

A Study of Health and Safety Practices in Medium Sized Hotels of Mahabaleshwar, Dist. Satara, (MS)

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to understand the practices perform by employees working in different departments of medium sizedhotels. This study will provide guidelines toimprove the health and safety at work places. In order to carry out the research, questionnaires were used to collect data from employees working in different department of different medium sized hotels, and literature was also reviewed. From the findings, it shows that when good health and safety practices are not put in place, accidents ,major and minor injuries can happen, and it is what most of the employees in other companies have so far experienced. This implies that if health and safety is not managed effectively, both the two parties being employees and the organization would suffer because for the organization to function effectively, it needs employees and for the people to survive, they need to work.

Keywords: OSHA; Health; Safety; Injury; Accident

Introduction

The hospitality industry is closely linked with travel, tourism, MICE, enjoying an annual growth rate unmatched by any other industry. Organizations in the hospitality industry tend to be labour intensive. Employee's safety and health are important elements at every work environment. A safe and healthy workplace enhance the productivity, contribute to morale, reduce the risk of accidents, decrease the rate of absenteeism, protect the physical as well as mental well-being of an employee. The problem of occupational health and safety presents a serious challenge to most of the organizations in Mahabaleshwar. The Employers, Human Resource Management, Trade Unions must play a leading role in identifying hazards, educating members and helping in protecting their members against work hazards. Hotel employees includes variety of staff including bell boys, housekeeping room attendants, chefs, waiters, engineering/ maintenance staff, front desk personnel etc. they can be exposed to various safety and health hazards at workplace depending upon the task they perform which might covered injuries from slips, trips, falls, cuts, burns and scalds, fire, risk of musculoskeletal disorder, health hazards from chemicals, noise.The employer has a legal duty to assess the work place in order to provide a safe workplace for his employees. The Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) regulates compliance standards for health and safety at workplace. It monitors workplace safety by compliance officers by performing unannounced inspection to ensure that employers are operating the health and safety regulations.

A lot of literature addressed about this but there is a considerable gap in health and safety on the employee's practices in medium sized hotels. A good hospitality,high standards of serviceand customer satisfaction are depends on employees at workplace. Therefore the research will proposed the guidelines to implement occupational safety and health at workplace.

Literature Review

According to (Ragin,2007), health and safety is a universal element that needs to be taken into consideration especially in medium enterprises as it is becoming a major problem for employers in theworld. There is usually lack of management support in small and medium enterprises as most of them look at maximizing of profits instead ofimproving the working cconditions hence the results

are poor health and safety of the employees. As per (Kandwaty, 1997) if management fails to provide a safe and satisfying work climate, workers should respond by absenteeism, lateness or deliberately working slowly. (Hayes and Ninemier, 2009), The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is an agency under the U.S. Department of Labor which oversees and regulates public and private workplace safety and health. Hotels are included in these compliance standards. The Occupational Safety and Health Act apply to nearly all hospitality employers. It requires employers to keep detailed records regarding employee illness and accidents related to work, as well as the calculation of on- job accidents rates. The OSHA Act requires the Secretary of Labour to produce regulations that ensure employers keep records of occupational deaths, injuries, and illness. Recording or reporting a work –related injury, illness, or fatality does not mean that the employer or employee was at fault, that an OSHA rule has been violated, or that the employee is eligible for worker’s compensation or other benefits. Instead, the records are used for a variety of purposes.

Currently, the major areas of OSHA-mandated record keeping related to the hospitality industry include:

- *Log and summary of all recordable injuries and illnesses.*
- *Personal protective equipment (assessment training).*
- *Control of hazardous energy (lock out/tag out).*
- *Hazard communication standards*
- *Emergency action plans and fire prevention plans*

In the same Act continues to add that where employees are employed in any process involving excessive exposure to wet or to any injurious or offensive substance, suitable protective clothing and appliances including where necessary, suitable gloves, footwear, goggles, head or face coverings or any other necessary clothing or appliance required shall be provided and maintained for the use of such employee. The absence of protective clothing increases the risk of being accident prone.

Ensuring Health and Safety

It is indispensable for all hotel employees and employers to know how health and safety may be ensured.

