



SOCIAL CHALLENGES OF WOMEN WORKERS IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

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Abstract:

Women have been connected to working in the hotel industry due to the modernization and need of the time for the hotel business. In this respect, women workers have been employed in the hotel industry which has become the heart of the tourist industry of the modern world. However, women working outside their houses had not been easily accepted and validated in the patriarchal social structure. In this context, this paper has focused on analyzing the social challenges of female workers who have been involved in the hotel industry. So, the objective is related to exploring the subjective feelings of female job holders under the patriarchal social structure of Nepali society. To gain the objective, the case study has been adopted in exploring and identifying the subjective feelings and investigating the challenges faced by female workers in the hotel industry by collecting the primary data through them under the qualitative research design. Female workers have been suffering from various problems and challenges in the hotel industry such as low salaries, insecurity in the workplace, mental and sexual harassment, problems with job security, challenges in professional development, Problems and challenges of traveling, challenges of education, and language problems. These facts are analogue to the theoretical explanation of patriarchy.

Key Words: Discrimination, Female Worker, Hotel Industry, Patriarchy, Tourism

1. Introduction:

Nature has formed the entire animals in two different forms of opposite sex from the beginning of the creation of life. Human beings too fall within the category of animals and they have also been made of two different sexes on the basis of their physical organs as man and woman (Adhikari, 2014). They have been endowed the tasks and their roles to perform on the ground of their physical structures (Adhikari, 2020A). The males have been performing their roles as working outside their houses whereas the females inside their houses since the ancient social structure (Adhikari, et al, 2024A). But the social structure has been determined by production system. (Adhikari, 2020B). Men have been playing their responsibilities of gaining source of income in handling the household affairs whereas females used to be acting as the responsible members of the family inside the house from the ancient civilization (Engels, 1984). On the contrary, women's participation in the outdoor tasks initiated with the beginning of the industrialization and the modernization. But women working outside their houses had not been easily accepted and validated in the patriarchal social structure. However, the women have been connected working in the hotel industry due to the modernization and need of the time for hotel business. In this respect, women workers have been employed in the hotel business which has become the heart of tourist industry of the modern world. In this context, hotel business is the backbone of tourism industry. Johnson (1994) underscores the importance of tourism for many countries that have faced depletion of natural resources and pollution from heavy industry. These nations view tourism as a pathway to economic prosperity, aiming to boost foreign exchange reserves, enhance the economy, create jobs, generate tax revenue, stimulate ancillary industries like retail, and reduce dependence on natural resources and polluting sectors. Furthermore, tourism can enhance the quality of life in local communities by modernizing infrastructure and transportation, offering employment opportunities, improving education levels, broadening perspectives, and revitalizing interest in cultural heritage and the arts. In the book "Tourism in Brief," Davidson (1993) characterizes the tourism sector as labor-intensive, emphasizing its reliance on human resources rather than machinery and technology. He argues that creating jobs in tourism is more cost-effective compared to industries like manufacturing or new technology. Davidson had predicted that by the year 2000 A.D., tourism would have emerged as the world's largest industry. Being a service-oriented sector heavily dependent on manpower, tourism has held the potential position to generate employment opportunities across various skill levels, ranging from high-level executives to semi-skilled and unskilled workers. According to the Hudson Institute's Report (1987), there is a notable shift in the workforce towards gender equality, with women now comprising a significant portion of the workforce. Despite this increase, many women occupy junior positions. The fundamental roles of the tourism industry in any country include providing modern hotel services, efficient transportation, hygienic food, easy access to cultural sites and natural attractions, and offering guidance and support to enhance job performance and understanding (Bhaita, 2010). Tourism encompasses travel for purposes such as recreation, leisure, religious activities, family visits, or business, typically for a limited period. It has grown into a globally popular leisure pursuit and a significant economic contributor to many nations, impacting both the economies of origin and destination countries. But tourism alone cannot resolve all economic development challenges by providing employment and income for everyone in a destination and Kunwar (2012) has argued that as a labor-intensive service sector, tourism has the potential to generate jobs across various skill levels, from top-level executives to semi-skilled and unskilled workers.

