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Consumers Satisfaction Level Towards Sustainable Practices of 5-Star Category Hotels of Mumbai

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Abstract

Background: *Sustainability in the hospitality industry has gained increased importance with environmentally conscious consumers. The present study focusses on consumers' satisfaction towards the sustainable practices of 5-star hotels in Mumbai. This study helps to understand how these hotels have managed to deal with environmental concerns like energy efficiency, water conservation, plastic reduction, etc. and thus help in improving the customer experience by matching the rising sustainability expectations. This research attempts to analyze consumers' perception regarding sustainability in 5-star hotels and suggests implementable suggestions to hotel practitioners that can contribute toward customer satisfaction.* **Objective:** *The primary objectives of this research were: To examine the consumers' satisfaction level with sustainable practices at 5-star hotels in Mumbai. To suggest measures for hotel professionals to improve consumer satisfaction with these sustainable practices.* **Methodology:** *To fulfill the objectives of the study, a descriptive research design was adopted. Data were collected during August 2024 through convenience sampling in respect to diversified visitor responses towards the 5-star hotels of Mumbai. Online surveys through social media and e-mails were adopted as data gathering instruments, wherein a total of 270 questionnaires were issued and 165 were received. Only 156 were considered for final analysis. It contained two sections: a demographic data questionnaire and a questionnaire assessing consumer satisfaction with sustainable practices. The description statistics and specifically the technique of central tendency, were utilized to determine the weighted means and rankings for each of the practices surveyed.* **Results:** *The most appreciated were energy efficiency (3.87) and water conservation (3.56) by guests as being highly satisfactory. Plastic reduction (3.38) as well as the sourcing of sustainable food (3.12) followed even though reactions towards these were varied. Practices such as waste management, sustainable linen reuse and environment-friendly toiletries were rated only moderately satisfactory; however, sub-areas including local community engagement, transparency and carbon emissions reduction were not rated satisfactorily, where there is room for improvement with better communication and visibility of the sustainability efforts.* **Conclusion:** *Energy efficiency and water conservation are highly appreciated by guests; however, other practices such as waste management, linen reuse and eco-friendly toiletries are not communicated sufficiently. Sustainability activities such as involvement in the local community and reduction of carbon also require more visibility for consumer satisfaction. Hotels should therefore focus on increasing guest engagement and transparency in sustainability initiatives to fulfill guest expectations within luxury standards.*

Keywords: Consumers, satisfaction level, sustainable practices, 5-star hotels, Mumbai

Introduction

The hospitality sector is among the world's fastest-growing industries and contributes meaningfully to economic growth. Over the last few decades, increased concern about environmental deterioration has put hospitality sustainability in the spotlight (Cheng, 2020). Hospitality sustainability comprises sound environmental management, effective

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energy use and advantage for guests and society alike (Hanks et al., 2019). In spite of the difficulty of incorporating sustainability into the activities of luxury hotels, 5-star hotels identify it as one of their most important competitive strengths. Consumers are nowadays more conscious of the environment and anticipate firms to be sustainable, which puts pressure on the hotel industry to turn greener (Jones et al., 2016). Sustainable hotel practices involve the reduction of energy and water use, waste minimization and the utilization of environmentally friendly products and encouraging green behavior among consumers (Chan & Hsu, 2016). Most 5-star hotels now have sustainability policies to maximize resource use and reduce emissions (Bohdanowicz et al., 2011). Mumbai, a fast-growing business and tourist destination with a population of 20 million, has serious environmental concerns such as water scarcity, waste management and air quality (Kasliwal & Agarwal, 2020). Visitors who reserve upscale hotels are used to comfort and luxury but more and more weigh sustainability in their decisions. This study examines consumer satisfaction with sustainable practices in Mumbai's 5-star hotels.

