Condition of Women in the Culinary Industry

Kamal Jeet Kaur Mann*

In the developing and changing world, being a part of business life has become common for women; however, that situation is not the same in professional kitchens. Compared to male chefs, gaining a place in the male dominant kitchens is hard but not impossible for women. In this study, it is aimed to determine the current situation of women chefs in professional kitchens. This study makes inference about how they can exist in this sector dominated by men. Interview, which is one of qualitative data collection tool, was chosen in this study. Purposive sampling was preferred. Data were obtained from 30 chefs via a semi-structured questionnaire. The results showed that the role of women in culinary was only 13.3% of women working in restaurants in in 1990-2000, which increased to 26.6% in 2000-2010. In 2011-2020 majority of women (60%) were in restaurants. Gender differences exclaimed that in 1990-2000 only 10% of gender differentiation existed between women and men in restaurants, but in 2000-2010 there were 36.6% in restaurants. In 2011-2020 there were massive gender differentiation between women and men in restaurants. Role of women chefs in economic development showed increase from 16.6% in 1990-2000 to 30% in 2000-2010. In 2011-2020 the low numbers of women chefs were 53.3%.

[**Keywords :** Culinary industry, Role, Chefs, Cooking skills, Gender differentiation]

* Associate Professor, Department of Food & Nutrition, Govt. Girls College, Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan (India) E-mail: <drkamalmann@gmail.com>

1.   Introduction

Many women now also learn about the food service industry and prepare some culinary dishes. Through hands-on activities and in-depth study of the culinary arts field, the concerned courses help students hone their cooking skills and give them the opportunity to explore careers in the food industry. In today's context, researchers are increasingly stressing on the importance of gender variables and the feminine approach in social sciences.

Orser and Leck (2010) have added that 'both at personal and organizational level, factors influence success outcomes' and insist on the need to examine 'gender as a moderating variable' of these out-comes in certain occupations. Many authors claim that promotion criteria are gender sensitive. This is due to the gender unequal distribution of jobs and positions concerning decision-making process.

Hurley (1999) holds that considering gender relations and building new organizational theories that are not male dominated could 'produce changes at societal level'. She argues that early studies of entrepreneurship during the nineteenth century were mainly about men and that it is necessary to include case studies of women.

Eagly and Carli (2007) have emphasized that men benefit more of 'higher wages and faster promotions'. They found that women have less record of experiences in higher hierarchical levels. There is a 'resistance to women leadership' and that an issue of leadership style for them. Not only this, women have to face much more difficulties managing work-life balance and they under invest in social capital.

2.   Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to investigate the condition of women in the culinary industry.

3.   Literature Review

Professional kitchens are one of these businesses that prove gender discrimination. This situation can be explained with military history dating back to 14th and 15th centuries. According to Platzer (2011 : 3) who cited from Cooper (1998) states that during times of

wars, members of the army were expected to cook. However, it is possible to see the fallout of this convention. Even though the field of cooking has been traditionally dominated by women throughout the history, there is a huge discrepancy in professional world. Men are held responsible for professional kitchens unlike women who are in charge of domestic kitchens. It is challenging for women to take place in this male dominant place. Although, they struggle to exist in men's place, few of them are able to have high post. Though some women have achieved a success in this world, they do not generally expose to equal circumstances compared with their male partners. They continue to work in lower statues. Therefore, it can be stated that professional kitchens are still places where men can yield a profit in terms of material and nonmaterial. Professional kitchens are places which necessitates team work. Unfortunately, this team consists of men. According to Acker (1990 : 139), gender-neutral policy is not effective in organizational structures; hence, women are kept outside.

In addition, Acker (1990 : 152) states that bodied process for women such as pregnancy, breast feeding and menstruation are not suitable for organizational structures. Apart from these differences, women have some certain social roles as mentioned earlier. Their social roles impede their success professionally. Because of adapting different roles at the same time, women have to promote themselves more in culinary field. That is why the number of women chefs cannot outnumber men chefs.

According to survey carried by Arnoldsson (2015 : 7) in Sweden, 66% of executive chefs consist of men (Ince, 2016 : 420). In male centered kitchen, it is not surprising to see the lack of female representation for top positions. In that 'men's club' (Platzer, 2011 : 10), women expose to some problems such as abasement, mockery. According to LaPontie (1992 : 379/385), if women want to work in professional kitchens, they have to endure not only all difficulties of place but also they have to put up with jokes, abasement, and sexual harassment. They face a great amount of pressure that paves the way for mobbing. Because of working under stress resulting from intense pressure, their attempt to reach high positions is hindered considerably. The worst side of that situation is women feel obligated to adapt themselves to macho atmosphere to exist because to a large extend, they are aware of the fact that eradicating widespread prejudice towards women about their ability to perform tasks is

really hard. Barriers applied to women make many men to reach leading positions in professional kitchens.

