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ROLE OF WOMEN IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

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INTRODUCTION:

The hospitality experience would prove to be quite incomplete, without the charming smile of a woman. It is without doubt that women have excelled in this sector not only in India, but all over the world. The feminine touch indeed lends grace and elegance to the hospitality industry. In fact, it would only be fair to say that the industry today holds more potential for women than ever before.

One might think that being a woman might be a disadvantage in a work arena where long hours, steep stress levels and crisis management are common place. However, women have come out trumps, and worked twice as hard to do a better job than their male peers. Women now enjoy prominent positions in what was once perceived to be a man's domain. "When ability, instead of your post, commands respect, gender becomes irrelevant. It's important to convince your staff of your competence. That done, being a woman makes no difference," says Shirin Batliwala, VP Food and Beverages, the Indian Hotels Company Limited.

Women are a growing part of the work force. According to an analysis of female employment by the International Labour Office (ILO, 2004), over the past several decades, a larger percentage of women have joined the workforce: 33 per cent in 1960, 43 per cent in 1980 and 45 per cent in 1990. In 2003, 40 per cent of the world's 2.8 billion workers were women. Compared to the last decade, this is an increase of about 200 million. According to the ILO, women make up over 90 per cent of all employees in the catering and accommodation operations. It's about time then to give women their due — acknowledge and appreciate their contribution to the global travel and hospitality industry.

H&T employees who are women, by region (%)

Region	Percentage (%)
Asia	45.3
Europe	8.64
Africa	7.4
North America	4.55
Latin America	5.85
World	26.84

Source: ILO Laborsta Database.

Tourism is a service industry with a strong female presence. That is all the more reason why gender sensitization and ensuring equal rights to the women and men are important concerns of the Ministry. The Ministry of Tourism is committed to the Articles 15, 16 & 39 of the Constitution of India that prohibit discrimination of any form against women and to provide for equal opportunity and equal pay for equal work, irrespective of sex. Women Officers in the Ministry are posted at the Headquarters, in Regional Offices and also in the Overseas Offices. The women employees of this Ministry play a pivotal role in the organization of conferences, Seminars, exhibitions & road shows of national and international importance. The Ministry has a Grievances Cell for women to address problems and grievances faced by them

Empowering women to participate in economic development at all levels and in all sectors is essential to building strong economies and stable, just societies.¹ Tourism provides significant opportunities for both women and men. According to UNWTO Highlights 2010, tourism's contribution to employment is estimated to be 6% to 7% of the overall number of jobs worldwide (direct and indirect). One in twelve of the world's workers are employed in the travel and tourism industry. In developing countries where women have less access to education and often have greater household responsibilities, the low barriers to entry, flexible working hours, and part-time work present

potential opportunities for employment.

Tourism can also help poor women break the poverty cycle through formal and informal employment, entrepreneurship, training, and community betterment. Not all women are benefitting equally from tourism development, however. In some cases, lack of education and resources may prevent the poorest women from benefitting from tourism development. While in some regions tourism helps empower women, in other regions, tourism negatively affects the lives of women and perpetuates existing economic and gender inequalities.

The overarching vision for the Global Report on Women in Tourism is to promote women's empowerment and protect women's rights through better tourism work. There are five goals: to promote equal opportunities for women working in tourism; to inspire increased entrepreneurship for women in tourism; to advance women through education and training; to encourage women to lead in tourism; to protect vulnerable women and those working in home-based tourism enterprises.

Chef Veena Arora, Executive Thai Chef, The Imperial, New Delhi, says, "A hotel kitchen is considered to be primarily a male dominated place. It is probably one of the most stressful places as well, but I think that gender biases belong in history books. If you're tough enough, the world is your oyster." Moreover, the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has finalised a broad-based action plan designed to highlight and uplift the role of women as employers, employees and travellers. At a forum convened at ITB Berlin in March 2008, a special UNWTO Women in Tourism initiative was started. This initiative is designed to raise and maintain awareness about the social and economic opportunities that tourism can offer to women; stress the need for appropriate policy frameworks to promote women's empowerment and protect women's rights in tourism, and encourage the public and private sectors to facilitate the achievement of gender equality in tourism development. However, regardless of these improvements, women continue to be inequitably hired, promoted and rewarded

For years, hospitality industry experts and analysts have talked about the "glass ceiling" that has prevented women in the field from ascending to the upper ranks of supervisory and managerial positions. To an extent, the same conditions prevail in virtually every industry -- although women have come a long way in the workplace, men continue to hold most leadership roles. However, the unique culture and history that define the hospitality industry have made the prospect of change particularly challenging.

