

GENDER STEREOTYPING AND GLASS CEILING BARRIER FACED BY WOMEN IN HOSPITALITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The lack of gender equality in management positions is a global phenomenon and the barriers women face when accessing leadership positions are proven by research (Villamil López & Alonso Almeida, 2013). According to ILO (2016) in Asia, for example, 30% of business leaders surveyed mentioned that most of the mid-career or senior women who left their jobs voluntarily did so due to family commitments. If we focus on Japan, despite anti-discrimination legislation, only 43% of women who tried to rejoin the workforce after childbirth found jobs, suggesting this is a major cause for the leaky talent pipeline. The study also shows that two-thirds of senior women from companies and professional firms across Europe have highlighted the stereotypes and preconceptions of women's roles and skills as the most important barrier to their career progression. Usually, a segregating organizational culture also determines imbalances and limitations by Huete et al., 2016 (DanielaFreundGildaHernandez-Maskivker, 2021)) when it comes to being promoted to high positions , (Cristina Figueroa-Domecq (School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 2020) Flecha Barrio, &Palomo, 2018 ([1], [2], [2], & University)). According to the theory of human capital, smaller investment in human capital is one of the factors that complicates women's job promotion. This theory claims that individuals succeed in increasing their production capacity by investing in themselves, and that the main sources of investment are education, training, and work experience. This approach suggests that many women, lack time outside working hours to invest in training, and as a result are excluded from promotion opportunities. The present research aims at highlighting the glass ceiling barriers faced by women in hospitality sector.

Keywords: Tourism, Hospitality, Glass Celing, Barriers, Entrepreneurship.

Introduction

In the preparation of this paper titled “A study on **Gender Stereotyping and Glass Ceiling Barrier faced by Women in Hospitality & Entrepreneurship**” on which this paper is based, I requested input in form of one to one interviews from women and men in entrepreneurship and more from hospitality sector, also colleagues with respect to the content and issues. The interviews were conducted in English and Hindi. Several hoteliers, entrepreneurs and colleagues responded through kind discussion on definitions and prevalence of Glass Ceiling, acceptance of such ceilings. Since its meaning was not very uncommon and unclear, and that what was what helped to focus on ways in which it could be applied to gather the conclusions. A number of businesses by the brave women have begun and boomed however some have bombed as well but what interesting is the growth in the idea and interest that have been nurtured by women in this male chauvinist enterprising arena. It fills us up with pride to see so many women entrepreneurs who are running successful organisations but little is the count in hospitality sector.

Although tourism may “open doors” to women, there are lingering problematic gendering processes. It is interesting to note how women’s criticism of gendered structures in the tourism sector is combined with an essentialist view of women. This seems to provide evidence of the strength of the prevailing gender prejudices and stereotypes (e.g., women as mothers), which are reified and ingrained to such an extent in organizations and in the society at large, that they become “invisible.”(Inês Carvalho, 2018)).The intangible barrier which exists is referred to as glass as it is though invisible but impactful as it serves its purpose well by obstructing women from entering into top management positions in the hospitality industry. For a long time, the presence of such a glass ceiling was denied but with the tireless efforts by researchers this barrier was recognised. Social norms also create barriers like “ Think Manager Think Male” stereotype and discriminatory corporate policies. A glass ceiling inequality represents a gender or racial inequality in the chances of advancement into higher levels, not merely the proportions of each gender or race currently at those higher levels.

Another quote from a survey beautifully yet sadly depicts the scenario of gendering in the hospitality hierarchies which comes naturally to most of us, is, “I can save you some time, the

bottom line . . . it's still a man's world." This is a survey respondent's email (name withheld) to the authors, in an English daily published in June 2012, which stands true even today. Brownell, work-family issues can have a negative impact on organizations, but for her this can be in part counteracted by measures that support work-family balance. However, she underlines that there are key concerns regarding the bottom line impact of such measures, particularly if there is no accompanying change in the management philosophy or no involvement at the management level (Brownell, 2008) Judi Brownell proposes a partnership between educators and hospitality leaders. A change process towards flexibility, open-mindedness, and an improved work-family balance might add a competitive edge to the organization and boost its performance (Brownell, 1998). Magnini (2010) carried a literature review on the consequences of work-family conflict in hospitality firms. Besides explaining its negative consequences, he also proposed a series of measure for reducing the clash between work and family lives ((Peter)Kim, 2011)). For married women with children the route into hotel management seems to be later in their lives and through their husbands. Kanter (Kanter, 2014)(I9771). This paper reflects upon how women are taking control and gradually, persistently shattering the glass ceiling by creating a niche for themselves in the entrepreneurial arena by being proactive in leadership and professional development, making sacrifices, developing support systems and being willing to make changes including moving to new locations and zones.

