

# Human Resource Management Practices and Sustainable Growth in Star Hotels of Nepal

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**ABSTRACT-** The world is a rapidly and constantly changing place and that change is a part of the reality of business, which challenges all industries and the entire world. Because of the reason that the emergence of the knowledge-driven economy has evolved a significant challenge for human resource managers on how to manage employees involved by gathering, leveraging, and using knowledge effectively to achieve competitive advantage in the global economy, which drag interest to the researcher on HRM practices for Nepalese star hotel industry for four reasons. One is in such a politically unstable situation, how far hotels are practicing towards employees so that employees provide the best service that attracts tourists to visit again. Second is the urgency behind tourism ‘Double the Number of Visitors Visiting Nepal’ plan of Nepal tourism for 2019 and so finding out the rate of tourism till date. The third is the issue and importance of HRM for sustainable growth. Fourth, the issue of re-development and practice of HRM which is specific, relevant, and useful in the hospitality industry and besides affiliation to a political party and its support, how far Nepalese star industries have grown for sustainability and the status of its. The paper presents an overall figure of the HRM practices in the case of star hotels in Nepal and the conclusion is drawn on an abstract basis, it is hard to make more conclusive use of its data. This study used a qualitative and descriptive approach with a convenient sampling method for data collection. Given the high proportion of quantitative studies in hospitality industry research across the world, a qualitative method is used in this research and in-depth interviews were done. Thirty hotels were approached and fifteen hotels participated in this research which was shown in table 2, representing a 50 percent response rate.

**KEYWORDS:** Human resource management practices, sustainable growth, star hotels.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The paper will consequently present the transferred and/or localized HRM practices in the Nepalese star hotels. In the last few decades, Kathmandu has seen the mushrooming of

world-class hotels [1] [2]. The Nepalese hotel industry has completed a full cycle, experiencing both downswing and upswing periods. The industry was robust in the past. However, as tourism development was deteriorated by the political instability and the decade-long violent conflict, the hotel industry in Nepal suffered a lot during the period of crisis [3]. The industry passed through the hardest time ever. Undercutting rates and fostering unhealthy competition was the biggest mistake in the history of the hotel industry that aggravated the situation [4]. It was simply unsustainable and the customers used to question the reliability of the services at such a low rate. How good is the hotel in providing fair practices to the employee? The hotels continue to suffer in the transition period with the increasing costs and undue pressure from unions [5]. Revenue is decreasing but the unions are forcing the hotels to increase pay and facilities simply to gain popularity among the members and for some other political reasons [6]. Hotels are the breeding ground for miscreants, misbehaviors, and political battlefield [7] [8]. The problem of hotels using costly generators even if there is only one guest or not at all and the problem of other operating costs that hotels have to bear during the period of crisis be it power crisis or political crisis. Due to these many reasons researcher was interested in studying what is the current status of tourism [9], HRM practices for sustainable growth [10], Tourism Ecosystem [11] The problem in HRM practice [12], Counseling [12], Job satisfaction [13] issues, and the challenges that the hotel industry is functioning and facing with [14].

## II. OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

### A. Growth of Hotel Industry in Nepal

Nepal’s travel and tourism sector directly supported 504,000 jobs in 2013. The country is expected to attract 861,000 international tourist arrivals in 2014, and the income from tourists is expected to rise by 11.9 percent in the same year [15]. The “Economic Activities Report 2013-14”, a study conducted by Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) research department, has concluded that the tourist standard hotels in Nepal have increased by 15.4% to 1,224 hotels as compared to the last fiscal year. A total of 20,408 rooms are available

per day in the country, which means that the country can accommodate 7.44 million tourists annually with the existing infrastructure [16].