Although this pattern continues to hold true in the hospitality industry, the last several decades have been a period of remarkable change and growth for women in the field. In restaurants, hotels, catering firms, resorts, and many other venues, women are becoming much more visible in management roles and other key positions than ever before, and experts predict that the opportunities for women in the industry will only increase as businesses struggle to keep pace with growth and demand in the field.

A new generation of female supervisors, leaders, and executives

Women have long worked in positions of de facto leadership in the hospitality industry, such as supervising or managing a family-owned business, or assuming additional responsibilities in their boss's absence. However, it was not until 1980s that large numbers of women first began to be formally hired into leadership roles.

Since that time, the opportunities for women in the hospitality industry have begun to expand exponentially. Today, you can find successful women filling managerial roles at every level, ranging from floor supervisors to executive board members.

Although they are still significantly outnumbered by their male counterparts, these women have broken through the once-impenetrable "glass ceiling" and are now leading the way for a new generation of females who aspire to leadership positions in the hospitality industry.

Some inspiring success stories include:

CAMELLIA PANJABI

Camellia Panjabi does not own a single restaurant in India, and yet she has probably had an enormous influence on where and how you dine. As managing director of the Taj hotels, she was responsible for introducing Mumbai residents to Sichuan cooking (she opened Golden Dragon at the Taj Mahal Palace hotel in 1970) and for pushing The Taj to become the first five-star luxury hotel to put appams and other South Indian specialities on their menu. She is also responsible for introducing regional Indian cuisine to the UK, opening Bombay Brasserie in London in 1982, and subsequently becoming director of Masala World, where along with her sister and brother-in-law, she launched some of London's best known Indian restaurants like Chutney Mary, Veeraswamy and the Michelin-starred Amaya (one critic cautioned that eating there can turn you into a "proselytising maniac"). Her

seminal cookbook 50 Great Curries of India has sold over a million copies and is widely considered a compulsory read for anyone in the Indian food business. Panjabi, who studied Economics at Cambridge and splits her time between Mumbai and London, spoke to us about the Indian palate, our culinary failings and why you won't see a Mumbai branch of Amaya anytime soon.

SHATBHI BASU

Shatbhi Basu, class of 1980, graduated from the Institute of Hotel Management, Mumbai, and has been associated with the hotel industry for over 20 years. She is the founder of the STIR Academy of Bartending at the Revival Restaurant in Mumbai, and hers was the first school in the country meant exclusively for bartenders. The course offered at the school has a graduate and refresher programme on bartending, a corporate appreciation programme and an amateur appreciation programme. Shatbhi has also authored the seminal Indian cocktail book - "The Can't Go Wrong Book of Cocktails".

PRIYA PAUL

Priya Paul is the epitome of the superwoman. Not only is she the Chairperson of the Hospitality Division of the Apeejay Surrendra Group, which owns the prestigious line of The Park Hotels, she also embraces a multitude of other roles with equal ease and grace.

A successful woman entrepreneur, loyal wife, devoted mother, strong feminist and an active industry supporter, it is clear why she has often been dubbed as the leading lady of the Indian Hospitality Industry.

Some may say that she was born with a silver spoon. The daughter of Surrendra Paul, the founder of the first Park Hotel in Kolkatta, Priya Paul was certain from the tender age of 10 that she was going to grow up to be an entrepreneur. Despite her illustrious lineage, getting there was no easy feat.

Her career decision lay in the hands of her family, who toyed with several industry portfolios including shipping, tea, real estate, construction and financial services before finally settling on the hospitality industry. A decision, which in retrospect, was the perfect career choice for this creative and sociable woman.

Armed with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Wellesley College, USA, she returned to India in 1988 to join her father as Marketing Manager of The Park Hotel, New Delhi. She was only 22.

