

A Study on the Impact of Women as a Diversifier in Hospitality and Tourism Industry—An Economic Game Changer

Arun. A¹, Kanchana Arun^{*1}, Yuvaraj.J¹, Wilfred Lawrence¹

¹Assistant Professor, School of Hotel & Catering Management Vels University,
P.V. Vaithiyalingam Salai, Velan Nagar, Pallavaram, Chennai, India

ABSTRACT

Background: In recent scenario the contribution of women in the hospitality industry has increased, their representation in top management positions has made women's status more prominent.

Aim: To assess the efficiency level of women professionals in the industry and also to measure the contribution attributes for the career advancement of women in Hospitality and Tourism sector. To study the impact of diversification of women professionals in Hospitality and Tourism Industry.

Method: The empirical study was carried out by means of a rating scale questionnaire.

Results: With high level of tolerance and patience they can handle any kind of situation. They are providing to be very good leaders by solving problems and taking right decisions. They are well focussed in goal setting.

Conclusion: The professional women in Hospitality and Tourism industry, excel in their personal attributes and talented in the art of convincing guests and providing huge subsidy to the formal and informal economy.

Keywords: Women, Diversifier, Hospitality Industry, Economy Game Changer.

INTRODUCTION

The contribution of women in the business world has increased in recent years, and in hospitality industry their representation in top management positions has made women's status more prominent. Various social, cultural and economic factors influence the role of women prominence occupying both in the society and in workplace. The hospitality and tourism industry aims to lift the acceptance of women in business and raise their profile in the industry. Till recently, norms and attitudes have prevented women assenting to the upper ranks of supervisory and managerial positions in the Hospitality Industry. Women have come a long way in the work place, the unique culture and history that defines the hospitality Industry has made the women to diversify towards the prospect of change, particularly in the situation which is highly challenging for women. Tourism is one of the world's largest and fastest growing industries. In many countries it acts as an engine for development through foreign exchange earnings and creations of direct and indirect employment. In addition, the diversification in the hospitality sector has mitigated

the GDP in the Indian Tourism economy. According to the world Travel and Tourism Council, World tourism will be creating around 70 million new jobs in following decades in Asia. The travel and tourism industry in Asia will grow by more than 6% every year which was predicted to be the fastest rate among the regions in the world.¹

WOMEN IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

The current scenario in the industry has created a period of remarkable change and growth for women in this field. In restaurants, hotels, catering firms, resorts, and many other venues, women are becoming much more visible in management roles and other key positions like – Director, General Managers, and Executives etc than ever before and experts predict that the need for women professionals in the industry will increase in the future.

According to the HR managers 50% of those with a hotel management background join the high end hotels, five stars and above. This is primarily because of better career prospects, higher pay structures and greater

work prestige. On the question of profile of the women employees, interviews with several HR managers confirmed that employment of women in the hotel industry is still restricted to Front- Office, Back Office and Housekeeping.

Nevertheless, women seem to have good opportunities when it comes to a career in these positions. The managers responded positively in saying that there is a progressive change predicted towards employing women in male dominated departments like Food Production and Services.

WOMEN IN TOURISM INDUSTRY

Tourism presents a wide range of income generation opportunities for women in both for formal and informal employment. Tourism jobs are often flexible, can be carried out at various different man made amenities and natural amenities. Additionally, tourism creates a wide range of opportunities for women through the complex value chains it creates in the tourism destination economy.

The need to acknowledge the important economic contribution of women and ensure them, access to credit, capacity building and enhanced skills access to the market, encouragement to form unions, associations and cooperatives to increase their bargaining power and to ensure that their safety health and social security needs are met is critical.²

Tourism provides better opportunities for women's participation in the work force, women's entrepreneurship and women's leadership than other sectors of economy. Women make up a large proportion of the formal tourism workforce. They are well represented in service and clerical level jobs but poorly represented at Professional levels. Women in tourism and typically earning 10% to 15% less than their male counterparts.

HOSPITALITY WOMEN A DIVERSIFIER

The tourism sector has almost twice as many women employers as other sectors. It is stated that one in five tourism ministers worldwide are women. They make up a much higher proportion in terms of profit in self employed business in tourism than in other sectors. Women are being exploited in the hotel industry and family business similarly a large amount of unpaid work and extended

duties are being carried out by women in family tourism businesses. So this paved the way for diversification among the women entrepreneur to break the wall and build up their career with a high salary packages.

