

## **Women's Role in the Hotel Industry - An Exploratory Research with Special Reference to Waskaduwa Citrus Beach Hotel'**

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Tourism industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the economy of Sri Lanka. It has an aim to reach its target of 2.5 million tourist arrivals by 2018. Tourism industry has witnessed a rapid growth after the 30-year civil war in north and east. Tourist arrival has doubled during the period, thus expanding tourism industry. Therefore, the hotel sector which has been a major component of the hospitality industry is required to show a rapid development in Sri Lanka. Hotels, catering and tourism is a large and fast-growing service sector, with an average female participation of 55.5 per cent at global level and up to 70 per cent at regional level. The major objectives of this research is to study the women's role within the hotel industry in Sri Lanka with a special reference to Waskaduwa Beach Hotel in Kalutara. This research also focused to identify the gender labour division that is present in the hotel industry, social concept on female hoteliers and barriers for women employees. Both primary and secondary sources have been utilized in generating data. As the source of primary data, hundred female hotel workers were selected purposively and they were interviewed by using semi-structured interview method to a sample of women employed in the hotel industry, specifically in Waskaduwa Beach Hotel in Kalutara. Five case studies and information from key informants also provided the need of primary sources. This study argues that the contribution of females is low and their social and economic status is comparatively backward within the hotel industry in Sri Lanka as a result of gender stereotyping, "glass ceiling effect" unfavorable social attitudes, stressful working schedule, security factor, sexual harassment and male dominated working environment. Certain women friendly policies like flexible timings, part time work options, daycare facility at work place, grievance redressal cell, counselling cell for women, training programmes, succession planning programmes, pick up and drop facility are few of the suggestions that can be provided to assist them and encourage them to make this Industry a better environment.

**Keywords:** Hospitality industry, Gender Stereotype, Role model, Glass ceiling effect, social attitudes