

Women Chef's Workplace Integrity in Commercial Eateries- Challenges and Opportunities in Twenty-First Century India

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, Indian food has a rich legacy of being attributed towards women. In a typical Indian family, she has a significant role in managing household work including domestic kitchen. Increasingly, women in contemporary time are now being compelled by the economy to apply their domestic cooking skills in commercial kitchens. Furthermore, with the growth and acceptance of Indian food worldwide has resulted in increasing numbers of Indian restaurants and other catering forms, which explains the increased demand for more skilled, semi-skilled and non-skilled kitchen workforce. Simultaneously, to fulfill the workforce demand, mushrooming of culinary institutions has taken place, which have given the recruiters the right platform and opportunity to hire more women in non-domestic kitchens in an organized way knowing the historical and cultural potential of women in culinary skills. These women express their worldview through the values they give to their cooking as they do so. Due to their commonalities, these women are seen as important and natural key player of the society who possess comparable ideals, beliefs, and skills. To analyze the sociocultural forces that shape women's ethical culture in food establishments today, this article explains why women have been capable of negotiating their working identities in the culinary industry, due to the connection between women & gastronomy for generations. The purpose of this research is to discover the difficulties that women experience in a commercial kitchen and how they handle the challenges to reach the position of a chef. It also assesses the benefits, and motivations the business route, it provides for them. The researcher has chosen a qualitative method to collect data involving twelve female chef's who agreed to share their view's and discussed their experiences on pre-selected subjects via questionnaire.

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KEYWORDS: Female chef's; Indian Cuisine; Gender Identities; Catering; Commercial Kitchens; Culinary knowledge

INTRODUCTION

A chef is a trained, skilled, and commercial cook, with an acumen in all division of food production. Whether its kitchen operations or kitchen administration, he/she must have mastered a cuisine and should possess the working knowledge of multiple cuisine. Now a days, a formal academic training from any recognized hotel management institute, and industrial training under an experienced chef is a mandatory requirement to raise to the level of a Chef. These Chefs can be classified as of various types. Under Chef de Cuisine, the chef should have an in-depth knowledge of a particular cuisine like Indian, European, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern etc.

To talk about Indian cuisine, it is one of the oldest cuisines, well researched over thousands of years and reputed for its medicinal values where all ingredients, whether major or supporting have some or the other medical properties to maintain the proper balance among body, soul, and mind in the local environment. The cuisine is made up of a range of local, regional, and traditional dishes that are indigenous to the country. The beauty of this cuisine is in its variety, which is due to the soil, climate, culture, ethnic groups, and occupations. The influence of foreign culture by means of trade, invasions and intermarriage also played a vital role in the

development of the cuisine. In India, work of catering in a commercial kitchen was considered to be men's job and women use to manage domestic kitchens, this practice is on a decline in twenty-first century as the gender gap in commercial kitchen is decreasing and women are also coming up with their own space and identity in workplace, whereas 'gender identity' can be defined as a self-perception of one selves as men, women or others as a notable person with their differentiated work in the workplace and personal life. A commercial kitchen can be found in eateries, cafeterias, guesthouses, health facilities, academic and workforce facilities, army base, and other similar businesses. Catering is the activity of providing food service at a site like a hotel, hospital, pub, aircraft, cruise ship, park, festival, or filming location. In comparison to a home kitchen, these kitchens are often larger and furnished with larger, heavier-duty appliances. 'Culinary' pertains to things "connected to food," whereas arts can refer to a variety of diverse interests. Culinary Arts are, thus, the practice of preparation, cooking, presenting, and able to serve meals made from earth, water, fire, and air. All cookery are included in the culinary arts, which also include gourmet eateries and home kitchens. Related to the physiological procedures of production, culinary arts give perspective to faiths and cultures. In addition, to understand female chefs' practices, daily lives, ways of accepting realities of life with food, how they negotiate with their cooking career identities, and how they communicate their correlation with their profession in terms of faith, sentiments, and emotions associated with the workplace are different from their male counterparts'. The women chef gives more emphasize on devotion, selflessness, enthusiasm, acquiring knowledge, and adjusting to the defined guidelines while maintaining desire, innovative thinking, genuine love, and exploring self-identity. They needed to remain tenacious, keep growing, and demonstrate their expertise to deal with them. They seem fully committed to professional career first without compromising with the family relations, and yet they are seeking to develop their organizational competencies. The primary obstacles in their career path are masculinity, gender identification prejudices of their own skillsets and abilities, and the balance between profession and personal life. The women chefs are also exploring other exclusive options like entrepreneurship and niche jobs to improve their time management suppleness and creation new avenues in their professional field. To research women chefs at multiple levels in the field of commercial cooking is fascinating because of the noticeable discrimination in allocating range cooking task, considering the

existing perception about female in the domestic sphere and male in the professional one. This curiosity compelled the researcher to go to many open restaurants, cafes, as well as other establishments, regardless of their nature, occupations, professional backgrounds, and orientations, as well as interact with street vendors of casual cuisine to collect the data for analysis.

