

Status of Women Leadership in Global Context

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Abstract

A trend is emerging, across the globe, of a growing number of qualified women seeking managerial positions and successfully pursuing careers in management. Nevertheless, women continue to remain underrepresented in managerial jobs. While factors responsible for creating a favorable conditions for rise in number of women in management can be identified as educational facilities, changing socio-cultural values and need for supplementary income caused by inflation etc. the major barriers that explain their under representation could be stereotypical perception of women's abilities and qualifications, traditional attitude towards women's family roles, geographical immobility and broadly based discrimination against women. Until the late 1970s women remained virtually invisible as managers and their absence was generally considered a non issue (Berthoin Antal & Izraeli, 1993). Since then women managers are becoming increasingly visible in many countries. Each country reveals a growing number of qualified women seeking managerial positions as well as emerging cadre of women performing every possible managerial tasks with zeal and fervor do not appear to suffer very much the work family conflict (Korabik, 1992). This may be because they are able to delegate many domestic responsibilities to others.

Key Words: Women leadership, stereotyping, perceptions, barriers, styles, organizational practices, female employees

Introduction

seeks to analyze the status of women managers in the global context with special emphasis on India. The other countries include China, Japan, Malaysia, Great Britain, France, Israel, South Africa and the United States. This is done to enable us to develop a comparative perspective. Factors that restrict their upward mobility along the echelons of managerial hierarchy, as well as the gender related social attitudes inhibiting their career prospects have been studied, with the help of various research works done in the field in the respective countries. Due to the traditional close knit family structure, grandmothers often assist in childcare and

domestic work. In addition, the government provides working women with many support services in the areas of childcare and meal preparation. The most significant social changes to affect Chinese women's lives. However, many result from the one child family policies.

United Kingdom

In United Kingdom, 28 percent of all working women hold managerial position or professional job according to the equal opportunity commission (1991b). An estimate by the National Economic development office put the percentage of women holding senior and middle

management positions at a mere 1 to 2 percent (Hirsh and Jackson, 1990).

Generally women managers are found in functional areas, such as Personnel management, HRM and marketing. In others, generally less women friendly occupations such as engineering and information technology women have responded by setting up their own professional organizations. In spite of equal pay act, 1975, women managers earn less than their male counterparts. The pay gap is partly explained by the fact that women are much more likely to be in lower grade, lower paid occupations than men. Other factors contributing to pay gap arise out of the fact that women managers have less seniority and are rewarded at a lower rate. One of the major changes in Britain has been the number of company initiative regarding family issues, such as flexible working arrangements child care benefits and provision for dual careers, but the number of company's active increasing family friendly organization remain small. Women do not exhibit interactive leadership style while women are not aware that interactive leadership style is more effective in dynamic environment. Thus it appears that women are not demanding the type of jobs that are most suitable for on the other hand; male managers are unaware that they are underutilizing the unique leadership traits of women.

People are an organizations most important and valuable assets. To fully utilize this resource, it's vital that the strengths of both male and female employees be optimized by

creating an environment of equality and trust in the organization. Corporations need to realize that women represent a special talent pool. It's not only a matter of morality to treat women. It also makes good business sense to use this talented resource effectively. Some of the current business practices or areas of concern highlighted in this paper may help organization in developing corporate policies for treating women fairly and equitably.

Republic People of China

Despite its current openness to western ideas of economic liberalism, Chinese women do not share power equally with men. They are vastly underrepresented in key government positions. Stereotyped views about the nature of women and men are still ubiquitous and often serve to perpetuate discrimination and keep women in inferior positions. Stereotyped views about the nature of the women and men are still ubiquitous and often serve to perpetuate discrimination and keep women in inferior positions. Despite equal opportunities laws male managers still far outnumber women managers in China. In China almost all women managers face the problem of dividing their loyalty between work and family. Vast majority of women managers are married and have children. A patriarchal division of labor still exists in which household tasks are delegated to women and women's domestic role is been viewed as equal to or more important than their careers.

Position of Women Managers In Malaysia-

In Malaysia business organizations appear to provide equal opportunity for employment to women. However women do not perceive that they are underrepresented at all managerial levels and equity in compensation is still an issue. Female managers perceive resistance from both men and women for their advancement while men think they do. This difference in perception is greatest at higher levels of the organizational hierarchy. In all countries major barriers related to women's progress in management.

