

# Status of Women in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry in Urban Aizawl

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## Abstract

The tourism and hospitality industry have changed significantly over the past decade, particularly regarding women and gender equality. While women are still fighting for equality at work in different areas, they have earned their places in hotels, catering and tourism for quiet sometime. Women breaking the glass ceiling certainly is not unique to the tourism and hospitality industry and a significant progress can be observed. Nowadays women are employed in a variety of roles within this industry, ranging from cleaning personnel and kitchen staff to front-line customer service workers and senior management employees. If we compare to the situation few decades ago, it is now much easier for women to achieve managerial position and the career opportunities are more plentiful. This study is conducted amongst the stakeholders of the Tourism and Hospitality Industry in Aizawl city by the methods of interview and floating questionnaires. It will give an insight to the role played by the women and their challenges and prospect in the industry in Urban Aizawl.

**Keywords:** Tourism and hospitality, women, stakeholders, gender equality.

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism and Hospitality industry is considered to be one of the fastest growing industries in the global economy. Due to the diverse nature of the industry, it becomes an important source of both direct and indirect employment at all skill levels. Today, travel and tourism are the largest service industry in India with a contribution of 6.23% to national GDP and providing 8.78% of the total employment in the year 2011. According to the Ministry of External affairs, Govt. of India, its contribution towards gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to grow at 7.8% per annum during the period 2013-2023, so the tourism and hospitality industry is known to be one of the largest segments of the services sector in India.

Travel and tourism seem to be a particularly important sector for women (46% of the workforce are women) as their percentages of employment in most countries are higher than in the workforce in general (34-40% are women, according to ILO). The numbers of women and their percentage of their workforce in tourism vary greatly between countries from 2% to up to over 80%. Though there were few obvious regional trends it would appear that in those countries where tourism is a more developed industry, women generally account for around 50% of the workforce. Due to its size, quick growth rate, and its diverse, dynamic and flexible nature, the industry is often considered a good sector regarding the efforts towards advancements for women.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Singh & Maheswari (2017), stated in their work that the tourism and hospitality sector provide big opportunities for the growth of the country's GDP through foreign exchange earnings and employment for women. In the past, women working in this sector were more inclined towards domestic chores. The rise in women's status through such jobs provides a blissful outlook for India bringing gender equity in terms of employment. In support of this B & Siddiq (2016), suggests that women have every right to be treated equally with men in every field, and the advancement of women finds the right place in hospitality industry considering the enormous size; it's rapid and potential for growth, its diversity and vibrant nature. Hence tourism and hospitality industry can frame model by developing key initiatives and strategies for the advancement of women.

Even-though there are immense opportunity for women in the industry according to the UNTWO (2017), there are challenges faced by women in the tourism and hospitality industry. Women are often concentrated in low status, low paid and precarious jobs on the industry. Aykac (2006), found that women mostly were hired in low hierarchical levels and therefore are paid less than their male counterpart in the tourism and hospitality industry. In leu to this, Almeida & Mar (2013), are of the view that women should be given a chance to represent themselves at the top positions and the industry are more likely to grow when lead by women

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For carrying out this study a standard procedure of research was applied. The first method was through observation and interview of the industry and its personnel in urban Aizawl.

The second method was through questionnaire. These questions was distributed amongst the employees of the stakeholders

Purposive sampling was used through which 17 Travel Agents and Hotels combined was selected for the study. The sample size for the study is 100 respondents.

## ANALYSIS

**Table 1: Why did you join/choose this industry/work?**

	Frequency	Percent
Easy work	21	21.0
Good Salary	10	10.0
Personal interest	69	69.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey

Table 1 shows the variables for which reasons the respondents have chosen to work in the tourism and hospitality industry. It can be seen that with 69% of the respondents have chosen the industry for their personal interest, this is followed by Easy work with 21% and Good salary at 10%.

**Table 2: Do you feel this industry is a secure place for women? Crosstabulation**

		Do you feel this industry is a secure place for women?		Total
		No	Yes	
Gender	Male	4	43	47
	Female	2	51	53
Total		6	94	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents (94%) agree that the tourism and hospitality industry is a secure place to work for women. Out of which 51% are female respondents and 43% male. 6% of the respondents (4% male and 2% female) feels the opposite.

**Table 3: Do you feel that there is any sort of sexual discrimination in this industry? Crosstabulation**

		Do you feel that there is any sort of sexual discrimination in this industry?			Total
		No	Don't Know	Yes	
Gender	Male	35	11	1	47
	Female	41	8	4	53
Total		76	19	5	100

Source: Field Survey

The above table shows that the majority of the respondents feel that there is no sexual discrimination in tourism and hospitality industry (76%, out of which 41% are female and 35 male). From the respondents 19% of the respondents don't know or are not aware of such incidents. Out of the total 100 respondents there are 5% who feels that there exist such discrimination and 4% of the respondents are female.