Literature Review

Palmer, Cooper, and others (2010) claim that by examining the cultural facets of occupational groups, it is possible to comprehend how identity is formed through employment. In the current paper, I contend that the following processes shape the occupational identities of Mexican female cooks: a social and historical context related to the transference of culinary knowledge from the private to the public sphere and its impact on occupational behavior; functioning of human society in aspects of the authority derived from the acquisition of cooking skills; the theorization of empirical cooking knowledge that involves the expression of subjectivities relating to food; and the theorization of cooking knowledge that is based on empirical data (Abarca, M. E., 2007). My strategy was also influenced by Alan Fine's idea of culinary language, which views chefs as philosophers who express their relationship to food through metaphors that are understood by other people in the kitchen (Fine, G. A., 2008). The investigation for this article took place throughout 2009. Due to financial and scheduling constraints, the study was conducted in San Luis Potos, Mexico. However, a number of the main topics have worked in other Mexican towns, and a variety of cooking styles are featured, from street food vendors to chefs in international restaurants. Identity can be described "in multiple ways depending upon tradition, history, political affiliation, or religious and in connection such as age, gender, or sexual orientation," according to Palmer, Cooper, et al. The examiner's perspective is then a factor in identity understandings (Palmer, C., Cooper, J., & Burns, P., 2010). I use sexual identity as a filter to examine occupational identification in the current study. The way gender identity is constructed socially and symbolically from biological components and how it manifests in behaviors and cultural representations is how I define gender identity in this essay, according to Vizcarra. (Vizcarra, I., & Bordi, I. V., 2002). This essay also adopts Merlot's claim that professional identities entail manufactured meanings based on individual choices and representations (Meriot, S. A., 2006). Therefore, I contend that a significant portion of the subjectivities that shape collective occupational identities is expressed through

representations. Giménez notes that because of their distinguishing function, which allows groups to confirm their uniqueness while also giving them a system of meanings, representations are closely related to the formation of identities (Giménez, G., 2007). In a similar line, Merlot asserts that representation, which is both a byproduct and a process of the action of adopting external reality, contributes significantly to the preservation of group identity and socio-cognitive stability (Merlot, S. A., 2006). Collective devotion to representation enhances the social connection. Therefore, representation comes from a concept and guides attitudes and behaviors as a proactive or reactive explanation of interpersonal relationships and intergroup ties. Occupational identity has both outward and internal elements. Besides invisible or internal factors like social norms, norms, values, attitudes, and opinions that psychologically link people to specific occupational groups, visible factors like pay, circumstances, routines, and tasks function. I contend that the personal histories and worldviews that Mexican women chefs express while cooking have a significant impact on their occupational identities. Both writers put forth ideas that are less totalizing than more conventional methods of addressing the issue of identities, as well as a wider perspective on issues like gender, subjectivity, and representation. Likewise, I use Fine's idea of occupational rhetoric, which describes how kitchen workers identify themselves throughout a strategy of integrating activity into a framework of meanings, in addition to include the characteristics of occupational cooks' identities (Fine, G. A., 1996).

The definition of identity, according to Giménez, can be described as a "subjective process wherein the subjects identify their distinctions from others by the personality of a code of cultural traits that are largely constant in time." (Giménez, G., 2007). The author bases the previous description on two primary categories: on the one hand, he emphasizes those particularizing elements that determine the composition of the unique features of identity such as norms, habits, trends, and the identity of the body, individual interests of consuming, the personal network of close contacts, the possession of material items that represent specificities for the topic, and a personal background that implies an extreme self. The characteristics of social attachment, on the other hand, are those that are connected to the subject's identification with various categories, groups, and social collectives, such as status, ethnicity, and territorializing of communities. These characteristics of social affiliation are not always conscious to the participant. Giménez (2007) also emphasizes how

