

Women in the workforce sociology essay



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It has been argued that, women have been excluded from the study of work, and that, when they are studied, the analysis has often been distorted by sexist assumptions (Acker, 1977; Acker

and Van Houten, 1974; Brown, 1976; Kanter, 1975, 1977; Oakley, 1974).

Prior to the industrial revolution, the family economy operated as a cohesive unit; typically all family members, regardless of age or gender, were engaged in productive labour (Tilly and Scott, 1978). Given gendered expectations, along with a gendered opportunity structure (Browne and England, 1997), we, therefore, assume that

Women would benefit from arrangements providing the most family-related resources and

Supports in terms of both economic capital (e. g. income, security) and social capital (e. g. less time on the job, a supportive supervisor). Wethington and Kessler (1989) found women with high employment commitments were more vulnerable to distress (see also Mirowsky, 1996). Nowadays women have more freedom in choosing the path for their future and they may decide whether or not to combine career with having children. Women's increased share of the labour force has prompted businesses to respond to their family needs by providing " flexitime", or flexible work schedules (Wiatrowski, 1990). Bergmann 1986 highlights that middle class women are having fewer children; their labour force participation is now less responsive to their position in the family cycle. In fact as stated by Robinson, 1988 Women still do much more housework and family care than men, but the hours women spend performing these duties have been declining, particularly among

younger women. The entrance of women of all ages into the labour force in the second half of the twentieth century has created another period of structural lag (Moen and Yu, 2000). However although there has been effort done to increase diversity, female employees still face the glass ceiling when it comes to the top management jobs. The glass ceiling is according to Maume, 2004 a failure of women or a certain minority groups in climbing up the corporate ladder, despite seeing the top jobs but still not reaching them due to the discriminatory barriers.

The expectations from the women's family and from the society may sometimes affect the decisions of women in their career objectives which may act as a barrier. The society sometimes treats women differently. Sometimes often careers are cut short because of for instance maternity leave which takes women out of the workplace for months at a time where the company needs to move on. However, over the last years there was a change in the perspective that women are not as effective as men and this was highlighted in the Economist "Men -Tomorrow's second sex". A One Chief Executive Officer of a large Mauritian multi-national stated recently: "Women have done really well here and moved on. I've never come across sexist views. There are some really good assertive women role models here. Women want to progress and people's attitudes have changed".

Women in hospitality

Woods and Viehland (2000) found that although practitioners and researchers were concerned with females' status in hotel management, only a few empirical studies examined this topic. Whether the issue has been scrupulously studied or not, relevant literature clarified that it was widely

debated (Mann and Seacord, 2003; Del Sesto, 1993). In UK, the tourism sector was one of the area where there was the fastest growth and in the 80's three quarter of this growth was women's who were the most represented mainly in parttime jobs , insecure, low status and clerical post.

Recent years have seen an emergence of studies that explore mobility, the role of women in the labor force and the expansion of the internationally hospitality workforce (Baum et al..., 2007 ; Devin, Baum, Hearn, Devine2007a, 2007b; Matthew&Ruhs, 2007). Today tourism presents both the opportunities and challenges for gender equality and women's empowerment. (Global report on women in tourism 2010). Females contribute a significant proportion of the labor force in several countries awareness of the factors and the constraints that might affect their participation is increasingly required for their managers (Burrell et al,... 1997). The participation and involvement of women in tourism sector is being encouraged and women's participation has increased directly and indirectly in tourism industry also Boxall and Purcell, 2003 states that the career ladder within hotels is predicated on the conventional employment models of continuous employment and linear progression.

(Bagulley, 1990, Hicks 1990; Jordon 1997 ; Wood 1992) Identify that the tourism and hospitality sectors are dominated by women and managed by men; in fact it is very common as the service sector is largely populated by women and they are more present especially at the lower level. Women are important to the hospitality labour market (Doherty 1997).

