

Women Empowerment Policies in Selected Hotels of Vadodara

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Abstract

The UNO Summit in Paris in 2015 determined the 17 goals for the member countries to achieve in order to develop in an appropriate manner that will give an impetus to develop today while keeping in mind the social & natural needs of the future generations. Particularly 2 goals that have been set are directly related with Women Empowerment & Gender equality needs. Though the countries have been given the targets to achieve but at the national level specifically the sectors of an economy have to contribute a lot as it is the farfetched dream to be achieved. It makes the hotel inspired to work efficiently by aligning to sustainable development goals this research has the relevance to these two sustainable development goals of women empowerment and gender equality to be achieved by hotel industry by including the guidelines in policy making as it is a part of service sector of the economy.

This research is aimed at finding out the policies of women empowerment & gender equality at workplace in some 3&4 star hotels in Vadodara city of Gujarat state. It emphasizes on the policies set and followed by selected hotels in Vadodara city. These policies may include maternity benefits, equal monetary benefit, sense of privacy & safety as well as security of women at work place.

The study covers geographical area of Vadodara city because it absorbs the labor force in hotel Industry significantly as the city being an industrial hub it attracts business tourists from across the globe and thus has the facility of accommodation and Food & beverage offered in small to large size of hotels. The convenience sampling includes selected, Four 4 star & Four 3 star hotels in Vadodara city to observe & analyze the policies making keeping women empowerment in focus. The exploration brings out that positive steps have been taken by these selected hotels in regards with leaves, recruitment, pay scale while showing that women in top management is still a goal that needs to be achieved among the other goals for women empowerment.

Keywords: Gender Equality, Women Empowerment, Sustainable development goals.

Introduction

Globally the women empowerment was given more emphasis since the occurrence of French revolution that advocated for equality of gender & class etc. The concept of women empowerment has not been implemented or inculcated in lifestyle or culture of society as it should have been done by now. Though some of the countries have marked their performance as phenomenal in this term but countries in Asian & African continents lag behind if compared with Scandinavian countries like Denmark, Holland, Finland etc.

The scenario of gender equality & women empowerment is not new in Indian subcontinent as women were the main stakeholders of the society in Vedic Era but the societal developments in the later period of history saw the decline in the degree of importance and image of women in society.

The concept of women at workplace too has evolved since French Revolution took place. In India the prominence of empowerment of women or gender equality of women at workplace has been on the back foot. Though the acts related to minimum no. of women at workplace even in the legislatures have been made but have not been implemented efficiently. Since Hotel Industry has come out to be a prominent part of economy that absorbs the manpower significantly. It has been observed that policies related to Equality of gender and women empowerment in hotel Industry have also not fared out very well. Moreover Sexual harassment, biasness in promotion & lack of desire to give independent authority to women has restricted to women to a marginalized level only. This Research is thus oriented to find out the status of policies & Activities being carried out for women empowerment at the workplace.

Review of Literature

Extensive & numerous Work pieces related to Women empowerment have been carried out in India that give a general overview about status of women in society and many other works have studied the status of women in unorganized sector but the detailed study of position of women at work places specially in Hospitality sector have rarely been done throughout the Indian Hotels.

Hazarika 2011, study has tried to find out About Current status of women in India. Though it is a brief and covers general aspects of status of women empowerment while giving a brief history and a bit of glimpse of what legislature & Government have done in this regards by giving a timeline of legislations made and implemented.

Kaushik, Sharma, kaushik 2014, Denotes the research on Equality in workplace in Indian Organisations and other gender issues in India. Sociological analysis considering the fact that the house hold duties allocated because of male chauvinism and their effect work productivity at

workplace. It also exhibits the issues in context with promotions and appointment on top level of management.

The research done by Haq, 2013, elaborates the challenges & dilemmas challenges faced by women and intersectionality and its impact on personal & professional life of women. It inspires the readers belonging to organizations to implement policies that improve the life of women at workplace as far as intersectionality is concerned.