recognition determines particularizing characteristics and social affiliation. The subject encounters a dichotomy in the construction of her identity between how she wishes to be characterized by others and how other subjects identify her. The concerns made by Solórzano-Thompson (G. A., 2008), who suggests additional factors to be considered in the determination of identity, are added to the identity paradigm mentioned above. The experience of both individual and collective subjectivities, which arise from regular social practice and the material sensations of the body, is another important aspect for the author in the development of identity. Therefore, it is assumed that the body serves as a conscious medium for connecting the individual to their surroundings. According to Dubar, who was quoted in Merlot (2006), there are two processes involved in the formation of occupational identity: the biographical process, which is learned early in life and is connected to the development of social authenticity, and the process improvement plan, which is connected to interactions at work. Last but not least, I consider Fine's (1996) idea of occupational rhetoric. According to this author, people are expressing the world through their jobs and that work is a powerful source of identity. However, a placement or circumstance will determine one's occupational identity. He hypothesizes that cooks' occupational identity is a complex, fluid, and multidimensional creation that is influenced by various work contexts and duties as a result of this contextual flexibility. According to Fine (2008), cooks might make use of self-images (connected to the workplace situation) of themselves as experts, creatives, entrepreneurs, or labourers. He claims that these pictures are frequently represented through professional and creative metaphors and analogies as well as a subcultural understanding in terms of learned abilities, know-how, and practices. Cooks, according to Fine (2008), can rely on self-images (connected to the workplace setting) that depict them as professionals, artists, entrepreneurs, or physical labourers. He claims that these pictures are frequently represented through metaphors and parallels from the worlds of work and the arts, as well as through a sociocultural experience in terms of learned abilities, methods, and talents. Mexican cuisine at its core has long been associated with women. During the first decade of the 21st century, Mexican female cooks' occupational identities were largely shaped by the socio-historical framework around preparing food in the public domain, I contend. Furthermore, I contend that the systematization and transfer of gastronomic knowledge from the private to the public domain has had a significant effect on the current arrangement of

occupational identities. Mexico saw significant social and economic upheaval between the early 1940s and the 1960s. The middle and working classes and urban sectors were boosted by economic expansion and growing industries. The ongoing economic activity resulted in both new spatial redistributions and intercity migrant fluxes. A new urban apparatus was also created as a result, one that suited the new urban order. These economic and social shifts had a big

Methodology

The answers of a questionnaire filled out by twelve women chefs from Delhi/NCR (Table A) were used to gather details and analyze the subtleties of women chefs' views in the current study. The data gathered provided in-depth multiple viewpoints in the study topic of diverse and demographic circumstances, in addition to their possibilities, and gives insights into the 'mindsets,' 'expectations,' 'imperatives,' and 'foundation of cognition.' A form of questionnaire was sent to gather a deeper knowledge of the following critical issues: a) how individuals began their profession, b) how you overcome the various hurdles, and c) how you progressed up the organizational hierarchies. Due to time constraints for both the researcher and the female cooks, the participants were chosen at random, whose jobs entailed artistic, administrative, and managerial responsibilities in their catering company'. The majority of the female cooks were pursuing a professional career. The current study is to investigate why all these female cooks have picked a job in the restaurant kitchens.

Table A Universe for Women chefs				
No	Restaurants	Location	Age	Children
1	KFC, Sector-12 Dwarka	Delhi	48	3
2	Sagar Ratna, RDC	Ghaziabad	33	2
3	Om sweets and Snacks, Sector- 46	Gurgaon	37	2
4	Om sweets and Snacks, Jail Road	Delhi	42	2
5	Handi, Tilak Nagar	Delhi	45	2
6	Nirulas, Jail Road	Delhi	31	1
7	Shri Makhan Sweets, Hari Nagar	Delhi	29	1
8	Halidiram, Raj Nagar extension,	Ghaziabad	33	1
9	Barbeque Nation, Sector- 50	Gurgaon	40	1
10	Ferns N Petals, Hotel	Greater Noida	42	2
11	Absolute Barbeque, Subhash Nagar	Delhi	40	2
12	Chills Restaurant and Bar, GIP	Noida	47	2

Table B Acquiring kitchen Skills ranked from 1 to 5, including gender disparities and relevance, Acquiring Skills				
Educating oneself and from other professionals	12	Yes	0	No
Taking classes to learn	7	Yes	5	No
Competition participation	2	Yes	10	No
Taking lessons from common problems issues and knowledge	12	Yes	0	Yes
Trying and failing	5	Yes	7	No
Utilising cutting-edge tools and technology	4	Yes	8	No
Eating at different restaurants	6	Yes	6	No

Table C The type of leadership of female chefs within the restaurant.					
	A Few		A Lot		
	1	2	3	4	5
Kitchen Protocols					
Authoritarian vs. participatory					X
Anxious about the colleague	X				
Help the junior	X				
Provide specific directions.		X			

