

Gender Diversity in Beach Hotels in Sri Lanka

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Tourism, being the world's largest industry, continues to grow dramatically. Moreover accommodation sector which is a major component of tourism is required to show rapid development. Though it is maturing, the gender diversity and status of women in hospitality industry has been a concern among both management practitioners and academicians. In recent years, there has been remarkable progress with respect to women closing the gender gap in managerial positions in the commercial hospitality. Yet there still seems to be what might be called "patterns of employment ghettos", where certain departments are predominantly filled by men and others are predominantly staffed by women. This suggests that gender diversity is lacking in hospitality industry. However, research studies based on this phenomenon in the hospitality industry remains inadequately explored. Accordingly, this research paper has articulated the extent to which gender diversity is a reality in the commercial hospitality in Sri Lanka. The study focused on two major research objectives, both of which address the extent to which gender diversity is affected within the hospitality industry. The study employed qualitative methodology to collect and analyze data from beach hotels in Sri Lanka. Findings indicated structural and cultural issues that affect gender diversity in commercial hospitality. The implications of the main findings have been discussed in relation to the hospitality management education and awareness raising to bridge the sociological and cultural gap, as well as the necessary policy implementations for a flexible working environment in commercial hospitality.

Key Words: gender diversity, commercial hospitality, women's contribution, cultural issues, Sri Lanka