

A STUDY ON ROLE OF WOMAN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

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Abstract

Women workforce is increasing globally due different socio-economic changes such as increase in women education, impact of globalization etc. Women occupy 46% of US workforce and they now make 23% of Women CEOs in the USA alone. Women in a research study had indicated that in a firm people are their main concern whereas men had indicated that completion of task is their main concern. Women in spite of better educational facilities today compared to earlier days, their capabilities are still limited due to gender discrimination, job difficulties local laws in addition to family responsibilities. In this paper the details about the role of women in various sectors, the draw backs for their development and their capabilities compared to men are presented.

1. INTRODUCTION

Women face multiple barriers right from their entry in career compare to their male counterpart [1]. In primitive society, men and women held equal roles. But as the society progressed from simple economy to complex some of the fields like mining, warfare etc have become more masculine in nature where men are compared and perceived as superior to women, thereby limiting the chances of women in such areas. Due to these type of situations women became confined to household and domestic works [2]. Later with special kind of sops and reservations provided to women by various governments, NGOs around the world, for the cause of women empowerment, today there is lot of women in leadership positions and are in a position to compete with men.

The advancement of technology in various fields such as software and service sectors have attracted researchers worldwide to concentrate on potential advantages and benefits that have been possible in terms superior productivity, better work place relationships and superior work life balance. It is also notable that women employees add diversity of value when they work in the male dominated sectors. Not only that , women employees contribute well and enhance the performance of the organisation [3].

2. NATURE OF ORGANIZATION-A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Considering the work culture, organizations commonly don't provide any important advantage for women. Mostly all organization's environment

is masculine in nature because it occupied by men largely. The earlier gendered management style debated that characteristics of successful manager Is that of man as they considered to be strict and career oriented [4]. This can be considered as an organizational barrier that women face while try for leadership positions [5]. They usually excluded from the "boys network" and gradually from the work culture also, set by their male counterparts [6]. As women participation in leadership positions start increasing, these women leaders adopt characteristics typical of male managers in order to succeed with care, empathy and cooperation in order to develop a horizontal relationship between various working cadres contrary to men's idea of developing a horizontal line of organization in a masculine work environment [7]. The potential advantage of women leadership is to act like a shock absorber between the middle level and higher level management and low level management. This is an important criteria which requires a lot of patience and perseverance where women only can fit into this role.

Military and police departments are usually act as male oriented workplace . Due to the male dominations in these two, it considers to be masculine [8]. Two sectors where women have similar advantage are education and social service [9]. Teaching is considered as aligning with their family role. Nowadays, research and publication becomes a necessity for teaching. But there too, women's contribution is less compare to men as they have family responsibilities like the nurturing of children and taking care of elderly people etc [10].

3. LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS WITH REFERENCE TO GENDER ORIENTATION

Compare to earlier times, women have increasingly moved toward greater gender equality at both domestic and professional life. But, women are still underrepresented in leadership positions and still considered an anomaly compared to men in some sectors such as higher education institutions where women representation is higher. While comparing the men and women leaders, it is often less what they do than in the various incidents they come up with when they lead. One constraint always act their leadership behavior is stereotypic gender role. Perceived incongruity between women and leadership roles make hindrances to leadership and came put as double binds, more negative performance appraisals, and different standards compared to those prevailed for male counterparts.

The leadership effectiveness depends upon the leadership style performed by the leader. Though women faced obstacles in going up the hierarchical ladder, they could also perform efficiently in comparison with male leaders [11]. According to Morgan Stanley recent report on Women Leadership, Women can promote more workplace harmony, employee retention, better decision making and greater innovation. The capability of women as caretaker, mother, cook and house maintenance result women capable of multitasking mindset which can be very helpful in corporate setup. The ability of women to constantly learn, coordinate, collaborate, deliver, influence, knowledge and respect give a better understanding of women in leadership roles. Moreover, women contribute well for the performance of the organization [3]. This is supported by a study conducted among recreation clubs, government agencies, public transport companies and students. Also, women leaders are found to be as more effective and as producing more satisfaction to male leaders.

Many studies have identified women as effective leaders in stereotype feminine organizations such as service sectors while men as effective leaders in masculine organizations such as technical and manufacturing sectors [9][12].

Some of the unique and different characteristics of women always ensures her career path to higher level [13] such as higher Emotional Intelligence (EI) than men [14-15], feelings or caring attitude and friendship [16].

It has mostly seen that women to go for a more collaborative, cooperative, or democratic leadership style ,while men choose a more directive, competitive, or autocratic style. Women show intentionally different and more collaborative based on differences in personality in the leadership positions. The use of a collaborative process is increasingly central to views of effective leadership.

4. PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES

4.1 Globalization.

Worldwide Globalization introduces both opportunities and obstacles to women. This extends higher responsibility and more expectations from senior level managers and top executives. Due to the pressures of relocation and timeline, the top managers have to move to new towns, cities and countries continuously. This acts as one of the prime barriers to women with families and a working spouse or significant other [17].

In fact, the larger problem is to adapt to new cultures and social norms than family issues. Many women were not able to accept the culture shock and mostly find it difficult in their new environments despite women being perceived to have the natural ability to adapt. Likewise, women can also face opposition to female leadership in other cultures. "Many countries will simply not deal with a women executive because of their beliefs and perceptions that women are incapable of doing business effectively" [18].

4.2 Internal Motivation.

Many senior executive and top management executives who are male simply claim that women do not have any aspiration to excel in their current job positions. But an interesting study indicated that 55% of women who are not in management positions desire to be in the higher levels of their organizations. Annis has described that many women lose their interest to go up in career ladder due to the many barriers met along the path of becoming a manager[19]. These obstacles include discrimination, stereotyping, prejudice, family demands, and lack of opportunities [20].

4.3 Life-style Conflicts.

They remain the primary caretakers for their families for so many women [21]. Promotion causes many women to choose between personal

and professional goals as time restrictions and demands of a job become more significant. As per a survey very few women CEOs and women executives have children because of the impact on their career that they will have. By comparison, many women have left their work willingly because of family choices [22]. Although a declining number of women take leaves of pregnancy or childcare, 32 per cent of women still leave their job after having babies. Often, once a woman has children, she becomes much more hesitant to travel and work long hours because of her duties at home.

4.4 Right to Education.

In spite of government policies there are still 960 million people in the world who are illiterate out of which two thirds are women. More government policies and legislation should be directed towards skill based learning, development of entrepreneurship among women and free support in the form of loans for women empowerment. Only when these barriers are removed we can have an overall development of the society.

4.5 Better working conditions.

In some of the countries like France women are provided with a number of leaves and incentives during maternity and various other benefits like vacation to support women. Such rules need to be implemented in various developing countries in all private and public sectors to help women in adjusting to various aspects of their life. These activities can boost their performance and can result in the overall development of the nation.

5. CONCLUSION

The above literature and findings indicate that women in today's world can excel in any profession. The positive nature of the society and the environment can help women to achieve work-life balance and give a wider chance for women to achieve higher goals in their life. With the advantages of technology, higher education and good support from the family women can prove that they are no longer inferior to men and they require the same incentives and perks, courage and support to have a better gender equality.

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