

Women in Management: A Cause of Nation Development

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Abstract

It is said that a person is the CEO of his/her own life. And when it comes to women, they are considered to be homemakers. The above two statements completely contradict each other. So does this imply that all the women on this earth strive to become the best homemakers? Or is it the other way round that women who choose career over home don't have a satisfying family life. This paper covers an analysis of gender bias; following this, examples have been cited as to how women and various organizations have strived to achieve no gender discrimination at the workplace. Further ways of promoting equal opportunities for women have also been discussed.

Keywords- Gender diversity, Equal opportunities, Women, Management

INTRODUCTION

There is gender bias throughout a majority of the societies in the world. In earlier times, it used to render women of their rights, but in the present scenario, with awareness at its peak and education, just sufficient women are given equal opportunity to decide, to lead and to what not. In various cases, women are seen in almost all sectors. But this hardly means that they don't look after their house! What is incredible about this is the capability of women to manage both the house and workplace. And this is where the word manage comes. Women are considered to be good managers. Gender awareness has become the crux of various aspects, including roles of everyday life and positions in the business. This is slowly becoming an issue of widespread concern.[1]

The evolution of social science is leading to increased research on gender diversity issues, and

the same is eventually evolving too. The initial research on this specific topic was generally centric to the male vision both in structuring the organization and determining the variables that explain the choice and attitude of entrepreneurs in establishing a business. The studies on women in management were never done as a consequence of social evolution wherein the woman was no more constrained by the role as daughter, wife, daughter-in-law or mother. But it was generalized to be an exception where the woman was thought to be driven by her own interest. This pushed her to take up business roles in management.

From society to one's domestic spheres, women have always been at the receiving end of discrimination. The huge hiatus that exists in the representation of men and women in certain fields has been a grievance that is voiced on many public platforms. The issue has been taken up for

research by numerous organizations; nonetheless, the unequal representation in leadership positions is blatantly overlooked. The number of women joining the workforce has increased considerably in the past few decades. With the increase in the workforce, the number of women with technological expertise has grown up. Unfortunately, the biases against the women at their place of work have adversely affected their promotions in the job that entitles them to an alleviated position in society. Gender discrimination manifests itself in various forms in the workplace, namely, professional separation, lower pay for women working in the same position as that of a man, and other general biases that consider them inferior to men. Working women, worldwide and on several occasions, have fought horizontal segregation and separation of the workforce into gender-specific tasks with equal fervor. The representation of women in management roles has not increased proportionally to the increase in the statistics of working women. Women representation in senior management positions is far from reality. Women are battling all the odds coming their way, graduating and even grabbing management roles but sadly, they are not able to the top management positions. The presence of a bottleneck in the middle management positions stifles their ascend to the top management positions. [2]

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender is a social construct. It attributes men and women to certain conduct and expectations. The two conventional and socially accepted genders are male and female. Besides these two genders, there are many non-binary genders that comprise transgender, referred to as Hijra in South Asian

society. Earlier, gender was closely linked with the sex assigned to a person at the time of birth. However, with time, the ideologies pertaining to genders, their obliged set of behaviors, their roles in society have witnessed some massive transformations over time. For instance, a hundred years from now, women were not deemed fit enough to go for higher education.

According to the United Nations Gender Inequality Index 2015 (UNDP, 2016), India stands at 125th position among the 159 countries for gender equality. This suggests that the gender-based discrimination against women at the workplace is much higher when compared to the global average. In the same index, the United States ranks 43rd, Switzerland is ranked first (i.e., the most equal society), and Yemen is last (159th). The index considers several factors like health, empowerment and labour market participation. According to UN statistics, 27% of Indian females aged 15 or over are employed compared to 79% of males. The corresponding figures for the USA are 56% (female) and 68% (male). From the same source (UNDP, 2016), 35% of females and 61% of males have some secondary education (compared to 95% for both genders in the USA). India is also ranked below average for the world (108th out of 144) for gender inequality by the World Economic Forum in 2017 (WEF, 2017). India was particularly unequal for labour market participation. India has been doing excellent in the field of female political empowerment. The representation of female politicians in good proportion in the Indian parliament has ranked our country 15 among the 144 countries. Various factors have been found to impact the prospects of females getting access to higher education in India.