### III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Table 1: The sample was taken for the study based on Kathmandu and Pokhara only

Name of the Hotel	Category	Location
Hotel Temple Tress	3	Gaurighat, Pokhara
Soltee Crown Plaza	5	Tahachal, Kathmandu
Dwarika's Hotel	5	Battisputali, Kathmandu
Atithi Hotel	3	Lakeside, Pokhara
Fishtail Lodge	5	Gaurighat, Pokhara
Hotel Mount Kailash	2	Lakeside, Pokhara
Radisson Hotel	5	Lagimpat, Kathmandu
The Everest Hotel	5	Baneshwor, Kathmandu
Pokhara The Grande	5	Pardi, Pokhara
Shangri-la Village Pokhara	4	Gharipatan, Pokhara
Hotel Barahi	3	Lakeside, Pokhara
The Fulbari Resort	3	Chinedanga, Pokhara
The Hotel Bedrock	2	Gupteswar Gupha.
Hotel Fewa Prince	3	Chautha, Pokhara
Landmark Hotel	2	Lakeside, Pokhara

Source for population: Nepal Tourism Statistics 2013, Annual Statistical Report, Government of Nepal, Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Singha Durbar, Kathmandu

In general, the main aim of this research is to know the condition of star hotels and the human resources management practices for sustainable growth. The specific objectives are:

1. To identify the current status and HRM practice's effectiveness to the hotel industry of Nepal.
2. To find the HRM functions used to engage with the Nepalese hotel industry.
3. To analyze the HRM issues in the hotel industry of Nepal.
4. To identify the challenges faced by the Nepalese hotel industry

### IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the status of the Nepalese hotel industry in general and how far does HRM practice enhance organizational effectiveness?
2. What are the major HRM functions used to engage with the Nepalese hotel industry?
3. What are the major HRM issues in the hotel industry of Nepal?
4. What are the challenges faced by the Nepalese hotel industry of Nepal?

### V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Interview questions to managers and employees were designed and carried out. Several telephone calls were also made to each hotel to seek participation and to arrange the interview time if they were willing to participate. The table categorization is shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 2: The population of star and non-star hotels in Nepal

SN	Kathmandu Valley	No of Hotel
1	5 star	8
2	4 star	2
3	3	11
4	2	27
5	1	26
	Sub-Total	74
SN	Out of Station	No of Hotel
1	5 star	3
2	4 star	-
3	3 star	5
4	2 star	4
5	1 star	11
	Sub Total	23
	Grand Total	97

#### A. Data collection method

A list of predetermined and standard open-ended structured questions was used which was taken from (Minichiello et al. 1995; Sekaran 2003). Follow-up questions were asked for elaboration or clarification (Maykut and Morehouse 1994) [17]. Audio-recording was needed as the researcher planned to use interviews as the primary source of data (Maykut and Morehouse 1994). All agreed on audio recording. The researcher introduces the expectations from the interview. This orientation process was beneficial for maintaining a positive interviewing climate and establishing the trust relationship between the interviewer and the interviewees (Maykut and Morehouse 1994).

#### B. Data analysis

A key characteristic of qualitative research is the 'human-as-an-instrument' for the data collection and analysis (Cavana et al. 2001). Frequency was used to calculate in knowing how many and who the hotels participate in giving certain points which were shown in the tables below.

### VI. THE RESULTS

The key human resource management practices that increase organizational effectiveness, as identified by interviewees, are listed in Table 3 in a sequence of the frequency with which they were mentioned

Table 3: HRM practices for the effectiveness of the hotel industry

No	HRM practices	Remarks Hotel
1	Employee benefits	12
2	Training and skill need	11
3	Employee participation	10
4	Career opportunities	10
5	Financial incentives	9
6	Existing employee flexibility	8
7	Exemplary employee awards	6
8	Cross-departmental collaboration	5
9	Employee assistance program	2

From the data analysis, it is found that to get better organizational effectiveness two different HRM practices must be emphasized 1) employee benefits and 2) training and skill. However, benefits must be made available fairly and consistently to all employees, no matter what their position and department are? The effectiveness of technical training can be reflected in many different ways, including service efficiency, customer complaints, customer satisfaction survey, or performance appraisal.