Management Skills- Your style					
Authoritarian vs. participatory		X			
Anxious about the colleague		X			
Help the junior					
Provide specific directions.			X		X

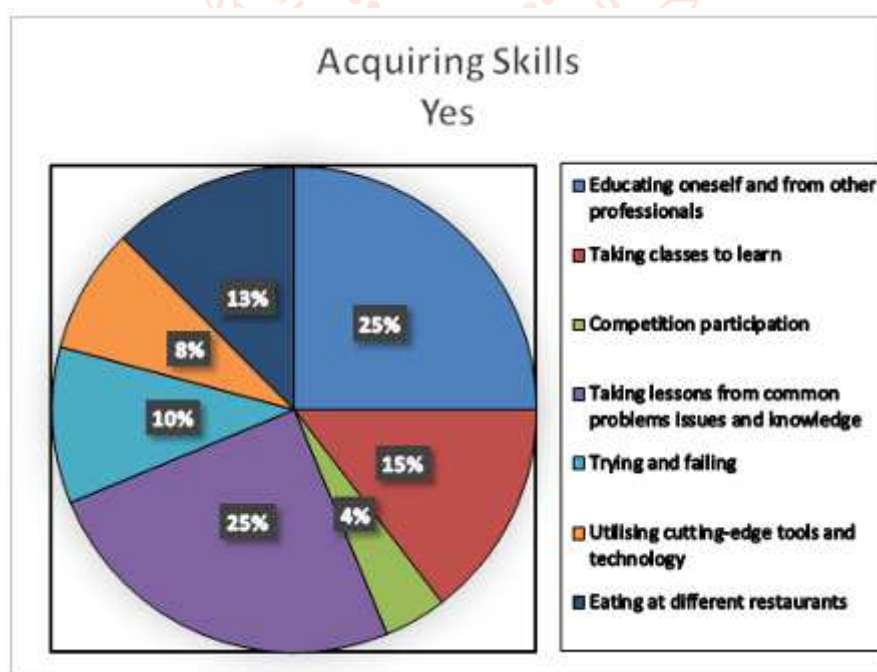
Findings

Skills and Experience required in commercial Kitchen

Every one of the female chefs mentioned that they selected culinary occupations since they enjoyed it professionally and had no special performance standards. They didn't want to be chefs or gain Michelin stars. However, the kitchen work environment has been considered as demanding for women, both psychologically and physically. It is also quite stressful due to the extended shift length. Women chefs feel that different talents and dispositions are required to incorporate and flourish in the culinary profession. They mentioned gastronomic learning, pragmatic cooking instruction, workplace conditions, strategic planning, practices, speediness, obtaining unique expertise, meeting deadlines, information exchange, bargaining, as well as HRM, and an enthusiasm for the career path as skillset. Competitiveness, persistence, selflessness, openness to learning, hard effort, consistency, courage, compassion, and empathy, as well as both psychological and muscular toughness under stressful circumstances and power of personality. From their perspective, there are no gender differences in this area and competitiveness is the key to success in order to acquire the different attitudes and skills, practicing has been advanced as the main tool, which requires curiosity and continuous search of acquiring new knowledge. Chef roles also value leadership abilities, which may be developed via experience in the workplace.

Acquiring Skills

100% women chefs agreed that due to lack of women chefs in restaurant kitchen they were trained under male chef's, they strongly believe that there are no gender disparities in the proficiency acquisition process in total (Table B). 58% women chefs have taken some kind of cookery classes to learn the basic skills of cooking and management. 83% of women chefs did not participate in culinary competitions for their professional growth. 100% women chefs said they have the greatest learning from every day's issues and problems while 83% of them lost confidence due to some kind of failure at workplace and took time to overcome the situation. 66% of the women chef believes that they are more of craftsmen than technologically savvy, they manage the resources available to them rather than using latest trends in equipment and technology available in the market. 50% of them do think that its important to dine out at various restaurant around to know the emerging trends in food the customers prefer.



Nearly all agreed that only a diverse workplace would be good and that they wanted to see many female chefs working in their fields. Lastly, all respondents concurred that having competent coworkers is important for job satisfaction and that dealing with incompetent coworkers may be challenging. They also noted a few instances of female cooks who were challenging to deal with due to female rivalry.

