INTRODUCTION

The rising growth and competition in the hospitality industry has increased the global awareness which in turn proves important for retaining the guests. The importance of implementing sustainable green practices in the current hotel industry and the perception of the same from the point of view of the guests as well as the industry experts. Many hotels have benefited from green management such as enhanced reputation of the firm and more worth customers. For the business standing, it reduces business’s cost for posting advertisements and the clear hotel’s orientation shows hotels’ positive image which might increase employees’ recognition toward the business. Sustainability in business is the growth in lively processes which enable people to understand the potential to protect the Earth’s existent support systems. On this issue it is mandatory to reduce the impact of tourists on the environment and follow the concept of sustainability in the hospitality industry. Industry experts believe that any business can make profits by satisfying its customers.

The empirical evidence from hotel industry show that only satisfaction does not ensure that customer will stay with you or will avail your services again. It is actually guest delightedness and curative tourism activity which makes, the customer loyalty that significantly influences the success of any business rather than customer satisfaction. The hotel industry has been pursuing and adopting enormous green practices since the year 1990s due to fluctuating economic levels and a strong focus on customer service and satisfaction. Beyond the above mentioned advantages, many hotels have started employing social initiatives and corporate social responsibility. The first ever green hotel was launched by the intercontinental hotel group in the year 2008. This was the world’s first 100 percent ecologically-friendly hotel. Their green features to name a few included: giving away non-perishable food to charities, use of solar panels on rooftops, a rainwater harvesting system to supply water to toilets, wind power to generate electricity for the hotel, recycled glass windows, furniture and fixtures made entirely from recycled materials, household waste to provide heat and water just to name a few. According to David Jerome of IHG, IHG was also the first hotel chain to introduce a set of ‘green’ guidelines for hotels in 1991. Along with this, the brain child of IHG which is the solar powered ‘innovation hotel’- outlined the latest technology in energy and water conservation recycling.
The image in hotel industry is different from traveller’s market and is an important factor among customer loyalty (Heung et al., 1996). Ensuring the favourable public image is vital not only to satisfy customer but to sustain their loyalty as well. Hotel’s image is an important factor that positively or negatively influences marketing activities. Customer’s perception of goods and services are greatly influenced by the image of the organisation. Mazanec (1995) found image to be positively associated with customer satisfaction and customer preference (a dimension of customer loyalty) in luxury hotels. For the past decades, environmental concerns have received much attention wherein it replicates the rising public concern and the awareness of people on environmental problems. Government institutions and several pressure groups all around the world have been campaigning vigorously for the environment; in addition, the media reporting on environmental issues has increased dramatically. These campaigns have pushed towards plans developed within political decision making such as several laws and regulations to protect the environment. For instance, through the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and the follow-up summits in Berlin in 1995 and in New York in 1997, objectives for international collaboration and action has been identified (Keating, 1993), thereby adding to the level of awareness raised towards environmental issues. Due to this increased level of environmental awareness, a positive change within the behaviour of consumers towards environmental products is prevalent nowadays.

Despite various researches in this area the relationship between image, loyalty, satisfaction and customer patronage is not very clear. Few studies have quoted image as an antecedent of customers experience to customer satisfaction, which is having a significant positive impact on customer loyalty (Andreassen and Lindestad, 1998; Clemes et al., 2009; Milfelner and Korda, 2011). Whereas, Helgesen and Nesset, (2007); Kandampully and Hu, (2007) have professed satisfaction to be antecedent of image and satisfaction together with image as the factor influencing customer loyalty. Furthermore, a study by Brunner et al., (2008) advocates the same, adding that loyalty varies with the type of customers- repeat customers are loyal; due to their previous experience of service while loyalty of new customers is motivated by their satisfaction level.

A study by Clemes et al. (2009) noted that behavioural intentions in hotels are greatly influenced by the satisfaction and loyalty of the customers. These changes contribute to the start of a green revolution that aims to thwart further harm to the environment. Despite such advances towards environmental concerns and the rise of green marketing, the construct of green marketing has been misinterpreted and misunderstood in its history.
Scope of the Study:

As such number of research has been carried out on green marketing, green brands etc in tourism and hospitality sector at global level and limited research has been done at national level, this study confines to cover the green products and practices found in selected chain of Green hotels in India.

The scope of research extends to the guests who are interested in green hotels for their stay. This research will be beneficial for the researchers, environmentalists, students and policy makers in framing the policy in context with the hospitality sector.