We are striving for more employee benefits. Employees will be able to understand that organizations treat them important and valued assets.-Marketing Manager, Barahi Pokhara.

The purpose of this plan is to provide ‘learning by doing opportunities. Industry leaders reported that in addition to job-specific skills, the hospitality industry has difficulty finding entry-level workers who possess basic “soft skills,” the hospitality industry as a whole lacks consistent training models and portable credentials that are recognized industry-wide. English proficiency is another training challenge for many employers in the hospitality industry.

“There is no best mode of training other than on the job training” - Marketing Manager, Barahi  
 "Training helps providing memorable service to customer " - Line Manager, Temple Tree Hotel

The other is employees participate in the joint-training program together because they can share mutual resources and exchange their knowledge, skills, and experiences with each other

Some employees pay more attention to career opportunities than financial rewards because they are keen to have a chance to develop their career path.- Marketing Manager, Fewa Prince Hotel, Pokhara

Most participants agreed that financial incentives are a good way to encourage employees and to increase organizational effectiveness. These hotels distribute financial incentives based on their performance at the organizational or departmental level. Using existing employees flexibly instead of employing casual workers during peak hours is

preferred since they are familiar with the organizational culture and sensitive to the hotel’s requirements and standards. Exemplary employee awards are another HRM activity used by star hotels in Nepal to enhance organizational effectiveness. All five-star hotels are focused to select an exemplary employee every quarter. It shows 5-star hotel offers gift vouchers to those employees which make them delighted. And other hotels also offer an award in terms of bonuses and certificates. The purpose of introducing an employee assistance program is to help employees concentrate on their work without being disturbed by their problems. Once employees understand what sort of assistance or care they have access to in the workplace, they will not fear dealing with issues and will be happy to devote themselves to the organization.

**A. Functions of HRM in star hotels of Nepal**

HRM was an administrative function and its major role was book-keeping in the areas of attendance and leave records, payroll and welfare, hiring, and evaluation. Human Resource Management practices in a star hotel in Pokhara are based on the generic function of HRM like selection, appraisal, reward, and development, and the others are acquisition, career planning, employee participation, job definition, and compensation.

**B. Main HRM issues confronted by the Nepalese hotel industry**

The major human resource management issues confronting the hotel industry in Nepal currently and for the near future, as identified by interviewees, are listed in Table 4.

Table 4: HRM issues confronting the hotel industry in Nepal

No	HRM issues	Remark Hotel
1	Excessive unionism	All 15
2	corporate social responsibility	Almost 12
3	Training and development	Hotel 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14
4	Employee turnover	Hotel 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11,13, 14, 15
5	Knowledge-driven economy	Hotel 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14
6	Service quality	Hotel 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14
7	Shortage of employees	Hotel 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 14
8	Internship employment	Hotel 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 13
9	Outsourcing/dispatching	Hotel 2, 5, 6, 8, 10,11, 14
10	Flexible employment	Hotel 2, 3, 4, 6, 12
11	Downsizing	Hotel 1, 4, 5, 6, 11
12	The new labor retirement pension system	Hotel 3, 4, 5, 10
13	Employment alternatives outside the country	Hotel 7, 9, 13
14	Collectivism to individualism	Hotel 2, 3
15	Workforce diversity	Hotel 5, 15
16	Diversity management	----
17	Employment security	----
18	Effective utilization of employees	----
19	Climate change	----

The basic issue of the hotel industry is unionization, Low level of training and development is another pertinent issue, especially in the case of Nepal. Similarly, there is a very close type of recruitment practice in the Nepalese hospitality industry posing serious challenges on retaining talents in the country and on the other hand facing deficiency of competent human resources in the industry. Similarly, because of the career prospect of people working in the hotel industry and also crave of earning much to live high standard life, staying in one organization for a long time is rare, especially Nepalese brain drain to abroad have been the major issues in terms of getting educated employee in the hotel industry. The issue of corporate social responsibility is also getting momentum these days. In the Kathmandu valley and as well most of the 5-star hotels are handled by Indian managers where the survey found them staying longer than Nepalese