Moreover, tourism has the potential to uplift the livelihoods of impoverished populations, necessitating focused strategies and collaborative efforts to establish strong ties with the tourism sector (Baskota & Sharma, 1995). It involves the temporary movement of individuals to destinations outside their usual residences for short stays, often internationally. Tourism plays a crucial role in the balance of payments for many countries, surpassing the growth rate of goods' trade. It generates employment and income, utilizing resources that might otherwise remain unused, especially by employing unemployed labor in developing nations where other job opportunities are scarce. The industry can directly enhance living standards and quality of life, satisfying visitors and benefiting destinations in various ways, such as through employment creation, economic expansion, preservation of natural and cultural heritage, cultural exchange, and more. Tourism has traditionally boosted the local economy through enhancements in living standards, education, healthcare, social consciousness, and infrastructure (Batra, 1996). Inadequate access to education and economic opportunities has led to lower economic productivity. Gender inequality persists in the society, with fewer opportunities available to women compared to men. But societal gender biases have diminished compared to past decades, as they have continued to impede the effectiveness of women. According to Collier (2010), women should be viewed as essential components of society rather than as a separate sector. In Nepalese society, women are frequently absent from public life, their voices are marginalized, their contributions are undervalued, and their future is often determined by community decisions. They primarily engage in food production, household chores, childcare responsibilities, and provide fuel and water for their families. According to Dhakal (2010), the domestic work performed by women and their contributions to agriculture are often not recognized as economic activities and therefore it goes unreported. Pokhara, a tourist city in Nepal, mirrors the patriarchal social framework typical of developing part of the nation. The Pokhara region hosts over 200 hotels of various types, where women also participate as employees in the hospitality sector as well as the entertainment to the customers. The women workers have not been gaining the equal opportunity of wages and respectable positions in the patriarchal social structure whereas men have been in the dominant position.

The aforementioned critics have remained silence regarding the real condition and the challenges that women have been facing in the in the hotel industry. Hence, the research has attempted to investigate what types of challenges the women workers in the hotel industry have been facing in reality? How have been the women workers in the hotel industry playing their roles as time-boundless duty? So, the research has attempted in revealing the challenges of women workers in the hotel industry.

2. Objective and Method:

This paper has focused to analyze the social challenges of female workers who have been involved in the hotel industry. The objective is related to explore the subjective feelings of female job holders under the patriarchal social structure of Nepali society. So, qualitative research design has been applied to gain the objective. Qualitative data and qualitative research design have become useful in drawing the justice of identifying and exploring the subjectivity of entire human being as well as women (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994 and Krippendorff, 2004).The case study has been adopted in exploring and identifying the subjective feelings (Adhikari et al, 2024 B) and investigating the challenges faced by the female workers in the hotel industry by collecting the primary data through them. The twenty cases have been selected by a purposive and snowball sampling process from the female workers of the hotel industry. The content analysis method has been employed, and it has even utilized to analyze both primary and secondary information in the research. The following diagram has reflected as the methodological framework of the research.

Methodological Frame Work:

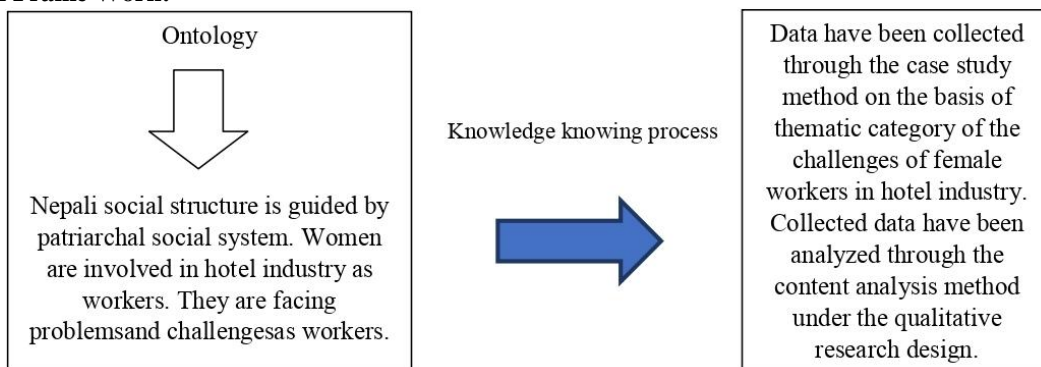


Figure 1: Methodological Frame Work

3. Theoretical Underpinning:

Patriarchal theory has been taken as the lens in analyzing and exploring the women's challenges as they have faced while working the hotel industry. Walby (1986) has claimed that patriarchy is the product of masculinity considering femininity as a subordinate element. She opines that a patriarchal society is predominantly concerned with exploiting women along with imposing a masculine regime over women. According to Gerda (1988), patriarchy is a familial, social, ideological, and political structure where men exert control over women through direct force, rituals, traditions, laws, language, customs, education, and the division of labor. Similarly, Ritzer (1996 & 2000) has defined patriarchy as the source of controlling the women through various means like rituals, laws and the like. This system dictates the roles that women are allowed or not allowed to play and women are often being subordinate to men in various aspects of life. This perspective has overshadowed the fact that social structure depends upon the interrelationship between men and women to form a family as well as a whole society. In addition, this perspective has also forgotten that men and women are crucial to each other for their existence. In terms of an asset to production too, patriarchy has excluded the importance of females. Likewise, this school of thought doesn't seem to be concerned about the protection of women's rights well as their participation. The following diagram has reflected as the theoretical framework of the research.

Theoretical Frame Work:

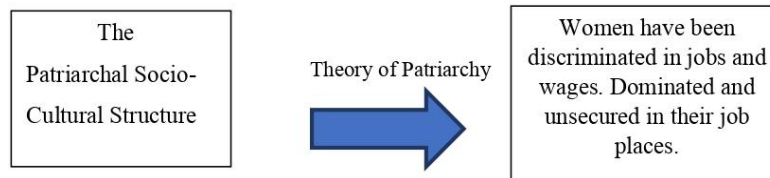


Figure 2: Theoretical and Conceptual Frame Work

4. Findings and Discussion:

Female workers working in the hotel industry in the context of patriarchal social structure in developing country have been facing numerous social problems like having paid low salary, insecurity in their working zones, mental harassment, sexual harassment, insecurity of their jobs, problems in professional development, problem in travelling, in education and the language, problem in perception and the like. Such problems have been felt and realized by the female workers themselves and their experiences have been explored, identified, categorized and analyzed mainly the women workers who have been facing as the objects of the victimization in the developing country.