The lack of gender equality in management positions is a global phenomenon and the barriers women face when accessing leadership positions are proven by research (Villamil López & Alonso Almeida, 2013). According to ILO (2016) in Asia, for example, 30% of business leaders surveyed mentioned that most of the mid-career or senior women who left their jobs voluntarily did so due to family commitments. If we focus on Japan, despite anti-discrimination legislation, only 43% of women who tried to rejoin the workforce after childbirth found jobs, suggesting this is a major cause for the leaky talent pipeline. The study also shows that two-thirds of senior women from companies and professional firms across Europe have highlighted the stereotypes and preconceptions of women's roles and skills as the most important barrier to their career progression. Usually, a segregating organizational culture also determines imbalances and limitations by Huete et al., 2016 (DanielaFreundGildaHernandez-Maskivker, 2021)) when it comes to being promoted to high positions , (Cristina Figueroa-Domecq (School of Hospitality

and Tourism Management, 2020) Flecha Barrio, &Palomo, 2018 ([1], [2], [2], & University)). According to the theory of human capital, smaller investment in human capital is one of the factors that complicates women's job promotion. This theory claims that individuals succeed in increasing their production capacity by investing in themselves, and that the main sources of investment are education, training, and work experience. This approach suggests that many women, lack time outside working hours to invest in training, and as a result are excluded from promotion opportunities.

We all have visited hotels, restaurants and if we introspect honestly, let us recapitulate the likely percentage of women General Managers, Resident Managers, Front -Office Managers, Reservation Manager, Controller, Housekeeping Manager , Chief Engineer, Sales and Marketing Director, Sales Manager , Chief Security Manager, Food and Beverage Manager, Executive Chef, Sous Chef, Banquet Chef, Restaurant Manager have we seen on the above mentioned heirarchical positions. There is a larger level of gender stereotyping and the strong glass ceiling barrier than what meets our eye. The reason for a great majority of women not being on these positions as these positions most likely lead them directly to the position of General Manager in the hotel with the next promotion.

The word entrepreneur reflects the ability to challenge ones strength and go beyond it. Today we have few but inspiring examples of women entrepreneurs. Women are entering high-level management positions in greater numbers, and at a younger age, than ever before. But when will they break down the wall blocking the top executive suite? This question has remained unanswered mentioned by many researchers through decades ranging across from seventies to present year 2022. In all the current discussion about women climbing the corporate ladder, two schools of thought have emerged. The more pessimistic view, expressed by Morrison, White, and Van Velsor, notes that although women have already broken the "glass ceiling" by entering high-level general management positions, they now face a more formidable wall blocking entry into the top executive suite. Morrison, White, and Van Velsor interviewed 76 women in or near general management positions at 25 Fortune 100 companies and also talked with 22 insiders about the special problems corporate women face. Although their study provides excellent insights into problems, pitfalls, and politics in the big corporation, its assessment of the future

may be too negative. The alternative view recognizes the intense competition that exists for top executive positions and proposes that until women reach general management positions in significant numbers, it is unlikely that a female will be chosen as a chief executive of a major corporation. This theory may aptly be described by such physical analogies as "filling the pipeline" and the "critical mass" concept. A recent Business Week cover story, headlined "They're About to Break Through to the Top," stated that 37 percent of corporate managers are now women, compared to 24 percent a decade ago. The story provided profiles of five women who are currently positioned properly as candidates for chief executive posts and identified 50 more women who may become future CEOs. However, a comprehensive study of the progress of women executives from 1970-1981, published in Business Horizons in 1983, showed that merely reporting percentages of women in management or executive positions may be misleading. This study of 1,262 executive women found that many were older, not well educated, and in dead-end positions such as corporate secretary or treasurer. Still, a significant number of highly educated younger women had become vice presidents, with the greatest concentration in service firms. It was predicted that the first female chief executives of major firms would appear within this sector.. (J. Benjamin Forbes, 1986)). Going back, Madame C.J. Walker who was born as Sarah Breedlove was the original self-made Woman. As a daughter to former slaves who was orphaned at the age of seven and Walker quite literally built her empire out of nothing. In 1917, Walker held one of the first meetings of businesswomen in Philadelphia, the Madam C.J.Walker Hair Culturists Union of America convention. Olive Ann Beech was an inspiring lady who enterprise in the aviation sector when the world was suffering the depression of 1930s and earned many awards, citations and honorary appointments. She is often referred to as the First Lady of Aviation. Talking of the current scenario we have Ms Falguni Nayyar, an IIM Ahmadabad pass out who set up and nurtured her entrepreneurial dream of setting up the very famous and every lady's favourite cosmetic brand Nykaa.com. She is also the former MD of Kotak Mahindra Capital Company. India is inching close towards being one of the biggest GDP economies in the world and so are its citizens. Tapping on this urbanized set up Ms Pankhuri Shrivastava who worked for Teach for India, has now set up Grabhouse, which is a broker free website that helps people finding apartments, sharing rooms and PG's on rent. Grabhouse raised \$2.5million from the market. This website has more than 1.5 lakh visitors a day. To make travel and meetings easy and comfortable Ms.Ankita Sheth, co-founder of Vista Rooms has the credit of being the only

