

Emerging Trends In Construction Safety Management Influence on Indian Construction Scenario



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Global construction industry is expected to grow massively over the next decade, especially in emerging economies. Driven by advanced technology, India has experienced one of the fastest economic growths in the world. This has fast-forwarded the infrastructure development and construction activities in our country to the point that construction workers are often found to be in the receiving end. The success of socio-economic development depends hugely on key project elements of safety, quality, planning and cost. The endeavor to optimize construction sector must be focused on human factors, and this in turn will influence the other three to a considerable degree.

Construction projects are dynamic in nature and the managers are every so often forced to expect the unexpected. Labor crisis in India continues to be a challenge, especially in the skilled trade space.

Transient workers in a project form a large percentage of the workforce at any given time and they are typically unskilled and inexperienced. Laborers operate in a dangerous environment and are not used to or aware of the high safety standards that are expected from them. This situation combined with incompetent supervision can directly impact quality of the deliverables. Current labor situation in India is of concern and a lot depends on how the government rolls out the anticipated labor reforms. Further, robust checks by concerned authorities and financial institutions, at set construction milestone stages, will go a long way to cleanse the industry practices. These improvements will help in achieving and sustaining top class construction standards.

Accidents are inherent in construction industry. In industrialized countries there are occupational safety laws, regulations and strict enforcement in effect since many decades. Statistics show that every year there are thousands who get hurt or worse even now. With all the complexities and the perception that human life is not valued in India, any typical worker in project site has over time attuned to the potential hazards to be a survivor, for it is his/her work on a given day that ensures food for the family. The Indian construction workforce is huge, with enormous potential toward contributing to our national economy. It is up to the construction industry fraternity to use the lessons learnt and have the commitment to adopt international standards in ensuring safe working practices, training in pertinent topics including an important one that aims at enhancing safety culture, and management of projects. Effective construction safety management is the need of the hour and continuous improvement in this aspect will have far reaching transformations to create a win-win situation for all involved.

In its efforts to catch up, there are many areas that have witnessed progress in the recent past. New building technologies like aluminum forming are becoming the industry standard. This will minimize risks related to human-factors engineering. Building Information Modelling (BIM) has become an enabler in reducing safety risks, improving planning and aiding in enhanced sustainability. More than fifty percent of the accidents occur whilst working at heights. Elevated work platforms like the Cherry Picker is being adopted to prevent fall of workers. Strides in mechanization are alleviating labor challenges to a great extent. Both makers of mechanized devices and developers are exploring opportunities to adopt mechanization more than ever. But the pace of this evolution can certainly be increased.

Organizations representing many countries where safety is critical and a priority are demanding high standards of safety management system implementation. This has been one of the drivers for the construction sector in India to align themselves to world-class safety standards. The trend is expected to pull up all construction related supply chain industries. Eventually in matter of years, only the pedigree developers who are positioned well with superior safety solutions in Project Management Consultancy will emerge as champions. Let us drive globalization of safety, and in this process, protect those who are in the receiving end in construction industry. **BE**