



Exploring the Role of Indian Women in Hospitality Industry Entrepreneurship: Challenges and Opportunities

Authors

1. **Ms. Laxmi Todiwan**, (Author) Research Scholar, Pacific Academy of Higher Education and Research (PAHER), Pacific University, Udaipur.
2. **Dr. Chef Sangeeta Dhar**, (Co author), Associate Professor, Pacific Institute of Hotel and Tourism Management, Udaipur, Rajasthan.

Abstract:

The hospitality industry is a critical contributor to the Indian economy and has grown significantly in recent years. However, despite the sector's growth, there remains a gender gap in leadership and entrepreneurship opportunities for women. This research paper explores the challenges and opportunities faced by Indian women entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry and aims to provide insights into how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the sector.

The research paper begins with a comprehensive literature review on women's entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry, with a focus on the Indian context. The review highlights the key challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, including access to finance, lack of support systems, social and cultural barriers, and gender bias.

The research methodology used in this paper includes combining a qualitative study of in-depth interviews with women entrepreneurs and professionals in the hospitality industry. The study uses purposive sampling to select participants who are entrepreneurs or professionals in the hospitality industry in India.

The study finds that women entrepreneurs in the Indian hospitality industry face several challenges, including access to finance and credit, lack of support systems, societal and cultural barriers, and gender bias. The paper also identifies various opportunities for women entrepreneurs in the sector, including changing cultural norms, favorable government policies, and emerging market trends.

The research paper recommends several strategies to promote women's entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry in India, including improving access to finance, creating support networks for women entrepreneurs, addressing cultural and societal barriers, and promoting gender sensitivity in the workplace. The paper also highlights the need for further research on the topic to improve understanding and inform policy interventions.

In conclusion, this research paper provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in the Indian hospitality industry. The study recommends several strategies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the sector, which could help to unlock the full potential of women entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry in India.

1. Introduction:

The hospitality industry is a critical contributor to the Indian economy and has grown significantly in recent years. However, despite the sector's growth, there remains a gender gap in leadership and entrepreneurship opportunities for women. This research paper explores the challenges and opportunities faced by Indian women entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry and aims to provide insights into how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the sector.

1 a. Definition of women entrepreneur

According to Schumpeter's concept, "Women who innovate, imitate or adopt a business activity are known as women entrepreneurs". Government of India based on women participation in equity and employment of business enterprise has defined women entrepreneurs as "An enterprise owned and controlled by a woman having a minimum financial interest of 51% of the capital and giving at least 51% of the employment generated in the enterprise to women."

Women entrepreneurship has been getting growing recognition over the past two decades across the world. Women entrepreneurs not only generate new jobs for themselves but also for others. They provide society with different solutions to management, organisation and business problems. Women owned businesses are playing a pivotal role in the upsurge of entrepreneurial activity in the United States. It is reported that the highest number of self employed women are in Sweden followed by England, France and USA. In general, women are attracted to retail trade, restaurants, hotels, education, insurance and manufacturing. In our country, women constitute only 5.2 per cent of the total self employed persons in India. Majority of them opted for agriculture, agro based industries, handicrafts, handlooms, cottage industries but in 2011 (2011 census) it has improved to 25 percent.

Women entrepreneurship is gaining importance in India in the wake of economic liberalisation and globalisation. The policy and institutional framework for nurturing entrepreneurial skills, imparting vocation education and training has widened the horizon for economic empowerment of the women. However, women constitute one third of the economic enterprise. There are scores of successful women entrepreneurs both in economic and social fields in India.

Thus, a stage has been already set for social take-off of women from a low development path to an accelerated pace in achieving higher level of self sustaining economic growth in the wake of new economic policy 1991. (12th Commerce : Chapter 23 , 2023)

1.1 Research Design:

1.1 a Purpose: The purpose of this research paper is to explore the role of Indian women in hospitality industry entrepreneurship, including the challenges and opportunities they face. The study aims to provide recommendations to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the hospitality industry in India.

1.1 b Scope: The scope of this research paper includes a comprehensive literature review of women's entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry; the research design includes qualitative interviews with women entrepreneurs and that of hospitality industry professionals, and analysis of the findings and recommendations for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the hospitality industry in India.

