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**EVENT REVIEW**  
HOTEL BUILD 2017

## WATT'S THE GOOD WORD

A SLEW OF BRANDS, NEW GUEST RESERVATION SYSTEM AND LOTS MORE ... ALAN WATTS,  
IHG'S COO, ASIA, MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA REVEALS WHY THE GROUP IS BULLISH ON INDIA



PHOTOGRAPH: THE RESORT MADH - MALAD

# WATER WISE

The hospitality industry is leveraging a whole new host of new-age technologies to conserve the ‘elixir of life’ and also bolster their savings in the bargain

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO

**T**ry this for some number-crunching – the Sofitel Mumbai BKC managed to bring down its water consumption by 45%, from 30,500 kiloliters in January-April 2016 to 16,556 kiloliters in January-April 2017. That is almost half its water use in one year! And it is one of the many hotels and restaurants in the country that are working out ways to reduce and reuse water on their properties.

To conserve water the first thing companies need to do is identify sources that use it in the maximum quantity. In a hotel, the laundry, swimming pool,



Vidur Kapur, general manager, Rokeby Manor and Residence.

I. The Resort Madh Malad realised that water conservation cannot be done in isolation; it is an integrated effort.

cooling towers, kitchen, rooms and landscape areas consume the largest amounts of water. A few large, kitchen and F&B equipments like bain-marie, coffee machines, boilers and dishwashers too use large amounts of water. Similarly, in restaurants, the dish wash and pot wash areas are high water usage areas.

The awareness about water conservancy has seen companies seek out options to store and reuse this resource better. Talking about the steps his company has undertaken, Pankaj Gupta, co-founder of Flavour Pot Foods LLP Hospitality says, “For the dish wash process, we follow a three-sink wash method where

running water is not used since it causes major losses. In the front and back restroom areas the flush tank push levers are designed to only release one fourth of a tank at a time, which ensures minimal yet optimum amount of water required for hygiene. Men's urinals do not have sensors but manual tap levers to curtail default flushes that cause wastage."

At the Clarks Exotica Convention Resort & Spa, the laundry sequence is implemented for full load of the washing cycle and flow meter is provided to monitor the water consumption. M Balaji, the company's CEO of the brand says, "Our treated water is utilised for gardening and we have installed rain water harvesting collection tank. Recharge pits and overflows are connected to this tank to conserve water. Pool back wash is also scheduled as per the requirement."

To ensure water conservation, JW Marriott Kolkata employs low-flow showerheads that reduce water usage by up to 40%. It also uses dual flush systems in the toilets whose operating mechanism allows flushing of water either on low volume or high volume, which significantly help to save water. Ajay Rai, director of engineering, adds, "Additionally, we use faucet aerators, which are used to shape the water stream coming out of the spout, offering consistency in flow and pressure, by preventing a lot of water flow and use of less water."

Rohan Chakranarayan, chief engineer of Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport too adds that his hotel has installed aerators to reduce the water flow per minute in shower heads, wash basins, and health faucets without affecting the water pressure. "In March 2017, we had installed the aerators and there has been a noticeable 15 % reduction in the consumption of water."

Most hotels have installed water meters to identify areas of maximum water consumption. A set standard and level is put into place for the amount of water consumed in each specific area of the hotel and this is tracked.

"To keep a check on the same on a daily basis a simple apparatus called a 'Water Meter' is installed to designated areas of the property. This device not only gives a clear reading on the volume of water consumed on a daily basis but allows us to take corrective measures to ensure water is not wasted and does not exceed the limit set," says Nemaraji Sabapathy, chief engineer, High Ultra Lounge, Sheraton Grand, Brigade Gateway. Review audits are another way wherein water consumption is monitored.

Technology reviews in order to ensure that the hotel is up-to-date is also important. "We review technologies at least thrice a year. We constantly look for and interact with subject matter experts at hotel and



Ramakant Singh, chief engineer, The Lalit Mumbai.



Hitesh Keswani, director, Silver Beach Entertainment & Hospitality.



Kush Kapoor, AGM, Roseate Hotels & Resorts.



Pradeep Kumar BS, chief engineer, Signature Club Resort.

2. Ultra Lounge, Sheraton Grand, Brigade Gateway

restaurant exhibitions. Separately in our environmental commitment for lowering the carbon footprint we constantly align with local efforts of municipalities and innovate in overall conservation of natural and other resources," says Gupta.