In many of the literature review it has been observed and declared by many authors that women are key participants in the tourism labour market (Ashley, Roe and Goodwin 2001; Jameison 2003) , although there is a belief that women tend to be disadvantaged in this sector as few women occupy the senior executive positions and those that do receive less pay (Iverson, 2000 ; Jordon 1997 ; Ng and Pine 2003 ; Skalpe, 2007; Zhong and Couch, 2007). However, we can put forward “ assertion was that girls are now outperforming boys at every level in school and closing the gap at university level”. Women in fact predominate in the growing service sector, while men are trapped in declining heavy industries - the sugar industry is an example (In Mauritius) - and that employed men are no longer attractive marriage partners. (Tulsidas Naraidoo, 2011)

It has been found that women are more likely to fill part time roles , 54% of female working in the sector work part time, compared to 46% of man- according to women case for change-executive summary 2010. Beyond the rapidly increasing numbers of female entering the workplace (Mc Dougal & Briley 1994), we cannot neglect women’s contribution in tourism development as for instance nowadays the proportion of women graduated in the sector is increasing at a rapid rate. Women are acknowledged as key participants in the tourism labor market (Ashley, Roe and Goodwin 2001; Jamieson 2003).

According to Kate Purcell the “ women’s jobs” fall predominantly three categories:

“ Contingently- gendered jobs” which happen to be mainly done by women but for which the demand for labour is gender-neutral.

Women work in such jobs as a result of employers’ pursuit of economic advantage rather than gendered preferences; they want cheap workers, and women – particularly, married women seeking part time work – have historically been available for employment for lower average rates of pay than men; partly reflecting their status as “ component” rather than “ breadwinner”. Crompton and Sanderson[8, pp. 155-8]

“ sextyped jobs”, where sexuality or other attributes assumed to be sex-related are explicit or implicit parts of the job specification

In the hospitality industry it is a cliché that “ the right kind of personality” is a more important employment prerequisite than formal qualifications[13, 14]. Where Filby’s[16] finding that “ personality” tends to be used as a synonym for sexual attractiveness and/or gender-specific tacit skills and attributes. He was told by a male manager he interviewed that recruitment of female staff was informed by “ a height for weight principle” It has been noted that for some front house jobs it is essential to have “ a certain type of woman” which, when pressed, he defined as “ ideally between 21 and 26, with long legs and a good figure”. This is because the “ the customers expect it”. This remark was highlighted by many other authors as Adkins [17, p. 109]).

“ Patriarchally-prescribed jobs” where patriarchal practice determines and prescribes appropriate job incumbency.

Patriarchal prescriptions, though, is a distinct and equally powerful tendency, deriving from largely unarticulated understandings that male dominance in the home and in the public sphere and women's dependency are normal and that these norms derive from "natural" differences between the sexes.

Bell and Newby have identified that there is the "deferential dialect" between male and female often, as reinforcing women's economic dependency on men by providing opportunities for "component waged" jobs[10] which the HCTC[3, p. 37] note, without irony, "appeal to women who wish to combine the opportunity to earn an income with their domestic responsibilities". The more higher level and very well paid the post is, the more likely it will be filled by a man, even though, women may be greater in number in the industry.

"Gender roles play a great role for women's low involvement in direct tourism business in one hand and on the other hand many employers of this sector think that women cannot continue the job due to their social and biological reproductive responsibilities. Such attitude of the employers about women may be due to the discriminative nature of the patriarchal system of the society."

Tourism provides good opportunities for female employees' contribution and participation in the tourism employment. Women's entrepreneurship as well as their leadership is important. Female employee in the tourism sector earn low pay and they are sometimes under utilised and under represented. However tourism offers positive pathways to the female success in tourism.

The global report on women in tourism 2010 by UNWTO and UNIFEM (now UN Women) findings were as follows:

1. Women make up a large proportion of the formal tourism workforce.
2. Women are well represented in service and clerical level jobs but poorly represented at professional levels.
3. Women in tourism are typically earning 10% to 15% less than their male counterparts.
4. The tourism sector has almost twice as many women employers as other sectors.
5. One in five tourism ministers worldwide are women.
6. Women make up a much higher proportion of own-account workers in tourism than in other sectors.
7. A large amount of unpaid work is being carried out by women in family tourism businesses.

