

Chapter 66

Gender Discrimination in Tourism Industry

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ABSTRACT

Compared to the past, business life has considerably developed in any area in the last century. All of the goods and services producing enterprises have made very important developments by taking advantage of science and technology at every stage of consumption and post-consumption processes starting from production. However, it can be said that the most important of these developments is the entry of the female workforce into the business life in the twenty-first century. The involvement of women in business life has not only changed the forms of production and presentation of the enterprises but also led businesses to achieve a completely different perspective.

INTRODUCTION

It is not possible to talk about the equality of the position and status of women in the workplace, their rights and working conditions with those of men; while women's are being actively involved in working life is considered one of the revolutionary events of the last century. Although women and men are protected under the laws that they should have equal rights both in social life and in business life, it is observed that gender-based discrimination is frequently made in business life. It has been demonstrated that discrimination in business life to be found in all of the developed and developing countries has resulted from many complex reasons including economic, social and cultural. When it has been taken into consideration that even the countries known as the superpower of the world have discriminated, it can be said that discrimination is mostly caused by personal and societal reasons.

One of the most important industries where gender-based discrimination is seen in business life is the tourism industry. Although the number of women working in the industry, which consists entirely of enterprises which offer different kinds of services, is about twice more than the number of men, women working in the industry are exposed to different practices and discrimination due to their gender. Until now, almost all of the studies done by academics and international organizations have shown that

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women are exposed to discrimination in terms of their jobs, wages, working conditions, promotion and internal social relations due to their gender. Giving women specific rights and responsibilities taking into account their gender, rather than their qualifications, background, education, and experience constitutes the most obvious indication of discrimination. Considering that the most basic aim of tourism businesses is to provide the best service to their customers in order to satisfy them and increase their income and profitability, it is important for the future of the businesses to evaluate the employees within the industry in terms of their qualities, rather than their gender. Therefore, the reasons and practices of gender discrimination in business life and tourism industry are given in this section and gender discrimination was generally evaluated as a result of the research and suggestions were made to prevent gender discrimination in tourism enterprises.

BACKGROUND

Concept of Gender and Gender Discrimination

Gender, in its broadest definition, defined as nature, sex and sexuality that gives a distinctive role to an individual for reproduction and provides to distinguish between male and female (TDK, 2017) refers to the biological orientation of being male or female (Dokmen, 2010). Although gender is a concept used to describe features of women and men that are different from each other, it is generally considered as biological sex and social sex in two respects. Biological sex is the type of gender that can be understood at first sight and is innate and expresses that the person is male or female. In other words, biological sex is due to the genetic constitution of people or their chromosomes. Social sex is also regarded as a concept including the perceptions of women and men in social life and expectations from them apart from biological differences (Yuki, 2003).

Since the days of mankind, women and men have undertaken different meanings, different duties, and responsibilities both in family life, societal and social life. From a biological point of view, this difference, which is only regarded as the difference in the chromosome, completely separates the woman and man in societal and social life. It has often been argued that these different meanings, duties, and responsibilities which are laid on them are related to nature. For example, it is believed that women must be responsible for children and households because of their productive or men must work out because they are physically stronger and more durable than women, which actually the result is arising from the difference between nature of women and men. Absolutely, there may be some points that women and men should be separated from each other in the home, society and social life. However, it is out of the question that some factors leading to discrimination such as the fact that women and men do not behave equally in formal relations and they are faced to different procedures in education and the right to life, which deprives them of the right to be an individual, are based on gender differences.

Gender-based discrimination, which arises from different reasons in societal and social life, is seen in almost all fields, and individuals are exposed to discrimination in social life, social environment, group and organization in which they are involved due to their biological and social gender. One of the areas where discrimination is most experienced is business life. Gender discrimination in business life is expressed as depriving a person of certain rights by assessing her/his gender characteristics that are not related to her/his work and performance (Arrow, 1973).

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