

### **5.01 Summary of findings**

The study revealed several key findings within the hospitality and tourism industry. Firstly, it pointed out that a significant preference exists for younger individuals within organizations, creating an age-related barrier for women. A considerable proportion of the respondents, over 50%, held a bachelor's degree, while 28% possessed postgraduate qualifications. Another important observation was the sector's preference for hiring unmarried women, leading to a shortage of experienced women in higher-level positions. The study emphasized the pressing priorities for women professionals, including recognition and status, networking opportunities, career development, financial benefits, increased job prospects, and challenging career paths. Furthermore, it identified various obstacles to women's progression, such as family and household responsibilities, gender biases, work-life balance concerns, and age-related challenges. Women also encountered difficulties such as a lack of mentorship, instances of sexual harassment, limited recruitment at entry levels, and the impact of maternity leave on career trajectories. Lastly, the research highlighted a lack of awareness or disagreement (at 67.92% on average) among respondents regarding the existence of women-friendly policies within the government and hospitality organizations, indicating a need for more inclusive policies within the industry.

### **5.02 Conclusion**

Throughout history, women who were employed were often perceived as lacking femininity, leading to a perception of them as deserving of sympathy. There was a prevailing belief that women working outside the home were unable to raise competent children. However, there has been a notable shift in society's perception of women's roles, driven primarily by technological advancements. This transformation has facilitated the success of women in various domains, including the workplace and educational institutions.

In contemporary India, women are increasingly pursuing professional education and seeking opportunities in traditionally male-dominated sectors such as engineering, law, aviation, and the military. They have evolved to be more physically capable and intellectually adept at handling diverse responsibilities in the professional realm. Additionally, the acceptance of working mothers pursuing higher education has become more prevalent, signifying a positive societal shift.

However, despite these advancements, women continue to face challenges, such as underrepresentation in senior management and board positions in both the public and private sectors. It is evident that further actions are necessary to secure gender parity and encourage women's ambitions across different domains. Women in contemporary society possess the capability to assume leadership positions, including those of top executives and board members, exhibiting both grace and confidence. In the modern workplace, female professionals demonstrate shrewdness, intelligence, and a strong drive to achieve their goals. Globally, concerns about gender equity persist regardless of geographical location, and workplace discrimination based on gender is an escalating issue across various professions, irrespective of the level of expertise required.

Restricting employment opportunities for women in the hospitality sector, based on pre-established gender norms within the industry, is deemed unethical. Despite this, past studies have highlighted discriminatory hiring practices within certain hotel chains that favor men. This results in a comparatively low ratio of women in the hospitality workforce and diminished prospects for female candidates in employment opportunities compared to their male counterparts.

A person's career is shaped by a culmination of experiences that influence their values, beliefs, and objectives. Individual career goals are influenced by factors such as age, education, social surroundings, cultural background, and family dynamics. These experiences contribute to the formation of self-perceptions, encompassing values, skills, and ambitions, which in turn drive an individual's actions and choices aligned with their self-image, also known as 'career aspirations'.

Research indicates that females tend to prioritize care-related career paths more than males, demonstrating greater flexibility in gender roles. In contrast, males tend to lean toward practical career options rather than those focused on care. Additionally, while males may prioritize external rewards and prestige, females are more inclined towards internal satisfaction. Furthermore, Women who possess a favorable self-image regarding their hard work and inner drive are more inclined to pursue careers traditionally dominated by men.

Despite the dominance of women in caregiving professions, male career aspirations appear less influenced by personal motivations. It's plausible that highly driven women may seek careers beyond traditional gender expectations, challenging

preconceived notions about their career ambitions. The industry itself bears responsibility for identifying and nurturing the talents present in the female workforce, directly contributing to the rise of women in the professional sphere. This trend has led to the emergence of various roles for women in the hospitality industry, ranging from top-tier positions to supervisory and executive roles, presenting unique challenges related to balancing familial responsibilities and work demands.

One of the prominent challenges faced by women in today's society revolves around their struggle to maintain a professional career after getting married or starting a family. Balancing work demands with domestic responsibilities often leads some women to temporarily give up their careers, causing a significant gap in their professional trajectory. Upon attempting to re-enter the workforce, these women may find limited opportunities available, often settling for positions that are either at the same level or lower than their previous roles.