### TEAM WORK

Water conservation in any organisation cannot be done in isolation; it is an integrated effort. Satyajit Kotwal, general manager of The Resort Madh - Malad recalls how he had a brainstorming session with his staff on ways to save or re-use water without inconveniencing the guests. They came up with some executable initiatives for a sizeable amount of water saving measures, like installing sprinklers and flushes that allow minimum water use. "We installed water-saving signs in guest rooms, washrooms and restaurant areas, gently reminding people to use water responsibly. Then we decided that laundry wash will be done only with full load and the rinsed water from the laundry wash will be used for cleaning and washing of garbage rooms. Another change we made was using a combination of pot boiler and bratt pans for cooking," he states.

The Westin Pune Koregaon Park has an outlined environmental policy that addresses six areas of opportunity, and its initial worldwide focus is on energy and water with a commitment to reduce water consumption by 20% by the year 2020. The hotel has, therefore, installed aerators for all taps to reduce water consumption by almost 50%. In the kitchen, the flow is throttled to lower pressure.

Nishant Agarwal, general manager of the property states, "We know that collaboration is crucial in addressing these issues. So, we formed a partnership with the Conservation International (CI) in 2009. Westin has saved 10% in total water consumption over the last two years. Along with the water conservation measures, we have a 400KLD sewage





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Some devices that save several kilolitres of water consumption annually include high efficiency aerators, low-flow shower heads, dual flush systems in toilets, hose nozzles, flow restrictors and pressure reduction valves.

treatment plant that converts waste water into usable water.”

**NEW VISTAS**

These are conventional methods of water conservation and much laudable indeed. But there are other ways to doing conserve this cherished resource innovatively and hoteliers are showing a willingness to go the extra mile to be eco-friendly. Rishi Puri, VP of Lords Hotels & Resorts opines how his hotels have installed return lines in the bathrooms for dispensing hot water. What this does is keeps the flow of hot water continuous as against the warm water becoming cold prior to use. “So when a guest starts the shower or the tap, they instantly receive warm water instead of waiting for the cold water in the pipe to drain. This significantly reduces water wastage.”

Pradeep Kumar BS, Chief Engineer, Signature Club Resort adds that they use covered pools to avoid water evaporation and native of plants are planted as they use less water. They have also retained a 35-year old well that has been converted into a rainwater harvesting pit. “We have dug natural ponds to improve the groundwater level and all plant and machinery have



Prashant Vaidya, director of engineering, Sofitel Mumbai BKC.



Nishant Agarwal, general manager, The Westin Pune Koregaon Park.



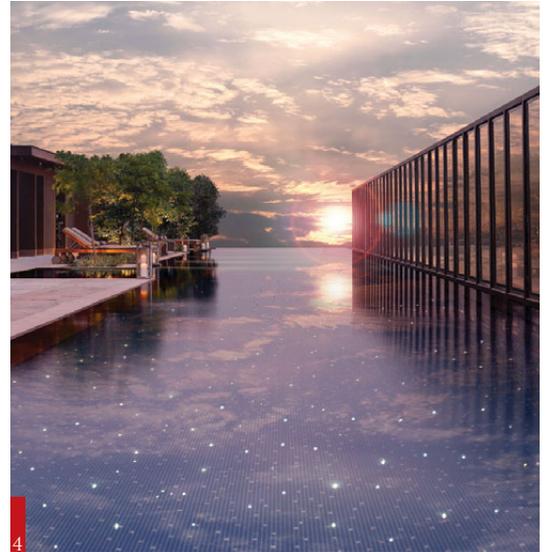
M Balaji, CEO, Clarks Exotica Convention Resort & Spa.



Ajay Rai, director of engineering, JW Marriott Kolkata.

3. Roseate House New Delhi.

4. Pool side of Roseate House New Delhi.



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been selected on waterless system, i.e. VRF air conditioning system, and DG air cooled, since these systems not required water for cooling towers,” he points out.

**RECYCLING PRINCIPLES**

For better resource management, recycling water is as important as conserving it. It is a core aspect of achieving overall sustainability goals.

Brands that want to be portrayed as green stewards are taking the onus to ensure zero discharge of waste water pollutants in the environment and also recycle water at their properties through sewage treatment plants (STP). A good case in point is Mahindra Holidays & Resorts India, which conducts regular monitoring of waste water by internal as well as external agencies (Parameters like C.O.D, B.OD, pH etc. as specified by statutory authorities are examined). These values have always been found to be within the guidelines and limits, defined by the State Pollution Control Boards and local regulatory authorities.