Therefore, to Heilman and Haynes (2005), women should make their work more visible in the masculinity culture contrary to men. Many studies showed that women and men have different traits, and men traits are more related to leadership requirements. Separate perceptions and stereotypes about gender roles gave rise to this situation. For instance, men thought that they were better political leaders and business executives (Kiser, 2015).

Unfortunately, as rightly stated by Heilman and Haynes (2005), stereotypical thoughts about gender show women as 'caring', 'relationship oriented', 'not forceful', and 'not achievement oriented'. This leads to label them as 'deficient' in male-oriented tasks, which affects their performance. In addition, Burgess (2003) has stated that women skills are supposed to be more suitable for 'lower level jobs'. Though, it's physically still quite challenging for a woman to reach the leading positions, still defying all these stereotypical gender roles, we have many famous women chefs. Due to traditional gender roles, long working hours ranging from 12-14 hours daily can be tough for women, who have to take care of their families too. Bartholomew & Garey (1996) and O'Brien (2010) hold that women chefs meet several obstacles to evolve to the chef position in the 'Haute Cuisine' field as they have difficulty in balancing work and family.

Study of Haddaji et al. (2017) has shown that many women cooks quit their jobs due to their family responsibilities. Women have more tendency towards doing so than men inasmuch as they are more emotional, they make more professional sacrifices due to their family responsibilities. Women are generally supposed physically and emotionally weak to work in "macho" environment. Women have to act in a masculine way to eradicate such prejudices.

Harris and Giuffre (2015) have stressed that women chefs are "encouraged to lean in at work and to find ways to fit within current occupational arrangements" and they have to "fit in homogenous work environments" as an outsider. Otherwise, many men chefs may try to harass women chefs verbally and physically convincing that such workplaces may be degrading for women. Women's lack of existence and their under-representation in culinary field prevents some titles such as "most influential chefs" for women.

Scholars like Eagly and Carli (2007) have stated that women do not have convincing record of experiences in higher hierarchical levels. This under-representation of women aggravates to become leaders in prominent kitchens.

Platzer (2011 : 6) has accounted for the lack of female representation in professional kitchens like the highly structural organization and macho atmosphere of the professional kitchens as well as stereotypical and the gendered expectations that our society holds about women.

4. Methodology

This research was conducted to determine the current status of female chefs in industrial kitchens. Qualitative approach has been preferred for this research. Qualitative approach aims at collecting first-hand data.

The lack of a detailed instrument in the relevant literature can be seen as a basis for this. The semi-structured interview technique, which is one of the qualitative research technique has been determined as an appropriate method according to the result of study done by the researchers.

Purposive sampling was preferred. Purposive sampling method was chosen for the interviews. Purposive sampling is the selection of samples that will provide more detailed and rich information about the subject.

Interviews were made with 30 participants working actively in the sector about the topic of the research and face-to-face interviews were made with 10 participants who made a positive return. With an average of 30-45 minutes of interviews, data were recorded via voice recordings with the permission of the participants and concurrently notes were kept. Within the scope of the research, 8 open-ended questions were asked and the answers were analyzed in interviews with the participants who were employed in Restaurants in Chandigarh used for the analysis of qualitative data.

5. Findings and Discussion

In this section, the findings of the participants were included in order to determine the status of women chefs. Firstly, self-information belonging to the participants and then the findings of semi-structured interviews were presented in a comprehensive

manner. To ensure the confidentiality of the participants, data have been tabulated by encoding Descriptive information related to 30 participants in the scope of the research is shown in table below :

Table-1 : Women in Culinary Industry   *n-30*

S. No.	Period	Number of Women	Percentage
1.	1990-2000	04	13.3%
2.	2000-2010	08	26.6%
3.	2011-2020	18	60%

The above table showed that in 1990-2000 only 13.3% of women were working in restaurants, but in 2000-2010 there were 26.6% women were in restaurants. In 2011-2020 majority of women (60%) were in restaurants.

While it is common for a woman to conquer the kitchen at home, when it comes to a restaurant, it seems to become a challenge, if you look at how dominated the scene is by men. However, the times are changing, and women are coming into the forefront and making themselves seen as glorious chefs worldwide, says Divya. People are fascinated with male chefs, not female chefs, because female chefs are doing what females are supposed to do : cook. But males are seen as doing something extraordinary.

Table-2 : Gender differences in Culinary Industry   **n-30**

S. No.	Period	Number of Women	Percentage
1.	1990-2000	03	10%
2.	2000-2010	11	36.6%
3.	2011-2020	16	53.3%

Table above showed that in 1990-2000 only 10% of gender differentiation existed between women and men in restaurants, but in 2000-2010 there was 36.6% gender differentiation between women and men in restaurants. In 2011-2020, there were massive gender differentiation between women and men in restaurants.

Gender discrimination appears to be widespread in the kitchen (Mkono, 2010; Poulston, 2008; Zhong, Couch, and Blum, 2011). According to literature, discrimination in the kitchen take two forms. One, Harris and Giuffre (2010) note that female chefs are presumed

to be emotional and cannot therefore be good leaders. However, Robinson, Solnet and Breakey (2014) found that female chefs had reduced emotions and were less aggressive. Female chefs appear to receive fewer opportunities for employment, or they may be deliberately held back, while male chefs are promoted (Harris and Giuffre, 2010).