Research indicates that religion, culture, and society can influence women's employment (Constance 2005; Feldmann 2007; Foroutan 2008; Read and Oselin 2008; Read 2004) and also a good example is in the context of Malaysia, Amin and Alam (2008) also found that religion significantly influenced a woman's decision regarding employment. However religion may not be the only factor discouraging women of working in hotels but also poor employee facilities and the absence of childcare facilities available in the country (Dayal and Didi 2001).

2. 2. 1 Women contribution to the hospitality industry

Women are acknowledged as key participants in the tourism labor market (Ashley, Roe and Goodwin 2001; Jamieson 2003).

The tourism sector is very labour intensive; it provides different jobs opportunities from high skilled jobs to unskilled jobs. However “ Women are often concentrated in low status, low paid and precarious jobs in tourism industry” as quoted in the global report on women in tourism 2010. According to Garavan et al., 2006; Woods and Viehland, 2000, senior managers are predominantly male; women middle managers are in housekeeping, front desk, personnel and training and conference and banqueting, whereas male managers are in finance and control, property and security and purchasing the latter more likely to lead to the general manager’s job also as stated in the report of the fifth UNWTO international conference on tourism statistics the apparent rate of women in the sector seems also to be related to the cultural issues, especially for employment in housekeeping, laundry, food preparation, guest services and so on. Many countries have a high presence of the feminine labour force in tourism this is because of the high demand of unqualified workers, especially for young women. Initially in the other hand females describe themselves much less satisfied than males in the hospitality sector. In America more than 50 % of the people who are employed in the tourism sector are women. According to Edgell, one in every fifteen people all over the world is employed in tourism sector and half of them are women. In the third world women constitute the basement of employment in tourism sector because they may work part-time, seasonally and without full salary. However, the industry plays a very

important role for the education and independence of women. Since tourism is a hospitality industry, the role of women is looked upon as significant and the trend of women participation is considerably increased since the mid of 70s. According to World Tourism Organization, in tourism business 51 percent are women (MOT/UNDP, 2006).

Barriers face by female employees in hotels

Even though women are important for the tourism sector, barriers to the advancement of female employees continue to persist; literature has singled out society's stereotypes and prejudices against women in positions of power (Catalyst, 2002, 2005). In fact a number of possible barriers to women's career advancement have been identified (Brownell 1993), including:

the glass ceiling based on gender discrimination

lack of role models

an absence of mentoring opportunities

exclusion from informal networks

gender discrimination and sexual harassment

(Knutson and Schmigdall, 1999)

From Richard Martell and Christopher Parker view it is stereotype which acts as a major barrier to women, they stated that women “ lack characteristics most needed to succeed and consequently were often judged to be less qualified than men”.

However from the executive summary of the case for change: Women working in hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism 2010, identify five other key barriers which according to them appear to be most significant in preventing women advancement to senior roles in the sector:

the difficulty of combining work at senior roles with caring responsibilities

a dominant masculine organisational culture

preconceptions and gender bias

lack of networking and exclusion from informal networks of communication

Lack of visible women in senior positions.

What can be noted is that all the authors' writings upon the barriers that stop women advancements are quite the same basically. It resemble in the sense that for example the lack of example of women at senior post, the stereotype at work or even the lack of networking. There is a serious need today to establish what kinds of work women may perform and if there are any barriers to their full integration and to identify policies and practices which might be helpful for employers who wished to make better use of their female workforce. (Tulsidas Naraidoo, 2011).). However Woods and Kavanaugh (1994) according to whom gender discrimination was an invisible barrier that kept women from reaching top positions in many management circles

There are other barriers identified also for instance: Other authors have cited the old boy network (Brownell, 1994a; Diaz and Umbreit, 1995); Women may

have to work twice as hard and do twice as good a job in order to warrant a promotion (Brownell, 1994b, Gregg and Johnson, 1996). Moreover Sekam 2000 sited that for family reason as well as organisational demands become to both working women and their organisation that fail to tap the full potential of experienced women thereby becoming less productive themselves. Family constraints is another barrier that women can faced it can be perceived ad a function of a female's commitment to and actual involvement in duties associated with parental , marital and homemaker roles on one hand and the amount of support she receives from her spouses and relatives on the other (Chin-Ching 1992). Sometimes in some countries in hotel industry part-time or of informal work is the flexibility it can give to women who may be required to spend more time working in the home (with family or care responsibilities). (ILO report). On the other hand some research indicates that religion, culture, and society can influence women's employment (Constance 2005; Feldmann 2007; Foroutan 2008; Read and Oselin 2008; Read 2004).