- a. Maintain health and safety is a top-priority concern in a hotel operation. Identifying risks and ensuring correct pre-cautions against the same are very urgent.
- b. Hotel employers and employees should know what risks are?
- c. Ensuring health and safety is reducing the risk factors. The important key factors are risk awareness and effective communication.
- d. Hotel management must prioritize risk control and measures. (<http://www.OSHA Wikipedia>)

Studies have also shown that occupational injury, illness and fatality currently accounts for significant losses, with over 3% GDP losses annually due to these causes. This means investments in occupational health and safety can thus bring gains in productivity and market access (Loewenson, 1998). According to Burlington (2000), there are costs to be borne both in the prevention of accidents and the provision of a safe working environment as well as the cost of any accident, for example cost incurred for replacing damaged materials and tools. Some organizations offer medical insurance as part of their benefits package, but this can be expensive. It would be just as sensible to spend time performing an audit of staff health before there was a need to take remedial medical action. This may mean organizations getting actively involved in the well-being of their staff by educating them about the problems associated with poor diet, smoking stress and alcohol abuse to name a few. By taking an

active part in the prevention of disease the organization retains its workforce, any costs associated with prevention can be offset against potential absenteeism (Taylor, 1998). The International Labour Organization (ILO) formulates international labour standards in the form of conventions and recommendations setting minimum standards of basic labour rights: freedom of association, the right to organize, collective bargaining, elimination of forced labour, equality of opportunity and treatment, and other standards regulating conditions across the entire spectrum of work related issues. It provides technical assistance primarily in the fields of: employment policy, labour law and industrial relations, working conditions, labour statistics and occupational safety and health. The overall costs of accidents include such factors as lost wages, medical expenses, insurance administration, fire related losses and indirect costs. There is also dissatisfaction with work hence the elements of the job and the work environment are believed to have a role to play in explaining absence patterns. It creates some general tediousness with the job and poor working conditions as factors which contributed to dissatisfaction in the workplace. Therefore, there should be a cause of concern for organizations and employees given that social, physical and psychological (Peter and Dodgshum, 2008) well-being of workers depends on a safe work environment.

Control of Health and Safety

Regulation of health and safety matters in the work place is the concern of all. Large establishment may set up a committee to oversee health and safety. Employees, through a representative of their union or an elected person, may lodge a request with the employer to form such a committee.

In establishment employing twenty or more, the majority of the employees may ask for a committee to be formed. It is composed of employees and employer representative.

To ensure effective representation of all employees, factors to be taken into account include:

- Various shifts
- Variety of occupations in the workplace
- Composition of the workplace
- Degree and character of hazards present.

Accredited training courses in occupational health and safety should be undertaken by committee member as soon as possible.

Functions of the committee

The committee must keep under review the measures taken to ensure the health and safety of the person at the workplace. It must hold regular workplace inspections and investigate any reports from committee members or employees about matters that are considered dangerous. The committee makes recommendations to the employer to ensure safety and health of the workplace. The committee tries to rectify problems or resolves matters before it. Records of accidents and hazardous situations are to be developed, enforced and monitored by the committee. The committee also monitors the use, maintenance and if necessary, replacement of plant and equipment to protect employees.

The committee has the power to inspect all information held by the employer relating to any accident or occupational diseases occurring at work, and to any research, testing or examination of any plant or substance for use at that place of work. (Peter and Dodgshum, 2008). Effective Health and safety management has been identified to have direct impact on health and safety performance and resultant reductions in the number of incidents (Lingard and Rowlingson, 2005).

The Supreme Court of India in Civil Appeal No. 1144 – 45 and 1147, 1148 and 1149 of 1982 and Writ Petition (C) Nos. 9728 – 29 of 1983 has held that hotel is a factory. The Hon'ble Court has also held that since the manufacturing process in the form of cooking and preparing food is carried on in the kitchen and kitchen is a part of the hotel, or a part of the premises of the hotel, the entire hotel falls within the purview of the definition of a factory.

However, Section 2(m) of the Factories Act, 1948 excludes certain premises including railway running shed or a hotel, restaurant or eating place from the application of the provisions of the Factories Act. In order to give effect to the judgment of the Supreme Court, the amendment to the provisions of Section 2(m) of the Factories Act has already been proposed. Since the hotels use LPG for cooking process and large number of appliances are involved in the processes, the safety and health of workers employed in hotels need to be addressed to 70 adequately. This can be achieved through making safety and health statute applicable to hotels also.

