



Sustainable Supply Chain Integration in Indian Luxury Hotels: A Farm-To-Hotel Model for Enhancing Environmental and Economic Performance

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<https://doi.org/10.55041/ijssmt.v2i4.300>

Cite this Article: M, B. (2026). Sustainable Supply Chain Integration in Indian Luxury Hotels: A Farm-To-Hotel Model for Enhancing Environmental and Economic Performance. *International Journal of Science, Strategic Management and Technology*, 02(04). <https://doi.org/10.55041/ijssmt.v2i4.300>

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Abstract: The growing emphasis on sustainability within the hospitality sector has encouraged Indian luxury hotels to adopt innovative supply chain practices that balance environmental responsibility with economic performance. This study explores the integration of a farm-to-hotel supply chain model as a strategic approach to achieving sustainable operations in Indian luxury hotels. The research aims to examine how direct sourcing from local farmers, reduced intermediaries, and improved traceability can enhance resource efficiency, minimize carbon footprints, and support rural livelihoods. Using a mixed-method approach, the study combines qualitative insights from hotel supply chain managers and local producers with quantitative analysis of operational and cost efficiencies. The findings indicate that farm-to-hotel integration significantly reduces transportation emissions, ensures fresher and higher-quality produce, and fosters long-term partnerships with local agricultural communities. Additionally, the model contributes to cost optimization through reduced procurement layers and waste minimization. The study proposes a conceptual framework linking sustainable procurement, green logistics, and stakeholder collaboration to improved environmental and economic outcomes. It concludes that adopting farm-to-hotel supply chains can serve as a competitive advantage for luxury hotels while promoting sustainable development within the broader food supply ecosystem in India.

Keywords: Farm-to-Hotel Supply Chain, Sustainability, Green Logistics, Luxury Hotels.

Introduction: The hospitality industry, particularly the luxury hotel segment, is undergoing a significant transformation driven by increasing environmental concerns, evolving consumer preferences, and the global push toward sustainable development. In India, luxury hotels are recognizing the need to align their operational strategies with sustainability goals, not only to reduce their environmental footprint but also to enhance their brand image and long-term profitability. One of the emerging approaches in this context is the adoption of farm-to-hotel supply chain models, which emphasize direct sourcing from local farmers, reduced intermediaries, and environmentally responsible procurement practices. The traditional food supply chain in the hotel industry is often characterized by multiple intermediaries, long transportation distances, and limited traceability, which collectively contribute to increased carbon emissions, food wastage, and inconsistent quality. In contrast, the farm-to-hotel model seeks to establish a more transparent and efficient system by connecting hotels directly with local



agricultural producers. This localized sourcing approach not only ensures the availability of fresh and high-quality ingredients but also supports regional farmers and promotes rural economic development. In a country like India, where agriculture forms a significant part of the economy, such integration has the potential to create mutually beneficial relationships between the hospitality and agricultural sectors. Sustainability in supply chain management has become a critical focus area for luxury hotels aiming to meet international standards and certifications. Green procurement practices, reduced food miles, and eco-friendly logistics are increasingly being adopted as part of corporate sustainability initiatives. The farm-to-hotel model aligns well with these objectives by minimizing transportation requirements, reducing dependency on large-scale distributors, and enabling better inventory control. Furthermore, it enhances traceability, allowing hotels to monitor the origin and quality of food products, which is particularly important in ensuring food safety and meeting the expectations of environmentally conscious consumers. From an economic perspective, the integration of farm-to-hotel supply chains offers several advantages. By eliminating intermediaries, hotels can potentially reduce procurement costs while maintaining consistent quality standards. Long-term partnerships with local farmers can lead to stable pricing, improved supply reliability, and collaborative planning, thereby reducing operational uncertainties. Additionally, the use of fresh and seasonal produce can enhance menu quality and innovation, contributing to improved customer satisfaction and competitive differentiation in the luxury hospitality market. Despite its advantages, the implementation of farm-to-hotel supply chain models in India is not without challenges. Issues such as fragmented agricultural systems, lack of infrastructure, seasonal variability, and limited technological adoption among small-scale farmers can hinder effective integration. Moreover, luxury hotels must invest in supplier development, logistics coordination, and quality assurance mechanisms to ensure seamless operations. Addressing these challenges requires a strategic approach involving stakeholder collaboration, government support, and the adoption of digital technologies for supply chain transparency and efficiency. This study aims to explore the role of farm-to-hotel supply chain integration in enhancing environmental and economic performance in Indian luxury hotels. By examining the key drivers, benefits, and challenges associated with this model, the research seeks to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on sustainable hospitality management. It also proposes a conceptual framework that highlights the interconnections between sustainable procurement, green logistics, and stakeholder engagement. Ultimately, the study underscores the potential of farm-to-hotel supply chains as a viable and impactful strategy for achieving sustainability and resilience in the Indian luxury hotel sector.

