

GENDER GAPS AT WORK: A STUDY BASED ON WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN DECISION-MAKING AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

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Abstract - For an enhanced society and sustainable economic growth, talent and technology collectively matters in its deliverance. When world's half of its talent is not transformed properly, there is always a risk in gender inequality. Although the past twenty years saw a significant development in gender equality both at work and in society, there is much more to be done to bring women's working condition as indicated in 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by UN. Educational progress of women has not resulted in gender equality at work particularly to gain opportunity in decision- making or leadership positions. Women are still underrepresented at work, only a small portion own and manage business that too is concerted in small and micro enterprises. Hospitality industry is claimed as one of the largest employers of women as their soft skills value this service industry. The study is to analyze the gender gaps in the hospitality industry. Paper is to influence for substantial ways to bring women to forth front in planning and development process for an economic advancement and in achieving sustainable balance.

Index Terms- decision-making, gender gaps, hospitality industry, leadership, women

1. INTRODUCTION

Hospitality experience is incomplete without the pleasant smile of a women on the onset. The feminine touch is indispensable in its service excellence. It is because of this fact, hospitality industry becomes the largest employer of women. Women are found in great numbers occupying professional and managerial positions in this sector, but found in marginal numbers in top most positions or C- suite positions. Despite the bold agenda for empowerment of women and gender equality during the 1995 Beijing's Fourth World Conference on women, 2015 statistical figures of gender gaps in labour force participation and employment rates shows only a marginal decline. When compared the statistics of 1995 and 2015, the global female labour force participation rate reduced from 52.4 to 49.6 %., thereby reducing the gender gap by 1%.

Global economy is in its transition to fourth industrial revolution, in such a change, women talent remains underutilized business resource. It is an astonishing fact that only 5% or less only represent women as chief executive officers among the largest corporations. As per ILO 2015 report globally women own one-third of all formal business, but they are concentered in small and micro enterprises that have very little growth. This report also estimates that still women's 50% of productive potential is underutilized when compared to 22% of men. The glacial progress of gender parity clearly pin points that glass ceiling is still intact.

2. WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION

In many regions, women outdo in educational attainment than men. Despite this fact, glass –ceiling of women exist. Women have to cross many hurdles. The corporate culture perceive management and decision- making as men's job. Women into top management invokes challenging issues of inequality that is common in all levels of sex distinguished labour markets. The global economy is missing out the creativity, perspectives and talent that women can put forward for a sustainable growth. Reducing gender discrimination in the labour market, thereby promoting women's participation in large numbers, is likely to positively affect the economic growth of a nation (Esteve-Volart, 2004). Generally, companies with more gender-balanced management teams have better financial results than those without such teams (McKinsey Global Institute, 2013). In the ILO report Women in Business and Management: Gaining Momentum (2015), there are more women in decision-making roles than a decade ago. In all areas, however, women are still underrepresented in decision-making and leadership positions. Affirmative action policies are of particular importance in correcting occupational segregation and promoting women's participation and leadership in decision-making. Affirmative action to counter sex discrimination comprises special – usually

temporary – measures to redress the effects of past or continuing discrimination in order to establish equality of opportunity and treatment between men and women in practice (ILO, 2007a).

In hospitality industry, women have been visible in all levels, and in fact successful in breaking “glass ceiling” in terms of representation and promotion but these figures are very less when compared to men. Unlike other industries, large percentage of female’s age category tends to be under 35 years, half of which are 25 or under. There is horizontal and vertical gender segregation in tourism labour market. The growing hospitality industry in India seems to be a particularly important sector for women. Horizontally, women are employed as waitresses, chambermaids, cleaners, housekeeping maids, etc. Vertically, characteristic gender pyramid is dominant– lower and middle level occupation with no or less career growth. It is a hard fact that social, economic, professional and gender aspects of work culture affect the advancement of women to top management. Based on the study of hospitality sector by Center of Social Research , factors was identified for the marginalization of women were gender stereotyping, lack of role models, lack of mentors in workplace, lack of self-perceptions and low confidence and aspirations.

3. GENDER GAP AND INDIA

India is ranked 87 among 144 countries in the global gender gap index as per the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap report 2016. The global gender gap index is considered on four sub-indexes- Economic participation and opportunity, Educational attainment, Health and survival and Political empowerment. Gender parity scores for India is 0.683 where gender parity is considered as 1.00. Women in India holds 136th position for the economic participation and opportunity, 113rd position in educational attainment, 142nd position in health and survival and 9th in political empowerment. The respective scores for gender parity is 0.408, 0.950, 0.942 and 0.433. As per the 2012 study by McKinsey and Company, the proportion of women CEOs in 2011 ranged from less than 1 % in India.