Hurdles for women chefs

Female chefs claim that concerns with parenting and family harmony as well as perceptions of masculinity in the cooking environment present the most challenges in the restaurant's kitchen. Another believes that women have less opportunity to network and make relationships in the business world. Always having to put forth more effort and demonstrate their aptitude. The fact that men make up the majority of gastronomy reviews is another obstacle that does not help to support female cooks. At work, women are expected to sacrifice more than men do. Additionally, all the cooks concurred that there are gender inequalities in home duties. When asked how they overcome these obstacles, the chefs responded that they made the decision to associate with individuals who valued them and that other chefs selected different facets of the industry because they posed fewer obstacles and gave them more opportunities for growth or work life balance. Few people actually think that they attempted to inspire themselves through activities other than cooking. Last but not least, it has been stated that too many women chefs have quit their occupations due to their obligations to their families since they are expected to make greater sacrifices in her careers and have lower aspirations for their families.

leadership styles

Relying upon their prior observations, women chefs claimed that perhaps the restaurant atmosphere is a highly authoritarian one with minimal regard for and cooperation of colleagues, but also that chefs generally do not give clear directions. They acknowledged that they adhere to such standards of leadership, but with some changes, such as offering their coworkers more help and delivering orders that were more precise. (Table C).

Career evolution and satisfaction

The women chefs are in a view that formal culinary education is very important to become a chef, so except two, rest have done diploma course in cookery. All of them started as a beginner and gradually climbed the ladder with getting professional experience and training and rolling in multiple restaurants within Delhi. None of them had any international experience. Regardless of many challenges, they were somehow having pride in their profession as a career as it has supported their families. They also stated that they started the profession without any expectations, but in the run, experience and growth motivated them to keep moving. It has also been observed that none of them have a fair idea about Michelin Stars and showed no desire of any kind of recognition. They were in the

view that men chefs are more attracted towards obtaining awards and achievements.

They mentioned the harmonization of family and business life. There seems to have a desire to be more autonomous. Finally, a few were yearning for the innovation and adaptability which they could not get as employees at other eateries. Women chefs stated that their prior experiences affected their business style. Finally, whenever it pertains to team selection, they stated that they placed a high value on professional and personal attitudes, candidate sentiments, and past work accomplishments.

Conclusions

Female chefs who took part in the questionnaire spotlighted powerful masculine supremacy in the restaurant workplace situation, emphasizing the importance of commitment, selflessness, being enthusiastic, adjusting and continuing to learn towards the identified guidelines while maintaining inspiration, advancement, devotion, and pursuing identity. The researchers went on to say how such women disputed gendered impact in the culinary workplace as a way to retake sovereignty and struggle with disparities over which she might have limited authority. These chefs also saw professional experience as critical to being a skilled chef. They gave good marks to the many learning tactics we recommended, such as gaining knowledge from those around, continuing to take lessons from day-to-day challenges, and trial and errors. On the contrary, they placed less value on gaining knowledge through contests and stated believing that female chefs are lesser tolerant of making errors throughout their education period. An intriguing discovery which can illustrate how women chefs have fewer gourmet prizes and incur less challenges.

Amongst the more frequently identified impediments by female cooks are men dominance, underestimating of their ability, less possibilities for strategic planning or collaboration, and balancing profession and family life. As a consequence, women chefs must trust in herself, be committed, be enthusiastic, and continue to advance despite surviving the existing workplace environment or procedures, even though they disapprove with many elements. They believe that reform will take place if the strength of the women chefs increases in the restaurant kitchens increases, as will the adoption of new practices such as restaurant kitchen.

Finally, women chefs know to enhance their prospects of becoming a restaurant chef, women must develop abilities such as leading, administration, communication, branding, and publicity. They suggested that individuals build personal contacts as

well. Women chefs showed their support for restaurant supervision skills, with some suggestions such as offering greater assistance to colleagues and clarifying directions. Mentorship was also regarded as a key aspect in assisting women in developing these various abilities. They thought that mentors might benefit women by encouraging them to trust in their abilities, supporting them, and connecting them with greater career prospects.

Because the chef's career does not allow for work-life balance, most female chefs took other kind of the jobs. They need learn excellent leadership and managerial abilities, as well as enthusiasm and risk-taking.

Women in 'feminized situations' who want to develop a good profession in the restaurant kitchen must overcome variety of challenges, including resistance and stereotyped answers.' She claims that these barriers are higher in "less feminine environments." As a consequence, women confront not just gender hurdles in traditionally male occupations, but also impediments to leading an organization that are considered as traditionally male dominated.

Limitations and further scope

The study was limited to the universe Delhi/NCR, more cities need to be covered to get a overall view of the country. The women chef's percentage in the restaurant scenario is very limited compared to the 5-star hotels, and hence the research needs to be carried out in other forms of catering industry to get an overall clear overview. Further the research can be conducted by carefully selecting the women chefs of varied demographic factors and creating focus group for pilot testing the questionnaire before circulating to the sample.

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