

A Study on Career Shift of Women from Hotels to Other Fields

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Abstract

Women employees in hotels play a major role in rendering services which possibly may be done only by them. These includes specialized services in housekeeping, front office, guest service, sales and marketing department etc. It has been observed that very few women employees are take up jobs in departments as kitchen and F & B as compared to the departments mentioned above as GRE , Front Office etc.

None of the hotels can have the workforce comprising of only of male employees and female employees have to be an integral part of this workforce.

But a trend has been observed of the career shift of female employees from the service sector. The paper therefore focuses on this aspect of career shift of women employees and thereon finding the reasons for these employees to leave the industry thereon. Apart from this, the paper also tries to identify various other factors associated with the career shift as the tenure spend by the women employees in hotels. The growth pattern of the women employees, and the reasons highlighting their shift from the hotel Industry.

The Primary data was collected through a questionnaire focusing on the population of women employees in hotel who have shifted from the hotel industry either to retail, academics or are homemakers.

The secondary data however was collected from books, research articles and journals. The paper tries to identify the reason/s for women to shift from hotel to other fields.

Keywords: Women Employees, Career Shift, Work Life Balance

Introduction

Service Industry unlike a manufacturing industry relies greatly on its human resource for rendering services to the customers. The success of each business depends greatly on their manpower and thus we say that focus of the management is not only on their customer and profitability but also on their employees, There is a tremendous and constant demand for skilled or semi skilled manpower in service or the hospitality sector. But the irony is that the work force is not available due to probably a gap between demand and supply or the huge turnover of the employees that the hospitality Industry is witnessing today.

The work force of the hotels comprises of a good blend of men and women. Women contribute to 70% of the total workforce in the tourism sector (Hospitality & Tourism Education in India: In search of innovative programmes-Dr. Ashish Dahiya) this statistics indicate that women do have a contributory role to play in hotel industry, secondly there are specific jobs in hotels such a housekeeping , Guest elations, Front office , sales which are more suitable for women and hence is mostly carried out by women. The reason being the in born qualities possessed by women as softness, aesthetic sense, patience and sincerity. All the above mentioned departments are productive or revenue producing departments and since women are an intigral part of their workforce , the role of women employees in Hospitality Industry is significant.

Despite these facts a trend that has been observed in the hotel industry and that is of career shift amongst women employees. The tenure or the duration spend by them has been observed to be short as compared to their

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men counterpart, at the same time there is also a lean representation of women at the higher positions in hotels. There can be numerous reasons for this status of women employees.

This paper therefore aims at finding out the factors influencing this career shift of women employees from the hotels either to other field or permanently leaving the hotel industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

I. Kate Purcell (1996) in her study focuses on the research on female employees at managerial positions and the findings suggest that women in “feminized” industries and occupations may face more formidable barriers and prejudices when they seek to develop careers rather than jobs because of the entrenched roles already allocated to women in such employment contexts.

II Babin, Barry J.; Boles, James s. (1998) the authors examine the attitudes and behaviors of employees who provide frontline service and address the extent to which relationships vary among male and female employees. The study suggest that role stress affects female service providers’ job performance more negatively than it does males’, and that job satisfaction is related more highly to quitting intent among males.

III. Davies, Taylor & Savery, (2001). In hotels, women are recruited to do somewhat semi- or unskilled, low-paid, gendered, operative and non-managerial jobs and women are not recruited for other hotel jobs since it is considered inappropriate, such as being bell-boys, night watch or night porters

IV. Linehan & Scullion (2001) stated that women held low-skilled jobs and low-paid positions due to selection and recruitment processes as well as informal and formal policies and processes, and that the main barrier preventing them from reaching senior managerial positions was the instilled negative perception in the organization environment towards them (their gender), as is demonstrated by Biswas and Cassell (1996: 23)

V. Prof. Thomas Baum(2004)the paper highlights the structural and cultural issues which determine the roles that women play within the hotel workforce and the strategies which can make a difference to their status and opportunities within the industry. Some of these issues

relate to occupational sex segregation, wage parity, career opportunities, the role of women within micro- enterprises and the informal hotel/catering/tourism economy.