Recognising women's centrality in development processes the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) argued that one of the main development challenges faced by the world today is that of 'the condition of women' and decided to 'promote gender equality and empower women'. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) launched a new Action Plan for the empowerment of women through tourism in March 2008 as a part of MDG's aim gender equality. These were the highlighted points in the UNWTO and focused its attention on the issue of women in tourism. The launch of the Action Plan of the UNWTO reflected on the diversification of the women and support from the MDG reached to is reflecting on the improvement of the women's entrepreneurship skills.

There are different challenges like educational, socio-cultural and technical setbacks that the women encounter in tourism. Women are often designated in low status, low paid and precarious jobs in the tourism industry. Tourism & Hospitality Industry in India Sectoral Report expresses that gender stereotyping and discrimination meaning, majority of the women mainly tend to perform jobs such as cooking, cleaning and only miscellaneous jobs in hospitality³.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the role of women professionals in Hospitality and Tourism Industry.
- To assess the level of diversification among the women in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry.
- To analyse the economic contribution attributes for the career advancement of women in the hospitality and tourism sector.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tourism industry can be widely exclaimed as an industry, promoting both tangible and intangible services

and is highlighted as one among the largest industry. The industry has been considered the foremost labour force in world trade, making a ground-breaking and momentous impact on the globe economic circumstances in-turn in India.⁴ (Iqbal BA, Sami S. 2016). UNWTO report stated that around the world the international tourist arrival are expected by the experts to be increased by 3.3% within 2030, and the market share to reach 57% by the year 2030⁵.

In India tourism account to 7.5% of the GDP which ranks third among the foreign exchange earned by the nation. The industry is expected to produce 13.45 million employment opportunities across the hospitality sectors such as hotels travel agencies tour operators and restaurants⁶. (Rising contribution to India's GDP 2017). When opportunities are created for women in tourism industry it's the skills and technology that will uplift them to the higher level post in the various departments of hospitality .If this is not achieved then the women are again nest in the low level jobs in the Tourism Industry.

Also, women are socially and culturally expected to conduct household chores, given less decision making power in the family and generally suppressed under a patriarchal society⁷. The problem of gender differences in wages especially grave in hospitality sector and are relevant in most countries. As compared to male colleagues, women earn less not just when entering the world of work, but also when reaching a career-peak position⁸. So women face a number of obstacles to break through and prove themselves. Gender discrimination, fewer opportunities provided for female employees, lacking of support from family and society to work in flexible shifts or long hour duties, personal commitments, family commitments are considered the obstacles hindering the career development of women employees⁹. (Pooja Shrestha 2016)

As discussed earlier, many of the women were found to lack a formal education or training related to the tourism and hospitality sector, thereby hindering their ability to deal with such challenges as seasonality and marketing strategies¹⁰. But presently the hospitality industry has experienced and noticed the vibrant change in the women.

The fast growing trends and technologies in hospitality industry, a drastic development in personal attributes of the women employees like level of education, experience at work, improved personality and creativity has broken these spells of obstacles in the career development of women in hospitality industry¹¹. (Karunarathne A.C.I.D 2015)

Women have taken into the procession of the major labour force in the industry as skilled and unskilled workers and started also flourishing in the top level of management¹². (Tom Baum2015) Being at the top levels of management holding responsible positions have motivated the entry of younger women generation into the industry brightens up the growth and career development¹³. (Brownell, J., & Walsh, K. 2008). Another prominent challenge is "Managing growth", which is expressed as women's difficulty to maintain desired quality, find adequate staff, and manage liability issues while growing their business; for some also meant their ability to manage growth with aging¹⁴.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is to explore the professional skills of women within the workplace. A discussion and interview method approach was adopted for data collection. The empirical study was carried out by means of a rating scale questionnaire. The study was carried out among the top level and middle level managers of the Human Resources, Front Office, Food & Beverage, Accommodation and Sales & Marketing departments drawn from different Hotels, Travel & Tours Agencies and Quick Service Restaurants. The collected data were arranged according to this study's objectives. Information relevant to this study was evaluated and analysed for further evaluation. The non relevant input for this study was later incorporated in the recommendation for further studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study has been statically analyzed using SPSS (21.0) software and checked for the reliability and the analysis showed that the data are reliable with a Cronbach's Alpha value (0.865).