Table-3 : Women Chefs in Restaurants **n-30**

S. No.	Period	Number of Women	Percentage
1.	1990-2000	05	16.6%
2.	2000-2010	09	30%
3.	2011-2020	16	53.3%

It has been observed from the data presented in table above that in 1990-2000, there was low number of women chefs restaurants (only 16.6%), but in 2000-2010 this number of women chefs rose to 30% and again in 2011-2020 to 53.3%.

Many researchers have argued that gender is a cultural construction rather a natural one. Haute Cuisine and the culinary field is a good illustration to how gender influenced the evaluation and the recognition of the cooking task in two different spaces, the professional and domestic. To analyze the reasons behind the low number of women chefs, we run a survey that targeted professionals in the cooking field. It included both gender and participants from Europe and USA. The survey results confirm the main argument that women are under-represented due to the masculine culture of kitchen work and culinary industry. Women therefore need to deal with it and to keep developing themselves professionally in order to achieve their place. A change in the industry dynamics will assess the barriers encountered in general by all professionals. The same change should impact household arrangements to facilitate women's evolution in the professional sphere.

Table-4 : Women Chefs in Intensive Sector **n-30**

S. No.	Period	Number of Women	Percentage
1.	1990-2000	07	23.3%
2.	2000-2010	09	30%
3.	2011-2020	14	46.6%

It may be noted from the table above that in 1990-2000 there were only 23.3% women chefs in restaurants, but this low proportion of women chefs rose to 30% in 2000-2010. In 2011-2020, this proportion of women chefs in intensive sector was 46.6%.

The executive position is what most chefs aspire to in order to achieve professional status. Brown (2005) argues that becoming an executive chef is a rigorous path; hence, distraction can be detrimental. In this regard, any challenges to the chefs' career are considered as distractions on the way to career advancement (Ko, 2012). The literature suggests that it takes years of experience and hard work (Brown, 2005), often in poor working conditions (Kang, Twigg, and Hertzman, 2010) with heavy workloads (Ko, 2012) to become an executive chef.

Table-5 : Problems of Women Chefs in Culinary Industry   n-30

S. No.	Problems	Number of Women	Percentage
1.	Physical Strain	07	23.3%
2.	Low pay	09	30%
3.	Sexual harassment	14	46.6%
4.	Career challenges at the individual level	16	53.3%

Data contained in the table above showed that in 1990-2000 there were low number of women chefs restaurants (23.3%), but in 2000-2010, this low proportion of women chefs was 30%. In 2011-2020 this proportion of women chefs further rose to 46.6.%.

Brief description of these problems of women chefs is as under :

5·1 Physical Strain

Chefs additionally suffer physical strain from their demanding roles which involves extremes of heat, cold and standing for long hours. According to a study by Haukka et al. (2006), chefs suffer from muscular pains that negatively affect their general health. Chefs appear to experience long hours standing in a highly heated environment, often with poorly ventilated spaces or in badly designed kitchens (Fungai et al., 2013).

5·2 Low Pay

Research suggests the Culinary industry offers low salaries across all sectors of the economy (Steyn & Jackson, 2015).

Unfortunately, women are still the lowest paid in the Culinary industry (Baum, 2007; Mooney, 2014; Zhong et al., 2011).

5·3 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment occurs when someone abuses power to satisfy their sexual self- interest and ego, thereby belittling their victim. In this study, sexual harassment is an abuse perpetrated against women due to the gender roles and power imbalances in society. Female hospitality workers are predominantly the victims, especially when they are young or junior in hospitality organizations (Mkono, 2010). Sexual harassment may take different forms, such as coercion, "touching, ogling, verbal harassment, indecent exposure and sexual jokes" (Pritchard, 2014 : 320).

5·4 Networking Barriers

Research shows that the Culinary industry commonly uses the informal form of employment to hire staff (Furunes & Mykletun, 2005; Mooney, 2007). Since the chef profession is male dominated, women are disadvantaged by informal employment due to lack of networks. Mooney (2007) found that Australian and New Zealand female hotel managers were disadvantaged by informal employment arrangements because of lack of established 'pool' of employed female managers

5·5 Career Challenges at the Individual Level

Perceptions of available choices in an organization and society depend on individual female chef. There are factors at the structural and organizational that may influence female chefs' careers . Moreover, (Mooney et al., 2017) suggest that age and gender intersections at the societal and organizational level may influence women's agency within organizations.

6. Conclusion

This paper was about tthe condition of women in the culinary industry. The literature indicated some of the challenges that female chefs may face many problems. This study further illustrated the socially constructed roles of women, and the positioning of women in the kitchen as perceived by society. The chapter also introduced the kitchen as a professional work environment, locating the profession in the context of the culinary industry. However, it

appears that there is a research gap about chefs in Chandigarh, particularly concerning how women progress in their culinary career.

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