



Phaltan's green spot

Jakson Inns Phaltan, located in a town in the Satara district of Maharashtra, is doing its bit towards protecting the environment. **Sandeep Talaulikar**, Owner, Jakson Inns Phaltan, says that though the initial cost of investment may have been high, it is still no hindrance to the efficiencies this move would bring in the future.

Hazel Jain

There are big lessons to be learnt from this small property located in Phaltan, which crosses a drought-prone area in Satara. It was conceptualised keeping in mind the various green systems that could be – and in some instances, must be – put in place. **Sandeep Talaulikar**, Owner, Jakson Inns Phaltan, knew that while the initial investment was high, these systems would bring in operational efficiencies while protecting the immediate environment. The state policies, however, did not make it

easy for him. He says, "Different states have different policies. What Maharashtra and the entire India need is an open solar policy like that of Karnataka."

Karnataka's policy not only allows a business to buy smaller amounts of solar energy, it also doesn't charge for transporting the units. A business can buy from solar farms or from the government and avail a 10-year relief on tax. In stark contrast, he says that for some reason, in Maharashtra – one of the most important states in India

– a business is charged for using solar energy. Also, one cannot buy small amounts. "You cannot buy less than 1 MW, which is something you will need for two ITC Grand Marathas. So, it's impossible for three-star, two-star, and one-star properties to buy solar power. Also, there is no tax benefit. It is no wonder why not many hotels are opting for solar power in this state," Talaulikar adds.

On its part, Jakson Inns Phaltan is trying to influence the policy makers. Due to lack of space, it becomes very difficult for hotels

to opt for solar panels or do water harvesting, or set up a Sewage Treatment Plant (STP).

Fortunately, the property has one. Talaulikar says, "There are some tax benefits to an STP in some municipalities in Maharashtra. So, people put it up but don't operate it until the inspector comes. There is an operative cost. However, if you feel responsible towards the earth, then you should operate it. There is also a taboo on it."

In Phaltan, Jakson Inns recycles 99 per cent of its

water through its STP, but telling the guest about the source is a problem and so, the hotel uses it for flushing, irrigation, and rainwater harvesting. It has

one STP, one rainwater harvesting tank, and a solar plant. The only thing it does not have is bio gas, which will be set up soon for the kitchen. But since bio gas does not come with a huge force, its usage is limited.

"We prioritised our green efforts. We put five per cent of ₹45 crore capex into being green, so about ₹5 crore at the hotel planning stage and we did it in phases. We opened with these three things – rainwater harvesting, STP, and solar panels. Over time, we added a few things and today, we are just about 110 KW short of being a net-zero off the grid," he adds.

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