Bhattacharya 2012 discerns the position of women in India's Information technology sector. The study does focus on finding out the issues related with constraints & opportunities to women employees in IT sector.

Dasgupta 2018 gives glimpse on psychological dimension of women empowerment at workplace and it mandates the need of emphasizing on it while forming the policies in organisation.

This research moreover gets inspired from Budhwar 2011, as it reviews the status of women in top management in case of India. The research emphasises upon the effect of globalization on Indian economy as it sees more employment absorption because of it and also examines the factors that retard women's participation of managerial positions.

Mehta & Sharma, 2014 too stresses the need of having women at the top management by conferring them with the required power, authority & autonomy for performing the tasks. It further takes into consideration some of the important domains of women empowerment at work place.

Additionally, Kadam, 2012 scrutinises & analyses the status of women since ancient India, Medieval India & Modern India as it briefly describes women in Vedic era, Mugal empire & Europeans' rule on the subcontinent. Besides it also give a glimpse of the efforts of different governments in the centre after Independence.

Jagannathan, Luecke, Gambheer, Krishnan, 2016, enhances the enthusiasm to understand the the challenges for gender gap and mechanism & tactics to fill up the gender Gap in the garment factory.

Batra, Reio, Reio Jr 2016 briefs about the socio cultural considerations that obstruct the women empowerment. The obstructions indicated include male chauvinism, predefined roles in social life, political context & social stigmatization about working women. The most important inference of the contemporary issues comes into play while analyzing the work of Hemalatha, 2020 in which the study illustrates the gender inequality in tourism sector of India which creates more relevance to this study.

Gupta, 2015 glances at the conditions of women in selected 5 star hotels. It takes issues like recruitment of women & women participation in managerial positions in to account and the

analysis discerns the reluctance of recruitment women as employees and even if they are recruited, they are limited to entry level only.

Choudhary & Gupta, 2010 analyses the status of women by finding out the roles played by working women in hotel Industry. It concludes that prevalence of biasness in official policies relating to gender equality creates restraints in achieving the gender equality.

There are many useful research works which have been carried out by academicians & research scholars in regards with women empowerment. These gender equality centric studies range from primary sector & secondary sector to tertiary sector of the economy and thus give an impetus to incline into going more into specific research oriented towards finding out the status of women in every sector focussing the small locale to make the study even better & authentic. The need of micro level focus considering the sector & place has incited to carry out this research.

Objectives

1. The research is focused to figure out the status of policy making and implementation regarding Maternity leaves & other welfare of women in selected hotels in city of Vadodara.
2. It also aims to Find out and analyse the Mechanism to handle, control and mitigate sexual harassment cases.
3. The study seeks to find out the participation of women in managerial positions in the hotel.
4. The research also intends to examine the status of strength of women in staff, their pay scale, and the work conditions.

Research Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is descriptive as it observes, analyses the measures taken on the front of women empowerment at workplace in selected hotels in Vadodara city. The suggestions & conclusion has been given after analysing the performance of selected hotels against some of the parameters set in this regards.

Locale-The vicinity of the research covers the area which has prominent 3 to 4 star hotels in vadodara city. Since arrival of tourists gives vast scope of business resulting in more labour absorption. The capacity of labour absorption renders more opportunities to involve gender equality in manpower recruitment.

Sampling-The data collected is primary. Since non probability sampling method allows choosing specific sample for specific purpose with pre-determined basis of selection & for finding out the position of women empowerment policies at workplace the sampling was chosen by adopting the convenience sampling method. No. of hotels considered for data collection is 8 out which four are 4star hotels & four are 3 star hotels in the city.

