

Facilitation of Women's Employment in the Retail Sector: A Study of Independent Self-serviStores (ISS) in Mumbai

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Abstract

Independent Self-service Stores (ISS) have emerged as a new retail format in India. In the male-dominated retail sector, ISS has a different gender-profile, and so we studied women's employment in ISS, their reasons for joining, and the employment conditions. We interviewed 59 women employees and ISS-owners from 59 enterprises in Mumbai using a semi-structured interview schedule. A nonprobability sampling method was applied for the selection of ISS from 24 municipal wards of the Mumbai region. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, and qualitative data were thematically assessed. It was found that ISS has a 1:1 men-women ratio, contrasting with the 4:1 ratio in other retail formats. Women's preference for ISS employment was due to several facilitating features of ISS, such as: flexible organisational policies, decision-making involvement, ownership and satisfaction, learning opportunities, proximity to home, hygiene, positive work environment, dress code, compensation, and training and development. ISS-owners also preferred to employ women, as they felt it will help them to compete better with other retail formats for customer retention.

Key Words

Women's employment, Organized and unorganized retail sectors, Independent Selfservice Stores (ISS), Traditional Full-service (TF) retailers, Labor force participation rate, Employee satisfaction

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