4.1 Disparity in Salary:

According to the law in Nepal, if a woman works equivalent hours, performs identical duties, and meets the same objectives as a male colleague, she is entitled to receive equal pay. Paying women less solely because of their gender constitutes sex discrimination and is prohibited by law. But this reality does not exist in practice. In the workplace, especially in tourism, we have seen discrimination between men and women regarding the salary system. During the case study, most of the respondents reported that they are discriminated against on salary provisions. In addition to that, other cases also reported similar voices regarding the salary system of the workplace. Cases 1 and 3 have been studying in college and they have been paying their fees themselves through their own earning. They are struggling to manage their expenses with their low salary. Case 2 has mentioned that she was not satisfied with her current salary. With her low salary, she has to manage her family at her own expense. In spite of her low salary, she has to manage her expenses in addressing her economic problems. The income from agriculture is not sufficient for her parents in the village so she has even to support them financially. Case study 6 has said that she gets monthly Rs 15,000 to 20,000 including the service charge. Her total working hour is 8 hours but she has to work overtime and she doesn't get paid for her overtime duty. Case study 12 has said that with the low salary, she has to pay her rent which is Rs 5,000 plus water and electricity bills. She has to make her daily living with the salary and she has even to support her family financially. Similarly, Cases 14 and 16 have mentioned about their salaries in which they were not satisfied. Their salary was not enough in meeting their expenses in this expensive place, like Pokhara and is not enough to compare their workload with the workload of the men workers. The mentioned facts of the case study have reflected of women hotel industry workers having the low salary system, delayed salary payment, and discrimination in assigning the extra workload to men counterparts. Multiple respondents have provided examples and have estimated indicating that women have been earning less than half of what men have been earning for identical positions. All of these respondents have attributed the pay disparity to the employees' gender rather than differences in skills or qualifications. Such inequality of the payment system between male and female has not become the source of motivation and empowerment in their jobs and the disparity has to be avoided from the policy makers and the employers on the views of the female professionals in the hotel industry. The respondents have even argued that low salary for the female workers have become a kind of social injustice and the organizations like the hotel business need to bring the drastic change in the salary payment system. They have expressed their views that the discrimination in the salary between male and female in the same position working together with the same skills and equal hours of work do bring the disgrace in the female's psyches and the feelings of the stigmatization degrade them psychologically and they cannot work as effectively and as diligently as they have expected in their working zones too. The female respondents have expressed their discontentment in the system of low and discriminated salary payment between the men and the women of having equal qualifications and skills and working in the similar ranks in the equal hours of jobs in hotel business in the patriarchal social structure in the developing country. The women respondents have signified that they do not have better job opportunities too and they have to bear the injustice done to them from the male workers in the professional life of the hotel business in the developing nation.

4.2 Personal Safety:

Women have encountered various workplace challenges concerning both their personal safety and their rights as employees. Issues have been included a notable awareness of gender-based wage disparities and limited job opportunities for women in general. In case studies, several instances were reported where coworkers and supervisors used offensive language, such as teasing, making vulgar comments, and inappropriate remarks about women's appearances. According to Case 7, sexual harassment is pervasive, with incidents of unwanted touching and teasing occurring regularly. Customers also engage in indirect harassment for the female workers in the hotel industry. The prevailing attitude often leads women to question whether it's worth fighting against such behavior, opting instead to ignore it. Similarly, Case 9 has described being assigned difficult tasks at work as a means of ridicule when unable to complete them, resulting in humiliation and questioning of her competence. Women in these workplaces lack separate restroom facilities, as noted in Case 11, where men often invade their spaces to smoke and deface walls with sexually explicit and derogatory messages. This environment contributes to a pervasive sense of insecurity among women, both in formal and informal sectors of the hotel business, highlighting the urgent need for better infrastructure and respectful behavior. All the respondents have pointed out that the insecurity has not been experienced only in the workplaces but also in the case of using the language by the male workers. They have narrated that using the pervasive words has generated the sexual harassment to the female workers and at the same time unwanted touching their bodies has created the sense of insecurity for the female workers in their workplaces in the hotel business. They have raised their voice against such maltreatment and misbehaviors from the male coworkers in the working zones and the females' respondents have demanded separate and secured restrooms for the females working in the hotel industry. The women respondents have even pointed out that even the customers initiate their

conversations in indirect form of harassment for them. In the opinions of the female respondent, the invading of their spaces for smoking has further complicated their safety and security both in formal and informal places. They have argued that the derogatory messages can become a kind of psychological harmful activities carried out by the male workers indirectly to the female workers in their professional life of the hotel industry.

4.3 Psychological Torture:

Unequal treatment of men and women, and gender bias in the workplace have been creating obstacles in their recruitment. Case 10 has expressed that when she applied for the job, the first question of the manager in the interview was, "How could you maintain the security in the hotel? There are varieties of male-related incidents that you may not be able to handle because you are woman."