Girls hailing from well-off districts are more likely to get higher education. However, staying together with the in-laws is found to affect the prospects of the same adversely. Girls underperform at schools when overburdened with household chores at age 12. Girls hailing from impoverished families are expected to assist their families with domestic works and child care, thereby decreasing the chances of the girl getting an education. If the family has limited financial resources, they prefer educating their sons over their daughters. The circumstances that a girl is brought up in may misguide her into believing that there are various other skills that are more important to acquire than to gain a formal education. [3]

The voices vouching for gender equality and diversity at the workplace have found a place on numerous platforms, organizational research and acclaimed discussion forums. However, the voices talking about the same in the higher education sector need more buttressing, probably because the Indian teaching infrastructure comprises more women than men. Several researches have concluded that even in the teaching fraternity, the posts of women are limited to middle-range positions. Females may experience ascent to the posts such as heads of department, deans, controller of examination and even registrars but scarcely ever getting to the office of the vice-chancellor. In a segment that has traditionally been a preferred career option for women over the decades, the inadequacy of adroitness being the reason for women not ascending to higher offices is nothing but a white lie.

In the past few years, India has witnessed a noteworthy increase in the number of females graduating from colleges and universities

(University Grants Commission, 2018). Besides, the number of women taking up jobs in various sectors has also gone up. However, according to the Catalyst (2018) report for India, while the work participation rate of Indian women in the workforce stands at 27.2% in 2017, their representation at the top level is highly insignificant. In the paper titled 'Gender diversity benchmark for Asia 2014', the representation of Indian women at the topmost positions is among the lowest. This paper reviews the near absence of women vice-chancellors in Indian universities.

From an Indian perspective, the theory of gender-specific functions plays a significant role. The roots of patriarchy are so firmly established in our society that men and women are assigned the roles of being the caretakers and bread earners of the house, respectively. Even after so many years of independence, our minds still cling to these stereotypical assignment roles based on gender, and it still finds its place in our professional and social context. While men take up challenging profiles and decision-making roles in fields like marketing and sales, the women settle for secondary roles. Men are socially accepted as leaders by both men and women, further watering the already well-formed roots of patriarchy. Studies suggest that women have always looked up to their male counterparts at the helm of authority and responsibility, and they find it difficult to associate the same with their peer female colleagues. [4]

Aiming for the growth of harmony across the nation, women must step up to work and take this as a challenge. Discrimination on the basis of gender has become the reason for various laws and rules to come into force so that there is equality in

the exercise of major organisations. The Companies Act of 2013 urged for a different class of organization to have a type of structure that promotes a female director on the board. With reference to the Companies Act 2013, SEBI made it essential to have at least a woman on the board from October 2014. Recent reports show that financial execution faced by companies is somewhat directly proportional to the number of women directors. Specialists have laid emphasis that female directors do prompt for better profitability in the organisation.

History is tainted with numerous malevolent practices like Sati, Child Marriage, female foeticide, to name a few, which are disgraceful evidence of the adversities that the women of the yesteryears had to go through. These inhuman practices and the thoughts begetting them can't be brought to a halt by just spreading awareness regarding women's empowerment. This can be achieved only if we persuade her to contemplate these issues and make her realize her true worth. With context to the female business, it is likewise that women have to come up front to represent themselves at various business positions.

Many companies have brought in a new trend in the corporate field by appointing more women directors on the board and also by assigning a post of director to their family women members. The latter can be best illustrated by citing examples where big shot companies such as Reliance Industries Limited accepted Nita Ambani, wife of chairman Mukesh Ambani as a director, Raymond has Nawaz Gautam Singhania, spouse of Gautam Singhania, Godfrey Phillips India has Bina Modi, spouse of K.K. Modi, Asian Paints has Amrita Amar Vakil. The very much popular skills that the

companies look for while appointing women are their skill set in Human resource, finance, governance and general management. Arundhati Bhattacharya, CEO of State Bank of India, Chanda Kocchar, MD of ICICI Bank notable examples wherein firms have a woman as their higher executive in the leading role. [5]

DISCUSSION

Nowadays, a lot of concern has been put by both business leaders and research scholars to study the various aspects of work-life balance. It has become a matter of great importance in view of the contemporary demographic, market, technological and organizational changes associated with it. Yet, there is still a very academic attempt to present an overall scenario of the work-life balance benefits and programmes (WLBPs) given by different firms across the nation.

Women have always mentioned about how they have to juggle between tasks that include several responsibilities at work, hectic meeting schedules and various business trips, and with all these manage the daily chores of the house. Career-oriented women are always challenged by the demands of their workplace, and on getting that finished, they have even more to do to serve their household commitments. It is quite understandable that being able to achieve work-life balance will henceforth create a much more satisfied workforce that will, in turn, be very much beneficial for the organization itself.

