

Tourism sector in maldives



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Abstract**General Introduction**

With the rise of tourism sector in the Maldives in 1972 with one resort, it has improved to be the “Ranbis alhaa kukulhu” by the Maldivians or defined as “

The chicken that lays golden eggs” which made a gateway to the employment as well as a boost in the economy of Maldives. The country with more than a thousand pearl islands in the Indian Ocean depends heavily on the contribution of tourism to its economy.

Along the years of the tourism development, the start of one resort in 1972 has changed to 91 registered operating resorts, 14 hotels, 23 guesthouses, and to more than 147 registered tourism vessels in operation and many more in development, over the last 3 decades.

The tourism sector has developed over the years since the first resort emerged in the year 1972 which also created a boost gateway in the employment sector of the country. During the 1990's, it was 6% of the employment which contributed to the tourism sector due to reasons such as lack of education in the field, un acceptance of the working environment since in Maldives its ‘ one island, one resort’ concept and also due to the religious facts such as working in places where wine & liquor are served are prohibited, and lack of foreign language. Then, it was mostly men who travelled to work in the resorts while the women were to look after the family and most were housewives.

Over the years, the acceptance of women working in the tourism sector directly dealing with the tourists have been increasing slowly. it is believed the main reasons which limits the number of women working in the resort are due to the ‘ one island, one resort’ concept where by a person has to work all week in the resort for which they are also accommodated on the same island and are able to visit back to their family once a week. This

becomes problems for most that have a family. And also due to ethical beliefs among people for which woman have to work among men far away from the families is still not being well accepted by the perception of the community.

As mentioned above, this dissertation would focus on issues regarding possibilities, reasons and opportunities which lack the young women to work in the tourism sector, mainly in the resorts which the small island nation such as Maldives is well known for. Hence the topic chosen for this dissertation is: An analysis on the reluctance of young women joining the tourism industry in Maldives. The ‘ young women” is described as young girls between the age of the 16 – 20 which is the most appropriate age for the girls to chose a field to build their career either through further higher studies in a desired sector or working.

The main four objectives to be covered in the research would be in order to find the following.

1. What are the views and opinions of the fresh graduates from high school towards women working in the tourism sector?
2. What can hospitality education programs or facilities do in order to attract more women towards the industry?
3. What are the factors that motivate them to join the industry? (that is either starting their higher studies in the tourism sector or work)
4. What are the factors why most girls are reluctant to work in resorts?

The following objectives are to be covered on the primary data collected.

This dissertation consists of two parts. The first part discusses the existing facts and figures of the women in the industry, concept and existing practices in the community. Also issues, challenges and barriers in the industry for woman theoretically explained by different people which is related to the independent and dependent variables of the research.

The second part consists of the research methodology, the findings and analysis.

For the research methodology, the research consists of primary and secondary data collected. The primary data would be the Questionnaire forms which would be filled up by the sample ages group which is girls between the age of 16 – 20. The analysis on the primary data would complete the objectives to be covered in the research as well as give the results of the hypothesis in this dissertation. The research methodology would be more briefed in the second part. The hypotheses to be tested are:

- H1: The views and opinions of the fresh graduates from high school towards women working in tourism industry would be an acceptable factor in the minds of the modern generation; hence they may be not able to work due to family influence in choosing their career or the perception of the people towards girls working.
- H2: The views and opinions of most fresh graduates towards working in the tourism sector would be unstable and would need guidance from informative sources about their career path

- H3: The resorts assuring the women as well as the parents of them on the safe and security of the working environment would attract women towards the industry
- H4: Factors such as families influence, the perception among people towards girls working in resorts and religious beliefs are main reasons why most girls are reluctant to work in the industry

The importance of the chosen topic is due to several reasons such as, as per a survey conducted by the Ministry of Tourism in the year 2006, it showed that it was a percentage of 54% employed are locals in the resorts, among that only 3% represents the women in the industry. The importance of feminism gender in the industry is very much needed in the tourism industry today.

Today, due to the dominant of the male gender in the tourism sector over the years since the beginning of tourism in Maldives, it has been a failure to recruit or to attract the female gender not even equivalent, but not even close to being equivalent to the male gender to work in the resorts.

If the tourism industry ignores this problem today, in the future, there may not be any chances of career building for a woman in the industry which has become the main occupation of the country.

Also one reason that motivated me personally in choosing this research topic is that I have seen my friends who studied with me, chose another career due to several barriers which they faced that changed their career leaving the hospitality industry after their higher studies in the tourism sector.

Part 1 – Literature Review

Existing situation in the industry

As per a survey conducted by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture in the year 2006 shows that a percentage of 7. 876% is the total of women, both local and foreign working in the industry while the rest 92. 124% are male, both local and foreign.

The survey also summed up that there were more foreign women in the industry then locals with a difference of 2%.

In order to find the existing problems that are faced by the women to join the industry, the main theory focused in this dissertation would be the “ Glass Ceiling” theory (Knutson & Schmidgall , 1999) and Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1975).

The ‘ Glass Ceiling’ is described as an invisible barrier which cause the women difficulties or are unable to reach higher posts. These barriers either limits the further growth of a women’s carrier in an organization or consists of de-motivating factors for which most chose not to work long term in the industry.

This may be occurring in the Maldives since over the years, the tourism sector has been dominant by the male gender that the woman are not provided with higher positions unless with long time work experience or by higher studies, and for a long time, with the males working in the resorts, the women have mostly been housewives or been in other fields of work.

The Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1975), describes that the differences in the income as well as the jobs offered are based on a person's experience, education and trainings. And that it involves no gender discrimination.

The glass ceiling is also caused by different other factors such as sexual harassment, limitations in 'the old boy network', work and family balance,

Describing sexual harassment, (Dunwoody-Miller and Gutek 1985). Sexual harassment could also be described in a work place other than abusing, but also such as humiliation in front of other people. Mostly within a work force with a larger number of men, the women could be humiliated for what they said in a crowd which they could feel sexually harassed. In most cases, it could be their seniors doing it. But unfortunately, most are unaware of the policies of an organization on whom it has to be reported for which some chooses to leave the organization.

The informal social group which has the high connection with the management allowing them for easier promotions and higher positions are described as 'The boy network' (Oakley, 2000). Thus in the hospitality industry, a lot of women complain that they are excluded from this informal groups where by the old boy net work also limits the opportunities of growth to the women.

Unlike the men, the women are also mostly responsible for the family as well as work. In order to balance out their work life as well as family life, the woman either try to find helpers or nannies to manage the homes or chooses jobs with lesser responsibilities and time that has to be spend in the work. (McGrath, 1999; Higgings et. al, . 2000).