



PERCEIVED PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOSOCIAL ENVIRONMENT – A STUDY ON PRIVATE LIFEGUARD BELONGING TO NEAREST AREA OF PURI BEACH

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present investigation is to study the physical and psychosocial environment as perceived by the private lifeguard belonging to nearest area of Puri beach. Accordingly, a group of 100 lifeguards (50 between the ages 26-35 years and 50 between the ages 36-45 years) were selected as sample in this investigation. A General Information Schedule and Perceived Physical and Psychosocial Environment Questionnaire were used as tools. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were done. The findings revealed that overall physical environment as perceived by them is moderate. According to them sewerage and drainage system and also medical facilities is not good at all. On the contrary, psychosocial environment as expressed by them is good. They opined that they have good relationship with neighbours and co-workers. Their family environment as perceived by them is more or less congenial. The significant expression indicates that their perception about the sea is very strong and they consider sea and also sea-beach as land as well as their life. To maintain congenial physical and psychosocial environment adequate measures may be taken mainly for proper sewerage and drainage system and also better medical facilities.

Introduction:

A lifeguard is a rescuer who supervises the safety and rescue of swimmers, surfers and other water sports participants such as in a swimming pool, water part, beach or river. Lifeguard is responsible for the safety of people in an area of water and usually a defined area immediately surrounding or adjacent to it, such as a beach next to an ocean or lake. Puri beach is a beach in the city of Puri in the state of Odisha, India. It is on the shore of the Bay of Bengal. A particular group of people named Nulia are local fisherman are migrated from the coastal boarder area of the neighbour state of Andhra Pradesh in search of better livelihood. Some of the Nulias have been given licenses by the government to operate as lifeguards. Besides this, some of the Nulias are working as private lifeguards. Disparity in the standard of living, differential access to income earning capacity and others generally rise to the growth discontent amongst the relatively indigent fisherman, thus weaken their interest to participate in fishing activities wholeheartedly (Boyce, 1994). In a fishing village the ownership pattern an individual status varies though the lifestyle and social condition of fisherman are more or less same (Balasubhramaniam, 2001). In the Southern coastal districts of Puri, the fisherman migrated from 50 coastal villages of Ganjam districts of Orisha and Shrikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh and they are mainly settled in Pentakola, Bali Nulia Sahi of Puri municipality, Chandrabhaga Nulia Sahi of Konark Municipality and Arkhakur of Chilka lake area (Mohanto, 2013). A study conducted by Relly et. al (2006) to quantify the physical demands of the most critical generic task undertaken by beach lifeguard. Findings revealed that if only a rescue board is available, the area out to sea a patrolled by a life guard should be reduced from 400m to 300m. A lifeguard's key duties is on the beach (usually as part of a team) but in some places, lifeguards may occasionally be required to work on their own lifeguards may also be required to attend occasional in-service meetings to strengthen their lifeguarding skills. Considering all, the aim of the present investigation is to study the physical and psychosocial environment as perceived by the private lifeguard belonging to nearest area of Puri Beach.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the physical environment as perceived by the private lifeguard belonging to nearest area of Puri beach.
2. To study the psycho-social environment as perceived by the private lifeguard belonging to nearest area of Puri beach.

HYPOTHESES:

Hypothesis I: Physical environment as perceived by the private lifeguard belonging to nearest area of Puri beach do not differ significantly in terms of age difference.

Hypothesis II: Psychosocial environment as perceived by the private lifeguard belonging to nearest area of Puri beach do not differ significantly in terms of age difference.

SAMPLE: A group 100 lifeguards (50 between the ages 26-35 years and 50 between the ages 36-45 years) was selected as sample in this investigation. Below and above 10 years working as a lifeguard was considered as subjects in this investigations.

TOOLS USED:

- 1. General Information Schedule:** It consists of items, viz name, address, age, educational qualification, no of family members, duration of working period etc.
- 2. Perceived Physical and Psycho-Social Environment Questionnaire:** Five items viz. i) Illumination and Ventilation, ii) water supply, iii) Sewerage and Drainage System, iv) Medical Facilities v) Overall Physical Environment were considered as physical environment. Each item was categorized into three categories. viz., a) Good, b) Moderate and c) Bad. On the other hand, Five items, viz., i) Congenial Family Environment, ii) Relationship with the neighbours, iii) Perception about the tourists. iv) Relationship with the co-workers and v) Perception about the natural environment (based on sea) were considered as psycho-social environment. Each item was categorized into three categories viz., a) Good, b) Moderate and c) Bad.