The burden of additional domestic duties, coupled with their professional commitments, emphasizes the need for both familial and workplace support to achieve a healthy work-life balance, which in turn can lead to increased productivity. However, women often feel excluded from informal communication networks and neglected during decision-making processes, a factor that contributes to their departure from the industry. Despite these challenges, there is a growing push for gender equity across various organizations, although the slow pace of change persists due to the predominance of men in leadership roles.

In the tourism and hospitality industry, the prevalence of women in lower-ranking positions compared to men is often attributed to various factors such as age, familial responsibilities, and a concentration of women in certain divisions like housekeeping, marketing, and human resources, limiting their upward mobility towards general management roles. This gender disparity is exacerbated by a range of care-related issues that act as hurdles to career advancement, encompassing individual, organizational, and societal factors.

Obstacles such as the 'glass-ceiling', discriminatory practices, limited networking opportunities, and prevalent biases inhibit women from achieving their career aspirations, compounded by a lack of role models, unsupportive environments, and cultural barriers. Factors like long and inflexible working hours, breaks for motherhood, gender biases, and the lack of relevant experience contribute to the high

turnover of women in the hospitality industry. Furthermore, the existing regulatory framework can also discourage women from pursuing careers in this field, creating additional barriers to their entry and progress within the industry.

The study emphasized the need for addressing the increasing challenges faced by women in the workforce, advocating for the establishment of flexible work environments, the implementation of mentoring and training programs, the standardization of procedures, transparency in recruitment, performance evaluation, and promotion processes, as well as the acknowledgment and rewarding of women's contributions through recognition and awards. These recommendations were aimed at reducing practical barriers for female professionals within the hospitality industry, considering the potential for exceptional female representatives to excel in the service sector.

Enabling a work-life balance for married women, facilitating flexible work hours, and encouraging women to pursue roles in traditionally male-dominated fields were identified as potential strategies to augment the presence of women in the hotel industry. The establishment of pathways for female employees to foster and engage in informal networks within the industry could facilitate greater access to new opportunities, particularly considering the relatively fewer individuals competing for these paths.

Regarding age, the study underscored that organizations within the hospitality and tourism sectors tend to prefer younger employees, potentially posing a barrier for women professionals. The survey indicated that a considerable portion of the participants had completed a minimum of a bachelor's degree, while a noteworthy proportion had attained a master's degree or more advanced qualifications.

Notably, the study revealed a preference among businesses in the hospitality and tourism sector for hiring single women over married women, indicative of a dearth of experienced women in higher-level positions within these industries. Concerns such as recognition and status, employment networking opportunities, career development, financial rewards and benefits, increased job prospects, and the challenges faced by professionals were identified as significant issues for women working within the hospitality and tourism sectors.

Prominent barriers to women's advancement in these industries included family and household responsibilities, gender biases, concerns about work-life balance, and age-related factors, along with challenges such as inadequate supervision, instances of sexual harassment, limited entry-level recruitment, and the implications of maternity leave. The study further indicated a lack of support for parental leave and male assistance, as well as the absence of advancement opportunities and equitable wages.

Moreover, the research found that a substantial percentage of men either disagreed with or were unaware of the existence of women-friendly policies enforced by the government and various organizations within the hospitality and tourism industry. This highlighted the need for more robust policies within these establishments to ensure equitable opportunities and support for women professionals.

The findings from this study shed light on several critical aspects of Experiences and professional ambitions of women in the hospitality and tourism sector. Firstly, it becomes evident that age can pose a significant barrier to women's employment in this sector, as many organizations tend to prefer younger candidates. Furthermore, the research highlights a preference for unmarried women employees over married ones, which reveals an existing bias within the industry.

One of the most striking conclusions drawn from the data is the scarcity of experienced women holding higher positions within the hospitality and tourism sector. This raises concerns about the industry's ability to foster the growth and advancement of women professionals.

In terms of career priorities, the study underscores that recognition and status, networking opportunities, developing confidence, monetary benefits, women's welfare benefits, increased job opportunities, and challenging careers are paramount for women professionals in the sector. However, they face numerous barriers, including family and household responsibilities, gender bias, challenges in maintaining work-life balance, and age-related obstacles.