The study finds out the various strengths of Indian Women in the managerial posts, and they are as follows.

1. They have a strong ability to perceive and understand situations.

2. They tend to make a very strong network with colleagues.
3. Their strong dedication and commitment to their organization are beyond comparison.
4. They are way more empathetic, compassionate and understanding.
5. They exhibit crisis management skills.
6. They possess a collaborative work style.

Some of the measures that can be taken by the organisations to create a “women-friendly” environment are:

1. Ensuring that the senior management is committed to gender issues.
2. Organising various programs, including career development, leadership development for women.
3. Facilities of child care at work.
4. Time to time survey of women for the assessment of job satisfaction. [6]

It is perhaps important for both the society as well as for corporations to understand that women are for sure blessed with traits that are essential to be a leader. Women portray an innate desire to excel and have a positive impact on others. The current trend forecasts that the working-age population in India will be about 20% of the entire worldwide labour force. Hence it becomes even much more important to increase women's participation in the corporate world. The best direction forward will be to build an opportune environment that encourages women to not only work but also excel in all the ways possible. A system of checks and balances must be there to ensure that there is no gender domination and any sort of stereotype in their firms and the societal discrimination don't affect their professional efficiency.[7]

RESULTS

The word “diversity” describes an assortment of different elements put together in a single place. For the Board of Directors, diversity can be in terms of various parameters, namely, age, gender, caste, ethnicity, etc. In the context of the Indian society, which is predominantly biased towards males, the agenda of equal representation of women has been getting swept under the rug of society AABFJ | Volume 13, no.2, 2019 56 on the board of directors or top management positions in a company, until the onset of Companies Act 2013. Das and Dey (2016) have concluded in their study that the representation of women in the board indicated the company's ethical behavior and a balance on board, hence guaranteeing a fine reputation among the stakeholders and investors of the company (Kaur & Singh, 2017) which will eventually procure better revenues for the company. Studies prove that empowerment of women is possibly going to be good for the financial health of the corporation owing to the diversity in ideas and approaches that women bring along with them (Paul 2017). Sanan (2016) concludes in her study that the number of corporations where there's an absence of independent female directors has drastically gone down over time, which is good news when effective administration in the corporate world is considered. Whether this welcome decision is likely to better the corporate performance or not is a burning question, still unanswered.[8]

All across the world, the percentage of women in senior management is augmenting substantially.

The year 2019 witnessed an increase in the percentage of women in senior management roles

to 29%, the highest ever on record. The year 2020 has kept this maintained.

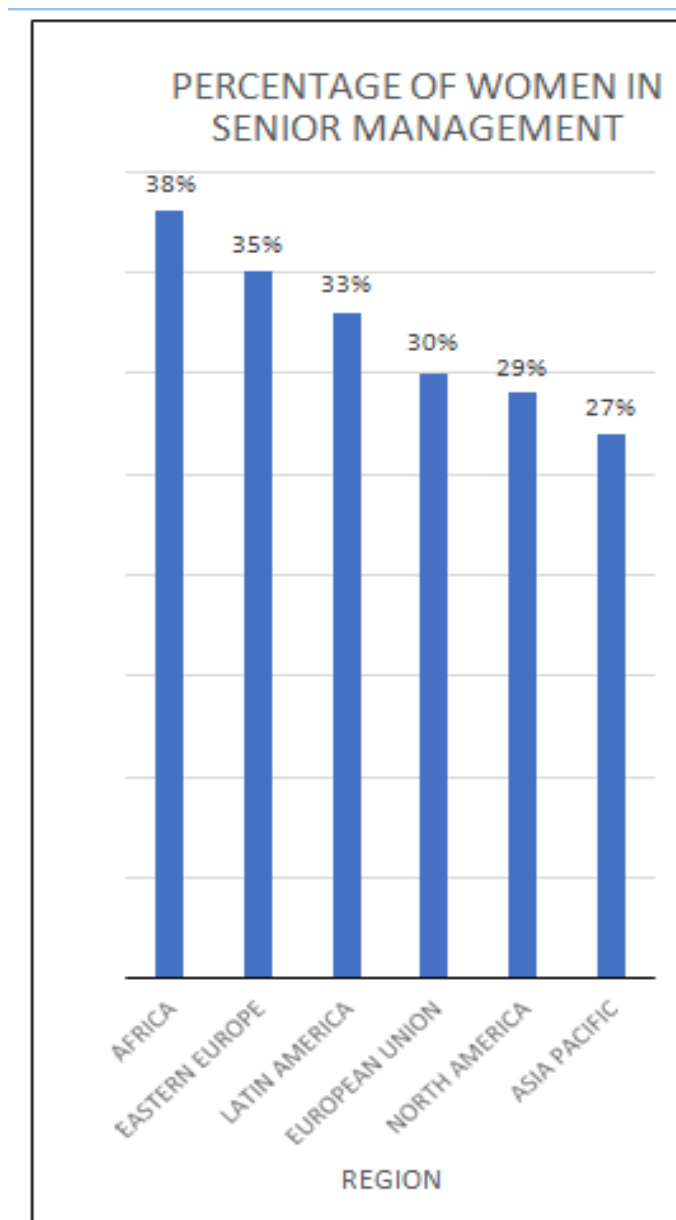
Of all the global mid-market companies, about 87% of them have at least one female lead representing the senior management role.