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Characteristic		Frequency (N = 47)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	30	63.8
	Female	17	36.2
Level of Management	Top Level	16	34.0
	Middle Level	31	66.0
Work Area	Travel Groups	7	14.8
	Star Hotels	20	42.6
	Quick Service Restaurants	20	42.6

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents, 63.8% of respondents were male and 36.2% were female. Top and middle level management staffs were only taken into account in which 34% from top level and 66% were from middle level of management. The study was conducted among the human resource staffs at various outlets in which Travel Groups constitutes 14.8%, star hotels and Quick Service Restaurants 42.6% respectively.

Friedman Ranking Test

Table 2(a) Ranks

	Mean Rank
Effective Problem solving	7.33
Approachable	9.01
Personal Attributes	9.17
Work Life Balance	5.97
Decision Making	5.23
Situation Handling	6.81
Objective Goal Setting	6.27
Communication skill	7.73
Leadership skill	6.09
Convincing tactics	8.95
Adopting Long Hour Work	2.57
Working Different shifts	2.87

Table 2(b) Test Statistics^a

N	47
Chi-Square	228.203
Df	11
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. Friedman Test

From table 2(a) and 2(b) it is concluded that the respondents have ranked - Working at Different shift (Rank Value 2.87) and Adopting Long Work Hours (Rank Value 2.57) have the lowest mean rank out of the twelve parameters hence it is concluded that these two variables have been a barrier for the women in hospitality to flourish effectively.

H_0 = There is no significant correlation between Objective Goal Setting and Situation Handling

H_1 = There is significant correlation between Objective Goal Setting and Situation Handling

The data were statistically analysed by Spearman's rho correlation between the Objective goal setting and situation handling parameter which is highly correlating at a significant level 0.01 and the correlation value is ($r = 0.824$). Hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

H_0 = There is no significant correlation between Leadership Quality and Communication Skill

H_1 = There is significant correlation between Leadership Quality and Communication Skill

Between the parameters leadership quality and communication skill the correlation is highly significant and the correlation value is ($r = 0.859$) Hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

H_0 = There is no significant relationship between Effective Problem Solving and Decision Making Skill

H_1 = There is significant relationship between Effective Problem Solving and Decision Making Skill

Data has been analysed for independent t test between effective problem solving and decision making skill of women employees the t - value is 2.52982. The P - value is 0.00866 and the result is significant at $p < 0.05$.

Mann Whitney U test

Table 3(a): Ranks

Attribute	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Decision Making	Male	30	21.15	634.50
	Female	17	29.03	493.50
	Total	47		

Table 3(b): Test Statistics^a

	Decision Making
Mann-Whitney U	169.500
Wilcoxon W	634.500
Z	-2.652
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.008

a. Grouping Variable: Gender

In the Table 3(a) and 3(b) as *p* value 0.008 is less than 0.05 (*p*<0.05), there is a significant difference between the decision making quality among male and female employees. It is concluded that decision making quality among the male and female employees is significantly different.

CONCLUSION

In this Cohort the result of the women’s Personal Attributes is ranked at 9.17 highest among the qualities. This result was arrived from the Mann Whitney statistical test. At the outset it’s understood that the employees have accepted that the women are trustworthy and loyal to the organization. Among the personal attributes the prominently highlighted is that the women employees are considerate and open minded. On this pretext it is perceived that the organisation prefers more women to seek employment in the hotel sector as they can perform outstandingly to contribute in the economy of the country. Secondly, the study expresses that the women are Approachable which is ranked at 9.01. This is a one of the most vital quality an employee should possess because the being approachable will make a new employee comfortable and to build the co operation and coordination among the existing team of employees in various departments.

Thirdly, the women should have the awareness on the legal protection in the tourism Industry, the legal

protection include equal pay legislations, minimum wages law, increase the number of days for maternity leave and include leave for the father to stay during the post pregnancy period.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

The study was limited to a few hotels, travel and tours in Chennai. A few of male and female employees had just started their carrier so that could have influenced the findings and results. To complete the investigation of the women’s potentiality it is suggested that this cohort can be replicated in other states of India or a thorough ethnographic study to be fulfilled.

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Ethical Clearance: Not Applicable

Conflicts of Interest: Conflict of interest declared none.

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