

Identifying Gender Issues in Tourism and Hospitality Sector - Challenges of Women Empowerment

Dr. Vidya H .N

Associate professor Department of History Government Arts , Commerce and
Post graduate College (Autonomous) Hassan
District Karnataka state – India

Abstract: This paper explores women empowerment strategies through identifying gender issues in tourism and hospitality related industries. The equality of participation of both the genders in the labor market is an indicator of a country's gross economic progression & overall development. But Women's participation in tourism and related industries is very dismal in India. Tourism related industries have greater probability of attracting vast human resources specially women. Motivating women to take up jobs linking tourism and tourism and related industries & help to maintain them in a large number. But this is a very big challenge. Studies have shown that women can be the best assets for any country's progression in tourism related industries. Tourism industry can play a pivotal role in women empowerment process as well. This paper streamlines the key role played by tourism industry in addressing retention & recruitment challenges of women in Tourism related industries.

Keywords: Indian tourism sector, Gender issues, globalization, Opportunities, challenges ,

I. Introduction

Indian tourism Industry is the largest service sector in India. It has emerged as one of the key drivers of growth it is an employment generator. The global report on women in tourism confirms that the TIs can act as a vehicle for empowerment of women & India being a culturally plural country can grow even faster with TI if the gender barriers are overcome. (Report on the UN Women Mobilizing women empowerment through tourism 2011). Even though UN WTO earmarked 2007 as **Tourism opening doors for women Year** . Women have fewer opportunities than men in Tourism related Industries. The number of careers for women as

1. Adventure tourism expert,
2. Airlines offices
3. Cruises handling manager ,
4. Customer service at international or domestic airports,
5. Event manager,
6. Flight attendants ,
7. Holiday consultant,
8. Hotel maids ,
9. Hotels, and tourism departments in government and private sectors etc .
10. Logistics,
11. Ticketing officer,
12. Tour guides etc
13. Tour operator,
14. Transport officer,
15. Travel agents,

are very compared to other developing countries. The Report of the Research division, ministry of tourism, government of India New Delhi 2012 reported that women can be employed in all tourism and travel hospitality sector .

The statistics- The tourism Industry in India has developed as it was in financial year ending 2014-2015

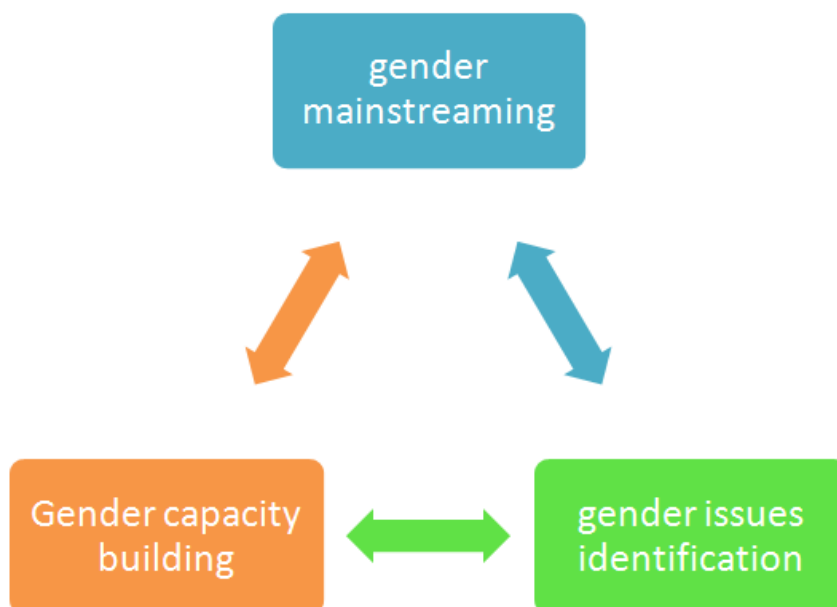
6.5 trillion	trillion US dollar earnings
7.6 million	foreign travellers
7.1 %	foreign exchange earnings

Source: Report of the Research division, ministry of tourism, government of India. New Delhi 2012).
Opportunities

Indian women need to be made to break out of their traditional roles for example trekking guide training programs & apprenticeships for women in hilly areas can promote employment to women of the region locally.