2. 3. 1 Segregation in the hospitality industry

The theories of occupational segregation on women's employment were first presented in depth by Hakim (1992). In fact the tourism industry has shown a wide adoption of segregational occupation (Crompton and Sunderson 1990). In the industry women frequently carry out the most undesirable and lowest status work (Adid and Guerrier 2003; Korczynski 2002) Many authors have identified the factors which contribute to the professional marginalisation of women. The interlinked factors include gender stereotyping (Heilman, 2001) ; a lack a role model , mentors and peers for

women in the workplace (Noe, 1988) and ‘ the glass ceiling’ (Davidson and Cooper, 1992; Reich 1995).

Problems of gender domination include women workers crowded into a narrow range of jobs, lack opportunities for promotion and development and insufficient opportunity to develop a broad range of skills (Gardner and Plamer 1997; Hagan and Jensen 1998). The Global report on women in tourism 2010, states that gender stereotyping and discrimination means that women mainly tend to perform job such as cooking, cleaning and hospitality.

Vertical and Horizontal sex segregation has been shown to exist in the hotel industry (Ludkins 1999). As in most organisations and occupations, there are male and female occupational groups vertically and horizontally segregated throughout large hospitality organizations and hotels themselves, reflecting economic and power differences. Many studies of gender segregation have focused on international country comparisons (Jensen et al., 1988, OECD, 1999) and industry and cross sectoral comparisons (Game and Pringle, 1983; Pringle, 1988).

Segregation by gender results in individual costs to women workers in terms of narrower range of employment choices and opportunities along with lower pay but there are also broader economic and social costs. It is contended that gender segregation of the workforce inhibits flexibility in responding to pressures of structural adjustments and prevents expanding national skills bases resulting in a less competitive economy. (OECD, 1991)

The sexual division of labour resulting in the domination of industry sectors, organisations and professional by one gender is argued to be a major factor shaping workplace relations. (Game and Pringle, 1983; Burton, 1991)

In general, gender inequality in the labour market is closely connected to educational and professional, both vertical and horizontal, segregation. The labour market is divided into women's jobs and men's jobs, and women find it hard to access managerial posts. (HCT ILO REPORT). Stockdale (1991, p. 57) has defined occupational sex segregation as existing where the jobs, that women do are different from those done by men (horizontal segregation) and women work at lower levels than men in the occupational hierarchy (vertical segregation).

It is still the case that relatively few women achieve management roles in the service areas and as a consequence few make to general management positions. This segregation within the management ranks impacts adversely on the pay of women managers and their influence in this field. Tulsidas Naraidoo, 2011.

2. 3. 2 Sexual issues in hotels.

Urry's[18] observation that such the service and commercial industry involve the sale of an experience, where the quality of the social interaction, including the visual presentation of interactive service workers, is an intrinsic part of the service itself. If women are routinely seen as (indeed, employed as) sex objects, what implications does this have for their career development opportunities, as individuals and as a category? Interactive service jobs in hospitality, tourism and leisure, exemplify occupations where

gender (and indeed, sexuality) are explicit aspects of the job. In fact tourism is associated with freedom and relaxation that have traditionally been visualized in marketing and PR with images of attractive young women. (HCT ILO REPORT). Woods and Cavanaugh (1999) stated that almost one-quarter of both males and females agreed that most women in the hospitality industry had been subjected to sexual harassment at work. The ILO report that women are, more often than men, faced with precarious types of jobs, violence at work, stress and sexual harassment. It is a fact that when working in the hotel industry the service worker must be “ socially attractive and friendly with the customer” . An author even gave an example of a young girl who was told on starting waitress to “ wear her skirt as short she would feel comfortable”.

