



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES BY FAST FOOD CHAINS

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ABSTRACT

Though women form the backbone of any progressive society but women in India face a double challenge – a bias against girl children denies them the education and the opportunities available to their male counterparts and the lack of such learning and skills development inhibits any career ambitions. In many parts of the country, women venturing out of the household to work face much opposition and criticism. A question mark over safety has also been a deterrent for women to take up jobs of choice. Women empowerment can only be achieved by creating environment where women feel themselves independent to make their own decision for themselves as well as society. All of this is changing silently. This research paper is a secondary data based conceptual study. This conceptual paper highlights the challenges, prospects and role of fast food industry in empowering women. Some suggestion has been made at the end of the study base on the problems in the path of women empowerment through which may help in the smooth achievement of desired level of women empowerment by providing career opportunity.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, women employees, economic development, women career

INTRODUCTION

“Empowerment means moving from a situation of enforced powerlessness to one of the powers”. The role and status of men and women are governed by traditions and cultural practices. Women give sincere efforts to human resource development as mothers and caretakers. But the same women have not been treated on equivalence with men in every aspect of life though their responsibilities are crucial for the family, for the society and also for the progress of economy of a country as a whole. The empowerment of women is one of the central issues in the course of development of countries all over the world. Empowerment is a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and multi-layered model. Global fast food chains are breaking traditional stereotypes by emerging as one of the top sources of female employment in the country. In a country where traditional markets do not have enough women employees, various fast food chains like Pizza Hut, KFC, and McDonalds in Delhi’s Mall of India today has over five floors where women employees are in the majority. Most fast food chains today prefer having women employees as they are more customer-friendly than their male counterparts. In order to cultivate a female employee culture, many of these chains offer various women-centric workshops.

REVIEW OF LITRATURE

Malathi Ramanathan (2004) in his article “Women and Empowerment, Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad” has studied the expansion of an organization, resulting from a group of women’s step to get additional earning. He concluded that the organization was positive in its approach in promoting economic empowerment of women which was well recognized. **Sinha (2005) and Manimekalai (2005)** gave emphasis on the point that Empowerment is an essential starting point and a continuing process for realizing the ideals of liberation and freedom. **Gangaiah et al. (2006), Suguna (2006) and Raman Bali Swami (2007)** mentioned that shifting the concepts of "Development to empowerment" the Indian Government adopted the approach of (SELF HELP GROUPS). Self Help Groups are needed to overcome exploitation, create confidence for the economic self-reliance of poor, particularly among women who are mostly imperceptible in the social structure. Also studied the impact of microfinance on women empowerment using framed survey. **Singh (2012)** states that in former days, for women there were 3 Ks- Kitchen, Kids and Knitting, then came 3 Ps- Powder, Papad and Pickles and now at

present there are 4 Es- Electricity, Electronics, Energy and Engineering. **Vijayakumar and Naresh, (2013)** Most existing networks are male dominated and sometimes not particularly welcoming to women but prefer to be exclusive, even when a women does venture into these networks, her task is often difficult because most network activities take place after regular working hours. **Rajasekaran1 and Sindhu (2013)** The growth of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) is an evidence of the fact that women are coming out of their shells and maintaining their citizenship in the city. Women Self Help Groups is being studied and found that the role of women entrepreneurs is increasing drastically every year. The participation of women has been increased from 22.3% in 1990-1991 to 31.6% in the year 2010-2011. This is a source from the World Bank report 2010-2011 & WAW conference report. 71.5% of the women SHGs formed in 2009 and 2010. For the duration of 2010-2011, this ratio stood at 74.08%. **Fazalbhoy (2014)** The Asian Development Bank (2007) argues that in countries such as India, Indonesia and Malaysia, the gross domestic product would increase by up to 2%-4% annually, if women employment rates were raised to 70%, from 30% at present. While women entrepreneurs have demonstrated their potential, the fact remains that they are capable of contributing much more than what they already are **Satpal, Rathee and Rajain (2014)** reveal that despite their increased gender parity in the workforce today, few women attend management positions at the top at large corporations. Policy-makers and educators who are interested in increasing women in the executive ranks need to understand the interaction between family and career aspirations in order to properly guide those who choose business leadership positions. **Vinay and Singh (2015)** articulate that because of the reproductive roles of women, they tend to be responsible for business as well as for most of the unpaid work of the household and so have less time to devote to their work making them less mobile.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i) To understand what women empowerment.
- ii) To identify the challenges encountered by women in opting for employment.
- iii) To point out fast food chain initiative for promoting women employment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper is a conceptual and descriptive in nature. This study is based on secondary data collected from different books, articles published in different journals, research papers and websites.

CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN EMPLOYMENT IN INDIA

The major challenges encountered by Women employment in India are:

- **Family Commitments**
- **Male Dominance**
- **Social Obstacles**
- **Lack of self-confidence**
- **Lack of education**
- **Skill gap**
- **Tough competitions**
- **Limited mobility**
- **Women harassment at workplace**
- **Exploitation**

INITIATIVES BY FAST FOOD CHAIN FOR PROMOTING WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

A greater part of the nation's working women is used on ranches and as residential specialists. Women regularly represent short of what one in five representatives in different divisions. About 16% of those utilized in retail are women, while just 14% of the food benefit industry is female.

Now a day, fast-food chains—a large number of which have set up shop in India in simply the most recent couple of years—are attempting to convey better adjust to these disproportionate measurements. They say it is more than assorted qualities that they are after. Women are extraordinary for business, administrators at a few chains say, because they are by and large more sterile, client well disposed and steadfast—an uncommon attribute in an industry where representative turnover is high.

Following initiatives has been taken by fast food chain giants for women empowerment:

- After the success of its acclaimed 'She-Taxi' project, the Gender Park, under the Department of Social Justice, is now set to launch the 'Food on Wheels' programme, which is envisaged to achieve food safety along with women empowerment. Under the initiative, around 2500 women entrepreneurs will serve high quality food at cheap rates through mobile food units.
- The leading American chain, Pizza Hut recently launched an innovative campaign called “Start-up Hours” in collaboration with Chatur Ideas who are a start-up enabling platform. This campaign is basically a platform for all the women entrepreneurs in Bangalore. Pizza Hut welcomes all inspiring women entrepreneurs in Bangalore, to work from their outlet, network with people, discuss new innovative ideas and avail all the facilities of pizza hut. Women entrepreneurs can use the temporary work station at Pizza Hut outlets in Bangalore from Monday to Thursday, 11am-6pm. Not just that, Pizza Hut has a special menu for all the women entrepreneurs.
- Women plan pizzas at a New Delhi outlet of Domino’s India, which rewards stores that draw in more female candidates. Domino’s Pizza Inc. has sexual orientation refinement classes for newcomers and offers prizes to stores that draw in the most women.
- McDonald’s selects a female associate at each outlet, meaning to empower women to speak all the more unreservedly about their personal lives or family issues—points they might be reluctant to examine with male partners. It gives moms more adaptable hours and tries to keep women on after they get hitched by helping them exchange to another branch if they move to their spouses’ homes.

When a few families had worries about their girls wearing pants, McDonald's changed its uniforms at select outlets to make them looser and permitted women to wear their shirts untucked so their clothing could impersonate customary dress. McDonald's often invites parents of women employees to visit and check the safety measures in place, thereby assuring a safe and secure working environment for women. The salaries offered for women employees here are on par with their male counterparts, helping them support their families. Small steps like allowing female employees the option to work from a different location post marriage, having India-centric dress codes, and 'women only' staff in stores, are all playing their part in increasing the number of women workers.

- Burger King, for example, has a mentorship program teaching self-defense to its women employees.
- Walmart's Global Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative, Walmart is working to improve the lives of women around the world by providing more training, market access and career opportunities to nearly 1 million women, many on farms and factories, ultimately allowing them access to the economic opportunity they deserve.
- Yum Manufacturers Inc. which runs Pizza Hut, KFC and Taco Bell, pays recruiters greater commissions for feminine candidates. It holds workshops for ladies on subjects starting from accounting to administration. Now, greater than 40% of their feminine staff are managers. A few outlets at these chains are run exclusively by women; others let every single female group run the morning shifts so they can wrap up before dull.

CONCLUSION:

Women empowerment is presently the most discussed and encouraged concept all over the world to overcome economic challenges. Women being the vital gender of the overall population have great capacity and potential to be the contributor in the overall economic development of any nation but in India girls suffer disproportionately from malnutrition and are less likely than in most other countries to be found in the best universities, parliament or the boardroom. They are even missing from the internet: There are three Indian men for every

Indian woman on Facebook, for example, partly a result of women being denied access to technology. The female participation rate in India's labor force is among the lowest in the world. It has slid nine percentage points over the last 10 years to 27 per cent of the workforce as safety concerns have soared and economic expansion has failed to generate many good jobs for women. A lot of initiatives are being in the row by fast food industry as listed above yet the pathway is not guiding the direction of women empowerment as expected due to some regional as well as administrative hurdles. But if we see the scenario in the light of last six decades since post-independence then the picture is brighter than ever and moving progressively day by day. Most of the fast food chains today prefer having women employees as they are more customer-friendly than their male counterparts. For Indian women making and baking food remained favorite work area forever. And now, even the fast food industry is also opening up new avenues for women empowerment by offering employment making it sustainable and mutually beneficial.

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