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CHALLENGES SERVICE SECTOR WOMEN FACING AT THE WORKFORCE

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ABSTRACT

Increasing rate in the proportion of women in service industry enabling women to exploit their potential in the labour market and experiencing economic independence. But whether this participation creates new tracks for women to take a lead in improved job design, quality of work life and their socio-economic status.

The paper conclude that, the service economy will advantage women, if she intensively acquired competency that are in growing demand and it will be great opportunity for women to compete effectively with men.



KEYWORDS- Work place and personal hurdles, women's expectations, women competency, job outcomes.

• Why women in service industry ?

The service sector in India today accounts for more than half of India's GDP. Services or the "territory sector" of the economy covers a wide gamut of activities like trading, banking & finance, infotainment, real estate, transportation, security, management and technical consultancy among several others.

The combination of more educational opportunities for women and increasing number of jobs in raising service sector in Indian economy propelled the steady increase in the female workforce participation in the post Liberalisation. As women are more interchangeable from the standpoint of employees, demand for women rose in service industry.

Today's service industry think that women employees having qualities of high sense of responsibility, most trustworthy, can handle pressure, tidy and methodical, meeting deadlines, can analyse effectively, can multi-task, maintain harmony. Good communicators and fast learners. Hence maximum women workforce observed in Telecom, HR, Advertising, IT, Insurance, Consultancy, Health Care, Banking and Educational Services.

Another source of hope for women and the service sector comes from the work in organizational behaviour and firm sociology that sees female "Social Intelligence" having productive use in team production and group management. It may evolutionary selection or cultural training or both females 'attention to the feelings of others and to group dynamics. May also be an important advantage in the growing markets for client interactive jobs, whether in Consulting, Insurance, Banking, Telecom, Legal Services or Healthcare Services.

Now the scenario revealed that, there is high need to think on the trickiers issues concerned with women employees in service industry.

• Barriers faced by women in service industry :

Generally, there are two types of women employees. Some accept the life as they find it. The attitude of such women towards job is providing living in enough. For some taking home a pay is not all, such women are searching chances for self-fulfillment in workplace. While pursuing for the above job aims there may be some barriers they are :

I) Workplace perspectives :

- Feeling trapped in current position.
- Not wishing to work in inappropriate conditions.
- Do not like the work doing.
- Heavy workload.
- No opportunity for growth/ poor career advice.
- Poor training.
- Male-oriented work culture/ prejudice mind of bosses, colleagues & subordinates.
- Lack of flexible working.
- No-out of turn promotions. only giving better assignments.
- Emotional pressures.
- Poor interpersonal relations.
- Risk of job.
- Dealing with guilt after breaking the glass ceiling.

II) Personal Perspectives :

- Care for family / children.
- Lack of emotional quotient.
- Lack of desire to engage.
- Social & cultural constraints.
- Husband's view on work.
- Distance from workplace.
- Parent's / In-laws view on work.
- Social pressures, not to earn money.
- Poor education.
- Feeling shame/ guilty.
- Lack of time and energy.
- Unable to lead a fulfilling family life.
- Work stress.
- Detachment at home.

In short, women in service industry are getting it bad from both sides, and they don't know how to react. If women give all to their career it will seemed as 'too hardcore'. If women asks for flexitime, bosses abuse them of demanding too much down-time. If they give up totally and focus on family, husband and family members feel resentful about woman' hanging around at home & enjoying all the perks'.

Thus women are facing trickier issues and performing daily tight-rope walk. The are postphoning having babies because not sure about jobs will waiting for them. Husband also pressurized to fulfill expectations of his parents. In case if women go away on long leave seniority is gone then how to start reporting to a junior? Even men (husband/ bosses) are not all thinking seriously about the circumstances. Their cool attitude generates more problems. They are expecting the perfect society hostess, a superwoman who work hard, and parties even harder. A woman be could flaunt, but also perfect homemaker, make dazzling conversation and be great in bed.

What women are really expecting ?

- Need for mentoring.
- Change in societal mindset.
- Change in herself.

- Special training and development for women.
- Day care centers.
- Elderly care.
- Flexi-timings.
- Work-sharing.
- Part-time employment.
- Leave plans both paid & unpaid to suit employee needs.
- Rest rooms.
- Job with autonomy & flexibility.
- Realistic work loads.
- Participative work culture.
- Insurance plan.
- Food services.

If organization are taking painstaking efforts to fulfill expectations of women will have diversity at workplace. Organization can ensures women's career and retain them even they can returned to their careers after maternity breaks and continued to flourish in the company at all levels. This would be the greatest way to tap into a vast talent pool at a reasonable cost. Considering that competent women employees are largely titled toward service oriented companies.