Literature Review: The concept of sustainable supply chain management (SSCM) has gained significant attention in recent years, particularly within the hospitality industry, where environmental and social responsibilities are increasingly prioritized alongside economic performance. SSCM integrates environmentally friendly practices, ethical sourcing, and efficient resource utilization across all stages of the supply chain. In the context of luxury hotels, this approach is crucial due to the sector's high consumption of food, energy, and water resources. Scholars have emphasized that adopting sustainable supply chain practices not only reduces environmental impacts but also enhances brand value and customer loyalty, especially among environmentally conscious travelers. One of the key dimensions of SSCM in hospitality is sustainable procurement, which involves sourcing goods and services in a manner that minimizes negative environmental and social impacts. Research indicates that local sourcing plays a vital role in achieving sustainability objectives, as it reduces transportation distances, lowers carbon emissions, and supports local economies. The farm-to-hotel model is an extension of this concept, focusing on direct procurement from farmers and minimizing intermediaries. Studies suggest that such models enhance supply chain transparency and traceability, which are essential for ensuring food safety and quality standards in luxury hotels. Furthermore, direct relationships with farmers allow hotels to influence agricultural practices, encouraging the adoption of organic and sustainable farming methods.



The farm-to-hotel supply chain model is closely related to the broader farm-to-table movement, which has been widely studied in the context of restaurants and food service operations. Literature highlights that this approach not only improves the freshness and nutritional value of food but also enhances the dining experience by promoting authenticity and regional identity. In luxury hotels, incorporating locally sourced ingredients into menus can create unique culinary offerings that reflect the cultural and agricultural heritage of the region. This aligns with the growing demand for experiential tourism, where guests seek meaningful and locally rooted experiences. Environmental performance is a central theme in the literature on sustainable supply chains. Several studies have demonstrated that reducing food miles defined as the distance food travels from production to consumption can significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions. The farm-to-hotel model contributes to this objective by shortening supply chains and promoting localized distribution networks. Additionally, efficient logistics and inventory management practices associated with this model help reduce food waste, which is a major environmental concern in the hospitality industry. Researchers have also highlighted the importance of adopting green logistics practices, such as energy-efficient transportation and eco-friendly packaging, to further enhance environmental outcomes. From an economic perspective, the literature presents mixed findings regarding the cost implications of sustainable supply chain practices. While some studies argue that local sourcing and direct procurement can lead to cost savings by eliminating intermediaries, others point out that initial implementation costs, such as supplier development and infrastructure investments, may be high. However, in the long term, the benefits of improved efficiency, reduced waste, and enhanced customer satisfaction often outweigh these costs. In the context of luxury hotels, where quality and exclusivity are paramount, the use of fresh, locally sourced ingredients can justify premium pricing and contribute to increased revenue. Stakeholder collaboration is another critical factor highlighted in the literature. Effective implementation of farm-to-hotel supply chains requires strong partnerships between hotels, farmers, suppliers, and government agencies. Studies emphasize the need for capacity building among farmers, including training in sustainable agricultural practices, quality standards, and supply chain coordination. Technological advancements, such as digital platforms for supply chain management, blockchain for traceability, and data analytics for demand forecasting, are also identified as enablers of efficient and transparent supply chains. These technologies can help bridge the gap between small-scale farmers and large hospitality enterprises, ensuring consistent supply and quality. Despite the potential benefits, several challenges associated with farm-to-hotel supply chains have been identified in the literature. The fragmented nature of agriculture in India, characterized by small landholdings and limited access to resources, poses significant barriers to integration. Seasonal variability and dependency on climatic conditions can lead to supply inconsistencies, affecting hotel operations. Additionally, logistical challenges, such as inadequate cold storage facilities and transportation infrastructure, can hinder the efficient movement of perishable goods. Researchers have also pointed out the lack of standardized quality control mechanisms, which can create difficulties in maintaining consistent product standards.

