CHAPTER I

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Mahatma K. Gandhi extolled women: “To call women the weaker sex is a libel; it is man’s injustice to woman. There is no occasion for women to consider themselves subordinate or inferior to men. A woman’s intuition has often proved truer than man’s arrogant assumption of superior knowledge…Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities…If nonviolence is the law of our being, the future is with woman.” (Quotations compiled by Tikekar, 2007).

1.1 Background of the study

Hospitality industry was earlier defined as any and every trade and business whose main vision was serving people outside the private homes (Barrows, 1999). The Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education (International CHRIE, 2004) report incorporated lodging, food, leisure, and travel related all services as the most accepted definition. One of the largest world’s employers is the hospitality industry (Reigel, 1998). It is observed from the facts that the hospitality industry has been experiencing an incredible growth within the past decades and it is expected to continue further than the year 2010. As a result, the industry worldwide faces dearth of trained hospitality professionals (Robinson, 2007) and the job opportunities are continuously rising.

With the mushrooming of lot of International hotel chains in the country, India is being looked as the potential destination for the expansion of hospitality industry. The World Travel and Tourism Council has projected that by 2019, there would be 275 million jobs available linked with the hospitality business. Even if there is lot of scope in this sector in the western developed countries, a lot of openings will be created in the developing countries like, India, Russia, Brazil and China. The intensification of hospitality industry has been speculated very high in such developing countries. Currently, in India, there are about 90,000 hotel rooms available and with the new chains opening up, these numbers
are escalating to 2,40,000 hotel rooms, which would also generate a lot of employment opportunities for hospitality graduates (The Hindu, 6\textsuperscript{th} Sep, 2010). In such a demanding scenario, the industry is keeping up pace with the modern technology in all aspects, but the fact that services are required to be provided has not changed, albeit technological advancements are embraced by the industry. The essence of service depends purely on human aspects like touch, feel and presence for the efficient delivery and smooth operations.

In 1999, it was anticipated that the industry employed around 11.4 million people, It was predicted by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics that by 2005, 12.4 million people will be employed in the industry. (International CHRIE). The lodging industry created 113.7 billion dollar sales compared to 105.3 billion dollar in 2003, and the number is still rising as per the American Hotel and Lodging Association (AH&LA, 2004).

It is seldom that the gender in the workplace will not matter. Regardless of the workplace, cultural backgrounds, historical base, men and women view at each other and the world in a specific gender based lenses (Tannen, 1990). Gender diversity has the potential to enhance the productivity of the organization by improving interactions in between the stakeholder, thus achieving the desired outcome. Women being the important aspect of the diversity cannot be underestimated.

1.2.1 Importance and nature of hospitality industry

Today, researchers are finding that many women employees prefer to remain in so called marzipan layer i.e is just below the top executive level. (The Economist: June28th,2003:90). In this layer women working in HR or Sales department are rarely allowed the upward mobility to the senior positions, whereas the highest position they can attain is the Director level. Thus, the women appear to dropout form the race of moving up to executive level (Isaacson, 2002). Beck (1998) suggests that it will be around 2466, that the women will take to reach at par in the executive suite. The main focus of the study thus, will be to determine as to why women’s career progression appears to be stalled and the challenges they face needs to be addressed by devising suitable women friendly policies.
There was a period when the researchers hypothesized that women at senior levels would automatically continue to grow; by simply offering them senior level positions which would make easier for others to follow. But Rindfleish (2003) is one of the researcher who recognized that the future of women in the Hospitality industry will not unfold quiet so impeccably. He further states that the management of the hotels will have to intentionally provide certain women friendly policies to the women to increase their participation in the leadership positions. Vigil (2002) stated further that women in this scenario will have to take risk to move ahead. To add it to this, hospitality organizations continue to be sexualized workplace, that contributes to one of the many challenges women faces at the workplace.

1.2.2 Women’s Place in Hospitality

The organizations today are better understanding the importance of investing in women employees. Organizations believe the importance of women possessing soft skills are superior managers and, therefore, are recruiting more women at all levels to bring in the desired change. They believe that women possesses higher emotional quotient than men and are more intuitive which an essential factor in people management.

Today, a woman has become the most fundamental part of the hospitality industry. They are breaking out of the stereotype roles and are representing at the topmost positions in the hospitality industry.