Fate however, had other plans. After her father's untimely death in 1990, with just two years of experience in the hospitality industry, Priya Paul stepped in to fill her father's (rather large) shoes as the Chairperson of The Park Hotel chain and there has been no looking back since.

It is not only her hotels which have won national and international recognition. Priya Paul was named the Young Entrepreneur of the year by the Federation of Hotels and Restaurants Association, India in the year 1999-2000. She was won the Economic Times Business Person of the Year in 2002-2003.

SHIRIN BATLIWALA, VP Food and Beverage, Taj Hotels

Custodian of the Taj legacy for 38 years, Vice President, Food and Beverage of all the Taj Hotels, Resorts and Palaces in India, Shirin Batliwala has been a key stake-holder in charting the future of the country's hospitality industry. On completing her hotel management from the Institute of Hotel Management, Mumbai she joined the group as a trainee in 1971 "It was the first time that the hotel decided to take a woman in any area besides housekeeping," says Batliwala. She is currently involved in coordinating business development projects for future hotels, renovating old restaurants, adding new cuisines and rolling out wine lists for the group.

VEENA ARORA

Veena Arora, consultant and Chef de Cuisine at The Imperial Hotel, is busy flipping sole fillets for a party unmoved by the chatter and clatter that surrounds her. The diminutive chef has been running the hotel's South Asian eatery Spice Route for nine years now. But she's far from bored. "My passion for the job and my love of eating keep me going," says Arora, who cooks Thai food (along with light Punjabi dishes) even at home.

Those who swear by the authenticity of the food at Spice Route might be surprised to know that Arora is not professionally trained. A true woman, she cooks by instinct, and by experience. She began by helping out at her brother's restaurant in Thailand, where she was born and raised. Marriage in 1980 brought her to Agra, where she began supplying sandwiches and Thai food to the Army canteen and conducting cookery classes from her house. She moved to Delhi a few years later and a friend, seeing her expertise in the kitchen, suggested that she join the hospitality industry.

A stint at The Intercontinental on Barakhamba Avenue followed. Then, when Imperial's Jasdev Singh Akoi was launching Spice Route, he brought in Arora to conceive the menu, recruit cooks and train the waiters. Most members of the team have been with her since the start, but whenever she hires new recruits, Arora makes sure that they're all from, believe it or not, roadside dhabas. "I prefer to teach them the basics in my own way," she reasons.

RITU DALMIA

Another self-taught chef is Ritu Dalmia, owner of Diva, the Italian eatery at Greater Kailash II. Dalmia believes that being a woman chef has many advantages. "Clients are gentler, dealing with the MCD is easier and, most importantly, the food is tastier because women have a sixth sense for food," she grins.

Dalmia, who has been cooking since she was a child, picked up Italian cooking on trips to Italy for her family's marble business. She opened her first restaurant, Mezzaluna, at Hauz Khas village in 1994. It served Mediterranean food and wound up within two years. Dalmia attributes the early demise to Delhi's "conservative approach to experimentation, then". After a stint in London, where she ran Indian restaurant Vama along with a friend, Dalmia returned to Delhi to launch Diva in 2000. This time, to glory and riches.

Unlike Arora and Dalmia, Nita Nagaraj of Jaypee Vasant Continental is a professionally-trained chef. And has the resume to prove it. She joined the Oberoi as a kitchen trainee immediately after her hotel management course. "The first month was bad and I wanted to quit, but after a month or so I began enjoying myself in the kitchen," she remembers. She moved from the Oberoi to the Taj Group, where she worked for 17 years before joining Jaypee three years ago. As the corporate chef, Nagaraj is in charge of all the restaurants that the Jaypee Group owns in the country. "Be it presentation or cooking, the buck stops with me," she says.

Mukesh Singhal, Jaypee's vice president, operations, is all praise for Nagaraj's professionalism. "Gender is no issue with her. She can be relied upon to be at work at the oddest of hours," he says. Whether it's tweaking the menu or managing her team of 70, Nagaraj never lets up, he adds. When the hotel was hosting a Parsi food festival, Nagaraj made endless visits to Basil and Thyme owner Bhicoo Maneckshaw's house to get the recipes just right, he remembers.