The main characteristics of the sexual issues are obviously the sexual harassment on the place of work that is at the hotels. Woods and Kavanagh (1994) found that hospitality managers perceive sexual harassment to be pervasive within the industry. In many customer contact roles in the service sector, “ sexiness” is a part of the role itself, the “ job flirt” is encouraged as a part of the service style (Hall, 1993) and there may be a thin line between “ selling the service” and “ selling sexuality”. The hospitality industry can be susceptible of having incidents of sexual harassment due to the “ ambiguity of hospitality service” , that is , the odd working hours as well as the conditions of work.

2. 3. 3 The gender role stereotyping perspective in hotels.

Stockdale (1991, p. 57) assumption about the segregation and stereotype “ the assumption that people in particular jobs and the jobs themselves have

the characteristics of only one gender". Women in the hospitality industry are widely employed in subordinate jobs for their nurturing and/or sexual attributes. Moreover differential treatment of women has been reported in recruitment, pay and career development prospects (Brown, 1979). The reason for the different treatment is the gender role stereotyping perspective. In fact women have been socialized to adopt attitudes and behavior that are in conflict with the demands of a successful managerial career (Schein, 1973, 1975; Terborg, 1977).

Sinclair (1997) found that women have been excluded from some occupations within the tourism industry due to traditional ideologies of gender and social sexuality which is very stereotyped.

Stereotyping can have negative impacts to women's advancement in the workplace, since negative stereotypes of women influence how their workers perceive them, how their other colleagues perceive their work, their selection for further training and development, and finally, the rapid pace they move in their career. Although there are such stereotyping in the industry, studies show that female students are more committed to careers in hospitality and tourism and seem to better fit success in this sector than do their male classmates and colleagues (Kuslavan and Kuslavan, 2000; Burke et al., 2008). The female employees must be able of "wearing two different hats - one at work and one at home"

2. 3. 4 Breaking of the Glass Ceiling in the Hospitality industry.

The term was earlier used by Morrison et al. (1987) in their fascinating book *Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Can Women Reach the Top of America's Largest Corporations?* That gave new insight to the issues women face in their journey through the executive echelons of the corporate organizations and Maume 2004, stated that glass ceiling is the failure of women and other minority groups in climbing up the corporate ladder, despite seeing the top jobs, but still not reaching them due to discriminatory barriers, is what many think of as glass ceiling. There have been many studies about the breaking of glass ceiling of women in each and every industry. Cotter et al. (2001) profound description of the term as a specific form of generic inequality existing at the apex of hierarchy contradicts others (Reskin and Padavic, 2001; Maume, 2004) claiming its existence in lower levels and working class jobs.

Cotter et al. (2001) three criteria for the glass ceiling occurrence suggest that it occurs when despite similar credentials women (and minorities) face barriers in their career advancements, it also occurs when due to limited promotional prospects; women are discouraged from the initial placement on the job ladder, thus raising men's numbers to survive till the top levels and lastly, while organizations may be willing to pay out high salaries to women, they still hesitate to place them in positions where they can make an impact on organizations profitability, therefore, glass ceiling is created.

The glass ceiling as in every industry affected also women in the hospitality industry. It has been highlighted by many authors that the industry is a

female dominated industry however it is managed by men. Among the reasons for the glass ceiling phenomenon such as the lack of role models, mentoring, networking options, and the complexities of the dual role as working woman and housekeeper (Crampton and Mishra, 1999), literature has singled out society's stereotypes and prejudices against women in positions of power (Catalyst, 2002, 2005). According to Frank (2006) do find evidence that gay/bisexual men suffer from glass ceilings comparable to those faced by heterosexual women (p. 485). Existing management resistance must be offset by the multiplier effect of more female role models advancing beyond the glass ceiling.

2.3.5 The promotion issues in hotels.

Like the retail services, tourism and hospitality are sectors which are highly dominated by women however managed by men (Bagguley, 1990; Hicks, 1990; Jordon, 1997; Wood, 1992) Sometimes men get more privileged than women these differentials were reinforced by differences in fringe benefits, with men in the commercial hospitality sector significantly more likely than women to be entitled to valuable “ perks” such as company cars, free or subsidized meals, low-cost housing, private health insurance, company share ownership schemes and product discounts. . Many authors tend to attribute the finding that males are promoted more frequently and rapidly than equally qualified females to the influence of gender based stereotypes (Owen and Todor, 1993; Cordano et al., 2002; Tomkiewicz et al., 2004). The hospitality business, therefore, provides fewer opportunities for promotion that are sufficient to meet the expectations of females (McCuddy et. al., 2010).