**C. Challenges Facing by Nepalese Hotel**

By its nature hospitality industry is influenced by other economic and social sectors and sub-sectors posing certain challenges to the industry. Customers today are not only looking for quality goods and services but also the provision of a memorable experience. Thus creating customer value through innovation is the first and foremost challenge of the hospitality industry today and in the days to come. Globalization itself is a challenge to this industry since it offers comparison and increases competition among the service providers. Attending the desired experiences of very individualized customers has become a tough challenge in this industry. The challenges devastated the lives and lifestyles of indigenous people. Sustainable eco-initiative in the tourism and hospitality industry has become a burning issue today. Eco-design of hotels, eco-green housekeeping, energy conservation, water resources management, and other environmental considerations are some major issues of the hospitality industry today. Excessive unionism is another serious challenge faced by the Nepalese hotel industry. Today forced recruitment of unskilled manpower to sensitive positions under pressure to the management by trade unions and the unruly behavior of some of the staff have hampered overall operational efficiency and service delivery of hospitality industries. Nepalese hospitality industries are also facing the difficulty of low occupancy rates and thus causing heavy reliance on food and beverage services to sustain the industry. Similarly, in the absence of a common code of conduct of the hospitality industry, there is unhealthy competition among the industries, which was more evident during the crisis period. In the absence of a database of demand and supply of human resource development, there is quite a mismatch in demand-supply dynamics in the Nepalese hospitality industry. Hotel industries including the Hotel Association of Nepal are often challenged for confining themselves within the boundaries of their hotels. The hospitality industry suffers from different unfortunate events, episodes, and incidences from time to time whether it is September 11, the Oil crisis, Tsunami, or Bird or Swine Flu. Similarly, given the rate of environmental degradation

and the stress on unplanned and unfettered urbanization, it is possible that tourists may not like to stay in hotels in such poorly managed locations. The overall image of the hotel industry by parents and customer is not good though everyone loves to have an excellent service experience.

**D. Need of HR in Future**

What sort of people will be needed in the future, when asking what sort of people, in terms of numbers, skills, and capabilities the participants provided varied answers from different perspectives

Table 5: Employee needed in future

No	Sort of people needed in the future	Frequency
1	High Profile individual to top-level	15
2	Middle-level management	15
3	Entry-level employees	13
4	Hospitality graduate and degree	10
5	Characteristics and personality traits	
	a. Positive attitude	10 10
	b. Strong communication power	10
	c. Enthusiastic and energetic	9 9
	d. Disciplined	9 9
	e. Positive value	8 8
	f. Integrity	7 7
	g. Language proficiency	5 5
	h. Flexibility	
	i. Interpersonal relationship	
	j. Learnable	
	k. Adaptable ability	
	l. Neat and clean mindset	
	m. Competence	

**VII. DISCUSSIONS**

Nepal has every category of accommodation facilities that range from international standard star hotels to budget hotels and lodges. 15 issues were identified as the main human resource management issues confronting the hotel industry in Nepal in the immediate future shown in table 5. HRM practices can substantially help a firm perform better. The results indicated that HRM practices had slightly a direct effect on service quality and an indirect effect through employees’ service behavior. The hospitality HR managers should regularly conduct job evaluation surveys to keep them updated. Besides the market positioning, the hotels can launch promotional programs on HRM practice positioning in the job market to attract potential employees. Not only practitioners in the industry but also government and the academy need to collaborate side by side to strengthen the professional development and practice of HRM in Nepal. Employee turnover has been one of the biggest concerns in the hotel industry for a long time (Hinkin and Tracey 2000) [18] and it is the major issue of Nepalese star hotels due to brain drain has become the fashion.