To address these challenges, scholars have proposed various frameworks and strategies. These include the development of cooperative farming models, investment in rural infrastructure, and the implementation of policy measures to support sustainable supply chains. Public-private partnerships are often highlighted as a means of facilitating collaboration and resource sharing. Furthermore, the adoption of integrated supply chain management systems can enhance coordination and efficiency, enabling hotels to better manage procurement, inventory, and distribution processes. In summary, the literature underscores the importance of sustainable supply chain integration in the hospitality industry, with the farm-to-hotel model emerging as a promising approach for achieving environmental and economic objectives. While the model offers numerous benefits, including reduced carbon emissions, improved food quality, and support for local communities, its successful implementation requires addressing structural and operational challenges. Continued research and innovation in this area are essential to develop scalable and resilient supply chain solutions for the luxury hotel sector in India.



Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-method research design to examine the effectiveness of the farm-to-hotel supply chain model in enhancing environmental and economic performance in Indian luxury hotels. The integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches enables a comprehensive understanding of both operational practices and measurable outcomes. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with supply chain managers, procurement heads, and executive chefs from selected luxury hotels across major Indian cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, and Chennai. In addition, interviews were conducted with local farmers and suppliers involved in farm-to-hotel partnerships to capture multiple stakeholder perspectives. A structured questionnaire was also administered to assess key variables such as procurement efficiency, cost reduction, waste management, and sustainability practices. Secondary data were obtained from academic journals, industry reports, hotel sustainability reports, and government publications to support theoretical and contextual analysis. The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling, focusing on luxury hotels that have implemented or are in the process of adopting sustainable sourcing practices. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns related to sustainability practices, challenges, and benefits. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and performance indicators such as cost efficiency, reduction in food miles, and waste minimization. The combined methodological approach ensures reliability and validity, providing robust insights into the role of farm-to-hotel supply chain integration in promoting sustainable hospitality practices in India.

Conceptual Framework for Farm-to-Hotel Supply Chain Model

The conceptual framework for the farm-to-hotel supply chain model is designed to explain how sustainable supply chain integration contributes to improved environmental and economic performance in Indian luxury hotels. This framework is built on the interrelationship between three core dimensions: sustainable procurement, green logistics, and stakeholder collaboration, which collectively drive sustainability outcomes. The first component, sustainable procurement, focuses on sourcing agricultural products directly from local farmers using environmentally and socially responsible practices. This includes selecting suppliers who adopt organic or low-chemical farming methods, ensuring fair trade practices, and maintaining high standards of food safety and quality. By reducing intermediaries, hotels gain better control over product quality, traceability, and pricing. Sustainable procurement serves as the foundation of the farm-to-hotel model, enabling closer integration between agricultural producers and hospitality businesses. The second component, green logistics, emphasizes environmentally friendly transportation, storage, and distribution systems. This includes minimizing food miles through localized sourcing, adopting energy-efficient transportation methods, and utilizing eco-friendly packaging. Efficient logistics also involve improved inventory management systems to reduce food spoilage and waste. By optimizing logistics processes, hotels can significantly reduce their carbon footprint while maintaining operational efficiency.