In fact, while she specializes in Continental cuisine, Nagaraj is now focusing on Parsi and Bengali food. "Regional recipes have a lot of potential," she says, and experimentation is the key to success. "Combine that with passion, the ability to learn from people and the virtue of being thick-skinned; and you have all the ingredients of a successful chef," she smiles. Though for a woman, it is a bit more difficult, she admits, and the predominance of men in the kitchen ensures that a woman never feels like 'one of the guys'.

But perceptions about the profession are changing, believes Manisha Bhasin, executive chef at Marriott WelcomHotel, "and if one has a passion for cooking, the possibilities are limitless." In any case, she adds, competence always scores over gender. "There may be a few challenges initially, in terms of adjusting to male colleagues reluctant to take a woman chef seriously, but later in the career, no such divides remain," says Bhasin, who has been with Welcomgroup ever since she was a trainee.

"Food throws up new challenges every day and chefs need to have creative solutions ready," says Bhasin. Her typical day includes interacting with guests, checking raw materials and new vendors, organizing the right crockery, deciding upon the garnishing and, of course, two hours of serious cooking. "Otherwise I will lose touch," smiles Bhasin who specializes in Western food.

Last year while visiting Marriott's headquarters in Washington, she realized how tastes have changed globally. Bhasin prepared mildly-spiced Indian food for the gathering, only to be asked by surprised guests why the food was so bland. "That's when I realized that everyone knows and want the real stuff, no matter where they are," she smiles.

Clearly, these kitchen queens may have earned their toques by their individual recipes for success, but there is no denying that Delhi is richer by the collective wealth of culinary experience that they bring to the table.

Factors that Constrain Women's Career Advancement

Researchers have identified a number of factors that function as barriers to women's career advancement. These included glass ceiling, gender discrimination and sexual harassment, organizational culture, and work and family conflict.

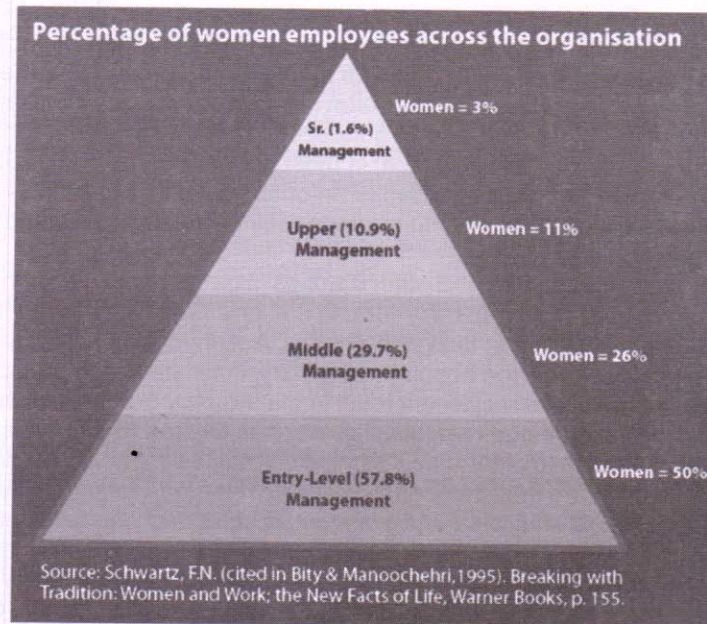
1. Glass Ceiling

The glass ceiling refers to invisible, generally artificial, barriers that prevent qualified individuals, e.g. women, from advancing within their organizations and reaching their full potential (Knutson & Schmidgall, 1999). The term was popularized in the 1980s when it became a significant concept in the workplace in the United States. It

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describes a tendency for women and minorities to be over represented in the lower levels of an industry, but under represented at senior levels. Even though great strides have taken place in recent years, there remains room for improvement.

