the status of ecofriendly practices by the restaurant in eastern India. Six factors were extracted using the principle component analysis. These factors are Legal compliance, Normative Pressure, Cost optimization, Growing awareness, Philanthropic Motive, Good image. Though slowly, but steadily the consciousness regarding the adoption of environment practices is increasing in the restaurant industry. This study can aid and abet the concerned authorities to device a mechanism to turn the hospitality industry into a true musketeer of the environment, however, since the study area is confined to only a few selected cities of eastern India, the result may not hold true in general.

INTRODUCTION

Environmental issues have been the focus of discussion since the last few decades. People are becoming more concerned about the environmental issues and some have translated their environmental concern into pro-environmental behaviour such as recycling, energy saving, water conservation, and green purchase behaviour (Kim, 2002, Kim & Choi, 2003, 2005). It has implications for many industries one of which is hospitality. The hospitality and tourism industry is one of the largest and fastest-growing industries in the world (Sulaiman & Haron, 2011). The hospitality industry includes hotels, food services, hospitals, and airlines among its components (Line & Runyan, 2011). The restaurant industry is one of those industries which is one of the most important consumers of resources that is needed on daily basis as for instance, food materials, water, power and so on. As a continuously growing sector, the hospitality industry has a social responsibility to contribute to environmental issues and climate change, as natural resources and the physical environment are the most precious assets in that industry (Kasim, 2009).

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One such way is the adoption of eco-friendly practices. These practices are not only helpful in preserving the environment but are in the long run interest of restaurant industry itself. Furthermore, environment consciousness is increasing day by day in the whole world. In this competitive scenario, the increasing demand of eco-friendly products and services the restaurant industry will have to implement eco-friendly practices. Only then they can match and fulfill customer expectation.

In line with the above notion, adoption of an environmentally friendly management approach is one of the popular issues addressed in many industries (Blum, 1997; Bader, 2005; Enz & Siquaw, 1999; La Vecchia, 2008; Stipanuk & Ninemeir, 1996). Driven by government regulations, changing consumer demand, advocacy by NGOs and international organizations (Mensah, 2005), rising water, energy and waste disposal charges, need to control guests’ desire for use of energy, strong advocacy for high environmental values, and need to seek accreditation (Tzschentke et al, 2004), the industries’ major players have taken the necessary steps to undertake the implementation of environmentally friendly practices.

However, the pressure to adopt environmental management in the service sector pales in comparison applied to those in manufacturing sector (Grove, Fish, Pickett & Kangun, 1996) due to its inherent characteristics. Service lacks tangibility (not physically present), lacks perishability (cannot be physically stored), highly heterogeneous (influenced by human factor) and characterized by inseparable transaction between service provider and customer (Kotler et al, 2006). These characteristics contribute to the long held perception of service sector as, ‘soft’, or ‘smokeless’ industry (Kasim, 2005).

In this context, the prime purpose of this study is to identify and delve into the factors driving the adoption of environment friendly practices by the restaurants in eastern region of the country. It provides an introductory knowledge to the planner and policy makers regarding the status of eco-friendly practices by the restaurant in eastern India. The rest of the paper is organized as follow: section 2 has been devoted the literature review. Section 3 outlines the methodology adopted for the study. It contains research questions underlying the study, research objectives and techniques of data analysis. Section 4 contains analysis of data and related discussion. Section 5 summarizes and concludes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Green Business

Zsolnai (2002) defines a green business as a business that has adopted the concept of environmentalism across the various functions of the business. The term ‘green businesses’ is defined by Smith (2003) and Friend (2009) as businesses and practices that are viewed as environmentally sound, including the use of organic and natural products to build factories, tighter protection against emissions and environmentally friendly sourcing of materials. Gilbert (2007) identifies a green business activity as any activity that is performed in a manner that has either limited negative ecological impact or directly benefits the natural environment in some way. Morebusiness.com (2009) describes a green business as using less natural resources to complete the tasks needed and using sustainable methods and materials such as recycling (paper, plastic, electronics, glass and aluminium) and using sustainable products (recycled, plant-based or organically grown).
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