Consumer satisfaction in the context of sustainability goes beyond service quality and product offerings. It also reflects on the alignment of a hotel's sustainable practices with the values, expectations and preferences of the consumers (Rahman & Reynolds, 2016). For example, while the guests might appreciate energy-saving efforts or plastic reduction efforts, they might also be interested in whether such efforts affect their comfort and convenience. Maintaining a balance between luxury and sustainability is important in determining customer satisfaction in 5-star hotels (Verma & Chandra, 2018). In the hospitality industry, sustainability tends to be associated with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which postulates that businesses ought to fulfill social and environmental obligations without affecting operational efficiency (Font et al., 2016). This research investigates the efficacy of sustainable practices implemented by 5-star hotels in Mumbai and also considers consumer satisfaction in this regard. The main issue is limited consumer awareness of sustainability practices. Most visitors are unaware unless the hotels clearly inform them of their environmental policies (Martínez & del Bosque, 2013). Effective communication fosters consumer engagement, helping them recognize the benefits of sustainability for themselves, the hotel and the community (Kim et al., 2016). Research suggests that guest's express higher satisfaction when sustainability initiatives are seamlessly integrated into luxury service without compromising the overall experience (Han et al., 2010).

Concept of Sustainable Hotels: Green or eco-friendly hotels take initiatives to reduce environmental footprint while improving guest satisfaction and community health (Abdou et al., 2020; Olorunsola, 2020). Such hotels incorporate initiatives to minimize resource use, maximize energy and water efficiency and make efficient waste management (Pereira et al., 2021). Sustainability runs through their operation, from the materials used in construction to everyday resource use (Abdou et al., 2020). Sustainable hotels aim for environmental, social and economic sustainability, which are interconnected. They employ energy-efficient technologies like LED lighting, smart thermostats and renewable energy like solar and wind to minimize their environmental footprint (Kular, 2014). Water-saving measures consist of low-flow fittings and rainwater collection. Waste management practices entail recycling, composting and the use of biodegradable products (Mbasera et al., 2016). Moreover, they procure local, organic and fairly traded foods to promote local economies and lower carbon footprints (Seyfang, 2007). Socially accountable hotels participate in community well-being programs, uphold equitable labor practices and patronize local entities (Aquino et al., 2018). They also raise awareness among visitors regarding sustainable behaviors for their better experience. Sustainable operations and ethical policies ensure long-term profitability (Holcomb et al., 2007). Eventually, green hotels promote ethical tourism, providing comfortable, interactive stays with reduced ecological impacts (Menegaki & Agiomirgianakis, 2019).

Consumers Satisfaction Level Towards Sustainable Practices of Eco-Friendly Hotels: Consumer satisfaction in terms of sustainability within eco-friendly hotels has become more popular as a result of increased awareness of the environment and tourists' sense of responsibility. Research suggests that water and waste efficiency increases customer satisfaction since consumers increasingly appreciate the significance of sustainable approaches (Baker et al., 2022; Gössling & Peeters, 2015). Sustainable hotels with green initiatives are advantaged by enhanced customer loyalty because customers see sustainability as a positive addition to their experience (Han et al., 2018; Chen & Peng, 2019). Existing research emphasizes that overtly displayed green certification and eco-labels enhance consumer trust, satisfaction and return intentions (Graci & Dodds, 2008;

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Millar & Baloglu, 2011). Yet, consumer satisfaction cannot be based on the existence of sustainability programs alone; communication and integration into the guest experience are key (Robinot & Giannelloni, 2010; Shapoval et al., 2017). Transparency in decision-making about green practices motivates guests to adopt sustainability (Kim et al., 2017). Further, sensory elements including fresh air, quiet spaces and natural products are substantial contributors to guest satisfaction (Line & Hanks, 2016; Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007). However, certain research indicates that prices and convenience matter most to consumers, meaning that environmentally friendly hotels have to weigh eco-policies against comfort and affordability (Choi & Parsa, 2006; Verma & Chandra, 2018).

