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HYGIENE, SANITATION AND FOOD SAFETY - KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES AMONG FOOD HANDLERS WORKING IN RESTAURANTS AND FAST FOOD CENTERS IN TIRUPATI & TIRUMALA

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ABSTRACT

Tirumala and Tirupati are world Famous Pilgrim centres in Andhra Pradesh, India. Tirupati, the Gate Way of Tirumala, the abode of the famed "Lord Venkateswara" attracts around 3 Lakh Pilgrims, and Visitors of Domestic and International and minimum of one lakh everyday. Besides pilgrim centres, Tirupati a centre of hosting several Educational Institutions and Small Scale Industries and their is a dire need for the study. In this descriptive study, food handlers working in Restaurants and Indian Fast Food Centres in Tirupati and Tirumala town area of Andhra Pradesh, were selected for the sample. To Assess the knowledge and practices among food handlers working in Restaurants and Fast Food Centres. Of the total respondents, Restaurants of Tirupati and Tirumala Scored moderate values 70% and 67.2% in the practices towards Hygiene Sanitation, and Food Safety to the maximum of cleaning of floors, ventilation, temperature control at storage at preparation where as in Fast Food Centres of Tirupati and Tirumala scored minimum values i.e., 30.0% and 16.4%. The Fast Food Centres where not given much priority to Hygiene Sanitation, and Food Safety Practices in anyway. Restaurants showed moderate Practices and where as Fast Food Centres showed poor practices in both areas. The findings suggest an overall deficiency in the standards and practices by food handlers in Fast Food Centres of in both locations.

KEYWORDS

hygiene, sanitation, food safety, food handlers.

INTRODUCTION

Lack of basic infrastructure, poor knowledge of Hygiene and Practices in Food Service Establishments can contribute to out breaks of food borne illness. Food Safety is defined by the FAO/WHO, as the assurance that when food is consumed in the usual manner does not cause harm to human health and wellbeing (WHO, 2002). According to WHO (1989) food handling personnel play important role in ensuring Food Safety throughout the chain of food production and storage.

Lack of unsuitable environments for food operations can contribute to poor microbial quality of foods. In addition, poor sanitary practices, food storage, food handling and preparations can create an environment in which Bacteria and other infectious agents are more transmitted over inadequate time and temperature control and cross contaminations are responsible for food poisoning outbreaks (Wilson, 1997). Poor personnel hygiene frequently contributes to food borne illness which indicates that food handler's knowledge and handling practices needs to be improved.

As stated by WHO, each year over two million people die from diarrheal diseases, many of which are acquired from eating contaminated food from food services establishments (Lee et.al; 2012). Major factors in food contamination are food handling during preparation process by food handlers, food purchase from unsafe sources, inadequate cooking (or) heating storage at room temperature cross contamination from other foods poor personal hygiene or improper food handling practices. Safe handling of food especially in catering establishments is a basic element in the reduction of food borne illnesses and it is essential to understand the Hygiene sanitation and Food Safety knowledge and practices of food handlers working in the catering centres.

METHODOLOGY

A purposive sampling technique was followed and multistage random selection was utilized in the selection of the sample units. A multiple group comparison design was adopted where in a total number of 130 Food Catering Centres divided in to Restaurant and Fast Food Centres both in Tirupati and Tirumala Towns of Andhra Pradesh. 50 Restaurants and 50 Fast Food Centres from Tirupati and 10 Restaurants and 20 Fast Food Centres from Tirumala as per the data of Municipal Corporation and Revenue Section of Tirupati & Tirumala. Information regarding their Hygiene, sanitation and Food Safety Practices was collected using a structured schedule. Percentages, Means and Anova was calculated to see differences between the practices Restaurants and Fast Food Centres in two locations.

A schedule consists of demographic profile of respondents and a structured questions prepared for the study which consists of 25 questions. Each question was evaluated and aimed to generate Yes/No answer and assigned mark 1 for 'Yes' answer and mark 0 for 'No' answer and total scores obtained in each of the area was calculated, interpreted in relation to the maximum score using appropriate statistical procedure and Data analysis was done using SPSS Version of (20.0).