Data Analysis-The data was collected by means of conducting structured interviews of HR managers of these hotels. The questionnaire introduces and asks questions on 10 criteria for women empowerment. These criteria have been mentioned below-

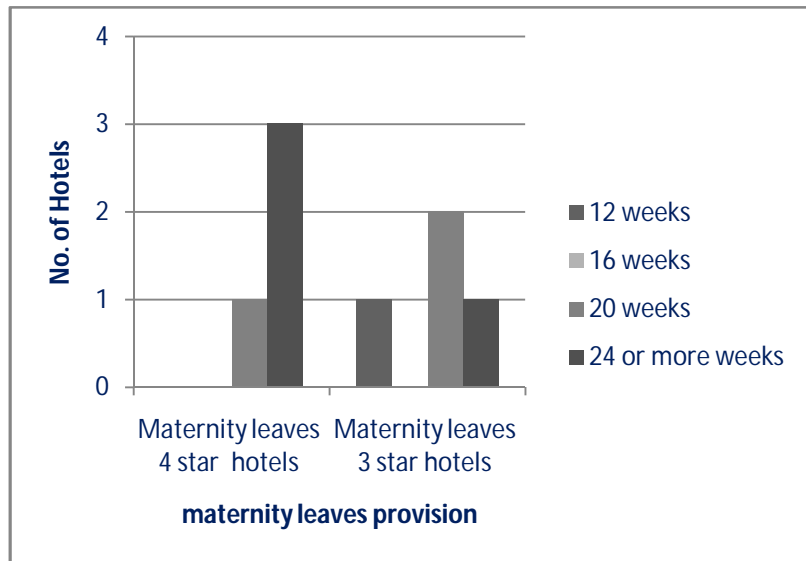
1	Maternity Leave Policy
2	Sexual Harassment (Complaint Redressal committee)
3	How many women leading the main operational department out of 4 main departments.
4	Ratio of women employees working
5	Pay scale
6	Transparency (Open door policy)
7	Work Allocation
8	Incident yet
9	clean & Hygienic washroom
10	Baby Cribs

The data collected during these interviews was evaluated against the parameters set in the questionnaire.

Results & Discussions

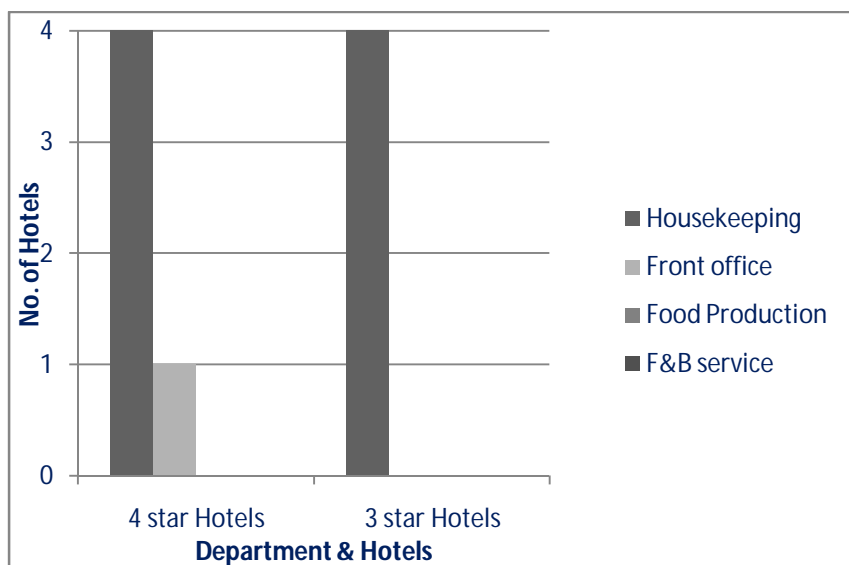
The criteria chosen to measure the performance have been decided by giving the due consideration of the psychological, physiological needs of working women. The findings have been discussed below-

Maternity Leaves-It was kept a criteria as being pregnant is a blessing but it immediately makes it difficult for working women to work as well as after some time while she is going antenatal period it totally makes it unjustified to go and work physically in hotel industry by risking the life. The delivery also renders women unwell to start the job as soon as it is done and thus women need rest for a few months and therefore the provision for maternity must be there as mandated by government. The research finds out that 3 out of 4 four star hotels provide maternity leaves for at least 24 weeks and 1 out of the 4 gives 20 weeks as maternity leave. The data from 4 three star hotels shows that out of 4 , one hotel gives 12 weeks, one give 24 & rest two hotels give 24 weeks leaves as maternity benefit to working women. This show that the government's act on it is being followed by almost all the hotels except one 3 star hotel that have chosen for sampling.