Tourism is a major industry in Mumbai, with growing dependence on 5-star hotels hosting both local and foreign tourists. The connection between consumer satisfaction and sustainable practices needs to be well understood by stakeholders in the industry as well as policymakers. The present study examines consumers' perceptions of sustainability initiatives, such as water conservation, renewable energy sources, waste disposal and green guest services (Davis & Packer, 2015). It also probes if visitors consider such actions as worthwhile or a compromise for luxury (Robinot & Giannelloni, 2010). Even if Mumbai emphasizes green urban development, there are visitors who are in favor of sustainability in theory but are displeased because of cost, inconvenience, or perceived loss of quality (Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007). Cultural and demographic insights continue to influence visitor attitudes, requiring a balanced framework to measure sustainability initiatives among luxury hospitality (Budeanu, 2007). The importance of this research is that it makes a contribution towards understanding consumer satisfaction with sustainable practices in 5-star hotels in Mumbai, a key element in the hospitality industry's transition to environmental responsibility. Through the measurement of guest perception and satisfaction levels, the research offers important insights into how sustainability efforts impact customer experience and loyalty. In addition, the results will benefit hotel practitioners in determining areas of improvement and applying effective measures to increase consumer satisfaction while sustaining environmentally friendly operations. This study not only promotes sustainable tourism development but also helps luxury hotels adapt their practices to changing consumer expectations and international sustainability targets. This research will present useful information on the efficiency of sustainability management on 5-Star hotels in Mumbai and give guideline on enhancing consumer satisfaction in the expanding field of hospitality management.

Objectives
- To examine the consumers satisfaction level with sustainable practices of 5-star hotels of Mumbai.
- To suggest measures to professionals of hotels to enhance consumers satisfaction level with sustainable practices of hotels.

Methodology

Research Design: Descriptive design was used for the achievements of objectives of the present work. Respondents were asked closed ended questions on demographic profile, consumers awareness and attitude towards sustainable practices exercised in 5-star category hotels of Mumbai.

Locale: The data for the present research is collected from visitors of all over India who had visited 5-star hotels of Mumbai.

Sampling Design: Convenience sampling method was employed in the current research for data collection. Questionnaire were sent to 270 respondents and out of them 165 had completed the questionnaire and 156 responses were valid. Out of 156 responses 128 were male respondents and 28 were female respondents. Age of respondents are 18 years to above 55 years and other significant questions were asked on educational qualification, occupation, annual income etc. The data for the present research is collected in the month of August, 2024.

Tools and Technique: Questions related to hotels sustainable practices were put on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from "Highly Dissatisfied to Highly Satisfied". Two sections were in the structured questionnaire. The demographic profile of respondents was covered under the first section. The second part included questions on the level of consumer's satisfaction with sustainable practices implemented at hotels on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 represents highly dissatisfied, 2 represents dissatisfied, 3 represents neutral, 4 represents satisfied and 5 represents highly satisfied. Questionnaire was made on online platform Google form and were sent to respondents via their email-ids and social media websites.

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Data Analysis and Statistical Analysis: Descriptive analysis was employed for the data analysis. In the current study, central tendency method was applied wherein weighted mean of different variables were calculated and based on the values of weighted mean, rankings were assigned to different variables.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents: Table 1 reflects the demographic profiles of the respondents who frequent 5-star category hotels in Mumbai. Gender breaks showed 82.1% of respondents were males and 17.9% were female respondents. 39.7% were aged between 18-25 years, 35.9% were between 26-35 years and 24.4% respondents were between 36-45 years old. 58.3% of the population in the survey were unmarried while 41.6% of the respondents were married. 48.7% people were graduates, 34.6% people were postgraduate. 42.3% people were doing government job, 26.9% doing private job and 24.4% people were running their own business. 15.4% people were living in rural area and 84.6% people were living in urban areas. 30.8% of the respondents were earning income of up to 4 lakhs of annual income followed by 38.5% earning 4-8 lakhs of annual income.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Parameters	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	128	82.10
	Female	28	17.90
	Preferred not to say	0	--
Age	18-25 years	62	39.70
	26-35 years	56	35.90
	36-45 years	38	24.40
	46-55 years	0	--
	Above 55 years	0	--
Marital Status	Single	91	58.3
	Married	65	41.6
	Preferred not to say	0	--
Educational Qualifications	Intermediate	8	5.10
	Graduate	76	48.70
	Postgraduate	54	34.60
	Doctorate	18	11.50

	Others	0	--
Occupation	Students	10	6.40
	Government Job	66	42.30
	Private Job	42	26.90
	Business	38	24.40
	Others	0	--
Area of Residence	Rural	24	15.40
	Urban	132	84.60
Annual Income	Not earning	8	5.10
	Up to 4 Lakhs	48	30.80
	4-8 Lakhs	60	38.50
	8-12 Lakhs	36	23.10
	More than 12 Lakhs	4	2.60