ANALYSIS

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FOOD HANDLER'S: 130

Demographic Characterises	Number	Percentage%
GENDER	All are Male Respondents	100%
Education Qualification		
Below 10 th Class	8	10.04 %
Intermediate	43	33.08 %
Graduates	60	46.15 %
HTML ,Degree / Diploma	14	10.76 %
Post Graduates	5	3.85 %
Working Experience		
Below 5 years	35	26.92 %
5 to 10 years	58	44.62 %
10 to 15 years	22	16.92 %
15 to 25 years	15	11.53 %

Table No. 1 presents the distribution of socio demographic profile data for 130 food handlers working in Restaurants and Fast food Centres (Indian) in Tirupati and Tirumala areas. The data were collected in the categories of Gender, Education Qualifications, Working experience and kind of owner ships of the catering centres. Food handlers who responded to the schedule was males (100%). Recording education qualifications 8 members (10.04%) or below SSLC all are working in Fast Food Centres. 43 members (33.08%) having intermediate education, 60 members (46.15%) are graduates and 14 members 10.76% having HTML Diploma and Degree holders and only 5 members (3.85%) are post graduates.

Regarding working experience 35 members (26.9%) are having below 5 years experience 58 members (46.15%) are having 10 year working experience and 22 (16.92%) are having 15 years experience and 11.53% are having 25 years of working experience in the establishments and they are owners of their Food Centres.

TABLE 2: PERCENTAGE SCORE OF HYGIENE, SANITATION AND FOOD SAFETY PRACTICES IN RESTAURANTS AND FAST FOOD CENTRES (n=130)

Location of Food Catering Centers	Number	Percentage of Practices
Tirupati Restaurants	50	70.6%
Tirumala Restaurants	10	67.2%
Tirupati Fast Food Centers	50	30.0%
Tirumala Fast Food Centers	20	16.4%

Table no. 2 shows that the level of food handler’s knowledge and practices of Hygiene were above average level with a mean percentage score of 70.6% in Tirupati Restaurants and 67.2% in Tirumala Restaurants. Where as, 30% and 16.4% level of knowledge and practice was observed in Fast Food centres of Tirupati and Tirumala. Food handlers of Fast food centres demonstrated very poor in knowledge and practices in Hygiene and maintained poor sanitation and safety precautions.

TABLE 3: MEAN SCORES AND ‘t’ VALUES OF RESTAURANTS & FAST FOOD CENTRES OF TIRUPATI & TIRUMALA CATERING CENTRES IN HYGIENE, SANITATION, FOOD SAFETY PRACTICES

Practices	Tirupati			Tirumala		
	Restaurants (n=50)	Fast Food Centres (n=50)	“t” Value	Restaurant (n=10)	Fast Food Centres (n=20)	“t” value
Hygiene	Means \pm SD	Means \pm SD		Means \pm SD	Means \pm SD	
Sanitation	16.66	7.50	26.64**	16.80	4.10	18.56**
Food safety	(\pm 2.33)	(\pm 0.70)		(\pm 2.78)	(\pm 0.97)	

**Significant at (P<0.01 Level)

Table No. 3 shows that the Hygiene, Sanitation and Safety practices were expressed in terms of means and percent scores. The differences of two locations were calculated by ‘t’ –values.

TABLE 4: COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES AND ‘t’ VALUES FOR RESTAURANTS AND FAST FOOD CENTERS OF TIRUPATI & TIRUMALA

Attribute	Restaurant			Fast Food Centers		
	Tirupati 50	Tirumala 10	t-Value	Tirupati 50	Tirumala 20	t-Value
Hygiene						
Sanitation	16.66	16.80	0.168(Ns)	7.50	4.10	16.29**
Food safety	(\pm 2.33)	(\pm 2.78)		(\pm 0.71)	(\pm 0.97)	

(Ns) Not Significant ** Significant at 0.01 Level.

