

## REFLECTIONS ON THE ISSUES AND DETERMINANTS ASSOCIATED WITH WOMEN'S CAREER PROGRESSION IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY AT BENGALURU

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**Abstract:** The main purpose behind the study is to evaluate the impact of the issues and the determinant on the career progression of the women working in the hospitality industry. The study would help to assist the women staff members through the programs and the initiatives taken by the organization or the hotel authority so that the women could make progress in their career and achieve the top level managerial position in the hospitality industry. Although woman are entering to serve in the hospitality sector but still the high level managerial positions are held by the men. Despite of the high qualification and experience in their service, they are not able to achieve progress in their career. In order to bring the women to the great managerial positions there is the need to conduct the activities which are based on training and mentoring. Awareness must be created in the public so that they won't make unfavourable perception about the women serving in the hotels. To enhance the diversity and promote further development it is important to conduct effective programs by the hospitality business.

**Keywords:** Women, Career, Progression, Hospitality Industry, Participation, Issues, Determinants.

**1. Background of the Study:** The hospitality industry is one of the major drivers of the economic growth of the service sector in India. With the age-old motto of "*Atithi Devo Bhava*", hospitality in India has been an age old adage. The Indian hospitality industry falls under the spectrum of tourism sector which contributes to about 11-12% to the GDP of the country (Tobergte & Curtis, 2013). However, the Indian hospitality sector accounts for a minuscule share of 0.6% of the world hospitality industry. The hospitality sector along with providing income provides employment opportunities as well as helps in generating foreign exchange. To explore the opportunities of expanding growth, the Ministry of Tourism has set up a Hospitality Development and Promotion Board to promote the hospitality sector in India (KPMG-CII, 2013).

Women have a major role to play in the development of the tourism sector in India which is depicted by the fact that around 50% of the employee strength in the hospitality sector comprises of women. This trend is more common in major cities of Bangalore, Chennai, and Kolkata than in the cities of Delhi and Mumbai (Vinayak, Bhat, & Fukey, L. N., 2014). Although the presence of women in the hospitality industry is crucial, women still face a glass ceiling in a way that they have access to low-skilled, low paying jobs but not many women are able to reach the managerial level of high skilled, high paying jobs in the organisation (Masadeh, 2013). Traditionally women were engaged in the housekeeping department but this trend has been changing and at present women constitute at least 33 percent of employees in the hospitality industry as stated by Sarika Kamble, Sous Chef at Ista, Bangalore (Subramaniam Deena, 2015). The paper throws light

upon the women's presence in the hospitality industry in Bangalore.

### **2. Aim and Objectives:**

**2.1** To explore women's participation in hospitality industry, identifying key influential issues affecting their career progression.

**2.2** To critically review the impact of determinants of career progression on Women staff of hospitality industry, based in Bengaluru'

### **3. Literature Review :** 3.1. Issues Associated With Women's Participation in The Hospitality Industry:

Women's participation in the hospitality and the challenges faced by them were highlighted by a report presented by the International Labor Organization (ILO) (Baum, 2013). As per the report, challenges faced by the female employees can be attributed to direct discrimination in the face of inequalities in salaries when women receive lesser salaries than men, this leads to an undervaluation of the work done by women and discourages the participation of women in the industry. It was observed by Brownell, (1993) that the women-oriented jobs like housekeeping are rather underpaid as compared to the similar skilled jobs associated with male counterparts like bell hops. Further issues may arise in the name of traditions and stereotypes that define the role of women and men in the society and the roles that are socially acceptable for each gender. Often it has been seen that women struggle to balance between a life of work, household, and children which are not present in the case of men (Tom Baum & Cheung, 2015). Despite the large representation that women apparently have, they are under-represented in the top level jobs in the industry mainly due to the gender discrimination and the low support from the society as well. In a country like India, where the social typecasts and gender roles