Profile of the Respondents Related to their 5-Star Hotels Visit in Mumbai: Table 2 is indicate profile of respondents related to their visit at 5-star hotels of Mumbai. 46.2% of the respondents mentioned that they stay in hotels of Mumbai once a year, 26.9% 2-3 times, 24.4% 4-6 times and 2.6% stay more than 6 times a year in hotels of Mumbai. 44.9% of the respondents mentioned that they stay in hotels for leisure purpose, 32.1% comes in 5-star hotels of Mumbai for business purpose, 16.7% of the respondents visit for family visit and 6.4% of the respondents mentioned for attending social events like marriages, party etc. 12.8% of the respondents mentioned that they have very high environmental awareness level, 53.8% have high and 33.3% of the respondents have moderate environmental awareness level.

Table 2: Profile of the Respondents Related to their Hotel Visit in Mumbai

Parameter	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Frequency of Stay	Once a year	72	46.20
	2-3 times a year	42	26.90
	4-6 times a year	38	24.40
	More than 6 times a year	4	2.60
Purpose of Stay	Leisure	70	44.90
	Business	50	32.10
	Family Visit	26	16.70
	Social Events (Wedding, Party etc.)	10	6.40
	Others	0	--

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Booking Method	Directly Through Hotel	70	44.90
	Online Travel Agencies	42	26.90
	Travel Agents	22	14.10
	Corporate Book-ings	20	12.80
	Others	2	1.30
Environmental Awareness Level	Very High	20	12.80
	High	84	53.80
	Moderate	52	33.30
	Low	0	--
	Very Low	0	--

Consumers Satisfaction Level Towards Sustainable Practices of 5-Star Hotels of Mumbai: The first objective of the study was to examine the consumer's satisfaction level with sustainable practices exercised at 5-star category hotels of Mumbai. Table 3 indicates consumer's satisfaction level with sustainable practices exercised at 5-star category hotels of Mumbai. Energy efficiency efforts came out as the most satisfactory sustainable practice, receiving the highest rank with a weighted mean of 3.87. This can be attributed to the direct, observable and palpable effect of energy-efficient technologies, including LED lighting, smart thermostats and efficient HVAC systems, which are all directly associated with lower energy consumption and a lesser environmental impact. With climate change and energy conservation at the forefront of global focus, guests may interpret such measures as a reflection of responsible and forward-thinking hotel management. Water conservation measures came in second, with a weighted mean of 3.56. Efforts would be low-flow showerheads, water-efficient appliances and linen reuse programs. The positive consumer response could be due to growing awareness about water scarcity, especially in urban areas like Mumbai, where water management is a crucial issue. Water conservation efforts may also contribute to a positive brand image, aligning with broader environmental concerns. Plastic reduction initiatives ranked third with a weighted mean of 3.38, showing a solid level of satisfaction among consumers. Hotels to fight plastic waste use refillable bottles, offering alternatives to single-use plastics and encouraging eco-friendly packaging. This is a sure sign that consumers care more and more about plastic pollution's environmental impact, especially given the world's efforts to reduce plastic consumption around the world. Hotels that have implemented successful plastic reduction programs are likely to be perceived as more environmentally responsible,

which could encourage consumer loyalty. Sustainable food sourcing ranked fourth with a weighted mean of 3.12. Sustainability is mainly through source of locally procured organic foods and those obtained ethically and produced organically, though that does not really fit most consumer's varied wants. A certain consumer will regard the costliness of the type of food procured to be more than standard products. Such factors bring the level of guest satisfaction low, but more are going in favor of this option.