VI . Yan Zono (2006). The study indicates that three gender issues as equity, Family issues and career advancement were the factors influencing the growth of women employees in hotels

VII. Jeanette Cleveland and John W.Oneil (2007) the paper deals with the issues of work pressures and family stress because of the work pressures. Results of the multisource qualitative research suggest that long, unpredictable hours create individual and family-related stress. This results in women employees either leaving the jobs or suffers health problems

VIII. Hmtiaz Muqbil (2011) the study indicates that heavy schedules and tighter deadlines at hotel and home both are telling on the health of married women workers. They are becoming prone to restlessness and insomnia. The major cause identified in the study for these problems is domestic stress.

XI. AfshanNaseem, SadiaEjaz Sheikh (2011)theresearch focuses on the factors influencing the satisfaction of employees. It indicates that from employee’s perspective, conducive working atmosphere coupled with incentives like salary and frequent trainings focused the employees to work with dedication to uplift the organization (hotels) and retaining employees, which is reflected clearly by the satisfaction level of customers.

X. Boston Hospitality Review (2013) The study suggests that women have no problem in entering the Hotel Industry to beginning their career, However the number reaching the top thins down as there are a very few women at the top position not because of Glass ceiling but the women employees qit because of their family commitments or they chose not to get promoted as there will be more flexibility to cope up with professional and personal commitments.

XI. Dr. Mousa Masadeh(2013): It was found that female employees did not get promoted to senior levels due to four factors: 1) the belief that women once married would not function as well as their male counterparts; 2) in hotels, promotions could be associated with transfer of assignment to another hotel chain, and there is a belief that married females are not as mobile as males; 3) usually

female employees have to work much more than males to be as effective; and lastly, 4) the presence of cultural barriers that prevent women from advancing their careers

XII. ZeoH0 (2013) The article suggests a need to examine more deeply the underlying dynamics of career progression for female hotel managers, and to explore the reasons for the continued imbalance. If so many women enter the industry, then where along the way do they disappear, and why do they decide to leave the industry.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Type of research: Descriptive research has been used to study the facts about women employees in hotels.

Methods of data collection:

Primary data-Primary data has been collected from women who were earlier associated with the hotel job and are now are in different or allied profession or are home makers. The survey was conducted for 56 ex hotel employees (Women) from Pune city.

Primary data was collected through survey in the following ways:

- 1. Through personal interviews:** A part of the sample selected for survey were sought to a set of pre-conceived questions through personal interviews. And the data was collected in a structured way.
- 2. Through questionnaires:** Besides interviews a structured questionnaire was filled by the women employees who had worked in hotels and now are a part of Academics, retail, entrepreneurs, or are home makers. The questions focused on women employees working at various levels of hotels and to collect the information about the tenure spent by women employees in a hotel, the growth pattern of women employees and finally the reasons or the factors influencing them to quit hotels and shift to some other field.

Secondary data: Secondary data has been collected from published / unpublished literature, latest references available from the journals, newspapers, research publications and magazines, past records and training reports of the hotel, and other relevant sources like internet.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To study the reason for women employees to join the Hotel Industry.
2. To study the tenure spent by women employees in hotels
3. To compare the designation at the time of joining and then while leaving.
4. To study the reasons for leaving the hotel industry.

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of the survey is done to find out:

I Reasons for Joining the Hotel Industry

The survey suggest that the most prominent reason for joining the Hotel Industry was their relevant educational background followed by the passion and glamour towards the Industry.

In my earlier study I had tried to find out the reason for the students to opt for the Hotel Management course. It was found that 25% of the students were not aware of this course before they join the programme.(Sunder S and Anuradha K 2014) And hence some of them quit the course midway or shift to other fields or start their career in totally new field. But the aspirants who wish to join the Hotel Industry pursue the relevant degree and /or Diploma in Hotel Management to be eligible to join the Hotel Industry.

Some of the women employees joining the industry because of their educational background are well versed with the industry and its working and they find it suitable as a career option. The knowledge acquired by them while perusing this course motivates them to join hospitality sector.

Passion towards industry is another reason for opting it as a career option. Many professionals are attracted to the glory and glamour associated with this hospitality industry.

II. The Tenure Spent by Women Employees in Hotel

The tenure spent by the women employees varies from 2 to more than 8 years . It has been observed that women

employees join the industry but only a few continue to have a long tenure in hotels whereas majority of them leave the hotel industry in few years.

The average tenure spent by the women employees is found to be 2- 4 years by 47% of the women employees before shifting from hotel Industry. This is the highest percentage of the studied population. 22% of women employees have spent less than 2 years in Hotel Industry

No have the tenure of 4-6 years where as only 10 % have continued to be in Hotel Industry for more than 8 years.