women entrepreneur in this highly male dominated segment. Vista Rooms have scaled more than 700 plus properties in 70 plus locations for tier II and tier III locations in India. She is an avid traveler, an active social activist and has also been a part of Anna Hazare's campaigns. Ms. Richa Kar the CEO and Co-founder of Zivame, the first online lingerie seller space in India has played an important role in educating women across the country about intimate wear and shaping consumer behavior. We have Freshmenu, a startup by Ms. Rashmi Daga offering ready to eat meals. For private jet and charters, Ms Kanika Tekriwal has set up first marketplace startup JetSetGo.

Recent studies have begun paying attention to self-imposed barriers in the hotels across the world that can hold women back from advancing to top ranks. The most commonly cited fall into two major areas. First, there is the often dramatic "push and pull" between family-personal issues and the time of life during which promotions to higher ranks typically take place (Brizendine 2008; Reddy 2007). The age also plays an important determining role with respect to promotions, transfers and wage hikes for male and female managers.

Observation

Several results from recent research have shown that significant promotions typically take place for women when they are in their forties. At this time in their lives, many women must weigh their career advancement against family-related issues. Second, as we indicated above, self-established barriers interfere with advancement, such as unwillingness to relocate, concessions made within a spousal partnership, and traditional gender roles (Fischlmayr, 2002)). When women perceive barriers to their career advancement, they tend to either exit, voice concern, or rationalize remaining on a plateau ((Hamel, 2009)). Some studies suggest that the lack of self-confidence relates to the fact that the majority of women choose to quietly exit the company rather than voicing discontent about discrimination. Furthermore, gender stereotypes seem to be well-ingrained into the minds of managers, employees, and students who are about to enter the workforce ((Geyer-Semple, 2011)). However, research on the internal struggles of confidence and esteem for women is still inconclusive. Some studies have found no empirical link between career advancement and self-esteem (Soufi, Gilaninia, and Mousavian 2011).

Hotel industry is the top rising business segment in our country as well the World . According to ‘WTTC i.e. World Travel and Tourism Council’ the tourism sector and travel industry is expanded 3.5% in growth, which outpace the World’s economy of 2.5% successfully for the nine years consecutively. This sector is producing employment tremendously. In the past five years, one in four new jobs is generated by tourism sector.To add more the “Travel and Tourism Competitiveness” report by “World Economic Forum” on tourism industry and hospitality has raked India on the 6th place. Among top 10 contributor sectors in “FDI i.e. Foreign Direct Investment” is from hotel trade and hospitality business. During April 2000 to March 2019, the hospitality sector earned US\$ 12.35 billion of ‘Foreign Direct Investment i.e. FDI’, this is in accordance to the data reported by DPIIT i.e. “Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade”. The figure 1.1 shows an assortment of nations in key market that have the prospective to become new travelling households in coming ten years. By 2029, there are expected to increase in new travelling destinations by:

67 million new travelling household in China

14 million new travelling households in India

9 million new travelling households in USA

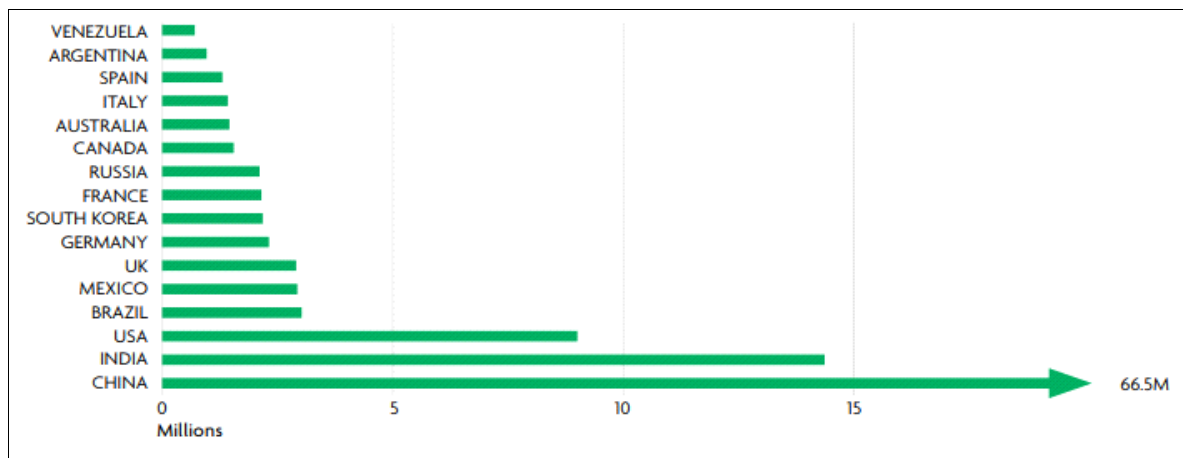


Figure: 1.1 New Travelling Households

Source: DPIIT.