Waste management was ranked fifth of the list. The weighted mean is 2.94 and thus indicates fair satisfaction. This shows guests may not recognize or understand many of the initiatives taken in regard to waste management. Effective waste segregation, recycling and food waste reduction programs are often not seen by guests. The lack of transparency or communication may also lead to dissatisfaction on consumer satisfaction. Consumer satisfaction would increase if the clear communication strategy for these practices was implemented. Sustainable linen reuse programs ranked sixth with a weighted mean of 2.88. This may be attributed to hygiene issues or the fact that there was no clear communication regarding the standards of cleanliness for reused linens. While these programs help with sustainability through reducing water and energy use, it might not be up to guests' expectations of hotel amenities, thus explaining the dissatisfaction. The increase in satisfaction might be seen in this area if the benefits and standards of linen reuse programs were communicated better. Eco-friendly toiletries ranked seventh with a weighted mean of 2.86. This may be attributed to the quality or effectiveness of eco-friendly products compared to traditional toiletries. Guests at five-star hotels often expect luxury and high-quality amenities and eco-friendly alternatives might not always meet these expectations, especially if they compromise on factors like fragrance or performance. Hotels can solve this problem by making sure that their green toiletries are both eco-friendly and of high quality. Involvement of the local community was ranked eighth with a weighted mean of 2.78. Consumers know that community involvement is important but may not experience it in their hotel stay. Supporting local businesses, artisans, or social initiatives might not be as visible to guests during their stay. Transparency and communication on these efforts would help increase the satisfaction levels of guests and help the hotel become more connected with its guests.

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Transparency in sustainability was ninth with a weighted average of 2.76. Larger group of respondents (48) were "Neutral," indicating the guests might not even know what the hotel is doing in order to prolong the sustainability. Transparency in sustainability would be significant to the consumer, who wants to make wise decisions regarding his or her contribution to the environment. Failure to communicate clearly on sustainability initiatives would lead to a decreased perception of the hotel's dedication to such practices. The more transparent exhibitions of the hotel's sustainability initiatives would enhance consumer trust and satisfaction. Carbon emission reduction was ranked tenth with a weighted mean of 2.64. Consumers may appreciate attempts at reducing carbon emissions, but they will not necessarily observe or feel it while staying there. Hotels may be employing energy-efficient technology, renewable resources, or carbon offset schemes, yet without transparent information or direct experience, visitors might not be aware of these measures. There may be more focus on observable activity or improved reporting on what is being done to cut carbon.

Sustainable Facility Maintenance (Rank 11), with a weighted mean of 2.62, denoting moderate customer satisfaction. It is the practice of keeping hotel facilities in ways that reduce energy usage, lower waste and enhance sustainability. Customers are not seeing these efforts as strongly as they were meant to. One reason could be that most sustainable maintenance efforts, like energy-efficient equipment, sustainable materials, or green certifications, are out of sight and not immediately apparent to guests. Consumers may also be unaware of the specific sustainable maintenance practices in effect. In order to enhance guest satisfaction, hotels need to become more transparent about their sustainability initiatives through the use of informative signage or through communicating information on how their maintenance practices benefit environmental conservation. Guest Environmental Awareness Programs was the lowest among all the parameters with a weighted mean of 2.58. This shows that hotels are not communicating their environmental awareness programs effectively. These initiatives, which can range from educational materials to workshops or in-room environmental information, are likely to fail to motivate visitors when they are dull, hard to find, or poorly integrated into the hotel stay. In addition, patrons of five-star hotels can anticipate refined and effective environmental learning instead of simple or general-purpose information. To solve

for this problem, hotels must further promote the usefulness and visibility of these programs, making them stimulating and informative enough for guests. Providing incentives to participate in the sustainability initiatives will also help induce guest participation. Generally, however, guests embrace energy efficiency and water conservation strategies in Mumbai five-star hotels but need plastic minimization improvement, greater transparency over sustainability initiatives and community outreach to further stimulate consumer satisfaction.

Table 3: *Consumers Satisfaction Level Towards Sustainable Practices of 5-Star Hotels of Mumbai*