Bily and Manoochehri (1995) described the development of women's role in history: traditionally, a woman's role has been in the home, taking care of children and husband. During World War II, women went to work because men were at war. After World War II, women were sent back home again to be wives and mothers. Their shorter work experience has impacted women in history. Since the 1960s, more and more women have entered the workplace and 30-40 years later they have stayed in the workforce so that the number of working women has been continuously increasing. While women comprise almost half of the workplace, the number of women in mid - management and especially senior management is still low. That is where the term "glass ceiling" comes from as cited in Bily and Manoochehri (1995). Schwartz (cited in Bily & Manoochehri, 1995) illustrated the glass ceiling as part of the management pyramid as below,



The numbers in the middle of the pyramid represent the percentage of managers in each category. The numbers on the right represent the women at each level. For example, 50% of entry-level managers are women while women accounts for only 3% senior management positions. In spite of the similarities in the backgrounds and experiences of men and women, the above figure showed women remain poorly represented at the senior level (Brownell, 1994).

Fortune magazine recently polled 201 chief executives of the nation's largest companies. Only 16% of these respondents believe it is either very or somewhat likely that within the next 20 years, a woman will be the head of their company (cited in Brownell, 1994). Studies also have identified the difficulties women face in climbing to the top management positions, including the old boy network (Brownell, 1994; Diaz & Umbreit, 1995), working family conflict, and poor childcare support (Brownell, 1998). Weber (1998) found that perceived importance of career constraints are: old boy network, lack of assertiveness, male bias and stereotyping, family and work conflict, insufficient career planning, and unhelpful boss.

1. Gender Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

Woods and Kavanaugh (1994) found that more than 80 percent of men and women perceive gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace as an ongoing problem. They mailed the 49 - question survey to 1,550 hospitality managers, all of whom had earned a baccalaureate or master's degree from hospitality management programs within the proceeding seven years. Fifty eight percent of the respondents were women. Results showed that in many cases the reasons why most women graduates left the hospitality industry was due to

gender discrimination or sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is simply not basing employment decisions on an individual's acceptance or rejection of sexual advances. Another form of sexual harassment is the creation of an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Repeatedly staring provocatively and making off-color jokes or remarks also are considered sexual harassment (Woods & Kavanaugh). Woods conducted a study in 1992 and asked the participants how often sexual harassment occurred in the hospitality industry. "Nearly one - fourth of both female and male respondents agreed with the statement: 'Most women in my field have been subjected to sexual harassment at work'" (Woods, 1994, p. 20).

Many studies describe gender - based pay differences. Recent research on gender issues in employment in the hospitality industry provided both "good news and bad news" to American women. The good news was that their increased employment in the industry demonstrates that "the hospitality field is rapidly becoming sex neutral". But women still do not receive equal in terms of rewards (Woods, 1994).

Models and theories have guided some of the research on gender - based income disparity. Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1975) and The New Home Economics Theory (Becker, 1981, 1985) have been the most popularized theories. The Human Capital Theory suggested that those with a larger investment in themselves have greater career opportunities and are efficiently sorted into higher paying jobs. Better educated workers have greater potential because they have increased their human capital investment by extending their credentials. The theory explains the difference in income by suggesting that a portion of those differences is not attributable to gender at all, but to the different levels of education, training and experiences. The New Home Economics theory argued that households maximize their use by dividing labor so that, in most households, men specialized in market work and women in domestic work. The male - female wage gap is an outcome of this decision - making process. Women choose part-time jobs that allow them the flexibility to manage their domestic household duties and do not require them to put career above family.

Based on the above two major theories and other theories, Sparrowe and Iverson (1999) conducted a study to examine the disparity of income in the hospitality industry. A one percent representative sample of the U.S. hospitality industry population was used to test their hypotheses. According to their findings, the presence of more covert forms of gender discrimination within the hospitality industry, consistent with previous research, women may experience equity of representing at the management level in the industry but the income is still lower than that of men. Sparrowe and Iverson (1999) suggested that this disparity has existed for many years and cannot disappear overnight. Comparisons should be made to determine if income disparities are being reduced in the industry today. Woods asked the respondents to indicate their salaries by ranges. The mean for men was about \$42,300 and about \$35,900 for women. The data suggest that a salary disparity exists along gender lines. Using the salary range \$35,000-39,999 as the midrange for the entire group, data suggested that 43% of the men had salaries below the middle range and 43% above it. Meanwhile, 60 percent of the women had salaries below the group's middle range, and only 20 percent had salaries above it. Also 40% of the women reported that "sexual discrimination is related to promotion and nearly 38% thought it related to salaries". Data support the argument that substantial levels of sexual discrimination exist in the industry. Increases awareness of the pervasiveness of this issue can reduce the likelihood of gender discrimination and sexual harassment.