are rigid and the education systems continue to typecast men and women in the pre-determined roles, it is hard to formulate a base for gathering the required qualification to progress up the management ladder. Often the employer's expectation from women is very high and in some cases almost impossible to meet, which lead to non-performance and thus, lack of participation in the industry. Cultural barriers continue to be a major issue in the poor participation of women in the hospitality industry in India and across the world (Masadeh, 2013a). The presence of a glass ceiling in the top level positions in the industry cannot be denied which retains women from gaining the managerial positions. This glass ceiling can be in the form of stringent rules and rigid policies that limit the entry of women in the managerial position or in the face of the long working hours that are deemed crucial for the promotion process in the organizations (Brownell, 1993).

**3.2. Determinants of Career Progression Women In Hospitality Industry:** An important determinant of career progression of women in the industry is the presence of social support systems which enable a woman to serve as an employee. The support of society and family are important for the career progression of a woman in the industry (Centre for Social Research, 2009). Networking through formal and informal channels provides critical information about the organization to the individual, career tracking providing women employees the visibility to be noticed as eligible candidates for career progression (Khemani, 2013). Patwardhan, & Mayya, (2015) explain that the dimensions of determinants of career progression of women in hospitality industry include self-directed learning which is the personal initiative of individuals to learn with any external help; career oriented continuous learning which is the initiative taken to learn about the career progression process; and lastly, formal mentoring wherein, the managers provide formal mentoring to young trainees. These entire factors combine together to form a basic infrastructure for career progression of women in the hospitality industry.

**3.2.1** Ho, (2013) identifies that demanding hospitality industry is a major reason for the limited career progression among women since, unlike other places of work, the hotels never close, thereby creating hurdles for the managers in the hospitality industry. The demanding nature of the work in the industry and the long working hours takes toll on the employees and leads to a departure from the industry (Nanayakkara, 2013). Personal choices also have an impact on the career progression of women because situations do arise where the employees have

to make choices between their personal and professional lives (Dinakaran U, 2015)

#### **4. Conceptual Framework:**

**4.1** A conceptual framework examines and explains the relationship between the different variables. Here the independent variables are the determinants of career progression namely social support system, industry demands and the education, training and development of the women.

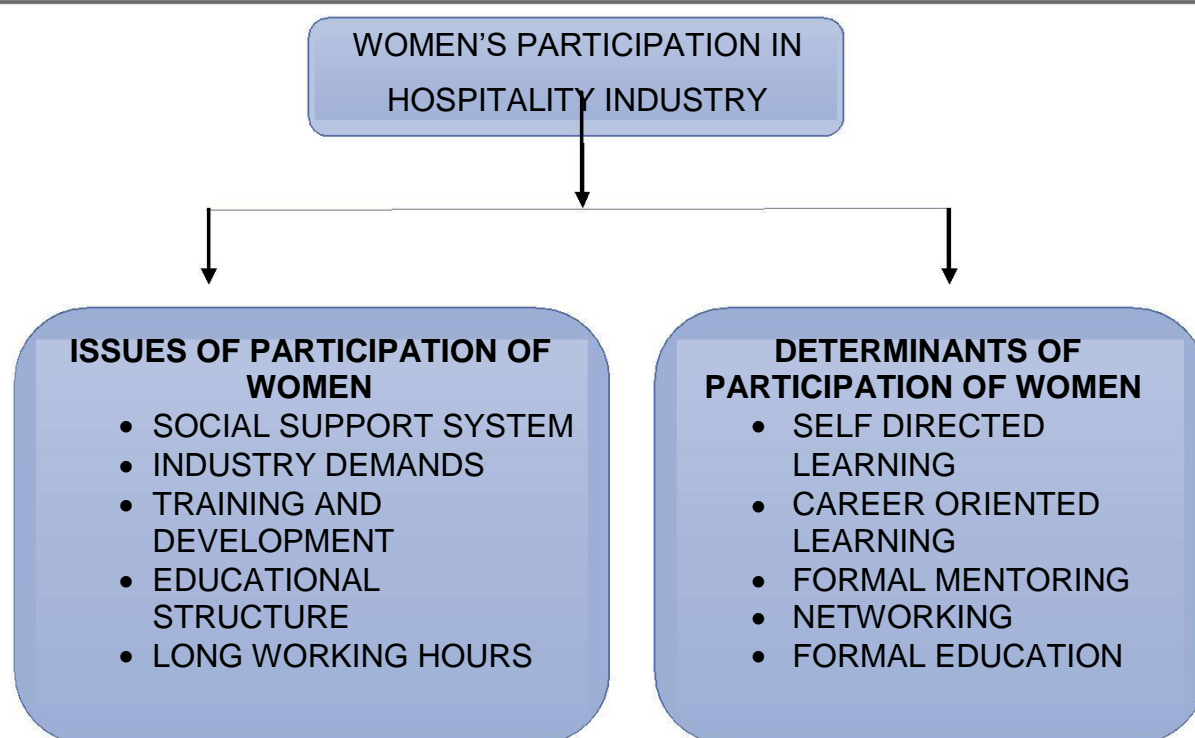
**4.2** The study seeks to study the role of women in the hospitality industry and the factors determining the career progression of women in the industry and issues which cause the limited women's participation in the industry. A study of the nature of presence of women in hospitality in Bengaluru, India has been made to get a glimpse of the role that women play in the hospitality industry at every level in the industry from the basic wage earning employees to a top level management employees and the factors affecting the participation, social support systems, socio-cultural and traditional stereotypes, educational system, training and development.