• Need for women competency :

Making a point during the seminar on 'safety guidance for women in service industry' in New Delhi, retired IPS officer Kiran Bedi focused on various laws and regulations listed in the constitution for issues concerning the safety of woman at the workplaces. Further she noted need to end gender discrimination among women workers and treat them as equal to men.

Speaking on occasion Bollywood actress Kiran Kher said :

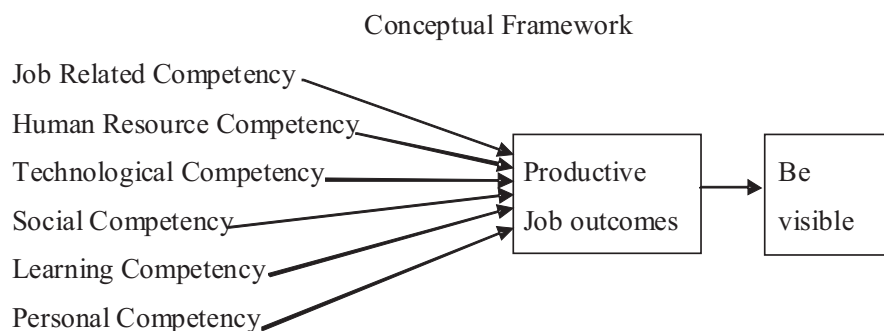
"Since in the hospitality industry women workers have to interact, travel and deal with their male counterparts and customers, it is advisable to be politely assertive in uncomfortable situations. If that does not work then they should bring it to the notice of immediate authorities." Addition to this she also advised woman do not only focus on their appearance and looks but also project the right body language and always take efforts to develop your inner strengths and standup against incorrect things.

Air Hostess Academy Founder Director Sapana Gupta said :

"Women in the service industry with a wide variety of people, hence making them more vulnerable to harassment at work. From colleagues to guests they need to interact all kinds of individuals. Hence the first thing they need to learn is to be calm and composed."

The above observations of the three eminent personalities in their respective fields underlines the issues- First the woman should be acquainted with the legal terms of their jobs. According to research survey conducted by Linda Babcock, H.U.D. Dept. of Economics, Karning Mellon University, women who are initially conscious about their career and work of selected jobs are not at all possessive about the offers given by the employers in terms of pay and facilities and other incentives, safety and security measures such kind of negligence occurred due to women's negative attitude towards economic sources. And they are motivated in taking up those roles that display familial & societal benefits. The survey further throws lights on, since the last few decade women's are leading prominently in every walk, but still are performing low challenging job and suffering gender discriminations in selection and promotions procedures.

Second, they should identify their inner strength and be competent in specialized skills. Lastly service industry is mainly people originated and here women has do continuously interact with variety of people. Thus if she will follow competency, it may helps her to retain in service industry.



Job Related Competency

Women should be knowledgeable and have authoritative position in all functional areas. For that she has to interact and work with proven seniors and mentors or well known consultants.

Human Resource Competency

She has to take continuous efforts to be acquainted with HR policies, selection procedures, assessment techniques, reward systems, organizational structure. It will help her to be familiar with employees, right to have quality workplace.

Technological Competency

Getting education and training as they can, being technosavvy and constantly involving herself in change management to cope up with dynamic external environment which worked as projecting, confidence, self promoting, nurturing their talents and developing their entrepreneurial skills.

Social Competency

Women should keep focus on customer services through continuous guidance, support, and facilities to customer. Interact people at all levels. It enables them to build their own image in the workforce. Such developed networks help to reduce over stress at both professional and personal life.

Learning Competency

Women should have to encourage learning attitude among themselves, depending on reliable data and exchange of information between colleagues and other employees helps in creating a more knowledgeable women workforce. Such people development ensures the image of 'Learning Organizations'.

Personal Competency

Women in service sector have to apply the learning's and knowledge required initiatives.

Thus conceptual framework highlights if women in service sector develop her own competency in the given area, she will be able to contribute towards productive job outcomes and become more perceptible.

CONCLUSION :

A rapid increase in the number of women employees in service industry creates need to attract, retain and grow this slot in workforce. In short in spite of number of hurdles women employees are willing to work hard, wanting to develop knowledge in order to achieve their career objectives. However women are focused on just superior performance of the job at hand, instead of lead a team. To change this attitude women has to develop their own competency because service industry ready to offering them high job security.

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