The hospitality experience altogether would showcase a quiet poor picture without the smiling and charming face of the women to start with. It is an obvious fact that a woman has showed her mark of excellence not just in India, but throughout the world in Hospitality. The very existence of women and her touch brings the charm and classiness to the hospitality industry. Thus, it’s a very proven fact that industry does today hold more respect and potential for women than before.

The pace of development of women managers continues to slowdown and not smooth with regards to different geographical boundaries and historical cultures (Burke, 2009). In India, the study and surveys discloses that women are surpassed by men in securing
top level positions (Centre for Social Research, 2009) and they appear to be underrepresented at managerial levels in Indian Hospitality scenario (HVS 2011-12). Globally various studies are carried on this issue, but the studies focusing women in hospitality remains unexplored in Indian context.

Hospitality industry has become the largest employer of women in the current date. According to a report published by leading newspaper in West Bengal and, South India 55-60 percent of the employees in hotels are women whereas in Punjab, Maharashtra and Delhi the percentage is around 40-50. The percentage is lowest in Jammu and Kashmir, UP and Bihar. And Mumbai, being the financial hub of not just Maharashtra but the nation, has large chunk of hospitality jobs in the city, which has topflight hotels and airline operations wherein most of the jobs are performed by women. Out of the 3 regions of study Karnataka shows the best result in this area with 13.4 percent female and 86.6 percent male workers in this industry. West Bengal takes the central position with 9.38 percent female and 90.62 percent male employees. (Times of India, 23rd February, 2013)

Women are a budding part of the work force in hospitality industry today. According to the research carried out by the International Labor Office (ILO, 2004) about the female employment, for the last several decades, a quiet rising graph is seen where in 1960 it was 33 per cent, in 1980 it rose to 43 per cent in 1990 it touched 45 per cent. In the year 2003, 40 per cent of the world’s 2.8 billion workers were women. In comparison to the previous decade, it’s an increase of 200 million. According to the ILO, women represent over 90 per cent of all employees in the Food and Lodging industry. Now are the days, where the women talent has to be appreciated and acknowledged for her contribution in the global hospitality and tourism industry.

In recent times, the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has declared a broad-based action plan to encourage, empower and strengthen the role of women as an employers, employees and travelers. At a discussion held at ITB Berlin in March 2008, a special UNWTO Women in Tourism initiative was proposed. This proposal is intended to uplift and continue awareness about the social and economic opportunities that tourism can offer to women. It also stressed on the necessity of framing appropriate policy
framework to promote women’s empowerment and protect women’s rights in tourism and hospitality sector. It also appeals to encourage the public and private sectors to assist developing gender equality in tourism and hospitality sector. However, in spite of all these propositions, plans, and actions, women continue to be disproportionately hired, promoted and rewarded.

Women have made progressed in reaching top level positions since the middle of the last century; however, there is no significance amount of increase in the number of women undertaking hospitality education as compared to the number of women represented in higher management positions.

1.2.3 Nature of women’s role in the Hospitality industry:

The hospitality workplace has been often termed as a ‘sexualized’ in many contexts. The environment and the characteristic of the hospitality industry is majorly responsible for shaping the way the men and women interact with each other. (Gutek, 1985; et al., 1990). The word Hospitality refers to have a relax and good time, and offering services to the guest that would satisfy them. The image of the industry is depicted by pleasant atmosphere, wine glasses, good food, luxurious amenities, exclusive service, pampering and finally the feel good environment. Thus, the workplace characteristics have a direct influence on the employee behavior. People work in close groups with each other for a long number of hours during day and night. Job requirements expects the men and women work in guests rooms, bars, restaurants, kitchen together at any given time. These all conditions accentuates and perpetuates gender related stereotyping. In Hospitality industry men and women of different backgrounds, culture, nature, with different expectations and assumptions often creates very awkward situations for the women employees and guests. For example if a guest expects that the female barmaid should give him good service that a women may not feel obligated to offer, may create a problem. Thus, Wood (2004) rightly states that the hospitality industry could overcome these issues by increasing gender diversity which would help them to retain these pool of talent. The industry could gauge these challenges only when it would face it more
intensely. And finally the hospitality industry will have to design and implement various women friendly policies to address these challenges.

Another characteristic to be mentioned here of the Hospitality industry is the importance given to customary belief and traditions followed. The loyal and repeat guests have a certain expectations from the hotels as to how they would like to get treated and the various services they would like to get served by the hotels. Such guests value a reliable and constant product/ service. But looking at the current status of the industry, the industry has not been able to adopt the newer technologies and the policies at the required pace that have been adopted by other similar industries.