The research also brings to light several pressing issues faced by women throughout their careers in this industry, including a lack of guidance, instances of sexual harassment, limited recruitment opportunities at entry levels, and the impact of maternal leave.

Perhaps one of the most concerning findings is the widespread perception among respondents that there is a lack of women-friendly policies in both government and organizational contexts within the hospitality and tourism sector. The majorities of respondents either disagreed or were unaware of the existence of such policies, suggesting a clear need for more inclusive and supportive policies in the industry.

**Historical Perception of Working Women:**

Throughout history, working women have often been viewed as lacking femininity and deserving of sympathy due to societal assumptions about their employment.

**Paradigm Shift in Women's Roles:**

Over the years, there has been a notable change in how society perceives the roles of women in the workforce, partly influenced by technological progress.

**Women's Advancements:**

Women have successfully carved out their place in various fields, including traditionally male-dominated ones like engineering, law, aviation, and the military.

They have become physically and intellectually capable of handling diverse responsibilities in the professional world.

**Changing Social Acceptance:**

Working mothers pursuing higher education has become more socially acceptable in recent years.

**Gender Disparity:**

Women are still underrepresented in senior management and board positions across various sectors.

Gender discrimination in the workplace is a growing concern.

**Challenges in the Hospitality Industry:**

Women in the hospitality industry face challenges such as limited career advancement, lack of support for work-life balance, and difficulties returning to work after taking breaks.

**Barriers to Career Aspirations:**

Women encounter barriers related to individual, organizational, and societal factors that hinder their career aspirations.

**Strategies for Improvement:**

Strategies to address these issues include flexible work environments, mentoring programs, transparency in recruitment, and recognition for women's achievements.

**Policy Gaps:**

Many organizations in the hospitality and tourism industry lack women-friendly policies, and there is a need for greater awareness and implementation of such policies.

**Call for Change:**

Despite progress, there is still a need for further efforts to achieve gender equity in various industries, including hospitality and tourism.

**5.03 Suggestions/ Recommendations****1: Promoting Gender Diversity in the MMRDA Hospitality and Tourism Sector**

To promote gender diversity in the MMRDA hospitality and tourism sector, it is essential to implement strategies and policies that create a more inclusive and equitable workplace environment. Here are some recommendations:

**Gender-sensitive Recruitment and Hiring Practices:**

Encourage organizations to adopt gender-sensitive recruitment practices that ensure a diverse pool of candidates is considered for job openings.

Promote blind recruitment techniques to reduce unconscious biases during the hiring process.

**Diversity Training for Managers and Employees:**

Develop and mandate Training initiatives for managers and employees focusing on diversity and inclusion, aimed at promoting awareness of gender-related concerns and cultivating a more inclusive work environment. Include modules on unconscious bias, gender equality, and respectful workplace behavior in training programs.

**Flexible Work Arrangements:**

Advocate for flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options, flexible hours, and part-time opportunities, to accommodate the needs of women employees.

Encourage companies to provide childcare facilities or subsidies to support working mothers.

**Leadership Development Programs:**

Create leadership development programs specifically designed for women in the industry to empower them to take on higher-level roles.

Establish mentorship programs that pair women with experienced mentors who can guide them in their career progression.

**Gender Pay Equity Audits:**

Regularly examine pay equity through audits to detect and resolve any gender-based salary discrepancies in the sector. Advocate for companies to openly communicate their salary systems and endorse fair compensation for comparable tasks.

**Diverse Representation in Decision-Making Bodies:**

Promote diversity in the leadership and decision-making bodies of industry associations and organizations.

Encourage women to actively participate in industry associations to have a say in shaping policies and practices.

**Recommendation 2: Training and Skill Development for Women in the Industry**

To empower women and enhance their career prospects in the MMRDA hospitality and tourism sector, it is crucial to provide targeted training and skill development programs:

**Technical and Soft Skills Training:**

Develop training programs that focus on both technical skills (e.g., culinary skills, hotel management) and soft skills (e.g., communication, leadership) to enhance women's competency in their roles.

**Management and Leadership Training:**

Offer leadership and management training programs to equip women with the skills and confidence to take on leadership positions within the industry.

**Networking and Industry Exposure:**

Organize networking events, conferences, and tailored workshops for women in the field, aimed at assisting them in establishing valuable professional networks and acquiring visibility.



**Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurship Training:**

Provide training in financial literacy and entrepreneurship to empower women to start their own businesses or advance to managerial positions with financial responsibilities.

**Access to Career Counseling and Mentorship:**

Establish career counseling services and mentorship programs to guide women in their career choices and development.

**Recommendation 3: Creating Awareness and Garnering Family and Society Support**

Creating awareness and garnering support from families and society are critical to encouraging women to pursue careers in the MMRDA hospitality and tourism industry:

**Educational Initiatives:**

Partner with schools and colleges to create awareness among students about career opportunities in the industry through seminars, workshops, and career guidance programs.

**Public Awareness Campaigns:**

Launch public awareness campaigns to challenge stereotypes and promote the value of women's contributions to the industry.

**Engage Community and Religious Leaders:**

Collaborate with community and religious leaders to promote gender equality and support for women's career aspirations within their communities.

**Family-Friendly Policies:**

Encourage organizations in the sector to implement family-friendly policies, such as maternity and paternity leave, to support employees in balancing work and family responsibilities.

**Role Model Promotion:**

Highlight successful women in the industry as role models through media, conferences, and industry events to inspire younger generations.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders in the MMRDA hospitality and tourism sector can contribute to a more diverse and inclusive industry where

women are empowered, equipped with the necessary skills, and supported by their families and society to pursue successful careers.

#### **5.04 Areas of further research**

1. **Longitudinal Studies:** Perform longitudinal research to monitor the professional paths of women in the hospitality and tourism sector over an extended duration. This approach can yield valuable understanding regarding the elements that foster continuous career advancement or potential challenges.
2. **Comparative Analysis:** Compare the career aspirations and experiences of women in the MMRDA area with those in other regions of India or globally to identify region-specific challenges and solutions.
3. **Intersectionality and Diversity:** Examine how gender intersects with other factors such as age, caste, religion, and sexual orientation to understand how these intersecting identities influence career aspirations and opportunities in the industry.
4. **Impact of COVID-19:** Investigate how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the career aspirations and employment prospects of women in the hospitality and tourism sector, including the adoption of remote work and changing consumer behaviors.
5. **Mental Health and Well-being:** Investigate the mental health difficulties experienced by women in the industry and the impact of these challenges on their career aspirations. Explore strategies and interventions to promote well-being.
6. **Policy Analysis:** Evaluate the effectiveness of existing gender diversity policies and initiatives within organizations and industry associations in the MMRDA area. Identify best practices and areas for improvement.
7. **Technological Advancements:** Investigate the role of technology in the industry's transformation and how women can leverage technology for career advancement, including roles in digital marketing, data analytics, and e-commerce.
8. **Cross-Cultural Perspectives:** Explore the career aspirations and experiences of women from diverse cultural backgrounds working in the MMRDA hospitality and tourism sector, considering both local and expatriate workers.

9. **Sustainability and Responsible Tourism:** Analyze the impact of sustainability and responsible tourism practices on career aspirations and opportunities for women in the industry, including roles related to eco-tourism and sustainable hospitality.
10. **Work-Life Balance and Flexible Work Arrangements:** Research the effectiveness of work-life balance initiatives and flexible work arrangements in retaining women in the industry and facilitating career progression.
11. **Entrepreneurship and Women-Owned Businesses:** Investigate the challenges and successes of women entrepreneurs in the hospitality and tourism sector, including the establishment and management of their businesses.
12. **Government Policies and Initiatives:** Assess the role of government policies, incentives, and support programs in promoting gender diversity and women's career aspirations within the MMRDA hospitality and tourism industry.
13. **Customer Perspectives:** Explore the impact of gender diversity on customer satisfaction and experiences within the hospitality and tourism sector, shedding light on the business case for diversity.
14. **Education and Training Impact:** Assess how effective educational and vocational training initiatives are in equipping women for industry careers, and analyze whether these programs align with industry requirements.
15. **Impact of Social Media and Online Platforms:** Investigate how women in the MMRDA area use social media and online platforms to network, build personal brands, and access career opportunities within the hospitality and tourism sector.

The exploration of these additional research areas will enhance comprehension of women's professional ambitions in the MMRDA hospitality and tourism sector. This will enable the creation of specific interventions and policies to bolster their career development and progress.