2-4 years is quite a short period to know the industry or rather get adjusted to the Industry. Through the interviews it was found that the employees leaving the industry in this short period is because of work pressure, family transfer, further education and marriage.

III. The Growth Opportunity

Duration spent by women employees on an average is 4-6 years .It is quite a short span to be considered for a career. But the study also highlights the fact that although the tenure is less the women employees have been promoted from the positions they were recruited at. The women employees were recruited at different positions as at entry, mid and top management levels 48% were hired at associate 32% at mid management and supervisory level whereas 20% were hired at the executive levels in different hotels. This data reflects that women employees have the potential of being recruited at the Top management positions and the Industry is recognizing this potential and has been giving fair job opportunities to women employees.

Another parameter of the growth opportunities available to women employees was studied and it indicates that growth opportunities are available to women employees and 33% could reach top management whereas 47% remained till Mid Management level. There are a few women employees who were promoted more than once in a short span of their work in the hotels. This means growth opportunities are there for them but on the other hand the study also indicate that maximum women employees could reach only to mid management or supervisory level during their career in hotels.

IV. The Reason for Leaving the Hotel Industry

It has been observed that women employees join the Hotel industry because of their relevant educational background but spend a short span of their career in Hotels. They shift to retail, Facility` management, Academics or become home maker. The analysis of the study indicates that the major reasons for the career shift from hotel Industry is the work life balance. 41 % of women employees have work life balance as a reason to shift from hotels. Hotel Industry demands a work force to cope up with the continuous work, consistent performance, long working hours and other work pressures as meeting the deadlines and multitasking. Women employees also do have their responsibilities back home as family responsibilities, children, house hold responsibilities and hence they find it difficult to cope up with both the demands which are equally important for them and hence career takes the back seat and they either prefer taking care of family responsibilities or look for a job which helps them to balance work and home together.

This was also a common factor resulting in the career shift, This is mainly owing to long working hours in Hotels as compared to fixed duty timings in any other sector, Nature of job which involves more of physical work also results in fatigue and stress and may be a reason to quit the Industry.31% of women employees complaint of long working hours as a reason to leave which is directly related to work life balance.

Transfer of spouse, Limited growth opportunities, work stress, improper superior subordinate relation are also other reasons for quitting hotel Industry.

FINDINGS

- The women aspirants who wish to join the Hotel Industry are recruited at all three positions as management (as Management Trainee), Mid Management and entry position where the highest recruitment is for Associate / entry level.
- The most prominent reason for the aspirants to join the hotel Industry was their educational background. The Passion towards the Hospitality Industry also was one of the major reason for joining the Industry. Few aspirants were attracted towards the glamour of the Industry.
- The average tenure spent at the hotel by maximum women employees was 2 to 4 years. This was sug-

gests that women join the industry but very few are retained for a longer period.

- The women employees leaving the hotel Industry were interviewed and was observed that there all the women employees surveyed were promoted at least once and a few more than once during their tenure. This suggests that there are growth opportunities available to them.
- Managing Work life Balance, Long working hours were the most prominent reasons for the women employees to shift from the Hotels. This was followed by other reasons as Work Stress, Transfer of the spouse, Limited salary, medical, improper superior subordinate relationship and no growth opportunity were the other problems identified for the women employees to leave the Industry.

Suggestion and Recommendation

The career shift from hotel Industry to other fields is due to two major reasons as Managing work life balance and long working hours.

It is suggested that hotels especially in India must have policies to have a limited shift period and follow the same as the employees can give due attention to their other commitments towards their families or otherwise.

Long working hours of 12 to 14 hours are stressful for the women employees and may be limited to strict 8 hours shift and the hotels should adhere to it strictly as practiced by the European and other Hotels.

CONCLUSION

The study carried out for a few women hotel employees who have shifted from the hotel to other fields. From the data collected and the Interview it can be concluded that women are passionate towards working in hotel Industry which also leads them to pursue education which will fetch them a job in the Hotels. But most of them leave the Industry within a short span of 2 to 4 years. The prominent reason for the employees leaving the industry was managing Work Life Balance, work Stress and Long working hours.

The scenario is a bit discouraging for the women aspirants who would like to serve in this Industry. The management

of the hotels should give due consideration to have limited work time per shift for not only women but all the employees which will help them to cope up with the personal and professional commitments more efficiently.

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