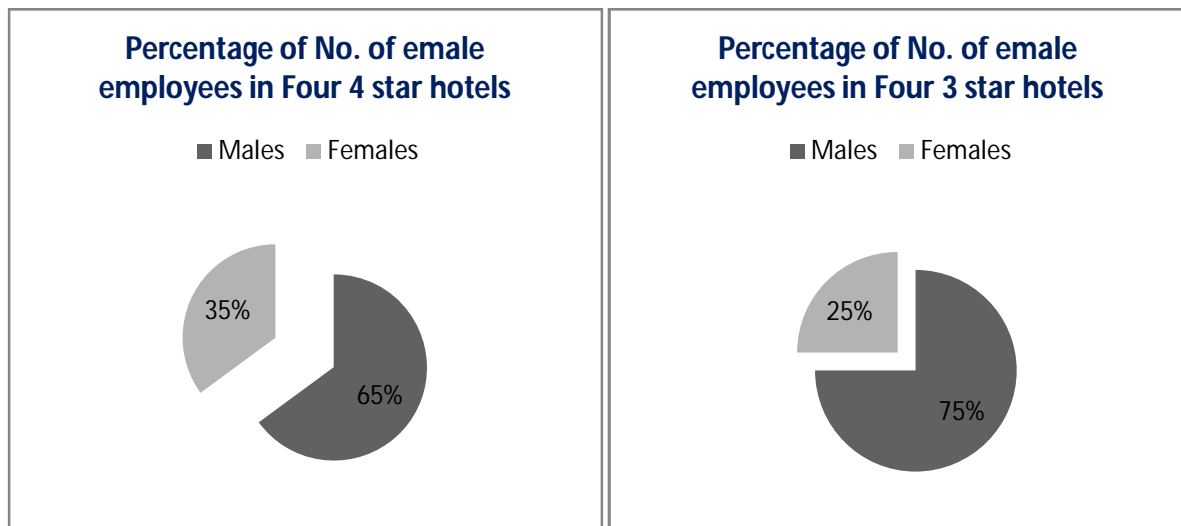
Participation in managerial level position (Out of 4 core department)-

It has been seen that often the women are restricted to lower level of positions because of the biasness and few other reasons and it retards their growth indirectly resulting in an indirect psychological effect. In this regard the finding denotes a very less participation of women on top management positions. Though the reasons for it have not been mentioned in the research but the general overview of no. of women at decision making level of the management is taken. The data depicts that out of 4 four star hotels only one has 2 female on the top of their 4 main departments while rest of 3 four star hotels have only one woman each on decision making level of 4 major departments. In case of 4 three star hotels, they have 1 woman at top level of only one major department. The whole scenario gives out that having 50 per cent women on top position of major department is still a farfetched dream.