In order to make our nation India a Global tourism hub, there are numerous constructive steps taken by Indian Government. 'Project Mausam' is initiated by Indian Government to institute cross culture association which will boost economic relations with 39 Indian Ocean countries.

Also the facility of 'e-tourist visa' has been made effective to citizens of 161 countries since April 2017. Initially 'e-TV i.e. e-Tourist Visa' was for 113 nations but now it is extended to 161 nations. To promote domestic tourism, Govt. of India has introduced various schemes under "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat". Such initiatives lessen the gap of cultural diversities and promote tourist inflow. But the question remains here when shall the' gap between the promotion possibilities to male and female managers in the hotels be bridged. Although the efforts for creating more management opportunities at the property level for women, now is the time to consider what types of positions women actually occupy. The career ladders must be examined with an eye to creating opportunities for women to move into positions that would be allowing the women to break the gender stereotyping bias which prohibits them from breaking the glass ceiling at the top.

Conclusion

The gender stereotypes about the ability to handle pressure, take quick decisions are permanently set in the mindsets of the professionals in hospitality industry which strengthens the glass ceiling. Women are taking control and gradually, persistently shattering the glass ceiling by creating a niche for themselves in the entrepreneurial arena by being proactive in leadership and professional development, making sacrifices, developing support systems and being willing to make changes including moving to new locations and zones. There is yet a great deal that has been written on the topic over the last few decades by renowned authors. However, further examination of the literature suggested that some discussion could be of great help on the meaning of the term – Glass Ceiling, at least in the context of tourism - was warranted, not because there is no definition, but because there are so many (Stabler & Goodall 1996). As other writers have pointed out (Wheeler, 1993)), that there are so many interpretations of the term has meant that each individual has been able to claim that his or her use of the phrase is appropriate. One result has been that the wide acceptance of the term noted above in many cases is simply acceptance of the phrase but not its implications. As found out by the (Rosen), women entering management must be prepared to clarify their career goals, to resolve dual career conflicts, to cope with possible discrimination on the job, and to project an image of confidence and assertiveness. Mostly it was acknowledge that it isn't easy and the price of a managerial career is

high. Forewarned is forearmed. It was also seen that the incentives and promotion of women at an organizational level appears more likely to be driven by external pressures in the operating environment than the proactive strategies in hotels and entrepreneurial settings. Thus there is definite need to understand and underline the causes, consequences to check the impacts of glass ceiling. As quoted by researcher, Zhong in 2011 in his article that the underrepresentation of women in top management positions is an important concern in the hospitality industry, in spite of the increasing number of women employees. (Zhong, 2011). Women should not be content with accepting meaningless senior appointments. The women should rather accept appointments of strategic value to the organisation where there is a likelihood of exerting impact in the organisation (Zanoxolo Makaula, 2015). When the female work shall be seen without the lens of gender stereotyping bias there might be a higher probability rate of breaking through the glass ceiling and this gaining rather greater pace and momentum in the future. When seen from a more negative perspective, it can be asserted that any perceptible change in attitude towards women in senior management in the hotel sector is not owing to conspicuous enlightenment and proactivity in women's issues on the part of males in the industry

Limitations And Further Research

This study used a limited number of participants. Although it was appropriate and necessary for this exploratory study, it does limit its findings. In order to obtain a clearer picture as to when more women and men shall be choosing to accept the existence of Glass Ceiling in entrepreneurship and hospitality industry, additional studies are necessary. To determine if these results are genuine or typical, future research could include a comprehensive study of even the beginners, the students enrolled in Industrial training, On the Job training in hospitality industry and various bachelors and masters programs in universities, colleges, schools, offering such degrees, also the employees who have quit their jobs owing to several reasons and not be limited to only in service employees of the hotels. Elaborate one on one interviews could add to discover more breadth and depth to the perspectives of entrepreneurs, hotel owners and hospitality practitioners working in hotels and restaurants. Administering in-depth interviews to the volunteering guests of 5 star hotels could also assist in providing more depth to the actual outsider look into the glass ceiling existence and might unveil clearer patterns and themes between glass ceiling prevalence, expectations and professional realities.

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