1.1 c Methodology:

The Primary Data is collected through observational and Experiential Method as the researchers have been educators and hospitality trainers for over two decades. Researcher is teaching at a hotel management institute and has also been conducting training programs for the Hospitality Industry on a regular basis. She is the Founder of Indian Women in Hospitality (IWH),

Indian Women in Hospitality (IWH) was created as a platform for knowledge sharing, networking, ideating, mentoring and empowering. Another aspect being creating awareness about the industry still not understood well; especially with respect to careers for women.

There are about 2600 members of IWH - Indian lady hospitality professionals from around the world who are creating benchmarks. IWH was invited for a Keynote at the Indian Hospitality Conclave at Mumbai on 19th December 2018. It has been offered a column in the monthly edition of a hospitality magazine. At least 3 ladies from the fraternity are conducting their research on the topic with reference to IWH. It is the ecosystem partner for Women's Web for Women In Corporate Award (WICA); also some of the top hospitality publications. It has become an empowering platform and the testimonials are very encouraging. The content on the website is receiving rave reviews and the reach is very good. The website has featured stories, write-ups, interviews and blogs so far. The stories that bring about the personal and professional journeys of the women are an inspiration to the others.

Key objectives of IWH and the roadmap ahead

The key objectives are clearly mentioned in the vision and mission of IWH. They serve as a guide and the roadmap for us.

Vision

We connect to inspire and empower!

Mission

We will create a platform for the Indian Women working in the Hospitality industry across the globe to reach their fullest potential through knowledge sharing, mentoring and inspiring each other.

We will collaborate to enhance women's roles in their own lives, families, communities and the society with self reliance, dignity and equality.

We will work for the nation building and get all Indian Women Empowered by providing support and contributing towards meaningful social causes.

The research methodology used in this paper includes combining a qualitative study of in-depth interviews with women entrepreneurs and professionals in the hospitality industry. The study uses purposive sampling to select participants who are entrepreneurs or professionals in the hospitality industry in India.

The study includes interviews with 30 women entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry in India, including hotel managers, chefs, and restaurant owners. It explores their perceptions of women's entrepreneurship in the industry, their attitudes towards women in leadership positions, and their experiences with gender bias. The interviews explore the challenges and opportunities they face, their experiences with gender bias, and their perspectives on how to promote women's entrepreneurship in the industry.

The secondary data is collected through journals and other published sources.

1.1 d Limitations: The limitations of this study include the small sample size of women entrepreneurs interviewed, which may limit the generalisability of the findings. Additionally, the study focuses only on the hospitality industry in India and may not be applicable to other sectors or countries.

1.2 Review of Literature:

Indian women have made significant strides in the hospitality industry entrepreneurship, breaking the traditional gender stereotypes and excelling in their ventures. However, they still face unique challenges and opportunities that need to be explored and addressed to support and empower women entrepreneurs in this industry.

Hospitality industry is one of industries which is considered to be male dominated for decades. All the renowned names in this industry have always been male, but now the scenario is changing. Unlike other industries, women are establishing themselves in this industry as well. (Lifestyle Desk, 2022)

Here are some examples of the challenges and opportunities faced by Indian women in hospitality industry entrepreneurship.

1.3 Challenges:

1.3. a Limited access to finance: Access to finance is one of the primary challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry. Women often struggle to secure loans and investments due to the societal norms and biases against women entrepreneurs. This limits their ability to start or grow their businesses.

1.3. b Gender stereotypes: Women entrepreneurs often face gender-based discrimination and stereotypes in the hospitality industry. They are perceived as less competent than men and face additional scrutiny in their business dealings. This limits their ability to network and secure partnerships with other businesses.

1.3. c Lack of representation: Women entrepreneurs are underrepresented in the hospitality industry, particularly in leadership positions. This lack of representation can lead to a lack of role models and mentors for women entrepreneurs, making it difficult for them to succeed in the industry.

1.4 Opportunities:

1.4. a Rising demand: India's hospitality industry is growing rapidly, and there is a rising demand for innovative and unique businesses. Women entrepreneurs can leverage this demand to create niche businesses that cater to the changing needs of consumers.

