

**FOSTERING OSH IN INFORMAL CONSTRUCTION
SECTOR OF SRI LANKA:
CHALLENGES AND APPROACHES**

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Degree of Master of Science

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Sri Lanka

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master
of Science in Occupational Safety and Health Management

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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own work and this dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a Degree or Diploma in any other University or institute of higher learning and to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where the acknowledgement is made in the text.

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Date

The above candidate has carried out research for the Masters Dissertation under my supervision.

Dr. Nayanthara De Silva

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Signature

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Date

ABSTRACT

Fostering OSH in Informal Construction Sector of Sri Lanka: Challenges and Approaches

The informal construction sector plays a vital role in Sri Lankan economy by being the second highest informal sector after agriculture. Moreover, there are considerably higher amounts of hazards in informal construction sites when compared with other industries. Simultaneously, several challenges to eliminate those hazards were discovered under five key areas as financial, time, knowledge/skills, misconception and poor attitude, cultural, regulatory and industrial. Thus, this study was conducted with the aim of fostering Occupational Safety and Health in Sri Lankan informal construction sector by recommending the probable approaches to mitigate above identified challenges.

Accordingly, a mixed research approach was adopted with questionnaire survey for 102 respondents while carrying out semi structured interviews with seven professionals. The findings were analyzed with descriptive analysis, one sample T-Test, factor analysis and code-based content analysis techniques. As the most common hazards in Sri Lankan informal construction sector, falling from height and ladder/scaffolding work with slippage and breakage were identified. Twelve critical challenges towards Occupational Safety and Health in Sri Lankan informal construction sector were extracted and they were further categorized under four specific factors as Knowledge and education, Safety attitude and culture, Government support and Nature of informal construction sector.

Consequently, it was recommended to implement mandatory rules for both labours and clients, provide awareness and education, conduct site inspections and accident inquiries, empower relevant regulatory bodies to provide guidance and support, labour gatherings in community level to raise their problems, training and evaluation for individual labours and provide safety equipment for reasonable prices as few major approaches to mitigate the identified challenges and foster Occupational Safety and Health in informal construction sector of Sri Lanka.

Key Words: *Occupational Safety and Health, informal construction sector, hazards, challenges, approaches*

DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of work to

MY BELOVED FAMILY MEMBERS.....

Who encouraged me

Providing emotional and spiritual effort

In this endeavour.....

While being my pillars of support

At my hard times.....

Let this be a tribute to their aspirations.....

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|---|
| CCOHS | Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety |
| CIDA | Construction Industry Development Authority |
| COT | College of Technology |
| CRC | Cooperative Research Centre |
| CSCS | Construction Skills Certification Scheme |
| EFA | Exploratory Factor Analysis |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GNP | Gross National Product |
| ICESCR | International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Right |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| KMO | Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin |
| MC | Municipal Council |
| NAITA | National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority |
| NHSL | National Hospital of Sri Lanka |
| NI | National Insurance |
| No. | Number |
| NVQ | National Vocational Qualifications |
| O/L | Ordinary Level |
| OSH | Occupational Safety and Health |
| OSHA | Occupational Safety and Health Administration |
| PCA | Principle Component Analysis |
| PPE | Personal Protective Equipment |
| RPL | Recognition of Prior Learning |
| SME | Small and Medium sized Enterprises |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences |
| TEC | Technical Colleges |
| UC | Urban Council |
| UDA | Urban Development Authority |
| UDHR | Universal Declaration of Human Rights |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UN | United Nation |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| USA | United States of America |
| VTA | Vocational Training Authority |
| WHO | World Health Organisation |
| WIEGO | Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing |

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