2.3.5.1 Women in management level in Hotels

Ludking (1999) notes the lack of women in general manager positions despite the high percentage of women in college and university hospitality programs. Although women are now graduating in higher numbers than men from educational institutions (Fagenson and Jackson, 1994) and more women are entering the paid workforce (Hind and Baruch, 1997) and taking up managerial roles (Parker and Fagenson, 1994), the poor representation of women at senior management level continues.

Pursuing a managerial career in every industry requires skills and competencies imparted to men as a social group. Employees and managers holding this type of stereotypic view are likely to perceive women as ineffective managers in job positions incongruent with females' more traditionally passive gender role. (Schein, 1973, 1975, 1978; Rosen and Jerdee, 1974; Powell and Butterfield, 1979; Brenner et al., 1989; Schein et al., 1989; Schein and Mueller, 1992; Schein et al., 1996; Heilman et al., 1995; Powell et al., 2002). It is not hard to find in the western context where patterns of gender inequality persist in leadership positions even with women's increasing visibility in the lower echelons of management (Weyer, 2007). Ezell et al. (1981) measuring the effects of having being supervised by a woman on perceptions of female managerial competence found significant differences only in the area of the motivation of a woman to manage. In the present study, direct contact could not help in suppressing gender stereotypes. By June 1996 only three of 72 Hong Kong Hotels had female general managers (Pine 1997). Woman's desire for advancement into a senior-level leadership position becomes more difficult because of the

prevalent "traditional role" assumptions (Schaap et. al., 2008). Moreover, research conducted in the U. S. A. indicates that, even in America, a disproportionate low number of highly educated females attain executive status in the industry (Li and Leung, 2001). The career ladder within hotels is predicated on the conventional employment models of continuous employment and linear progression (Boxall and Purcell, 2003). Some literatures state that the recruitment and selection processes may not be transparent. Both may be likened to an invisible web that works against women (Green and Cassell, 1996; Lan and Wang Leung, 2001; Rees and Garnsey, 2003).

2. 4. 1 Harassment at work

An additional negative aspects to women's work in hotels is that they are subject to high level of sexual harassment from both guests and peers due to their low status and low-educational levels (Poulston 2008). Research by Eller (1990) clearly indicates that more men and women experience sexual harassment in the hotel industry than do individuals in society-at-large. Today in many hotels there are a high level of female employee of gender discrimination and sexual harassment.

2. 5 Inequality issues in hotels.

" Research shows the different ways in which tourism can contribute to economic growth, poverty reduction and community development. However, less attention has been paid to the unequal ways in which the benefits of tourism are distributed between men and women, particularly in the developing world." Gladys Acosta, UN Women Director for Latin America of the newly-establish UN agency UN Women, pointed out that women's

contribution to the tourism sector is often invisible. According to Purcell and Quinn (1998) that it is a fact that in the early career stages, female hospitality graduates received lower pay, fewer fringe benefits and less intrinsic job satisfaction. However Woods and Kavanaugh (1994) according to who gender discrimination was an invisible barrier that kept women from reaching top positions in many management circles. There also continues to be wide discrepancies in remuneration between the genders (Munoz-Bullón 2009; Tugores 2008. The hospitality sector has an important role: it should respect the equality of men and women; they should promote human rights and more particularly the individual rights of the most vulnerable groups, notably children, the elderly, the handicapped, ethnic minorities and indigenous people. ILO report (Development and challenges in the hospitality and tourism sector 2010). Kinnaird and Hall (1994) comment that women fulfill the majority of jobs in tourism, especially those which are poorly paid, low skilled and part-time also it is to be noted that in the tourism sector unskilled or semi-skilled women tend to work in the most vulnerable jobs, where they are more likely to experience poor working conditions, inequality of opportunity and treatment, violence, exploitation, stress and sexual harassment. (ILO) Carli and Eagly (2001) observe that, although women's status has improved remarkably in the twentieth century in many societies, women continue to lack access to power and leadership compared with men (p. 629).