

## **Present Status of Food Safety and Hygiene Practices in Tourist Hotels in Uva Province towards Sustainable Business Operations**

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### **Abstract**

Food safety and hygiene practices in tourist hotels play a critical role in ensuring the well-being of travelers and the reputation of a region's tourism industry. This study aimed to assess the current status of food safety and hygiene practices in tourist hotels in the Uva Province of Sri Lanka, with the goal of promoting sustainable business operations and contributing to the socio-economic development of the region. A sample of 60 tourist hotels from both Badulla and Moneragala districts was selected for the study, and a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods, including questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and direct observations, were employed for data collection. The results revealed that a majority of hotels in the Uva Province were not certified with food safety or quality-related standards, indicating a need for improvement in compliance. In terms of raw material handling, most hotels exhibited good practices, such as checking for impurities and dates, but there was room for enhancement in other aspects, including supplier details and cleanliness of transporting vehicles. Personal hygiene practices among hotel staff were generally satisfactory, with a few exceptions, highlighting the importance of consistent adherence to hygiene standards. The study identified areas for improvement related to cross-contamination prevention, sanitation, time and temperature management, as well as staff training and awareness. Financial and management constraints were found to be key challenges in adopting food safety and hygiene practices. However, waste management practices in the hotels were generally adequate, though a few hotels required improvement. This research emphasizes the importance of enhancing food safety and hygiene practices in tourist hotels in Uva Province to meet sustainable development goals and maintain the region's reputation as a tourist destination.

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