Objectives

- To study the health and safety practices implemented in accordance to OSHA
- To study the need for implementation and training of OSHA

Study Area

Mahabaleshwar is located in Sahyadri range in Maharashtra with 17° 55' North to 17° 93' North latitude and 73° 39' E to 73° 65' East longitude. The altitude is 1353 m. The area selected by the researcher is basis on its popularity and regular visit of the tourist for tourism. To conduct the research survey medium sized hotels/ resorts (4 star/ 3star) property at Mahabaleshwar were selected by purposive sampling method.

Methodology

The sample size comprised medium sized hotels and there were 100 questionnaires given out to the respondents. In order to acquire sampling frame, individuals had to complete the blank space by writing their type of job. This was to identify the number of different types of employees in different organizations that are exposed to risks that affect their health and safety. A sample was drawn out of the target population using the simple random sampling technique. A combination of research methods and techniques were used to collect data. These included observation, personal interviews and focused group discussions. The researcher used a self-administered qualitative questionnaire containing two types of questions: closed and open ended questions were asked to employees who worked in front office, Housekeeping, food and Beverage service, kitchen and engineering/ maintenance department of medium sized hotels. Collected data was analyzed in consideration of research objectives and questions. This was done by using a MS-Excel provide tables and graphs representation of the data.

Findings

Table No. 1.1 OSH at Workplace

OSH at Workplace	
Response	Percentage
Excellent OSH Policies	20%
Safe Workplace	15%
Free from Health Hazards	15%
Required Special Courtesy for OSH	50%

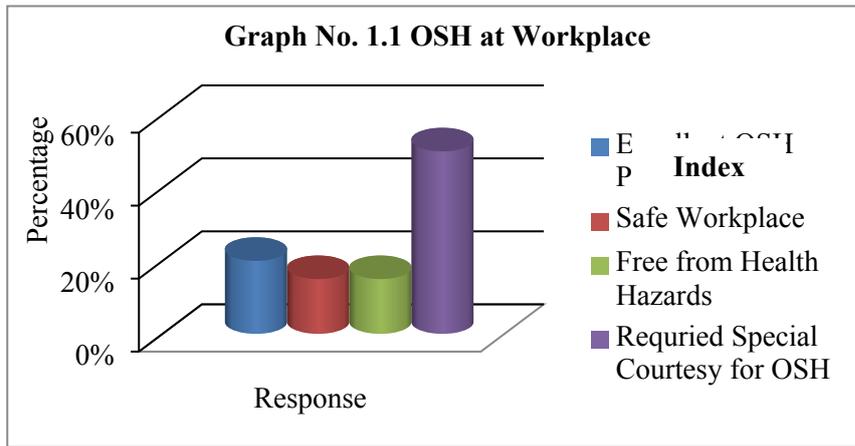


Table No. and Graph 1.1 OSH at Workplace shows that around 50% employees respond for requirement of special attention for occupational safety and health for employees at workplace. Work related injuries and diseases occur as a result of unsafe acts and conditions. They can be prevented by first identifying the hazards and then taking the appropriate preventive measure.

Table No. 1.2 Workplace Accidents & Injuries

Workplace Accidents & Injuries	
Response	Percentage
Musculoskeletal Pain by Standing long Hours	25%
Improper Handling of Cutlery, Crockery & Glassware at F & B Service	20%
Improper Handling of Heavy Machines & Chemicals in Housekeeping	20%
Improper Handling of Equipments in Kitchen	35%