We found that a significantly larger number of male managers in Corporate Malaysia perceive that various changing social patterns such as a s favorable economic and demographic conditions, supportive government policies, changing family roles and emerging supportive system in addition to women's positive response to the new opportunities. In each country the men controls the centers of political, economic and social power. Management as a profession is controlled primarily by men and women will remain newcomers especially at the top. In all countries major barriers related women's progress in management. These barriers are, stereotypical unfavorable perceptions of women's abilities and qualifications, traditional restrictive attitude towards women's family rules, women's minimal access to the social network from which companies recruit managers and executives, the prevalent discriminatory gender bias against women (Izraeli & Zeira, 1993). In both the industrialized and industrializing worlds, the expansion of banking and other financial services opened opportunities for

women in lower and middle level management positions. In most of the countries during the 1970s and 1980s the growing public sector also absorbed many of the increasingly educated women into lower level managerial positions. As new jobs were created, women moved into lower level management and men moved up the hierarchy. The expansion of public, private and service sectors became major factors promoting women's initial break through into management. In both the Industrialized and increasing global competition heightened the demand for top quality managers and the economic enterprises began to take advantage of the growing availability of qualified women to fill up the new positions. Women managers in Malaysia are as motivated, visionary, and committed to their jobs as their male counterparts. They are assertive and firm in decision making. But stereotypical prejudices against women are still prevalent among Malaysians. Their culture strictly adheres to traditions values that draw a clear line (Mansor, 1994) of distinction between women's and men's role.

JAPAN- Japan has relatively high proportion of woman is the labor market e.g. 41% is 1990. They constitute about 23 % of workforce in large companies and only 0.3 % of them are found in decision making portion. They are found in small and medium – sized enterprise rather than larger corporation. Child care benefits, and provision for dual careers; but the number of companies active is creating 'family-friendly' organizations remaining small. "Opportunity 2000" is probably the most encouraging initiatives in recent year for all

women. But still, remain to be seen whether 'opportunity 2000' will enable women managers to reach a self sustaining critical mass level (Hammond and Halton, 1994). Woman managers of Japan appear to come from families that encourages woman to study and work. Yet the messages women are mixed. Japanese managers are expected to work for long hours and are expected to be available until late at night when they may have special work demands. Married woman managers with home and family responsibilities in the evening would be hard pressed to meet these demand .It is hoped that labor shortage in large companies are, more favorable working environment and create more opportunities for women in Japanese management.

France – The distribution of women managers shows that in 1989, 20% of women were in managerial job. The number of women managers grew from 76400 in 1954 to 649000 in 1989 (in increase of 838%). Although the proportion of women managers has increased, there are very few women in senior positions. Women managers in France succeed as managers when they acquire the experience needed to be promoted to the senior management position. But most women at some stage of their careers, they lose their credibility as potential candidate for senior position. Woman managers in France have full formal equality. French social policy definitely allows women managers to raise children and pursue a professional career at the same time. Many French observers believe that the union's leaders, most of whom are men share management's prejudicial attitude against women (Serdjeniah, 1994).

ISRAEL - In 1991, women constitute 40% of total employed labour force and 16% of the managers and administration in Israel (Aharoni, 1991). They are severely underrepresented in private sector. In the public sector, they are concentrated in public and community services, especially in staff positions which generally carry less authority and have promotion ceilings. With few exceptions women have not been able to break through the glass – ceilings that divides lower and middle level managers from senior management. No systematic data on the promotion of women managers at different levels is available. The development that creates favorable conditions for women entry into management is the growth in female labor pool, management specialization. In Israel, as elsewhere women managers earn less than men managers. Women receive lower entry level. They face problems like blocked opportunity, limited access to information, devalued entitlement and lack of support. Israel's family centered society operates as a disincentive for women to seek management positions as a disincentive for employees to promote then to such positions. It encourages women to seek a less demanding career path. The Managerial roles also produce 'responsibility overloads 'namely strain i.e. experienced as a result of having to cope with two jobs. But the new generations of women managers started to cope in a better way.

South Africa:

In 1991, women constitute 41 percent of the economically active population in south Africa and 20 percent of all manage executives, and administrators (erwee,1994).many changes in south African society supports women’s advancement such as removal of discriminatory clauses in labor legislature, changes in legal status of women and the greater availability of educational opportunity. There is a greater awareness in multinational and South African companies of the aspiration and strength of women and men of all races as well as the problems related to their advancement. More women taking the imitative, such as planning their career development and managing their own business. These innovative women are becoming role models for other women. The problems faced by the south African women manager are almost same as those faced by women the world over. In most companies, women are not recognized as special group entitled to special programmes or as high level human resources with potential to be promoted into senior management. Company training politics, reward structure, and benefits are among the factors that contribute to women’s lack of promotion to position of power. Salary surveys also indicate pay differentials by race and sex. Another problem facing managerial mothers is acute shortage of crèches and day care facilities (Bryant, 1990). In south African culture, women are expected to give priority to their traditional roles as wife and mother, with such qualities as subservience, supportiveness and submissiveness. Career/women. Therefore often find it difficult to resolve. Such role conflict. The stereotypes that some male managers hold

regarding women. Capabilities crate self-fulfilling prophecies. Approximately, one third of the male managers, hold one or more of the following beliefs:’ women are less objective, less aggressive, less capable of contributing to organizational goals, less ambitious, less self confident and less capable of learning mathematical and mechanical skills than their male counterparts. In contrast to the perception of male managers, many business and professional women describe themselves as “career women” who take their career seriously.