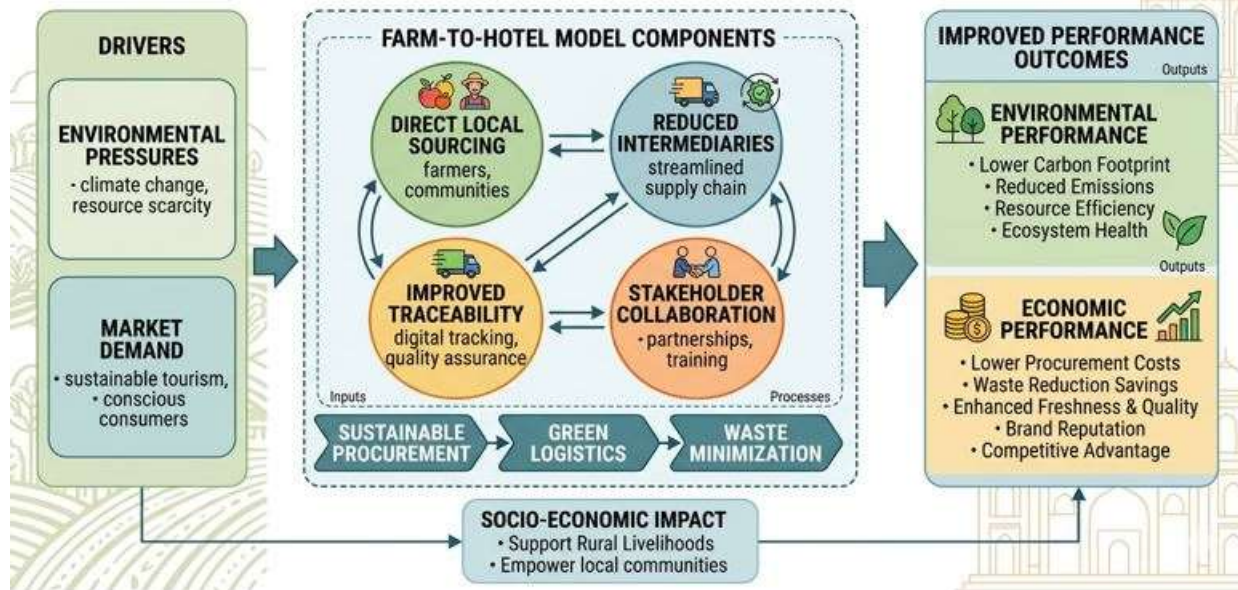


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Farm to Hotel Supply Chain

Figure 1 presents a comprehensive conceptual framework illustrating how a farm-to-hotel supply chain model contributes to improved environmental and economic performance in the hospitality sector. The model is structured into three major components: drivers, farm-to-hotel model mechanisms, and performance outcomes, with an overarching layer of socio-economic impact.

At the left side, the drivers highlight the primary forces motivating hotels to adopt sustainable sourcing practices. Environmental pressures such as climate change and resource scarcity compel the hospitality industry to rethink traditional procurement systems. Simultaneously, market demand—driven by sustainable tourism trends and increasingly conscious consumers—creates a strong business case for integrating local and sustainable sourcing strategies. These dual pressures ensure that sustainability is not only an ethical choice but also a competitive necessity. The central section of the figure outlines the core components of the farm-to-hotel model. Direct local sourcing from farmers and communities plays a pivotal role, as it shortens the supply chain and enhances freshness and quality. This is closely linked with reduced intermediaries, which simplifies the supply chain, lowers costs, and improves efficiency. Improved traceability through digital tracking systems ensures food safety, transparency, and quality assurance—key concerns in luxury hospitality. Furthermore, stakeholder collaboration, including partnerships and training initiatives, strengthens coordination among farmers, suppliers, and hotel management.

Supporting these components are three operational processes: sustainable procurement, green logistics, and waste minimization. Sustainable procurement ensures that sourcing decisions prioritize environmental and ethical considerations. Green logistics focuses on reducing transportation emissions and optimizing delivery systems, while waste minimization addresses food waste through efficient inventory and consumption practices. Together, these processes act as enablers that translate the conceptual model into actionable strategies. On the right side, the figure highlights improved performance outcomes, categorized into environmental and economic benefits. Environmentally, the model contributes to a lower carbon footprint, reduced emissions, better resource efficiency, and improved ecosystem health. Economically, hotels benefit from lower procurement costs, savings from waste reduction, enhanced product freshness and quality, and improved brand reputation. These outcomes ultimately lead to a stronger competitive advantage in the market. Finally, the model emphasizes socio-economic impact, particularly in supporting rural livelihoods and empowering local communities. By integrating local farmers into the supply chain, the model fosters inclusive growth and strengthens regional economies.

Overall, Figure 1 effectively demonstrates that the farm-to-hotel model is a holistic approach that aligns sustainability with business performance, making it a viable strategy for modern luxury hotels aiming for long-term resilience and competitiveness. The third component, stakeholder collaboration, highlights the importance of partnerships between hotels, farmers, suppliers, government agencies, and technology providers. Effective collaboration ensures consistent supply, quality assurance, and knowledge sharing. Training programs for farmers on sustainable agricultural practices and quality standards play a crucial role in strengthening the supply chain. Additionally, the integration of digital technologies such as supply chain management systems and traceability tools enhances coordination and transparency. These three components collectively influence two major outcome variables: environmental performance and economic performance. Environmental performance is reflected in reduced greenhouse gas emissions, lower energy consumption, and minimized food waste. Economic performance is achieved through cost efficiency, improved supply reliability, enhanced product quality, and increased customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, the framework acknowledges the presence of moderating factors, such as infrastructure availability, government policies, seasonal variability, and technological adoption, which can influence the effectiveness of the model. The conceptual framework illustrates that the successful implementation of a farm-to-hotel supply chain model requires an integrated approach that combines sustainable procurement, green logistics, and strong stakeholder collaboration. This holistic model not only enhances sustainability outcomes but also provides a competitive advantage for luxury hotels in India.