1.4. bGovernment initiatives: The Indian government has launched several initiatives to support women entrepreneurs, such as the Stand-Up India scheme, which provides loans to women-owned businesses. These initiatives can help women entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry access funding and resources.

1.4. cChanging societal norms: There is a growing awareness and acceptance of women entrepreneurs in Indian society. This shift in societal norms can create opportunities for women entrepreneurs to break traditional gender stereotypes and succeed in the hospitality industry.

Overall, exploring the role of Indian women in hospitality industry entrepreneurship is essential to identify the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in this industry. By addressing these challenges and leveraging these opportunities, women entrepreneurs can thrive and contribute to the growth and success of the Indian hospitality industry.

The literature review on women's entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry highlights the key challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in India, including access to finance, lack of support systems, social and cultural barriers, and gender bias. Several studies have also identified opportunities for women entrepreneurs in the sector, including changing cultural norms, favorable government policies, and emerging market trends.

Access to finance is a significant challenge faced by women entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry in India. Many women lack collateral or credit history, which makes it difficult for them to secure loans or investment. Lack of support systems, including mentorship, training, and networking opportunities, also inhibits women's entrepreneurship in the sector.

Societal and cultural barriers also impact women's entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry. Women entrepreneurs may face discrimination and stereotypes, which can limit their opportunities and discourage them from pursuing entrepreneurship. Additionally, gender bias in hiring and promotion practices can limit women's access to leadership positions in the industry. Several studies have identified opportunities for women entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry in India, including changing cultural norms, favorable government policies, and emerging market trends. For example, the growing demand for experiential travel and unique dining experiences has created opportunities for women entrepreneurs to start niche businesses in the industry.

1.5 There are several limitations to consider when exploring the role of Indian women in hospitality industry entrepreneurship. Here are some potential limitations and examples:

1.5. a .Sample size: The sample size is limited due to a lack of available data or difficulty in recruiting participants. For example, the study only focuses on a small region or city in India, the findings may not be generalisable to the entire country. Similarly, the study only includes a few participants, the findings may not be representative of the larger population.

1.5. b.Cultural factors: Cultural factors can affect how women perceive and pursue entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry. For example, in some parts of India, there are cultural norms that discourage women from starting their own businesses. This limits the number of women who are interested in hospitality industry entrepreneurship or who have the support of their families to pursue it.

1.5. c.Access to resources: Women in India face challenges in accessing resources such as funding, education, and mentorship that are necessary for entrepreneurship. For example, women are less likely to receive loans or investments compared to men, which limits their ability to start or grow a business.

1.5. d.Gender bias: Gender bias affects how women are perceived and treated in the hospitality industry. For example, women face discrimination in hiring or promotion, or they are not taken as seriously as male entrepreneurs.

1.5. e.Data availability: There is a lack of reliable data on the experiences of Indian women in hospitality industry entrepreneurship. This could be due to a lack of research on the topic or difficulties in collecting data from women entrepreneurs themselves.

1.5. f.Language barriers: Language barriers limit the ability of researchers to communicate with women entrepreneurs or to access resources in local languages. This further limits the scope of the study or makes it more difficult to collect comprehensive data.

It's thus important for researchers to acknowledge and address these limitations in their study design and analysis in order to ensure the validity and reliability of their findings.

1.6 Conclusion:

This research paper provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by women entrepreneurs in the Indian hospitality industry. The study finds that women entrepreneurs in the sector face several challenges, including access to finance and credit, lack of support systems, societal and cultural barriers, and gender bias. The paper also identifies various opportunities for women entrepreneurs in the sector, including changing cultural norms, favorable government policies, and emerging market trends.

The study recommends several strategies to promote women's entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry in India, including improving access to finance, creating support. Further studies are to be conducted on the subject as newer opportunities keep coming up with the dynamic world that we are living and working in. Start ups are coming up in a big way boosting the culture of entrepreneurship. Make in India and Women Empowerment are two missions that will further encourage women to consider entrepreneurial ventures.

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