#### **5. Research Methodology:**

**5.1 Research Design:** In order to explore women's participation in hospitality industry, identifying key influential issues and determinants, the current paper uses the positivism paradigm of epistemology philosophy because it helps addressing the questions needed to carry out the research – that is how will the researcher know what he/she knows (Grade, 2015).

Both descriptive as well as explanatory research methods have been applied. Through descriptive, the researcher studies the demographic profile and general background of the employees within their workplace, and at the same time, analyses their current situation to arrive at conclusions, as in case of explanatory research.

**5.1.1** Survey was chosen for gathering the data from the respondents because as compared to the other methods survey has the ability to extract the data from large number of respondents (Gray, 2013). Also survey was conducted because it is cost effective as compared to the interviews, focus groups, etc. However, it is significant to mention that, although the amount of respondents was evidently less (N: 40), yet survey strategy applied helped the researcher to gather the data that was statistically significant. Surveys provide more precise results as compared to other methods (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). The survey strategy applied has been analysed using deductive approach, through the development of conceptual framework to carry out the study. Such an approach has helped the researcher to deduce to a particular conclusion after exploring all the general and specific concepts related to the study (Mkono, 2012).



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework reflecting the Issues and Determinants associated with Women's Career Progression**

**5.2 Data collection:** The paper uses both primary and secondary data. The primary data has been collected from 40 women staff of various positions from 5 five star hotels– The Chancery Pavilion, The Zuri Whitefield, The Ritz Carlton, Vivanta by Taj and Clarks Exotica, based in Bengaluru, approaching 8 staff members from each hotel. Primary data is the first-hand information used by the researcher based on the particular aim established, and to solve the research questions posed (Lagasi & Buba, 2016). Through cover letter and e-mail, the researcher obtained requisite permission from the Human Resource Department of the two case hotels. The researcher used secondary data collected from books, journals, articles, websites etc. to support the primary data, besides developing the theoretical framework of the study.

**5.2.1** In order to extract the responses of the women staff members working in the hotels of Bengaluru, close ended and structured questionnaire was developed. Questionnaire was administered to the respondents by making personal visits to the two case hotels and distributing them among the respondents all at a time. Before the administration of the questionnaire survey, the study aims and purpose was explained and informed consent was taken by the researcher. Survey on one hotel was covered in a day, thereby collecting the responses within two days' time period.