Indian women contribute 17% to the GDP and represent only 24% of the labour force based on the MGI report. To bridge the gender gap in India, it is necessary to realize the economic potential of women. This is to be attained both at work and in society. Study reveals extremely high inequality at work by indian women is on the five grounds, i.e. labour-force participation rate, professional and technical jobs, unpaid care work, wage gap and leadership positions. While factors for gender inequality in society are categorized below:

- Essential services and enablers of economic opportunity (unmet need for family planning, maternal mortality rate, gap in education level, financial inclusion, and digital inclusion)
- Legal protection and political voice (presence of legal protections for women in 11 different areas, and representation of women in parliamentary and ministerial positions)
- Physical security and autonomy (sex ratio at birth, child marriage and violence against women).

Data from India’s National Sample Survey Office’s (NSSO) survey, India’s female labour-force participation rate is 21% and 36% in urban and rural areas respectively. The study identified that only 7 % of tertiary-educated women have jobs as senior officials that detect gender-gap in leadership and decision- making positions. The concrete social attitudes and moral values in India actually hinder the career growth of a women despite her educational attainment.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study is mentioned below:

- To analyze the issues related to gender gaps in the hospitality industry.
- To influence the government and non- governmental bodies for framing substantial ways to bring women to forth front in planning and development process for an economic advancement and in achieving sustainable balance.

5. METHODOLOGY

Descriptive qualitative research is used as the methodology of the study. The various international reports like ILO (International Labour Organization), World Economic Forum, etc. and statistical reports form the platform for the study. Other secondary data from websites, blogs, journals, research articles also were relevant to the study.

6. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Article 5(2) of the ILO Convention on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) (No. 111) lists the authentic grounds of ensuring equality of opportunity to create special measures. These are identified as sex, age, disablement, family responsibilities or social or cultural status to cease discrimination and to remain effective among all

stakeholders. In addition, proper training and access to other opportunities should be provided by government to women to improve leadership qualities. Government can create targets and quotas for women in leadership positions. Further action measures include the implementation of workplace policies for recruitment, leadership training, fast-track career measures, including sponsorship, mentoring and pairing within existing networks, with governments providing the financial incentives to do so; and information and awareness-raising campaigns to encourage employers to recruit and promote women, as mentioned in the ILO report *Women at Work: Trends 2016*. Work-family policies are to be structured to resolve tensions between care and work, these affect their good quality work. On the other hand, sectoral and occupational segregation that includes higher uptake of involuntary part-time work for women, inadequate paid parental leave, childcare and care services for family members, inflexible working arrangements, wage disparity, long working hours, schedule inflexibility and unpredictability. This would lead them to leave their jobs at midcareer. Many women entrepreneurs prefer closer business location. The risk of falling into poverty in old age is also greater for women than men (McKinsey Global Institute, 2015). As social security systems are based on continuous remunerated employment, women are less likely to fulfil the minimum contributory requirements, because of work interruptions due to the need to provide unpaid care, and thus denied access to adequate old-age pensions (ILO, 2009). Measures are to confine sexual and physical harassment of women and policies have to be liberalized for more access to resources for women. Policies framed in consideration of these measures, will serve to harmonize work and family responsibilities thus achieving substantive gender equality.

Two theories were identified by Oakley (2000) regarding the less representation of women in senior managements. The first points on the barriers due to the corporate policies of recruitment, retention and promotion of men over women. Second category is the behavioral and cultural factors that are entrenched in tokenism, stereotyping, power, leadership and psychodynamics of gender relations.

Consumer demand patterns in hospitality sector require unsocial working conditions and irregular working hours. Unskilled or semi-skilled is likely to experience poor working conditions, inequality of opportunity and treatment, violence, exploitation, stress and sexual harassment and less access to education and training. These lead to a weaker bargaining position. Women are found in part-time, temporary, casual and seasonal occupations in the sector, that lead in widening of gender gap. The governing body should provide opportunities for on-the-job training for those in the lower echelons of the industry.

CONCLUSION

The key basis of growth, economic enhancement, employment and decent work is vital for a sustainable enterprise that considers policies and practices not affecting global/local environment, community, society, or economy. Harmonious cooperation among governments, businesses, labour and society is required to promise the employment quality in a sustainable manner to gain decent work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity. Yet, it is vital for the hospitality industry to play a prominent role in hiring and promoting women in their growth opportunities as global economy cannot afford to waste the valuable brainpower in this competitive era.

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