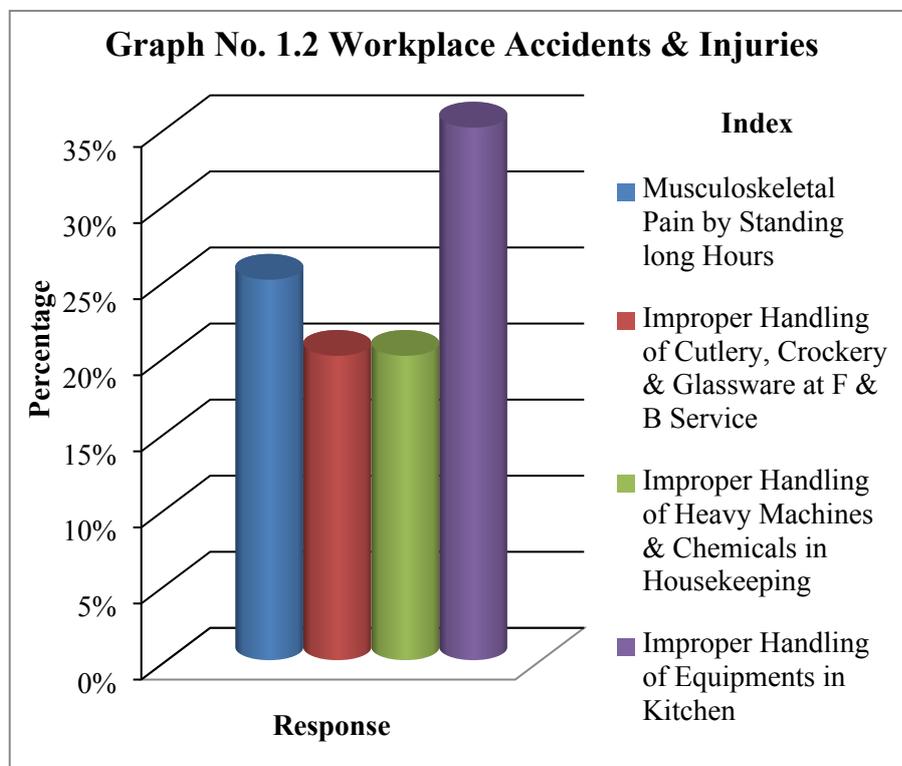


Table No. and Graph 1.2 Workplace Accidents & Injuries indicates that about 35% employees encountered with accidents and injuries because of improper handling of equipments in kitchen, 25% employees were suffering from Musculoskeletal Pain by standing long hours and about 20 % employees meet accidents from improper handling of Heavy machines, Chemicals, Cutlery, Crockery & Glassware during their works hours at workplace.

Table No. 1.3 Workplace Accidents & Injuries

Factors Available for Employee Safety	
Response	Percentage
First Aid Kit	50%
Protective Clothing	35%
Training	15%

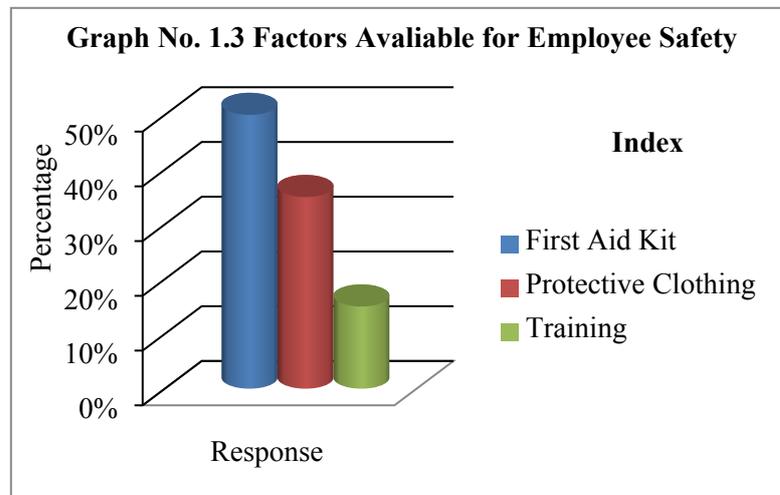


Table No. and Graph No.1.3 Factors available for employee safety indicates that about 50% employees responded to First Aid kit, 35 % responded for Protective clothing and very less employees i.e. only 15 % for training.

Safety training is important in providing staff with the knowledge and skills to work in safe manner. (Occupational Safety & Health guidelines for the Hotel Industry, Ministry of Manpower, Singapore Association of Occupational Therapists, Singapore Physiotherapy Association, Back Society of Singapore and the Singapore Hotel Association, Feb 2003)

Result and Discussion

Employers should be encouraged to establish safe work procedures for the various types of work carried out in the hotel. It should be effectively communicated to all staff. Training, Group meetings should be counted regularly to discuss safety and health issues. Workplace with 50 or more workers should form safety committees with representative’s management and employees. A set of written safety rules and regulations should be published by each department; this will function as a reminder of their safety & health obligations and responsibilities. The promotional programmes should be created for the awareness of safety and health which build a strong safety culture at the work place. There should be a system for documentation and review for occupational safety & health programme to ensure the relevant and effectiveness of the programme. With adequate leadership, attention, and resources, improvements can be made (Institute of Medicine USA, November 1999). All revision to safety and health manual should be dated and recommendation should be considered and implemented for better result of occupational safety & health at workplace.

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