**5.2.3** Reliability of the data was ensured by using the Cronbach's Alpha value, used in order to carry out the survey with the women staff members. It is used to ensure the consistency of the data which is entered. The reliability value of .70 or higher is considered to be acceptable (Cronbach & Gleser, 1957). Validity of the data is ensured using the pilot testing in which the small sample of the data is selected from the given sample size of the respondents. Under this study 5 respondents were selected out of total 40 respondents for the pilot testing. Upon identifying the loopholes existing within the questionnaire statements, they were re-modelled, so as to garner quality viewpoints.

**5.3 Data Analysis:** Upon collecting the data from the survey, the responses were numerically coded, using MS Excel. Following coding, the data was transferred to SPSS (v 21.0) Datasheet for incurring of statistical results using tools like Frequency Distribution– for analysing the trends in respondents' demographic profile and general background; and, Correlation, to understand the causal relationship between various issues and determinants and, women's career progression in hospitality industry.

#### **6. Data Analysis & Interpretation:**

##### **6.1. Descriptive study of the Women Respondents:**

Parameters	Frequency (N=40)	Percentage (%)
<b>Age of the respondents</b>		
Below 25	7	17.5%
25-30	15	37.5%
31-40	12	30%
Above 40	6	15%
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	28	70%
Unmarried	12	30%
<b>Current designation in hotel</b>		
High Level Manager	4	10%
Middle Level Manager	12	30%
Lower Level Manager	24	60%
<b>Total Experience (in years) in Current Position</b>		
0-5	10	25%
5-10	17	42.5%
10-15	11	27.5%
More than 15	2	5%

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Women Respondents of two case hotels**

**6.1.1** According to the descriptive analysis given in the above table, most of the respondents belong to the age groups of (25-30) and (31-40) which is about 37.5% and 30% respectively. Through the analysis it was found that about 70% of the women who are engaged in the case hotels are married and the rest of 30% are unmarried. Similar results were provided by the study conducted by (Ho, 2013) in which the women within the age group of 25-45 are engaged in the hotel industry. However, the study by Carter et al. (2001) contradicted the above findings, exhibiting larger presence of unmarried women within the hospitality industry.

**6.1.2** About 60% of the respondents are holding the position of low level managers that is the food and beverage manager, room service manager, etc. and 30% of the respondents hold the position under the middle level manager that is the front office manager, bar managers, etc. while only 10% of the women staff members are holding the high level managerial position like the general manager of the hotel, assistant manager, etc. Similar findings have been exhibited by Simona, (2010), according to whom maximum number of women staff were working at lower managerial levels in the hospitality industry.

**6.1.3** Total experience of the respondents in terms of years reflected 25% presence of women having less than 5 years, maximum of them having 5-10 years of experience in their current position. However, a minimal presence of women having more than 15

years of experience has been exhibited, projecting recent rise of the concerned population in the two case hotels of Bangalore.

## **6.2. Issues Faced By Women Staff Members In Hospitality Industry And Its Impact On Career Progression:**

**6.2.1** The correlational analysis in the table 1 shows that issues which are faced by the women in the hospitality industry is significantly correlated with the impact on their career progression. Through the analysis it can be evaluated that the issue of balancing office work and household work by the women member staff is positively correlated to the career progression having the correlational value of 0.675 which is most significant at 0.000 inferring that most of the women's career progression is greatly affected by their ability or inability of balancing both the chores. But the unfavourable perceptions of hotel authority about women working in hospitality industry is negatively correlated with the progression of women career with a correlational value of -0.15 however showing significant value at .000, inferring to the fact that, perception of authorities have opposite effect on career progression of women. However, the perception of the hotel authority that women don't fit for current work has a highest correlation with career progression of women ( $\alpha$  .923,  $p$  .000)

There by affecting their scope of development.