Thus, it makes it very clear that woman in the Hospitality industry still continues to face added challenges as a result of nature and characteristics of the industry that they work for. The Hospitality organizations do are gradually learning as to how best to develop culture in which both expectations and professional roles are not related to genders. It’s a tough task to achieve this goal and requires constant consideration and commitment, by both the management and the women who aspire to reach at the senior level positions.

As one walks into any luxurious hotel or a restaurant, one would find pleasant and charming women welcoming you at the front desk. The hospitality industry today has become one of the largest employers of women. Thus, it is a very demanding job place wherein one has to interact with the guest one-on-one, sustain long working hours, work late nights, stay away from home for days and, lastly, undergo stressful situations all alone. Thus, the women working in Hospitality industry, in any operational departments like front-office, kitchen-a male dominated area, or housekeeping, does face gender-related issues with meagerly any solutions. The hospitality industry experts and analysts have been talking for years about the ‘glass ceiling’ that has barred women in the hospitality sector from rising to the upper level of supervisory and managerial positions. But nearly the same picture is seen in almost all the industries. Although women have come a long way at their place of work, men continue to embrace most of the leadership positions. However, the special characteristics and the unique culture of the hospitality industry has made it a bit challenging for the possibility of bringing in the change.
1.3 Career Progression

Career progression is a constant process of managing work, learning, leisure time, and transitions in order to move upward towards a personally determined goal and creating self preferred future.

In an organization, the study of career progression refers to:

- How an individual manages hi/her career within and between the organizations and,
- How organizations formulates the career progression of their employees, also referred to as succession planning within most of the organizations.

There are many factors for the under-representation of women employees in the Hospitality industry that majorly includes conflicting work and family priorities and male-dominant corporate culture; however for those women who are looking at reaching at top, have to juggle and at times compromise between the home and work front to grab those lucrative opportunities.

The fresh, young women entrants in the industry especially needs to be realistic about their career progression and requires to devote time to learn and understand the culture and working of the industry as a whole.

One has to identify what one wants to achieve and should pursue those goals. Being women especially, it’s essential to look beyond the traditional gender roles to understand wide array of jobs that the industry has to offer. Today, there is an increasing number of women representation in the traditionally thought of male dominant environment in the roles such as General Managers, Chefs, Bartenders etc.

The hospitality industry traditionally recruits such women who have a sound career profile having a sufficient operational department experience. This experience is considered essential for the upward mobility and thus one should aim to achieve these goals early in the career before one gets married or shoulders domestic commitments.

The hospitality industry requires oneself to invest in long working hours and irregular work schedules so; one requires a strong family support to go ahead in the career path. Thus, a strong family support will enable the women employees to invest their time early in their career to assemble a varied range of experience needed to succeed in the industry.
Creating a strong network through mentorship programmes is a one of the way to climb the ladder of success to the senior positions.

It’s important that one does research and choose an organization that offers a conducive environment, supporting gender diversity. Various Hospitality organizations such as Accor and Hilton are prominent leaders in this field, committed to providing opportunities and facilities for its women employees for their career progression all over the world. They have developed and initiated various programmes to encourage and support the participation and development of women at all levels in their organizations.

Beyond individual efforts, the management of the Hospitality industry must come forward and work on developing a favorable environment that promotes gender diversity. They should develop certain women friendly policies to secure flexible working hours, safe and secured work environment to assist women in their career progression and increase their representation in the top positions.
The following figure 1.1 shows a career progression in the various departments in the hospitality industry which requires educational and work experience background to progress in the various departments of the hotel.

Figure 1.1: Career progression in Hospitality Industry

1.4 Challenges for women’s career progression in Hospitality industry.

A number of factors can slow down a women’s career progression and the salary (Catalyst 2003).

The most important point to be noted here is that the Hospitality industry in India has been socially accepted and perceived as a decent career option for women in the recent past only. Still the women is struggling hard to balance family responsibilities combined with work where one has to spend a lot of time to interact and entertain guests, which at
times is stressful and daunting to most women. Also it’s the fact that even when one is back home after work, one really cannot keep the work aside especially when at senior positions. All these factors at times do not make this career option very appealing for the average Indian woman. Researchers have identified various factors that act as barriers to women’s career progression. These include, masculine organizational culture, networking, deserted social life, geographical mobility, lack of visible women in senior positions, gender bias, work life balance, role models, cultural and societal pressures, glass ceiling, long work hours, traditional career path, pay inequality and sexual harassment.