The Knowledge and Practices Levels on Hygiene in Restaurants and Fast Food centres with mean scores of 16.66 (\pm 2.33) and 7.50 (\pm 0.70) in Tirupati were significant at 0.01 Percent level and 16.80 (\pm 12.78) and 4.10 (\pm 0.97) for Restaurants and Fast Foods centres in Tirumala were significant at 0.01 percent level Table No. 4 shows the comparison of Restaurants of Tirupati and Tirumala and Fast Food Centres of Tirupati and Tirumala. the results revealed that Practices where not Significant in Restaurants (0.168) (Ns) at both locations, and the practices Were Significant at 1 percent level (16.29).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The restaurants in Tirupati and Tirumala commonly gave positive answer for the statements that they are maintained the clean and dry floors, well ventilated rooms, giving importance to safety, that is first aid kit should available to meet the emergencies, Accident preventive measures should take immediately at the premises, Restaurants agrees that Hygiene inspection is required and it is necessary to control rules and regulations laid by Food Inspectors. 100% agree and requires that running hot and cold should available in wash basins, and cooked food should be kept covered at right temperatures and agreed that there was no sign boards for safety precautions hanged in kitchen. Food safety knowledge of the food handlers were high in storage conditions like temperature and infestations. Having moderate knowledge in handing at serving of food, clearing up, disposal and cross contamination.

Food handlers in Restaurants show interest and required in choosing good materials for cleaning purpose and aware of the need for personal hygiene and safety precautions and cares their personnel health. 50% food handlers responded about food catering centres they work, should have clean floor, non sliding surface, free from dust and dirt required pest control treatments, requires frequent garbage disposal, and Food Inspection in catering centres. All the (100%) respondents of Restaurants cleans their work area before starting work, cleans kitchen equipment and work tables, remains spic and span, during and after service.

That Restaurants are able meet the Hygiene practices and found in good conditions and always adhered and concentrate on the practices of the same attribute in both areas where as in fast food centres, being a small scale sector not given much priority to the hygiene, sanitation and safety practices having poor knowledge about Hygiene. Food handlers are having undergraduate education and 50% are having graduation, their awareness toward these attributes are poor compared to the Restaurants of Tirupati and Tirumala, and they simply emphasized on cooking, serving and disposing without much effects on hygiene, sanitation and safety measures thus the fast food centres scored the least means even for the practices like importance of safety precautions in the kitchen, temperatures, storage condition of cooked and semi cooked foods, safety precautions like requirement of first aid kit and accident preventive measures at the premises.

In Tirumala the means for Hygiene, Sanitation & Food Safety Practices were very poor than Tirupati Fast Food Centres being a small Scale Sector not given much priority to the hygiene environment and they simply emphasized on cooking, serving, display without much efforts on hygiene sanitation, and safety practices, they seemed to be simply following the economic returns without much emphasis on safety precautions indicating a definite need to bring changing’s regarding at least to the minimal level to safe guard the health conditions of the customers as well as the environment/surroundings of Fast Food Centres.

The study reveals that an overall deficiency in the standards of Hygiene, Sanitation, Food Safety Practices by food handlers in Fast Food Centres in Tirumala and Tirupati require proper training to improve knowledge and practices. The results revealed that environment in which they work also influence the knowledge and practice of food handlers that more effort is needed to be carry out by the food authorities to improve that level of practices in food safety among the food handlers in Tirupati and Tirumala towns.

Inadequate practices can not only be blamed on insufficient knowledge but barriers preventing implementation of their practices despite adequate knowledge are lack of time, lack of staff and lack of resources thus, infrastructure modification, and strengthening is required where training of food handlers is advocated (Sultana Abida et.at.,2013).

Previous study reported that improved knowledge will lead to behavioural changes involving improved practices and staff attitudes, can limit the improvements of practices among staff (Griffith, 2000). This majority of studies support knowledge as a prerequisite of safe food handling practices (Daniels et al., 2001., Lin et al., 2004).

Food Service managers are responsible for making sure employees follow safe food handling practices, so customers do not become ill from un safe food making certain that the food served to customers is safe for consumption is a priority for retail food service operations such as Hotels, Restaurants, Fast Food centres, Hospitals, Schools and Catering Operations.

CONCLUSION

Restaurants showed moderate Practices and where as Fast Food Centres showed poor practices in both areas. The findings suggest an overall deficiency in the standards and practices by food handlers in Fast Food Centres of in both locations.

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