

Speech of the Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand Dr.K.K.Paul for the International Conference on Hospitality and Tourism (ICHT -2017) at Graphic Era University, Dehradun on January 20, 2017

It gives me great pleasure to inaugurate this international conference on Hospitality and Tourism, organized by the School of Hotel Management & Hospitality, Graphic Era University, Dehradun. The theme of the Conference “Trends, issues and women in hospitality and tourism industry” is extremely relevant and will, I am confident, generate the high level of interest that it deserves. I hope that the delegates, besides professional inputs will also do some experience sharing.

An important aspect which needs to be highlighted today is that when education fails to keep pace with technology, the result is inequality. To stay useful, whether in tourism industry or elsewhere, as the opportunity arises, the workers tend to suffer in the absence of skills.

It is, therefore, important to create opportunities and simultaneously train women for the jobs in hospitality and tourism industry. Which type of training would be necessary, are there enough institutions in the hospitality management, or tourism industry. Can we take help of MOOC. These are some important issues today, for young girls to ponder, before they opt for this segment and I hope these are also discussed in the context of our state.

Despite the hospitality industry employing large numbers of women, they continue to be under-represented in senior positions and general management roles and when it comes to women in leadership roles the sector falls short of other industries and does not demonstrate the same advantage. The imperative to have women in leadership roles is now main stream, and many multinational companies and sectors have initiatives and objectives which aim to make this possible. There was a time, some 15/20 years ago when people used to say that women have not been able to break the glass ceiling. Today the situation has changed. At the international level, the CEOs of Pepsi, IBM, G Motors,

General Dynamics, Hewlett Packard, Lockheed Martin, Xerox, Oracle, to name a few are all women. In the financial institutions, the Chairpersons of Paytm, IMF, SBI, AXIS Bank, ICICI Bank, all are women. However, the hospitality and tourism industry clearly have not yet succeeded in promoting women in significant numbers into leadership positions.

In Uttarakhand, the tourism and hospitality sector has immense potential which is yet to be realized. Young girls and boys need to be adequately trained in order to enable them to be absorbed in the various wings of the hospitality and tourism industry within the state as well as outside. It is understood that the Graphic Era University has courses in hospitality and hotel management. Other universities of the state must also make efforts to introduce courses related to these fields. Along with the central theme of Women in tourism and hospitality, this Conference also aims to discuss some other very relevant themes, including Sustainable Tourism, Eco Tourism, Medical tourism, heritage tourism and tourism and hospitality education, health and wellness tourism, home stays and IT in tourism and hospitality.

Women play a pivotal role in society. Women represent at least half of the talent available to organizations and economies in most countries. Ignoring this talent pool puts at risk the competitiveness of both companies and the economies in which they operate. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) predicts Asia's travel and tourism industry will grow by more than 6% each year, of course depending on the economic conditions. According to some estimates, by 2020, Asian travelers are likely to account for nearly one-half of all global tourism expenditures.

Faced with such high growth predictions, especially in Asia, the hospitality industry must adopt a more proactive and strategic approach to talent management. Women in Tourism and Hospitality make up close to 70% of the total workforce. On this basis also, ignoring the barriers to the inclusion of women in the potential supply of

talent would be illogical. However, evidence shows that this is happening, unskilled or semi-skilled women tend to work in the most vulnerable jobs, where they are more likely to experience poor working conditions, inequality of opportunity and treatment, violence, exploitation, low wages, stress and sexual harassment. This assessment is supported by a number of complementary sources, notably the UNWTO in a 2010 report that highlights both the opportunities and challenges that face women with respect to employment in tourism.

The gender challenges in the global hospitality industry highlight a range of barriers that are predominantly socio-cultural but which also impinge on wider economic and political cultural traditions that are manifest in differing ways and to varied degrees across most countries and communities which prescribe traditional gender roles and responsibilities in the home and workplace, thus mitigating against opportunity for women to progress to the highest level in organizations.

It is very appropriate that the conference is being held this year in a state that has a vast variety of tourism possibilities while need to be explored fully.

In the end, I sincerely hope that this meet will help our state find a better direction towards fulfilling its vast potential as a tourist destination. This would involve identifying tourism circuits – creating infrastructure in the area, and simultaneously training women with the necessary skills and hopefully in the next few years they will make a substantial contribution to the GDP of the state.

With these words I thank you.

Jai Hind !