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### **Food Hygiene and Safety Knowledge of Managers in Catering Sector**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Food hygiene and food safety practices integral part of food industry particularly in catering sector as food served must be tasty as well as safe for the consumers. This has a major impact on the public image of these organizations. In India, Food Safety standards are laid by FSSAI to ensure sound implementation of food hygiene and safety practices by the food handlers at all steps of the food production cycle. It is crucial for managerial level employees such as Head Chefs, Restaurant Managers, etc. in catering sectors to understand these concepts thoroughly for their implementation by food handlers. The present study thus focused on studying the food hygiene and safety knowledge of managerial level employees in various catering establishments across Delhi. The study was conducted at 44 restaurants (14 QSRs and 30 FSRs). The results indicated that majority of the managers were males (98.5%) in age group of 20 to 40 years. The knowledge scores indicated that managers in QSRs have better food safety knowledge than those in FSRs. Positive correlation between the knowledge level of managers with the work experience and educational qualification was also observed.

**KEYWORDS:** Food Safety, Knowledge, Manager, Catering Establishment

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Food hygiene and food safety forms an integral part of every catering industry as food served is safe for human consumption and a high standard are needed to protect the health of consumers.<sup>1</sup> Food Service Industry has develops Standard Operating Procedures to ensure safe food handling. These procedures are usually based on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Good Hygienic Practices (GHPs) specified by the food safety regulatory body.<sup>2</sup>In India, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has specified GMP and GHP practices for Food Service Establishments under part V of Schedule 4 of Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Amendment Regulations, 2018.<sup>3</sup> These are the bare minimum requirements for implementation of food hygiene and safety in the catering sector. Also, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system helps in ensuring safe food handling.<sup>4</sup>

Managerial level employees in catering industry have a major responsibility to manage the overall food and beverage operations and sales. These managers usually are in roles of Head Chefs, Food and Beverage Managers, Operation Mangers, etc. These employees play an important role in implementation of the SOPs for safe food handling. They are responsible for the management of the operational activities but also to ensure food safety at each step of the operations. It is key responsibility of managers in catering sector to educate and train the food handler about the SOPs. Hence, it is crucial for managerial level employees to have thorough knowledge regarding food hygiene and safety and various systems in place for its adoption.<sup>5</sup>

FSSAI also emphasizes on this responsibility of the managers in ensuring food safety. FSSAI has introduced Food Safety Training and Certification (FoSTaC) program in year 2016. Under FoSTaC, FSSAI is promoting training and certification of Supervisory level and managerial level employees. FSSAI has suggested that there should be a trained Food Safety Supervisor over maximum 25 food handlers in each food business. The Food Safety Supervisor is responsible for implementation of safe food handling procedures and training of food handlers regarding food safety.<sup>6</sup>

In this context, the research attempts to assess the food hygiene and safety knowledge of the managerial level employee and various factors affecting it.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research study was conducted in 44 catering establishments which included 14 Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) and 30 Full Service Restaurants (FSRs) across Delhi, India. A questionnaire cum interview schedule was prepared for the managerial level employees. It included 20 multiple choice questions), each correct response was scored 1 and incorrect was scored as 0. The

score was categorized into various categories. Also, general information about the managerial level employees was collected. The total strength of managerial level employees was 136 out of which 50 per cent were randomly selected for the study making the sample size of 68 managerial employees (34 QSRs; 34 FSRs).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### ***General Profile of the Employees***

The data revealed that 47 per cent of the employees were **aged** between 30 to 39 years; 41.1 per cent of the employees were in age group 40 years and above and only 11.8 per cent were in age group 20 to 29 years. Also, the data regarding **gender** of managerial level employees revealed that most of the managerial level employees (98.5%) were males. These figures indicate that the catering industry is a male dominated industry. The same was also observed in a study, which documented gender stereotyping within hotel industry.<sup>7</sup>

The data also revealed that catering industry prefers managerial level employees with good years of experience as 70.6 per cent of employees had **experience** of more than 10 years and only 29.4 per cent had an experience of less than 10 years. Thus, although a large number of managerial level employees were highly experienced but did not have an educational degree related to catering industry.

Educational qualification of the employees indicated that nearly 70 per cent of the employees were graduates and only 23.5 per cent employees had professional degree of Bachelors in Hotel Management (BHM).

The salary quoted by the subjects indicated a low payment scale in the catering sector where majority (57.4%) of the managerial level employees were getting salary between 20,001-30,000 Rupees. The salaries of managers were lower in FSR in comparison to QSRs as a larger number of managers in QSRs (44.1%) were getting a salary above Rupees 30,000 in comparison to 26.5 per cent of managers working in FSRs.

**Food Safety Knowledge of Managers**

Table 1 indicates the category wise knowledge scores of select managerial level employees.

**Table 1: Knowledge Scores of Managers**

SCORE & KNOWLEDGE LEVEL	QSRs		FSRs		TOTAL	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
<b>POOR</b> (01-05)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>AVERAGE</b> (06-10)	4	11.8	14	41.2	18	26.5
<b>GOOD</b> (11-15)	9	26.5	17	50.0	26	38.2
<b>VERY GOOD</b> (16-20)	21	61.7	3	8.8	24	35.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100</b>

The results indicated that 61.7 per cent of managerial level employees in QSRs obtained very good scores while merely 8.8 per cent of employees from FSRs were able to obtain score in this category 50 per cent of managers in FSRs and 26.5 per cent of manager in QSRs were able to obtain good scores. It was heartening to observe that none of the employees were in poor category of scores. However, scores of managerial level employees of QSRs was comparatively better than the FSRs.

**Correlation of Knowledge Score with Age, Salary, Work Experience and Educational Qualifications of Managerial Level Employees**

**Table 2: Correlation of Knowledge Score with General Profile of Mangers (N= 68)**

Knowledge Score vs.	Category	r Value	p Value
	Age	.120	.330
	Salary	.231	.058
	Work Experience	.297	.014
	Educational Qualification	.355	.003

Correlation was derived between knowledge scores with age, salary, work experience and educational level employees of Managerial Level Employees. The results for the same are illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2 indicates a positive correlation between salary of managerial level employees and their knowledge scores. Education and work experience of employees adds to the knowledge and learning of the employees. There was a positive correlation observed between the knowledge level of employees and the work experience. Also, a positive correlation was seen between knowledge score and education qualification. Hence, it can be interpreted that employees with higher education qualification (i.e BHM or graduation) and greater years of experience had better knowledge scores than employees with lesser education qualification and work experience.

## **CONCLUSION**

Food hygiene and safety is a crucial part of food industry which also includes catering sector. The catering establishments should have their SOPs in place based on GHP, GMP and HACCP practices laid by the regulatory bodies. Managers play an important role in implementation of food safety. Hence, it is essential for managers to have thorough knowledge of food hygiene and safety. The current study focused on assessing the food safety knowledge of managerial level employees in catering sector. Majority of the employees were male (98.5 %) in age group of 20-40 years. Catering industry prefers experienced individuals for the managerial posts as managers have a crucial responsibility of managing the entire operation in their scope of work. The data revealed that majority of the managers (70.6 %) had experience of over a decade. Also, there is a positive correlation between knowledge scores and work experience. Also, a positive correlation was observed between knowledge scores and education qualification of the managers. It may be concluded that managers with a technical degree and good experience is ideal for ensuring food safety and managing operations in a catering establishments.

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