From this view, it can be said that the challenges for women workers get started before the starting of the job. There is social segregation of jobs which is suitable only for males. Mental harassment to women has not existed only in the office or workplace but also in the house as well because of the profession they chose. One typical experience of the case respondent was, "At home, I have to give a detailed description of my whole day activities to my husband. He won't believe me and this type of question always triggers me why my husband expresses such doubtful behavior to me." These kinds of unpleasant experiences of respondents reflect the mental harassment of female workers in the hotel industry. The expressions of the respondent reveals that the gender disparity has been found beside the working places in the society too. The Case 10 has displayed that the female workers have to face double mental harassment that is at workplace and even at home from the husbands who often go on asking numerous doubtful questions which become another mental harassment for the female at home. The women have to face the challenges at workplaces and even at home by their husbands and it has become unbearable for the women as the respondent of the case 10 has narrated her own personal experience of workplace and the doubtful questioning of her husband at home. In fact, it is the outcome of the socio-cultural structure of the patriarchal system that has generated complicated condition for the women workers in the developing country.

4.4 Sexually Misbehave:

Sexual harassment refers to unwanted sexual conduct that causes feelings of distress, shame, or fear in the recipient. It can manifest through physical actions, spoken words, or written communication. Importantly, sexual harassment does not involve consensual interactions, romantic relationships, or friendships. Sexual harassment is not the behavior that is mutually agreed upon. A few respondents accepted that men counterparts, senior or junior, and customers also have tried to be close to female workers not because of service concerns but because of sexual concerns. Case 9 (office assistant) has mentioned that six months before she lived near the market in rent. One of her senior staffs of the office used to come from her residential area. One day he gave her a lift from the office to the room and they exchanged their cell number also. Then he always started to wait for her in the morning and evening as well. She felt uneasy traveling with him every day. One day he offered her to take tea on the way but she expressed unwillingness. The next day also he offered the same and forced her and she accepted to have tea at the restaurant. But she felt his purpose was different from drinking tea, and he sat on her side and tried to hold her hand but she escaped. One other respondent who is working as a waiter in the restaurant has expressed the experiences of sexual harassment from customers as well. Case 13 has expressed that she had to sit with customers and lighten the cigarette and had to take wine as well. If she rejected his offer, the manager of the hotel industry compelled her to do such work. In this case, she had only two options either to leave the job or continue. If she left the job, she could not afford all the expenses to her family and she was not interested to continue such activities as well. The above facts reflect that the female workers have suffered sexual harassment which is very uneasy and problematic for them. It was an obligation to manage livelihood. The case 13 has depicted the hidden facts and the open secret about the condition of the female workers. The women either have to continue their jobs as the managers have demanded them to do and expected to perform their duties of sitting together with the customers and smoking with him to please the customers and if not, they need to quit their jobs. If they quit their jobs, then the women cannot run the family smoothly and they get forced to do whatever the managers have commanded them to do for the satisfaction of the customers. The case 13 has even pointed out the bitter fact that the female workers in the hotel industry have to adjust themselves and bear whatever kinds of the sexual harassment they have been realized by the customers for the survival of themselves and even to run the family smoothly by the income that they draw from their hotel industry professions in the social structure of the patriarchy in the developing country. The case 13 has further signaled that the female professionals of the hotel business need to tolerate silently the sexual harassments from the side of the customers for the satisfaction of the customers.

4.5 Strengthening of Career:

Another important issue for working women is professional development. They are generally deprived of the new training, workshop, and technical support. This is because they have to maintain their family life as well; they cannot give time for residential training because of their family boundary and responsibilities. One respondent who was working as an accountant in the office shared, "I had got the chance to participate in new accounting software training in Kathmandu, but my child was small, so I couldn't join the program." Women workers were also deprived of professional development programs because of the discriminating behavior toward women. One respondent has experienced that, "There was a one-month training package for the waitress, but I was pregnant for six months, so our hotel did not send me on training. The reason behind it was I may leave the job after my delivery." This has mentioned the facts that women workers are deprived of professional development not because of their interests and capacity but because of their job continuity problems and family roles as well as responsibility problems. According to the female respondent of above the women have got no opportunity for the advancement of their career building through the training, workshop and seminars due their responsibilities of the family and the discrimination of the socio-cultural structure of the patriarchy where women workers have not been allowed to participate in the residential training as the above respondent has felt, realized and experienced herself. Having been absent from the training conducted by the organization of hotel business meant of being away from the possible opportunities of better position and promotion in their professional life.