Parameters	Highly Dissatisfied (1)	%	Dissatisfied (2)	%	Neutral (3)	%	Satisfied (4)	%	Highly Satisfied (5)	%	Weighted Total	Weighted Mean	Rank
Energy efficiency efforts	20	12.82	20	12.82	14	8.97	8	5.13	94	60.26	604	3.87	1
Eco-friendly toiletries	18	11.54	64	41.03	26	16.67	18	11.54	30	19.23	446	2.86	7
Waste management practices	32	20.51	42	26.92	29	18.59	10	6.41	43	27.56	458	2.94	5
Water conservation measures	18	11.54	18	11.54	24	15.38	50	32.05	46	29.49	556	3.56	2
Sustainable food sourcing	34	21.79	26	16.67	28	17.95	24	15.38	44	28.21	486	3.12	4
Plastic reduction initiatives	26	16.67	16	10.26	30	19.23	40	25.64	44	28.21	528	3.38	3
Transparency in sustainability	32	20.51	36	23.08	48	30.77	18	11.54	22	14.1	430	2.76	9
Guest environmental awareness	18	11.54	70	44.87	36	23.08	24	15.38	8	5.13	402	2.58	12
Sustainable facility maintenance	56	35.9	24	15.38	22	14.1	32	20.51	22	14.1	408	2.62	11
Local community involvement	22	14.1	54	34.62	34	21.79	28	17.95	18	11.54	434	2.78	8
Carbon emission reduction	42	26.92	34	21.79	38	24.36	22	14.1	20	12.82	412	2.64	10
Linen Reuse Programs	26	16.67	40	25.64	34	21.79	38	24.36	18	11.54	450	2.88	6

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These findings align with previous research indicating that visible and directly experienced sustainable practices, like energy efficiency, tend to garner higher guest satisfaction. For instance, Olya et al. (2021) found that environmental sustainability initiatives positively influence guest satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, Gupta et al. (2023) reported that green practices in five-star hotels significantly impact guests' revisit intentions and willingness to pay premium prices. In contrast, Berezan and Millar (2014) observed that certain sustainability practices do not satisfy guests to a considerable extent, highlighting the need for hotels to better communicate and implement these initiatives.

Suggestive Measures for Professionals of Hotel Industry to Enhance Consumers Satisfaction Level with Sustainable Practices of Hotels: Since employability of sustainable practices is the responsibility of the hotel industry players, they need to explain to the guests about the various sustainable practices such as energy conservation, water usage and waste disposal. This fosters participation among guests hence promoting these initiatives of openness. Hotel industry employees must seek methods that are environmentally friendly such as clean wash and hand linen, refillable water flask and energy efficient bulbs in rooms. Sustainability measures that are evident and applied in a way that is tangible and useful are always welcomed by the consumers. Employees of the hotel industry need to have the necessary qualifications such as LEED, Green Key or EarthCheck that confirm the hotel's stewardship, which increases guests 'trust and satisfaction. Hotel industry professionals should engage guests in the green activities such as recycling exercise, organic farming or any other conservation exercise. Such engagements make the guests aware of such activities and enhances their knowledge on them.

When introducing sustainable practices in the hotel industry competence of professionalism in providing comfortable and luxurious accommodations cannot be over emphasized. For instance, it should be obvious to strive for energy efficient air conditioners and water efficient showers and toilets and the level of guest satisfaction should not be a victim in the process. It should be understood and educated on supporting measures regarding the pressing issues of sustainability staying prepared to answer guests 'questions. An informed staff always aids in the delivery of consistently green practices and providing knowledge to the guests. People who work in the hotel industry must incorporate locally sourced, organic or fair-trade products to hotel restaurants and services. This is not only beneficial to the local people but it is also favorable with customer who are now considering environmentally friendly and socially responsible practices.

Conclusion

The study evaluates consumer satisfaction with sustainable practices in five-star hotels in Mumbai, highlighting the most and least appreciated efforts. Energy efficiency ranked highest, with guests valuing visible technologies like LED lighting, smart thermostats and efficient HVAC systems. Water-saving initiatives were also well received, especially given Mumbai's water scarcity. Plastic reduction efforts gained appreciation as awareness of plastic waste grows. Sustainable food sourcing had a mixed reaction – it was appreciated by some, but also found costly or unappealing by others. The waste management facility had moderate appreciation but an unclear profile, such that the guest was uncertain as to how it worked. Linen reuse schemes were unpopular, possibly for reasons of hygiene, while eco-friendly toilet amenities had a mixed opinion, with some thinking them less luxurious. Transparency in sustainability initiatives and local community participation were cited as areas of improvement since most of the guests did not know about these activities. The least satisfied areas were in sustainable maintenance of facilities and guest environmental education programs because they had low visibility and low guest interaction. While five-star hotels in Mumbai are advancing sustainability, enhancing communication and making these efforts more visible and engaging will be crucial to improving guest satisfaction.

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