The various studies indicate that there is a disparity in career paths between men and women in the hospitality industry and the industry needs to take suitable action to become more competitive by introducing better women friendly policies for women employees to help them climb the ladder into top positions. Groysberg (2013) study reflects that 87% of the female directors are facing gender-related problems. The above findings though are not related to hospitality industry, but still well matches with the findings of study related to hospitality industry.

Ms. Mini Chandran,( General Manager, SwaSwara, Gokarna) opines that the younger generation women are especially facing challenge of struggling and learning to handle the weak Indian male ego for the efficient team work. She further states that in this glamorous world of hospitality people do feel that this industry does not require intelligence to prove oneself. But the people working here do have to prove that there success is not dependent on merely the looks and social skills, but is only based on hard work.

Judy Hou, CEO, (Les Roches Jin Jiang International Hotel Management College) faces balancing personal and professional commitments as one of the biggest challenge. She further opines that women executives have to make great effort to balance between family time, work-related issues and child care responsibilities. This requires good time management skills and sacrifices, as hospitality industry is an extremely intense, time and energy consuming, fast-paced industry.
The cultural background prevailing in India at times does restricts women to consider hospitality as the first option of career due to the social taboo attached to hotels, night-shifts and irregular, long working hours. Women in India still prefer traditional professions such as educational, technical, medical, sales and administrative roles. Some of the major challenges most women employees in the industry face are managing various responsibilities - professional and personal commitments, being time-bound or not open to job transfers or mobility, which at times may prove critical to move up the ladder.

Mielle Batliwala, Director of Human Resources, Marriott Hotels opines that one may think that being a woman may be a disadvantage in a work arena where long hours, high stress levels and crisis management are at their highest. It is always tougher for a woman to grow and excel professionally. Age-old beliefs surrounding the roles of women and deep-rooted patriarchy make it difficult for the male gender to accept a woman in power, which is traditionally seen as a male domain. This becomes harder when men have to report to a woman.

Priti Chand, (VP, Corporate Communications, Zuri Group Global) indicates that hospitality industry faces two-fold challenges. There is a silent stigma attached to this sector that refrains a woman to be accepted as a professional at par, and not taken seriously as a leader of her field.

Rita Chaudhary, (Corporate Housekeeper, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts) opines that it’s a personal choice whether to continue working in the hospitality industry after marriage or motherhood. Earlier most of the young couples had the family support. Now, in the current scenario with the increasing number of nuclear family set ups due to various reasons like moving out for jobs, career in different cities, women may not get support system to work in the hospitality industry. As a result, women’s percentage of taking a break in career is increasing and such decisions are not exceptional to the hospitality industry.
The women face diverse sets of challenges at various stages in the career. After gaining experience and seniority, the women may at times get married and thus, the family pressure builds up. If she lives in a joint family, she needs to consider the view of her husband along with the opinion of other family members and manage the workplace too. All this together may cause stress and tension, thus affecting the work life balance.

Women in the hospitality industry are struggling hard to manage stress at workplace coping up to maintain the work life balance. Married women especially in the industry are affected the most as per the research conducted in the Pune hospitality scenario. A tight rope scheduled between the home and the workplace is taking a toll on the health of these women employees, thus leading a stressful situation at both ends.

Thus, keeping in view the above mentioned career obstacles, there arises a need to provide a comprehensive attention and take a review of various aspects of women managers’ career progression in the hospitality industry. By reviewing and analyzing the status of existing research and opinions, the hospitality professionals will be able to take appropriate measures to improve the representation of women at all levels and develop women friendly policies to assist them in their career progression.
1.5 **Meaning of Terms**

The following definitions are directly related to the study, and any other terms are further explained in the text as necessary.

a) **Hospitality Industry:** Includes hotels, eating and drinking establishments, and institutions that offer shelter, food, or both to persons away from home. (Buengermeister, 1983).

b) **Career progression:** Factors that combine to influence the pattern of work related experiences such as job positions and duties (Marilyn, Davidson and Lurke, 2000). In this study career progression includes educational opportunities, salary increase, recognitions and current hierarchical position.

