

## COVER STORY



**Jatin Khanna**  
VP – Operations, India, Hilton



**Vivek Bhalla**  
Regional Vice President, SWA, IHG



**Ajay Nayak**  
Chief Engineer at ITC Gardenia,  
Bengaluru

projected to be living in water-stressed areas by 2030 and the demand for water is expected to exceed supply by 40% by then, admits Aldrina Fernandes, Environment Officer of Meluha- The Fern, An Ecotel Hotel. “Hence, Hotels have a responsibility to use water judiciously in order to not create a disparity in water distribution among the local communities, as well as ensure sustainable supply in the future,” said Fernandes.

Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) managed Taj Hotels work closely with International Tourism Partnership (ITP) for Water Stewardship programme. “The International Tourism Partnership (ITP) is working with its hotel group members to address water as a critical issue for the industry, and find ways to work together towards “United Nations Sustainable Development Goal -6” (UNSDG) i.e. clean water and sanitation. In addition to this, many hotels have taken water as a key materiality issue in their revised sustainability strategy framework,” a Taj spokesperson said.

Mukund Sahasrabudhe, Director-Technical Services, Sarovar Hotels Pvt. Ltd., one of the fastest growing mid-market hotel chains in India, says the value of water is beyond monetary worth. “It is not just a public resource but also a human right that everyone is entitled to.”

### PUTTING TWO AND TWO TOGETHER

Agreeing to the hoteliers’ efforts to curb water crisis, the sanitaryware suppliers too indicate that the hotel industry is already well-aware of the concern and are on the move to bring in a steady change to use water discreetly.

Headquartered in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA, with locations throughout Europe, GRAFF, a globally recognised plumbing and hardware manufacturer of trend-setting products; Emanuela Tavolini, Director of Sales - Europe of the company informs that the hospitality sector is becoming increasingly more aware of sustainability issues and very often selects producers also according to their standards in such areas. “GRAFF receives several requests from hotels and other estate developers for faucets that can reduce the water consumption and are produced in respect of the environment,” adds Tavolini.

“Over the years as consumers have become well-travelled and environmentally aware, where we have seen a significant rise in demand for water-efficient products from developers, architects and even hotels who are willing to invest in them,” said Manish Bhatia, President – Building Products Division, HSIL Limited.

Sandeep Shukla, Head of Marketing and Communications, Jaquar Group also spoke on similar lines to Bhatia, saying that the concept of water saving and energy-efficient bath fixtures are gaining a lot of popularity among the hospitality industry. They (hoteliers) are getting more and more conscious and are willing to adopt water-saving technologies to reduce their consumption, for which variety of products like Air Showers, Sensor faucets, etc. from the brand are being initiators of the eco-friendly measures.

Taps, toilets, showers and bathtubs/ Jacuzzis alone contribute to 30-40% of typical hotel’s water usage, making it a key area to reduce consumption and improve sustainability, says KE Ranganathan, Managing Director, Roca Bathroom Products. “Today, modern technology led products are chosen over their traditional counterparts not only for the ease-of-use but also for their energy and water saving properties,” informs Ranganathan.

Speaking on the initiative taken by The Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) to reduce the tension, the Taj



## COVER STORY



**Emanuela Tavolini**  
Director of Sales - Europe, GRAFF



**KE Ranganathan**  
Managing Director, Roca Bathroom  
Products

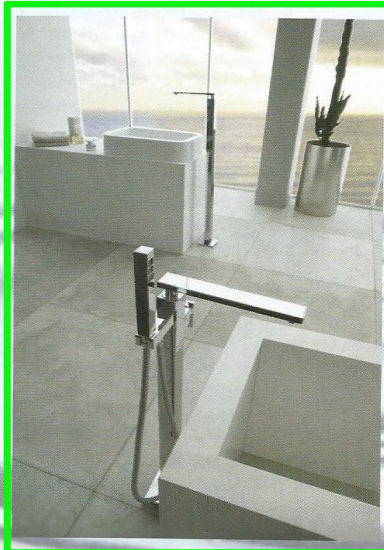


**Manish Bhatia**  
President  
Building Products Division, HSIL Limited

While it comes to conservation and sustainability, globally there are ideal models which can be emulated by stakeholders. Siobhan O'Neill, Editor of Green Hotelier and Communications Manager of International Tourism Partnership (ITP) highlights such examples from their latest Green Hotelier Award list. "Two hotels from our Awards stand out for their commitment to conservation and sustainability. Six Senses Laamu won our Community Award. They're based in a small island atoll. It gives 0.5% of total revenues plus guest donations for sustainable development projects in the community, contributing to roofing for a school, construction materials for a mosque, aggregate for a harbour, lights for an airport, and metal for a waste management centre. Mercure Convention Center Ancol Jakarta actively works with local government to ensure more water of high-quality is available locally. They ceased drawing from their well, engaged experts and undertook a comprehensive audit, installing meters across the property, training staff, checking weekly for leaks, adding efficiency measures and reusing greywater. They've achieved a water saving of 51% in six years and 10% costs against an increase of 7% on revenue."

### SUSTAINABLE HOTELIERING

The recent backlash against tourism in many 'touristic' cities of Europe was a wakeup call for global tourism industry. The reasons for such wave of anti-tourism protests across Europe had its core on sustainable tourism. Although various disjointed efforts are on across the globe at the behest of various global agencies to reduce the negative impact of tourism on community and environment for some time, they are yet to become a mission and a movement of sort. For that to happen the tourism businesses have to incorporate Sustainable and Responsible Tourism as a fundamental part of their brand architecture.



It is important that hotel developers and operators design their hotels in sync with the local environment. It is also important to get their messaging right with their target audience. Designing a luxury private pool villas in a water-scare area will definitely invite the wrath of the local people. "Hotels really need to get a lot better at communicating with guests and managing their expectations. Visitors really need to stop and think about why their resort in the desert has two pools and a lush green golf course and what that's doing to people who live there?" says O' Neill.

While the world is fighting the scourge of global warming and its ill-effects, and the global agencies are setting guidelines and best practices for industries to follow so as to reduce the emissions and wastage, the hotel industry cannot remain a mute spectator for the sake of 'customer experiences.' Experts feel that the spirit of sustainability and conservation is still not well understood by industry stakeholders. In the absence of absolute knowledge about its contours, people tend to pick up some aspects of it and come to the conclusion that they have adhered to the principles of sustainable tourism. Sustainability has business management aspect, the social aspect, cultural aspect and finally the environmental aspect.

Major hotel companies do make announcements about their initiatives on the sustainability front from time-to-time. There is also growing acceptance for Green certifications in the hotel industry over the last decade. Market research by global agencies have revealed that Green Building certifications matter considering 51% of the business travellers prefer to stay and hold meetings in hotels which give weightage to environment and sustainability, and about 75% corporates have shown preference for Green venues for their conferences.

Setting a major milestone, the Taj Hotels Palaces Resorts Safaris set a global