Many studies mentioned the gender gap in income. Umbreit & Diaz (1994) suggested that the gender gap in earnings would be even larger if women did not achieve a higher level of academic success as women continue to major in higher paying fields such as business management and/or undertake more internship related to their fields. Woods and Kavanaugh (1994) found that female managers in the hospitality industry earn \$6,400 less than their male peers. According to Brownell (1994), women view this lack of equity as a predominate obstacle to their career progression.

2. Organizational Culture

Recent research has concentrated on masculine organizational culture as an explanation for the glass-ceiling phenomenon, that is, organizational culture forms a barrier for women's careers. Usually people are attracted by an organization or a job due to their personal preferences, and cultural preferences are partly based on experience and personality. Eagly and Wood (1991) suggest that people who consider themselves very ambitious, for example, will probably favor a competitive environment; in contrast to people who see themselves as less ambitious. And, it seems likely that men will adhere more strongly to a competitive culture than women will.

Studies also have reported that there are only small differences between the management styles of male and female managers. These differences had decreased to the extent that these cultures were more male-dominated (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Many investigations have concluded that women in senior management positions have adapted

their behavior to emulate traditional male styles (Brownell, 1994).

Vianen and Fischer (2002) suggested that compared to men, women would feel less attracted to management positions, especially top management positions, because of their organizational culture preferences. According to their studies, women are confronted with two barriers on the way to the top, which are more restraining for them than for men. One is the women's first step into management. Few women will take this step partly because they have weaker masculine culture preferences. The other barrier concerns the step from middle management to top management. Women seem less ambitious than men in pursuing a top management career. It is suggested that if an organization truly wanted to assign more women to top management positions, they should put effort into changing the top management culture as well as trying to attract women with high salaries and status. Vianen and Fischer concluded that both processes of selection and self-selection are responsible for the slow advancement of women to top management careers.

3. Work and Family Conflict

In recent years, research has shown that work-family conflict also affects women's career advancement. Mallon & Cassell (1999) found that the expectation of long hours was a significant barrier to seeking promotions for many women in the industry (Mallon & Cassell, 1999). It is assumed that women traditionally would be involved in childcare and housework, which was viewed as their responsibility and an expectation from the men's world. Women in top management tend to be single or married with few or no children. "Hospitality management is not a 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. job. Success in the industry demands long hours and requires a great deal of crisis 24 management and problem solving. These factors combine to create a stressful and exhausting work experience". Brownell also mentioned that advancement often means leaving familiar towns, schools, and relatives to move across the country to a property that offers increased job opportunities. It is not unusual for an individual to move three or more times on the path from department head to general manager. There are opportunities in the rapidly growing industry, but people must be aware of the requirements of long hours, stress and loss of quality time with their families. These costs may be seen as not being worth the benefits of a hospitality career. People in the industry must balance success and cost, and struggle with work and family conflicts, especially those who are single parents.

Factors that Facilitate Women's Career Advancement

The review of literature revealed that energy and hard work are presented as being the most important traits that facilitate to women's career advancement. Gregg and Johnson (1990) noted that the women in their survey felt that they had to work twice as hard and do twice as good a job as their male colleagues in order to prove they deserved a promotion. Other traits also included communication, trust, and perseverance. Suggestions are given to women managers to stand out by hard work, being good at what they do networking, relocating, or changing companies. Knutson and Schmidgall (1999) noted that having a charismatic personality also is an effective advancement strategy and that women executives believe that to advance they must develop a style with which men are comfortable. Brownell (1992) described the hospitality managers who emerge as leaders in the 21st century as men and women who deal effectively with a multi-cultural workforce, present their ideas clearly, and are able to mobilize others around a common goal. Brownell (1994), in another study on personality and career development, found the following traits of hospitality managers: hard work, fairness, the ability to motivate others, determination, calmness, assertiveness or competitiveness, enthusiasm, deliberateness and detail-orientation. Skills and intelligence also are important, such as communication skills, leadership skills and interpersonal skills. Networking and mentoring have been identified as two methods to help women. Fagenson and Jackson (1993) stated that some women in high level have benefited from networks. Furthermore, women need to set up their networks and participate in men's networks. Many women have acknowledged the help of mentors who helped them to enter the old boy networks.