c) **Sexual Harassment:** Any unwelcome acts or behavior (whether directly or by implication) such as physical contact and advances, demand or request for sexual favors, making sexually colored remarks, showing pornography or any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature. (Supreme court of Indian Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997))

d) **Challenges:** problems or conditions that limit women’s capability to move on in their career in the hospitality industry. (Source- Wikipedia)

e) **Vertical segregation:** The situation where people do not get jobs above a particular rank in organizations because of their race, age, or sex. (Source- Wikipedia)

f) **Long work hours:** It means that one works for a period of time that is longer than the usual, regular, or routine for a given activity. In other words, it may mean overtime. (Source- Wikipedia)

g) **Mentoring:** Mentoring is a supportive learning relationship between a caring individual who shares knowledge, experience and wisdom with another individual who is ready and willing to benefit from this exchange, to enrich their professional journey. (Suzanne Faure)
h) **Role model:** A role model is a person whose behavior, example, or success is or can be emulated by others, especially by younger people. (Source- Wikipedia)

This study aims at identifying and analyzing various challenges that are faced by women employees in their career progression in the Hospitality industry and also explores the women friendly policies provided to them by the hospitality industry.

1.6 **Significance of the study:**

**For the Women employees:**

The literature review in the later chapter confirms that women talent is not utilized to its fullest potential all over the globe. Most of the literature reviews talks about the challenges and issues faced by women employees in their career progression, whereas there are very few studies that reveal women position in management, especially in hospitality sector.

Thus, significantly there is a need to retain this women pool of talent by addressing to their challenges and issues at workplace by suggesting few women friendly policies for equal gender representation in the hospitality sector at all levels. Such policies will assist more and more women to climb up the career ladder.

**For Human resource Managers:**

Since, the Human Resource managers are on constant look out to retain the female talent in the industry, this study will give them a better insight of the challenges the women employee faces in their career progression and its intensity. Thus, it will help them to frame new policies and offer facilities to retain the talented women employees.

**For the Future researchers in Hospitality Industry:**

This study will benefit the future researchers in the hospitality industry. The researcher can base his/her study on this research design and study each variable in depth covering larger area. Further, the researcher can use this study as a guideline for them to develop the required career progression policies that can be used by the management of the hotels.
For the existing theory:

This study can be taken as a comparative study between the challenges faced and its depth in Indian context with the western context. There has been limited study carried out in hospitality sector on the challenges in the career progression of the women employees in India.

The results of this research will benefit hospitality industry in general by understanding the challenges faced by women in their career progression. Thus, the management of the hotel will be able to understand deeper aspects of these challenges related to women’s career progression. It will enable the hospitality industry to devise women friendly policies to retain them in the long term and make this industry a more supportive place for women to work.

1.7 Organisation of thesis:

This study tries to analyse the research questions introduced in the further chapter. The thesis is divided into following chapters:

Chapter 1. It introduces the topic, and states the nature of Hospitality industry, importance and role of women in the Hospitality industry and the challenges faced by them in their career progression.

Chapter 2. An extensive review of literature is carried out to understand the status of women in Hospitality industry, the problems they face while working and the HR policies to assist them in their career progression. Further the research gaps were identified leading to the formulation of research objective.

Chapter 3. It states the outline of the Research methodology. This basically comprises of the research design formulated for this study, Population and sample chosen for the study, Scope and limitation of the study, Data collection instrument and tools of analysis.

Chapter 4. An analysis of the collected data as per the research design and testing of Hypotheses is stated in this chapter.
Chapter 5.  Deals with the findings arrived from the analysis of data, suggestions, recommendations and conclusions as derived from the study. Further it states the scope for the future research.

Chapter 6.  It presents the detailed bibliography of the cited research papers, articles, books and thesis referred for the study.

Appendices  Lastly various documents are provided to assist the study containing the Survey instrument, list of sample hotels, Hotels Appreciation letters, and Sample size calculation table.

1.8  Summary
This chapter presented an overview of Hospitality industry, women’s place in Hospitality industry and the challenges they face in their career progression. The under-representation of women in leadership positions and gender discrimination issues in the workplace have been reviewed in the previous studies, however, a little research has been focused on the perceptions of the Human resource managers and the women employees working at all levels in the hospitality industry regarding the challenges faced by women in the career progression in the industry. This chapter provided the background of the study, significance of the study and definitions of terms. The results of this research will assist the management of the Hotels to devise and adopt women friendly policies to assist women in their career progression thus, benefiting the hospitality industry in general.