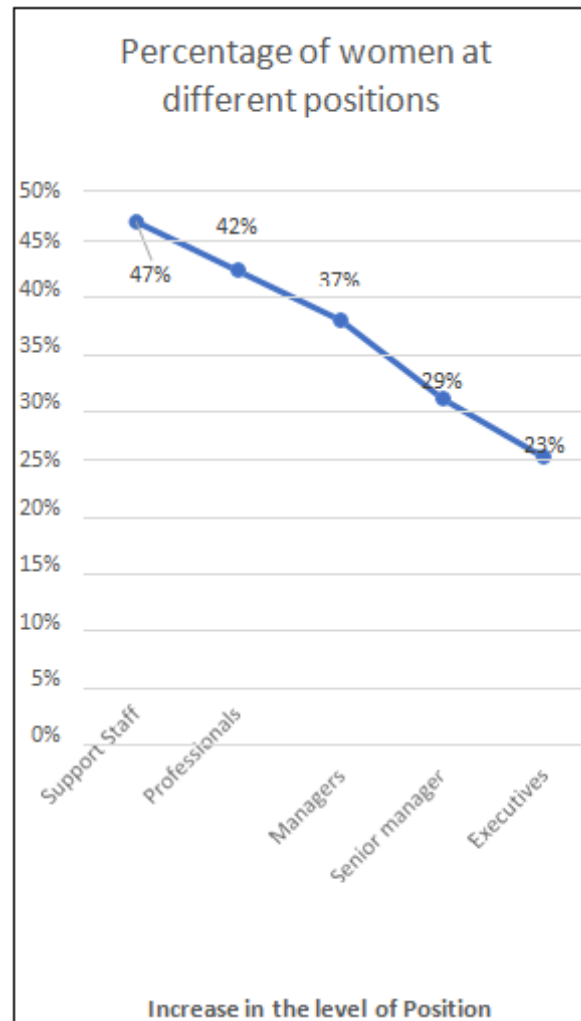
In the year 2020, women represent about 40% of human resources directors, 17% of chief marketing officers and 16% of chief information officers, which depict that although women represent the administrative posts, men are still found to

represent the operations, research and development departments.

The percentage of women in senior leadership is different by the years, as shown in the figure below.

From the 2020 analysis by Mercer of over 1,100 organisations across the world, the result found was a bit different. The findings suggest that as the corporate ladder increases, the women's representation became fewer.[9]





CONCLUSION

If equal opportunities are provided to women, they have a great reserve of potential to excel in any sector they enter. The list of prominent and inspiring women to name in various fields has never been short and is expected to increase endlessly. Take Mrs. Sudha Murty, for instance. The chairperson of Infosys Foundation and an acclaimed author of bestseller is the paragon of excellence in both professional and personal life. Besides delivering great work in their respective managerial capacities, women have determined to set straight things regarding social issues. Watching the interviews of one or more of such inspiring lives, it can be very well ascertained that these women are adept at striking the perfect balance among all tasks. According to Forbes [10],

Indra Nooyi has been a prominent name in the class of women carving a niche for themselves in the world of business. Drawing inspiration from her life, other women have gone on record to talk about the unconventional choices they made in their respective lives to see their ambitions take a stolid shape. Other distinguished speak about this with a lot of positivity and say that this efficient juggle between work and family will create a new world of opportunities for women. In this new world of opportunities, the skilled and the efficient will reign, and gender-based designations will be far, far away from sight.

Diversity has been accepted by women as a fact of life, and they have learnt to live with it. The difference herein lies whether they live with pride or with unwillingness. Thus the perception that we

have of the world has to change. The women should accept it as a part of their lives and handle it with generosity. Hence, instead of being a women's issue is the world's issue.

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