**Table 4: Do you feel this industry provide job opportunity for women? Crosstabulation**

		Do you feel this industry provide job opportunity for women?		Total
		No	Yes	
Gender	Male	2	45	47
	Female	0	53	53
Total		2	98	100

Source: Field Survey

This table shows that 98% of the respondents feel that the tourism and hospitality industry provide job opportunity for women. While 2% of the respondents disagree.

**Table 5: Do you see yourself growing/developing in this industry? Crosstabulation**

		Do you see yourself growing/developing in this industry?		Total
		No	Yes	
Gender	Male	0	47	47
	Female	2	51	53
Total		2	98	100

Source: Field Survey

The majority of the respondents (98%) of the respondents see themselves growing/developing in the industry while 2% of the respondents both females feel the opposite.

**Table 6: What position do you hold? Crosstabulation**

		What position do you hold?					Total
		Managerial	F&B Service	F&B Production	Housekeeping	Desk Job	
Gender	Male	11	13	6	4	13	47
	Female	15	5	2	14	17	53
Total		26	18	8	18	30	100

Source: Field Survey

The above table shows the position held by the respondents in their respective organizations from which 30% of the respondents are holding a desk job where 17% of them are female and 13% male. This is closely followed by the managerial position at 26% (15% female and 11% male). The position with the least is the Food and Beverage Production at 8%.

**Table 7: Monthly Income Crosstabulation**

		Monthly Income					Total
		Below Rs 10,000	Rs. 11,000 to 15,000	Rs. 16,000 to 20,000	Rs. 21,000 to 25,000	Above Rs. 25,000	
Gender	Male	22	8	8	3	6	47
	Female	27	8	4	3	11	53
Total		49	16	12	6	17	100

Source: Field Survey

This table bring to light the monthly average income of the respondents. The majority of the respondents at 49% (27% female and 22% male) earns below Rs.10,000 per month, while 17% of the respondents earn above Rs.25,000 per month out of which 17% are female and 6% male.

## FINDINGS

The purpose of the study is to have an insight of the status of women in tourism and hospitality industry in urban Aizawl and have a general understanding of the situation from both the male and female perspective. The findings are as follows:

1. In-order to have a better understanding of the status of women in the tourism and hospitality industry in urban Aizawl the respondents were both male (47) and female (53). Along with these the major two stakeholders of the industry was taken into consideration i.e. Hotels and Travel Agency from which the responses were drawn which was 76 hoteliers and 24 travel agency employees.
2. The working hours of the employees was fair with half of the respondents (50%) claim they work 8 hours while 34% of the respondents works overtime due to certain reasons. Amongst the respondents 4 persons from the travel agency claim they work 24x7.
3. The majority of the respondents have chosen this particular field out of their personal interest (69%) while the others feel that the industry provides good salary (10%) and 21% of the respondents feel the work is easy in the industry. The reason for the outlook difference may cause due to lack of sensitization and exposure. The majority of them (36%) came to be familiarized to the industry from the educational institutions that may have provided them the necessary courses while 32% of the respondents came to know from their friends.
4. When asked about the job opportunity for women in the tourism and hospitality industry 98% of the respondents feel it does provide them the opportunity. The findings also show that out of the total

respondents agreeing to this 45% of them being male clearly points out that the industry does give the female equal opportunity to work.

5. In-terms of security of women in the industry 94% of the respondents (51% female and 43% male) feels that the industry is secure for women to work in and is suitable for them. While 6% of the respondents (4% male and 2% female) still feels that it is not secured enough. This idea may be instilled as 5% of the respondents (4 female and 1 male) feels that there still exists the scenario of sexual discrimination in the industry. Even though majority of the respondents at 76% (41 female and 35 male) feels it does not exist, there are 19% of the respondents who are not aware of such issues and 5% being aware. These numbers may be few but it gives an idea of the open scenario of women's security in the industry.
6. The majority of the respondents (98%) feels that they are growing/developing in the industry. This shows that the prospects of the industry and the employees is bright and with 51% of the respondents agreeing to this are female, their prospect in the industry can also be assumed to be good. This development can be supported by the fact that majority of the respondents are holding a desk job (30%) and managerial positions (26%) from the respondents from which 32 of them being held by female. This shows that women are not only given menial jobs and proves that the industry provides them the opportunity to climb the hierarchical ladder.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of the paper is to have an insight and understanding of the status of women in tourism and hospitality industry in urban Aizawl and the findings here clearly suggests that the industry is suitable for women to work in and provides them with equal opportunities not only to enter the industry but also to have the opportunity to get to higher positions. The industry also proves to be providing a healthy work environment to the women as the findings suggests that it gives its women employees a sense of security as well as a platform to develop themselves in order to have better prospects. The findings also suggest that there still exists sexual discrimination, even though the number is minute such cases cannot be neglected in this 21<sup>st</sup> century and immediate actions must be taken in order to curb out such scenarios as such can destroy the image of the industry as well as the career of women employees. The paper points out that the industry is also becoming popular amongst the people as it was seen that majority of the respondents joined due to their personal interest. At the same time sensitization must still be given regarding to issues relating to women amongst the people in order to give them an equal and a safe platform so as to empower them.

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