Environmental and Economic Performance

The adoption of a farm-to-hotel supply chain model in Indian luxury hotels offers significant environmental and economic benefits, making it a sustainable and strategic approach for modern hospitality operations. By integrating local sourcing, efficient logistics, and direct farmer partnerships, this model contributes to both ecological preservation and financial performance. From an environmental perspective, one of the primary advantages is the reduction in carbon emissions.

Feature	Environmental Impact	Economic Impact
Direct Sourcing	Lower Carbon Footprint	Reduced Intermediary Costs
Seasonal Menus	Reduced Energy for Cold Storage	Higher Menu Freshness/Premium
On-site Composting	Diverts Waste from Landfills	Reduced Waste Disposal Fees
Organic Training	Soil Health Improvement	Consistent High-Quality Supply

Table 1. Environmental and Economic Performance

Table 1 shows the impact that traditional supply chains often involve long-distance transportation and multiple intermediaries, resulting in higher fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. In contrast, the farm-to-hotel model emphasizes local procurement, thereby reducing food miles and minimizing the environmental impact associated with transportation. Additionally, the use of fresh, locally sourced produce decreases the need for excessive packaging and refrigeration, further lowering energy consumption. Another key environmental benefit is the reduction of food waste. Direct sourcing enables better coordination between hotels and farmers, allowing for more accurate demand forecasting and inventory management. This reduces overstocking and spoilage, which are common issues in conventional supply chains. Furthermore, many farm-to-hotel initiatives promote sustainable agricultural practices, such as organic farming and reduced chemical usage, which contribute to soil health, biodiversity conservation, and overall ecosystem sustainability. From an economic standpoint, the farm-to-hotel model enhances cost efficiency by eliminating intermediaries in the supply chain. Direct procurement from farmers allows hotels to negotiate better prices and maintain consistent quality standards. Over time, this leads to reduced



procurement costs and improved operational efficiency. Additionally, long-term partnerships with local suppliers ensure a stable supply of raw materials, minimizing the risks associated with price fluctuations and supply disruptions.

The model also supports revenue generation and competitive advantage. Luxury hotels can differentiate themselves by offering fresh, locally sourced, and sustainably produced food, which appeals to environmentally conscious consumers. This enhances brand image and allows hotels to implement premium pricing strategies. Guests increasingly value transparency and authenticity in food sourcing, and the farm-to-hotel approach aligns well with these expectations. Moreover, the model contributes to local economic development by supporting farmers and rural communities. By providing fair prices and consistent demand, hotels help improve farmers' income stability and encourage sustainable agricultural practices. This creates a mutually beneficial relationship between the hospitality and agricultural sectors. The farm-to-hotel supply chain model delivers a balanced combination of environmental sustainability and economic efficiency. Its adoption enables Indian luxury hotels to reduce their ecological footprint while enhancing profitability and strengthening their market position.

Conclusion

The growing importance of integrating sustainable supply chain practices within the Indian luxury hotel sector through the adoption of a farm-to-hotel model. The findings demonstrate that direct sourcing from local farmers, combined with efficient logistics and strong stakeholder collaboration, can significantly enhance both environmental and economic performance. By reducing food miles, minimizing waste, and promoting eco-friendly practices, the model contributes to lowering the overall environmental footprint of hotel operations. From an economic perspective, the farm-to-hotel approach offers substantial benefits, including cost efficiency, improved supply reliability, and enhanced product quality. The ability to source fresh, locally produced ingredients not only supports menu innovation but also strengthens the competitive positioning of luxury hotels in an increasingly sustainability-conscious market. Moreover, the model fosters long-term relationships with local farmers, thereby contributing to rural development and ensuring a stable and ethical supply chain. However, the successful implementation of this model requires overcoming challenges such as fragmented agricultural systems, infrastructural limitations, and seasonal supply variability. Addressing these issues necessitates strategic investments in logistics, technology adoption, and capacity building among stakeholders. The farm-to-hotel supply chain model presents a viable pathway for Indian luxury hotels to achieve sustainability while maintaining profitability. Its adoption aligns with global sustainability goals and evolving consumer expectations, making it a critical strategy for future-ready hospitality management. Further research is recommended to explore scalable solutions and technological innovations to strengthen this model.

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