ADMINISTRATION, SCORING AND STATISTICAL TREATMENT:

General Information Schedule and Perceived Physical and Psychosocial Environment Questionnaire were administered to the selected group of subjects by giving proper instruction. Data were collected from them considering their residential and work environment. Frequency and percentages were calculated for General Information Schedule. Item-wise frequencies for good, moderate and bad category considering Perceived Physical and Psychosocial Environment Questionnaire were calculated. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis were done.

RESULT AND INTERPRETATION:

General characteristics data inserted in Table-1 reveals the characteristics features of the subjects, under study

Table 1: General characteristics of the subjects

General Characteristics		26 to 35 years		36 to 45 years	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Age (in years)		50	100.00	50	100.00
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	13	26.00	20	40.00
	Primary	17	34.00	23	46.00
	Secondary	20	40.00	7	14.00
No of family members	1-5	20	40.00	13	26.00
	6-10	30	60.00	37	74.00
Duration of working period	Below 10 years	27	54.00	17	34.00
	Above 10 years	23	46.00	33	66.00

Data inserted in Table-2 reveals the physical environment as perceived by the lifeguard between the ages 26-35 years and 36-45 years belonging to nearest area of Puri beach. Analysis of data reveals that illumination, ventilation and water supply as perceived by them is good. On the contrary, sewerage and drainage system is poor. Not only this, medical facilities as expressed by them is not good at all. In all the cases same opinion was given by both the group. Overall living environment as perceived by them is at moderate level. When comparison was made between the two groups no significant difference was observed. Thus, the **Hypothesis - I which postulates, "Physical environment as perceived by the private lifeguard belonging to nearest area of Puri beach do not differ significantly in terms of age difference"** - is accepted in this investigation.

Table 2: Comparative picture of the physical environment as perceived by the private lifeguard belonging to nearest area of Puri beach.

Physical Environment	Category	26 to 35 years	36 to 45 years	Chi-square
Illumination and ventilation	Good	25	28	1.56*
	Moderate	17	18	
	Bad	8	4	
Water supply	Good	30	32	0.04*
	Moderate	17	17	
	Bad	3	1	
Sewerage and drainage system	Good	8	12	2.40*
	Moderate	12	18	
	Bad	30	20	
Medical facilities	Good	5	7	0.32*
	Moderate	10	12	
	Bad	35	31	
Overall living environment	Good	17	15	0.32*
	Moderate	27	30	
	Bad	6	5	

*Difference is insignificant

Comparison was also made between the two groups of private lifeguard in terms of psycho- social environment as perceived by them (Data inserted in Table 3). Analysis of data reveals that they belong to more or less congenial family environment. Relationship with the neighbour is also good as opined by them. Besides this, they are maintaining healthy relationship with their co-workers. Their perception about the tourist is favourable. Natural environment which is mainly based on sea as perceived by them is very strong. When comparison was made between the two groups no significant difference was observed. Thus, the **Hypothesis II, which postulates "Psycho-social environment as perceived by the private lifeguard to nearest area of Puri beach do not differ significantly in terms of psychosocial environment"** - is accepted in this investigation.

Table 3: Comparative picture of the psychosocial environment as perceived by the private lifeguard belonging to nearest area of Puri beach.

Psychosocial Environment	Category	26 to 35 years	36 to 45 years	Chi-square
Congenial family environment	Good	27	30	0.32*
	Moderate	17	15	
	Bad	6	5	
Relationship with neighbour	Good	30	33	0.36*
	Moderate	15	13	
	Bad	5	4	
Perception about the tourist	Good	30	23	1.34*
	Moderate	17	20	
	Bad	3	7	
Relationship with co-workers	Good	27	30	0.34*
	Moderate	17	13	
	Bad	6	7	
Perception about the natural environment (based on sea)	Good	43	47	0.74*
	Moderate	7	3	
	Bad	0	0	

*Difference is insignificant

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

Lifeguard is such a profession which is durable, resilient and strong and also a dire-need for the tourist. This investigation was mainly based on their perception about the physical and psychosocial environment which may create some impact upon them. Although overall findings revealed more or less congenial in connection with physical as well as psycho-social environment, but two important areas, viz sewerage and drainage system and medical facilities as expressed by them is unfavourable. Adequate measures may be taken to get rid of the problem mainly to keep them physically and mentally healthy. It is interesting to note that the perception of the lifeguard about the sea and sea beach is very strong and they are very much aware about the overall environmental condition.

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