4.6 The Problems of Perception:

Tourism is a significant industry. It has affected all areas negatively and positively though it is one of the most important sources of the economy. Females also have got the opportunity of employment in the hotel business but there is still a negative perception in society. Case 19 has mentioned that she has faced social and mental problems. She continuously faced negative feedback from society which is disturbing for her profession and made her living uncomfortable. Not only in society, but even the guests' behavior is not appropriate to the female workers. So, society does not accept her job as a profession; they see it more as something to be ashamed of. She might not be able to have a married life because of the negative perception of society due to their professions in the hotel industry. Similarly, case study 1 has said that sometimes she has transportation problems coming back home at night. She has to come back home even at late night and society believes that it is not safe because for girls to work in hotel industry late at night is regarded as unsecured. The case 19 has revealed that women workers in the hotel are often taken negatively in the eyes of the society under the patriarchal social structure in the developing country. When the women workers arrive home quite late at night from the hotel profession, they are not taken positively and the women have to face the problems of the negative perception from the society. The female respondent has narrated own experience and it has displayed that the women who work in the hotel as making it their professions, then they ought to become ready to face and digest the negative perception from the eyes of the socio-cultural structure of the patriarchal system in the developing country.

4.7 Challenges on Traveling:

Women face challenges to their safety even before arriving at work or while returning home through the use of the vehicles. According to most respondents, women commonly use walking, cycling, and various public transportation modes to continue to work, often encountering harassment from men, particularly during evening and night hours. In Case no 13, it was reported that men would harass women with lewd comments and sometimes physically assault them while passing by on bicycles. The incidents included men making inappropriate propositions such as "How much would you charge me [for sex]". For women who traveled by bus regularly for work, men touched them inappropriately and their personal space was invaded. They have verbally harassed also in public buses and transports. The other problem regarding transportation is related to economic expenses. Cases 1, 2, 4, and 17 have mentioned the problem of expenses of transportation. They have said, since they are working at a low wage, they are having difficulties in managing their day-to-day economic expenses. When the company doesn't provide transportation, the female employees also have to face danger during night shifts when they have to travel in public transport alone which is not safe. The case 13 has shown that the transportation has become the greatest problem for women working in the hotel industry as the professionals. They get physically assault and even men ask them how much charge they have to pay for the sexual act with them as the case 13 has got such question in the vehicle during her travelling from the professional life of the hotel business. The case 13 has even narrated her own personal experience that she has been touched inappropriately by invading personal space in the vehicle at the time of travelling. Such her experience is applicable to all the women working in the hotel industry as their professions. Likewise, the cases of 12, 4 and 17 also have tackled the similar problems of harassments verbally in travelling and it can be generalized to apply to all other women working in hotel industry and travelling by the vehicles in the developing country.