Issues faced by women staff members in hospitality industry	Impact on Career Progression	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Balancing office work and household work	Pearson Correlation	.675

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Segregation problem regarding post in hospitality industry on the basis of gender	Pearson Correlation	.765
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Unfavorable perceptions of hotel's authority about women working in hospitality industry	Pearson Correlation	-.0150
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Hotel's authority perception that women don't fit for current work	Pearson Correlation	.923
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Behavior of the hotel staff is not good with women staff members	Pearson Correlation	.890
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

**Table 2: Impact of issues faced by the women staff in the hospitality industry on their career progression:**

**6.2.3** The study by Mooney & Ryan, (2009) also showed the similar results, under which it was analyzed that the woman is able to create the balance between her personal and professional life which would have a positive

impact on her career. Another study was conducted by (Bhat & Fukey, 2014), the result of which was quite contrasting to the present study, according to which the hospitality authority and its resultant impact on women's career progression have position correlation.

### **6.3. Determinants Of Career Progression And Its Resultant Impact**

**6.3.1** As is evident from the Table 2, career tracking determinant is positively correlated to the career progression having the correlational value of 0.510 which is most significant at 0.000 which means that keeping the track of the career has a significant role in the progression of the women's career in the hospitality industry.

Determinants	Impact on Career Progression	
Impact on Career Progression	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Self-Learning	Pearson Correlation	0.62
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Continuous Learning in Career	Pearson Correlation	-.0110
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Mentoring	Pearson Correlation	0.750
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Internal as well as External Networking	Pearson Correlation	0.820
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Career Tracking	Pearson Correlation	0.510
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

**Table 3: Impact of Determinants on career progression of Women staff members**

**6.3.2** However, the study conducted by Patwardhan, & Mayya, (2015) is quite contrasting to the above study which stated that maintaining the career track has no significant impact on the career progression.

**6.3.3** But the implementation of the continuous learning is negatively correlated with the progression of women career with a correlational value of -0.11 which is significant at .000 which means that continuous learning possess opposite impact in progression of women's career. Such a finding contradicts Masadeh's, (2013b) study projecting that continuing of studies along with work is positively correlated with career progression of the women

working in the hospitality industry. Lastly, Networking has a highest correlation with career progression of women ( $\alpha$  .820, p.000) inferring that the internal and external networking plays an important role in the progression of women's career.

Study by Ho, (2013) also showed similar result that maintenance of external network with staff members have significant or positive impact on the career progression.

### **7. Findings, Recommendations & Conclusion:**

**7.1** As exhibited from the primary study, there is a need to create awareness among the people in order

to bring out the positive image of women working in the hospitality industry.

**7.2** Further there is the need to change the approach of human resource management in the hospitality industries and this can be done by providing support through mentoring, allowing home working whenever needed, by providing support in paths of career progression, by allowing female employees to take breaks during their job for personal reasons, etc. (Simona, 2010).

**7.3** Organizations or the hospitality industries should take effective steps in order to eliminate the challenges like gender based discrimination faced by the women staff members– fostering improvement of opportunities in the career for both men and women (Lagasi & Buba, 2016). The foremost recommendation is designing of such types of programs that would support the development. In order to bring women to the great managerial

positions there is a need to conduct the activities which are based on training and mentoring (Mooney & Ryan, 2009).

**7.4** For understanding and examining the overall scenario of measures taken to tackle the issues identified in the study and also to gain an in-depth understanding of the determinants, further study is evident. This study, based on five 5-star hotels of Bengaluru, limits the scope and hence findings of the study, owing to minimal representation of the entire women population of the metropolitan city. Therefore, future studies can focus on varied categories of hotels within the industry business hotels, airport hotels, suit & resorts and such others, and explore women's participation within them.

Further a comparative study can be carried out among various metro cities of India, to highlight the varying degree of women's participation.

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