Gender Differences

Previous research revealed gender differences on factors that facilitate and constrain women's career advancement. Brownell (1994) conducted a survey of 97 female and 318 male general managers. Of the ten items that relate to the importance of career-related activities, only mentoring was found to be significantly different by gender, with males viewing it more important to women's career development than females. Of the eight obstacles to women's career advancement, gender differences were found between female and male general managers on the items: old boy network, family and work conflict, pay and promotions, job characteristics, lack of mentors, lack of credibility, and sexual harassment. For example, more than half of males (54%) viewed pay and promotions as no

obstacle or a minor one, while only 11% of females agreed. Nearly half of males perceived old boy networks as only minor obstacles while over half of females viewed this as major obstacle.

Ng and Pine (2003) found significant gender differences on the importance of effective communication skills, which indicated that female managers viewed a stronger positive relationship between communication skills and career development than males. Three obstacles were found to be significantly different between female and male managers; they were inadequate job knowledge, difficulty in establishing credibility, and lack of equity in training. In all these items, males viewed them as bigger obstacles than females.

Rising demand for women-only floors in hotels

With more and more women travelling alone, whether for leisure or for corporate purposes, many prestigious hotels are now dedicating floors exclusively to women, with special emphasis on security and comfort. Graciously dropped by the hotel industry at the dawn of the feminist movement, demand for women-only floors is back on the rise.

"Hotels are finally recognising the extensive travelling done by women and the need to ensure that their key priorities are being safe, comfortable and pampered," says Paulomi Bhatt, founder of World at Her Feet, the first travel group for women in the Middle East.

"Walking in Copenhagen's Bella Donna floor and being greeted by soft music, yoga mats, smoothies and a bathroom stocked with exclusive products, styling accessories, complete with wide shower heads and floor-length mirrors, it was sheer heaven," Bhatt says.

Not just Europe, ladies travelling to cosmopolitan cities across America, South East Asia and the Middle East can stay on floors creatively called Donna, Eva, Orchid and Her Space.

Many travel agents & tour operators have women only tours without any male consorts or children accompanying them. This segment of tourists is on the rise where women can enjoy and relax while traveling to foreign or domestic destinations for e.g. Kesari tours & travels has a very popular idea where they have formed a group & named it "My Fair lady". These groups of women tourists go to destinations for a period of one week to 10 days without having to worry about travel or hotel arrangements and get ample time to shop, see places, enjoy culture, arts, shows, along with sightseeing.

CONCLUSION:

Women could continue with their careers if their home and hearth is looked after for which the hotels could help them by,

1. Introduction of extension of maternity paid leave up to one year.
2. Day Care for small children of women employee in the hotel premises.
3. Promote women staff to study further in the course of their employment so that can be better equipped for promotions and career advancement.
4. With the advent of technology women can start up a small entrepreneurial venture as travel agents from the confines of their home. The tours can be personalized and made more composite as the clients want. In this way women can earn a livelihood without compromising on the personal front.
5. In the recent years, hospitality and tourism education has flourished in leaps and bounds giving a platform for aspiring women students to embark on careers as hotel and travel professionals who would give themselves ample choice, time to make a mark before they settle in to matrimony. The education sector should motivate girls students to realize their true potential and scope to be a permanent part of hospitality and continue to be associated even after their tenure in hardcore operations in hotels is over possibly due to marriage and responsibility of children for e.g. Teaching career in hospitality which would give them a chance to be constantly in touch with their core education. The hours of work would enable ladies to have a flourishing career, decent pay packet & a chance to mentor aspiring youth through this journey easily by maintaining work and home balance.
6. Today's women stand equal to men in most fields including the hospitality industry. They are not hesitant to travel to new places for work prospects and this will see a welcome change where women will put their professional interest first before personal front. This fearless attitude is a result of globalization and a belief that, "What men do..... women can do better!!"