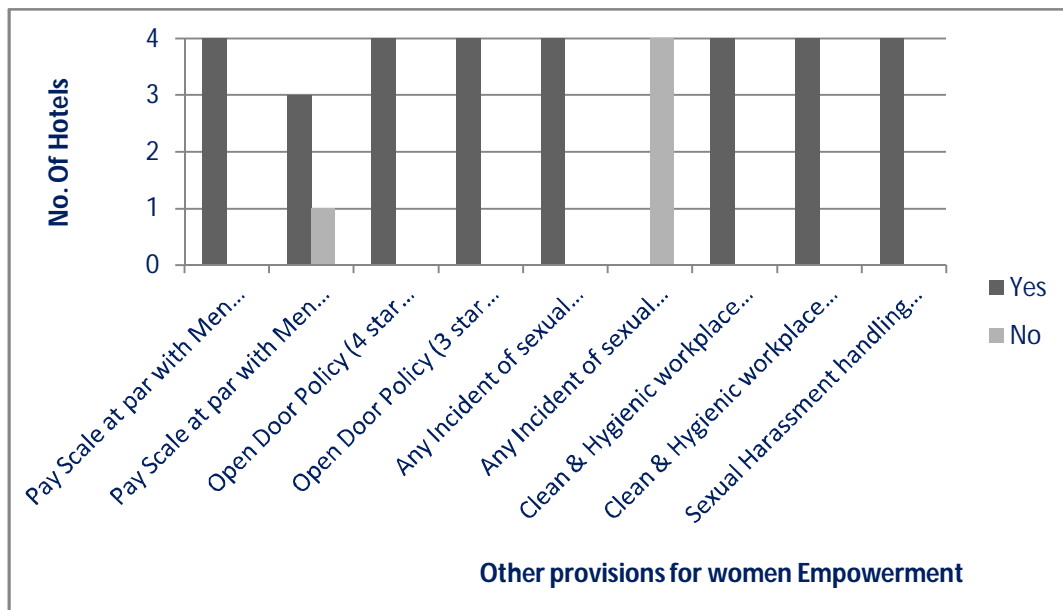
The Staff ratio male & female

Recruitment policy is a key in shaping the face of an organisation. The recruitment policy may differ as per the requirement and nature of work that is supposed to be performed. As far as Hospitality sector and especially Hotel Industry is concerned, it mandates the need of female staff members as the nature of the work demands soft skills, guest handling, property up keeping and management of money & manpower and for these jobs no one is better than a learned woman. The story of women employee on board really gives a disappointing output as irrespective of good recruitment policy for women, majority of the samples taken for research struggle to recruit 50% of women staff strength at workplace. The data shows that in 4 star hotels 35% of employees are women & in 3 star hotel it is less than 25%.



Other Gender equality and women empowerment related criteria

Criteria for further investigations were monetary benefits, open door policy & Psychological needs. These parameters do have the implications on wellbeing of women at workplace. In case of monetary consideration the study tried to find out whether the pay scale of women is at par with men or not as it gives motivation to them. At this front the study discerns that all the 4 four star hotels considered for sampling have given out that they all pay women on same scale as men but 1 out of 4 three star hotels lagging behind in this regards. When it comes to open door policy that is the psychological need of women staff, the research shows that all the hotels considered as a sample for this research have open door policy for women.



It is matter of proud that as per the responses of HR representatives of all the hotels there has not been a single case of sexual harassment that was reported. It is not only that the cases have not been reported but in fact there has not been any such incident taking place. The research also finds out that for handling sexual

harassment cases the mechanism like Sexual harassment cases Redressal committee has been formed in every hotel, but there is one three star hotel in which the work of committee is handled by GM himself. The conditions of facilities like washroom, workplace, and cafeteria given for physiological needs are very well kept.

Conclusion & Suggestions

The study has been done in order to know the status of women empowerment policies in 4 four star hotel & 4 three star hotel in the city of Vadodara. This research contemplates the need of working women and prepares the criteria. The study observed the positive steps and negative steps both as far as women empowerment is concerned. In respect to no. of female staff, the data shows that the no. of female staff is still less, though the study does not cover the sufficient feedback from female staff member, it glances on hotels policy in this regards and that is not biased the hotels must examine the reasons why female members are not interested and improve the status. In regards with sexual harassment cases, all the hotels have worked well. The main concern hovers around the issue of insufficient participation of female staff on top level of management as almost all the sample are lagging behind in that regard. The research is limited to the policies of hotel in context with working women and it does not take into account the working women's feedback as far as implementation is concerned and thus leaves the scope for further research on the same.

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