Training opportunities- Women can be given training in diving deep sea diving scuba diving skiing rafting kayaking etc. Women have opportunities in adventure sports events in tourist destinations. Women can be given opportunities in hospitality sector. Women can be gainfully employed in handicraft industries such as toy making, incense sticks, dress making, beads making jewelry making Jardozi, embroidery, basket making, hand weaving, painting, chicken works, embossing, inlaying works, etc. UNESCO report on Gender Equality & Culture demonstrates the need for deeper debate research awareness raising on the need for equal rights responsibilities in the fields of heritage & creativity.

Challenges - Employing women in tourism and hospitality sector of women in is a great task as it involves



1. **Gender mainstreaming** – gender mainstreaming can be used as a strategy. It transforming organization related to TI into gender inclusive workplaces acknowledging the needs of women positive action initiatives can be taken up. empowerment of women can be made more supportive with women inclusive strategies
2. **Identifying specific capacity building & training needs** - Specific capacity building & training needs can be identified. Creation of specific recruitment of women in TRIs. There should be enabling potential workers to combine their working & career responsibilities. As women have family & household responsibilities the TRIs can help them with child care centers day care centers. These initiatives can motivate women to enter labor market & retention of women labor force on TRIs.[4] (Report of the Tourism Industry 2014).
3. **Removal of wage inequities-** Most of the women labor employed in TIs & TRIs are in low paid jobs with very few opportunities for career advancement. This wage inequality can be overcome by employing proactive gender equality policies & training aimed at combating gender stereotypes. Jobs have to be made more attractive this makes potential workers to tap into new opportunities. The low wages low incentives low career moves makes it as disincentive & retention of women workers becomes a great challenge. In India women comprise 50% of the population & majority of them are part time workers identifying inequalities should be taken up remedial action for making their jobs benefit them economically. (Report on the UN Women Mobilizing women empowerment through tourism 2011).
4. **Recognition of gender issues** - recognition of gender issues have to be taken up within the frame work of sustainable tourism industry can grow only when it is devoid of gender inequalities. Society should be benefitted through equal pay opportunities. TIs contribution to employment is 7% of the overall Jobs worldwide. In India Only 1/12 employed in TIs & TRIs. Women have household responsibilities & most of them lack education. Most of them do not have any awareness about involving themselves in profitable ways in TIs & TRIs. All barriers to their entry into TIs & TRIs should be cleared. TIs & TRIs should make flexible working hours, high paid part time jobs, protection for women employees, good career benefits etc.
5. **Creation of awareness about human rights-** TIs & TRIs help the women empowerment as it breaks their poverty. TRIs support income generation, self confidence building, community development & awareness

about their rights . Women can be easily employed in TIs & TRIs which are informal & promote self employability & home based works which are in plenty. TIs & TRIs can play an important role in empowering women as they can provide a number of entry points for currently inactive house wives. TIs & TRIs are potential for creation of various employment & self employment.

6. **Role of government & non-profit NGOs-** By creating women co-operatives , supporting women social enterprises , supporting women owned micro & medium sized industries , motivating women handicraft shops , market access points , local hotels , etc help to create an environment of support to women. This will boost up their self confidence. Government should supervise the private travel agencies to recruit women in Travel related duties with utmost care & support. Government should seal off those companies which follow gender bias in their recruitment policies.

II. Conclusion

Thus women can help the industry through their creativity & inventiveness but they should be given awareness about the multi dimensional opportunities available through TRIs. This also helps women who have been marginalized in cultural life are to be streamlined in order to make tourism sector more sustainable. They are facing numerous barriers to equal access in TRIs which needs to be cleared with the support of all stake holders of TIs. Hindrances to develop their full potential have to be addressed in the light of impending global sustainable & inclusive social development . India needs renewed focus on skill development in all types of TRIs. The programs such as atithi deva bhava & Incredible India should be strengthened to make social inclusion of women. These Positive Initiates will amplify retention & recruitment of women in TIs & TRIs . TRIs need to support women involvement through implementation of all Inter National conventions & declarations on gender equality. Besides strengthening of regular & systematic collection & dissemination by national statistical office across India applying gender responsive policies strategies reinforcing national Institutional capacities to promote equal access in decision making process financial resource sharing education opportunities etc supporting awareness creation & advocacy campaign encouraging & involving all members of community in promotion of gender equality . Inter disciplinary research on gender equality needs a more didactic attention.

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