Globalization has posed a serious threat to national tradition and culture. Therefore, tourism trade associations like the Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) should make joint efforts to continue to preserve age-old arts, culture, and other national heritages. People should be made aware that culture

might be linked with the identity of particular ethnic groups [19]. However, it is a national asset and it is the responsibility of every citizen to promote and preserve national heritage with cultural and historical value.

The issue of melting Himalayas due to climate change has become a serious challenge for Nepal. Therefore, it requires integrated but swift actions on the part of the government and tourism stakeholders or by responding to climate change with adaptation (through risk management plan, appropriate building structure, environment-friendly hotel designs, proper treatment of sewage, awareness program, and carbon trade) or mitigation (energy-efficient buildings, awareness program, enforcement of environmental management system, use of renewable energy sources and tree plantation) strategy.

In a survey of the Caribbean hospitality industry, Hinds et al. (2004) emphasized that attitudinal problems must be taken seriously because unhelpful attitudes are difficult to train away [20]. Their views are supported by many researchers. Freiberg stressed (1998) 'hire for attitude, train for skill' because knowledge and skill can be improved through education, experience, and on-the-job training but personality characteristics are not likely to be easily changed.

### VIII. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Unless tourist destinations are not made competitive in Nepal, hotels alone cannot gain competitiveness in the international market. The World-class famous hotels' networking and personalized touch to the potential customers through email messages with details of their booking status, facilities, and services may be quite interesting to the star hotels of Nepal. The hotel industry of Nepal should understand the contemporary issues and challenges of globalization and its impact on the hospitality business and prepare themselves to grab the opportunities and face challenges with the strategic move and enhanced competitiveness. For this, the government also needs to be proactive to develop Nepal as a competitive tourist destination by improving the relatively low-level competitiveness indicators. Establishing networks and connections to the national, regional, and international industries would contribute to accelerating innovation in this industry. Given the highly seasonable characteristics of Nepal's tourism business, the hotel industry should adopt a twofold strategy of forging partnerships with the major players and stakeholders of the tourism business to reduce the impact of the seasonality factor by promoting Nepal for all seasons and seeking alternative use of its infrastructure during offseason. The basic thing is there is a lot to be done to improve the tourism sector in Nepal. Because of many crises, best HRM practices become difficult to implement for sustainable growth in Nepalese hotels though Nepal is the most eminent place for tourism that will ultimately hamper the star hotel businesses of Nepal. Globalization has brought both opportunities and challenges to the hospitality industry throughout the World. These challenges, if not addressed properly in time, might cause Nepalese hospitality industries,

especially the hotel industries severely marginalized. Ultimately, that would hamper tourism development in the country. There are some suggestions for the future implications:

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- To ensure quality service, it is advisable to use the facilities and services of government-registered hotels, lodges, travel agencies, licensed tour guides only and engage an authorized trekking guide or porter only through a registered travel and trekking agency.
- Practice of alliances, franchising, management contracts, joint ventures, mergers, and acquisitions might help strengthen their position and competitiveness.
- Information technology is a major factor influencing economies of scale and operational efficiency as well as shaping the opportunities for hotel industries.
- The use of the customer's database should be increased to engage the customer's relationship marketing.
- The government should encourage Nepali types of hospitality by providing incentives to the entrepreneurs.
- The hotel industry in Nepal should strive its best to enhance its image as a child-friendly, labor-friendly, and environment-friendly hotel.
- Hotels must design destination marketing to influence visitor behavior including the type of products and activities they choose, times of the year they visit types of accommodation.

The growth rate of hotels in Nepal has been higher than the growth rate of tourists' inflow. Still, what is a matter of concern is a decline in the growth rate of traditional pleasure tourism that cannot even be compensated by the upcoming trekking and mountaineering tourism.

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