“The STP treated water is used in cooling towers and landscaping at most of our resorts. To harvest the abundant rain water, our resorts collect the rain water and redirects it to sections towards the areas where there is requirement points through pipes. This water first passes through dual media filter before being used for treatment,” says Miguel Munoz, chief resorts officer of Mahindra Holidays & Resorts India.

The other source is a by-product of reverse osmosis (RO) process of purifying water. Though it is not fit for drinking, this can be used in topping up water in swimming pools and also for laundry purposes.

**GUEST SERVICES**

While water conservation is the need of the hour, guest comfort can never be compromised, so hotels need to balance the seemingly contrasting needs. “We drive water conservation through ‘Rain Water Harvesting’ to increase the ground level. We also run a program called MAGC (Make a Green Choice) that empowers guests to actively participate in energy as

well as water conservation efforts taken by the property,” opined Sabapathy.

Girish Gaikwad, director of engineering, Four Seasons Hotel Mumbai adds, “We ensure water pressure, temperature and quality of the water is maintained to suit the average guests requirements and ensure feedback is taken so that we can accommodate any changes they may want. Our water saving installations are fairly non-disruptive during the guest’s stay and if feedback does come in otherwise, we ensure to take all steps possible to amend the discomfort.”

Ultimately, all of these initiatives boil down to funds. Most hotels spend anywhere in the range of 0.8% to 3% of their total revenue on water conservation initiatives. Prashant Vaidya, director of engineering at Sofitel Mumbai BKC says that his hotel changes the budgets for water conservation as per the patterns and trends observed and experienced over the course of the previous year. “Multiple factors such as occupancy, events and similar are taken into consideration for determining the budget for a particular year. For instance, if at the same time last year, the hotel utilized 3 lakh liters for the month, this year the budgeted conservation that we would look for, would be a 10 to 15 % reduction from last year.”

**ROI ISSUES**

How does a brand gauge that the water conservancy initiatives undertaken are paying off? The basic yardstick is definitely lowered water bills at the end of the month. But if you would like to do a deep-dive then follow Gaikwad’s example.

“We check the energy saving equipment, take before and after readings, check the technical specification, calculate the number of equipment required and gauge the cost for the same. We calculate the possible savings from the product and duration in which we will get the invested amount back,” he avers, while replying how his hotel arrives at a cost-optimisation result.



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Rohan Chakranarayan, chief engineer, Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport.



Rishi Puri, VP, Lords Hotels & Resorts.



Miguel Munoz, chief resorts officer, Mahindra Holidays & Resorts India Limited.



Nemaraji Sabapathy, chief engineer, High Ultra Lounge, Sheraton Grand, Brigade Gateway.

5. Rokeby Manor and Residence.

6. Pool area at Lords Inn, Gir, Gujarat.



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Ramakant Singh, chief engineer of The Lalit Mumbai (Bharat Hotels Ltd) adds, “We decide the ROI based on daily average water consumption cost, material quality and its life. We keep reviewing the energy/water-related published reference time-to-time and share this knowledge with a group of chief engineers from various hotels and facilities for updates.”

Kush Kapoor, Area general manager of Roseate Hotels & Resorts opines, “We assess the ROI through an integrated approach that includes expenses on water saving devices, repairs and maintenance as well as our total annual water consumption. Another important factor to take into consideration is the quality of water quality received in the area that plays a significant role in calculating expenditure on water conservation solutions and technologies required.”

**VENDOR CHOICES**

A key factor in conservation is the solutions and naturally choosing the right vendors that provide them is important. Aspects that govern this choice include cost effectiveness and capability and resources to service current fixtures and equipment without the need of a continuous upgrade or adjustment. Hitesh Keswani, director, Silver Beach Entertainment and Hospitality India explains, “Water conservation vendors are sparingly found in the country because this is a new way of thinking. When we look at the best ones in the market, our main criteria is post-sales service and flexibility in terms of delivery timings, installation, training, etc.”

Vendors are also selected on the basis of their service standards. “It is necessary that the vendors selected tailor their needs as per our requirement. It is important that they understand our need to set up a technology in a manner to gather the water from the roofs that needed to be harvested. Pricing, while playing an important factor, does not affect our decision on selecting a vendor at the cost of great service,” says Vidur Kapur, general manager, Rokeby Manor and Residence, Mars Enterprises and Hospitality.

Companies in the hospitality industry are feeling a great urgency to set and achieve bold sustainability targets to manage their water resources. In case you have not done so far, maybe it is time to get thinking too! 📌