4.8 The Challenge of Qualification and Communication:

Most of the female workers have been coming from rural areas. Due to their weak financial backgrounds, they have struggled to have a complete education. They have started working and studying but because of the workload and long working hours, they are not being able to finish their studies for which they are paying. They also have language problems. In the tourism industry, they have to face a lot of languages of people from different countries. English is the universal language, but they have also problems with the English language because most of the cases, they have studied in rural areas where the educational background was not in English. Case 17 has said that she has faced problems at the beginning regarding Nepali language as her family background is not from Nepal. Case 2 has said that because of the Nepali educational background from a rural area school, her English is very poor. She is unable to communicate with the guest. Due to the language problem, she faces difficulties in her work. Case 6 has mentioned that due to the communication problem, there is sometimes miscommunication in the booking of the room and to serve them. Case 13 has said that she is originally from Tibet and she has a problem of serving the guests in Hindi, Chinese, Japanese, and Nepali language. These facts have elucidated the problem of education and language for the female workers in the hotel industry. The aforementioned cases have pointed out that women workers are mostly from the rural areas and they have not got good education and they are weak in language and they have not dealt with the guests of abroad in skillful language skill as the professionals of the hotel industry. Hence, the female workers of the hotel industry have been facing numerous problems including the language skills to communicate with the foreigners. Respect for not only women but all workers should be given as part of ethics at workplace and it should be taken as brand endorsement not only as part of labour law complaisance (Mishra, 2024; Mishra & Aithal, 2022; Mishra & Aithal, 2023; Mishra, 2022).

5. Conclusion:

According to the aforementioned facts, female workers have been found to be suffering from various problems and challenges in the hotel industry such as low salaries, insecurity in the workplace, mental and sexual harassment, problems with job security, challenges in professional development, problem and challenges of traveling, challenges of education, and language problems, etc. Regarding, salary discrimination, it is found that women are discriminated against in salary from males of the same post and same responsibility and the equal working hours. So, they have been found of feeling humiliated by being women workers in the hotel industry. Insecurity in the workplace has been explored as another problem and challenge that has evolved from employee responses. They have been identified having felt insecure from visitors, male counterparts, and hotel managers as well. They have been seemed of having perceived that males' attitude toward women employees is negative and harassing. Mental, as well as sexual harassment, are two issues that have been emerged as problems and challenges felt by women employees. Being women, they have not been found to get the opportunity for top posts, training facilities, and overload duties. Some of the hotel employees have been found to have expressed that they have to involve in bad activities to make the customer happy. Generally, male counterparts and visitors have been identified in using unwanted words to impress them. Job security and

professional development opportunities have been known as other challenges with private-sector jobs in Nepal. Specifically, women have been traced out of being felt insecure regarding the continuity of their jobs. They have been found in having to make their manager happy for the continuity of the job. They also have been revealed that to get the opportunities for professional development, they have to improve their service. Similarly, they have been known of facing problems and challenges in travel to and from work- Women in Public places. They have been known to have faced problems on the way to the workplace because there is no transportation facility from the management. The people have been identified having humiliated women professionals working in the hotel industry by using vulgar words in public vehicles. Finally, they have been found of having education and language problems. Moreover, working in the hotel industry by the female workers have been recognized more sensitive and complicated one even in the modernized age in the patriarchal system. Male and female have been identified different biologically and their works too do not seem to resemble in the patriarchal system. The works carried out by the women are found to be different from that of the men in the biological form. So, the work division of the male and female seem to have found to be somehow apt from the point of view of their physical construction, attitudes of the males, and the female using as the objects of beauty. However, the challenges that women face in their workplaces are found to be the outcome of socio-cultural structure of patriarchy in the developing country. Moreover, almost all the workers are found from rural areas and with poor academic backgrounds. Due to this reason, their English is found to be poor. These facts are analogue with the theoretical explanation of patriarchy.

6. Implication of the Study:

The research has got its own implication for the solution of the social problems and challenges of female workers in hotel industry in the context of patriarchal social structure in developing country since it provides a kind of the framework for the policy makers in improving the condition of female workers in the work places and in providing better as well as secured position for them. It helps in exploring the exact condition of the women workers and to know the possible ways of addressing the issues faced by the women in the hotel industry in the developing nation. It has attempted in identifying the existing issues of the complexities in various forms experienced by the women workers in the hotel industry under developing country not only in the work place but also in the issues of payment, transportation, as well as mental and sexual harassment that the female workers have been facing day- to- day in their professional life of the hotel industry in patriarchal social structure. The exploration of the problem becomes the ways of addressing the issues jointly from the social level as well as from the level of the policy makers.

7. Conflicts of Interest:

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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