United States:

In United States in 1990, 11 percent of working women were managers compared to 14 percent of employed men (US Department of Labor, 1990). Thus we see that in the US the gap has narrowed down significantly. This has been possible due to steady increase in the higher education of women. They are increasingly earning business and management degrees and are gaining entrance into management profession. However, women managers have not achieved equally with their male counterparts in terms of their salaries promotion of appointment to powerful position. 1992, women managers earned 66 percent of male managers’ compensation. Although women are entering managerial profession in comparatively large numbers, they are having great difficulty in securing middle to upper level management position. Only less than 5 percent of the top position is held by women (Fortune Magazine poll of 1000 companies, 1992).Women Managers in US have not achieved equity with their male peers in terms of their ability to pursue a

career and have a family. In 1988, only 60 percent of women managers were married, compared to 75 percent of male managers (US department of labour, 1989a) compared to their male colleagues, executive women are 13 times more likely to be single, separated or divorced and widened (Parasuraman and Greenhouse, 1993). Moreover executive women are significantly more likely to be childless (61 percent than executive (3percent) (Powell, 1988)

Thus it appears that women who have made it into the executive suite have difficulty in reconciling their family life with a high powered career. Yet, A few women have been able to break through the glass-ceiling, secure well compensated, upper level management jobs and it appears that they have achieved professional success and fulfillment. Women managers identify stereotyping and preconceptions as a primary factor impeding their ability to rise the top of their corporations (Hedrick and struggles, 1986) while law are designed to protect the rights of women's and minorities 'they do not guarantee a discrimination free work environment nor favorable court decision.

Status of Women Managers in India-

Before analyzing the status of women managers in India, it is important to discuss the status of Indian women in general. Though the constitution of Indian guarantees 'equality of status' to women, they do not enjoy full equality in the society. The vast majority of women are illiterate, underpaid, exploited, deprived, and disadvantaged. Many of our religious and social practices

have steeped women in a morass of backwardness, illiteracy and ignorance, condemning them to inferior positions in the society, completely dominated by men but urban areas, with the spread of education and the increase in number of working women outside their homes, the situation is gradually changing. Women have rise above socio-cultural traditions to take a serious look at themselves, their potentials and their capabilities .The traditional and well defined role of a housewife has gradually evolved into dual and more self fulfilling role of a working woman and a housewife. Some of the factors are responsible for this change are better education ,changing socio cultural values and the need for supplementary income caused by inflation. But day by day Indian women managers are proving to be successful in rising to senior positions in Indian organizations .We have examples of many women on top –Kiran Bedi, Kalpana, Chawla, Snehlata Deshmukh to name just a few, who with their grit and determination have reached pinnacles of success .So does that mean that women have finally arrived ? Have they broken into male dominated professions, explored new careers and done much more than the generations of women before them. Middle management is a level commens with an age group where women are usually confronted with choices, which force an imbalance between work and home .Initially after marriage they may not have problems but if they shift to nuclear families, then they have to handle the entire responsibility of their houses and after becoming a mother, the time and attention they need to give their house and family further increases. At this point of time,

support and encouragement they get from their husbands and in-laws will determine to what extent they can handle their work related responsibilities properly. Though women are making up a large chunk of the workforce, we see only a handful at the top. In some industries such as advertising, media, public relations, finance, it's your capacity that really matters. If the company thinks you are indispensable, there is nothing that can stop you from growth. There are certain other fields such as engineering, construction, sales where extensive travelling is required; it's generally taken for granted that women employees would not suit the bill. With regard to education, even though there is a gradual increase in the number of female students in different types of education their proportion in professional faculties is much lower than the male students. In spite of increasing parental awareness of girl education and conducive government policies, stereotypical attitude towards professional faculties will prevail.

A review of the economic role played by women in India reveals that Indian women have played a distinctive and significant role in the process of earning a livelihood for the family, putting in sometimes more, sometimes less and often an equal amount of labour compared to men. In India, one third of the labor force consists of women. Modernization, Social change and education have enabled some women to enter new professions, occupations which were totally closed to them earlier (Vidya Rani, 1990). For example the presence of women in public, private services and other jobs in the sector is now an accepted one. In both

public and private sector the employment of women is gradually increasing.

Common features

An analysis of the status of women managers reveals that women managers of different countries share common features. They are –

1. There is a gradual increase in the number of women in managerial profession. Increase in women's education, changing socio-cultural values, increasing awareness and consciousness about women's right and the need for supplementary income some of the reasons.
2. However there is still an under-representation of women in managerial jobs. Most of them hold lower and middle management positions.
3. Major women that restrict women to enter into managerial jobs are stereotypical attitude towards women managers, geographical in mobility of women, conflict between career and family responsibilities.
4. The stereotypical perspectives of women's trait as inferior, hence unsuitable for leadership, restrict women's entry into management. The cultural constraints on women's access to managerial positions can be traced to the deep rooted images of traditional women's role. Gender differences appear more deeply embedded in Asian countries than in western societies.
5. factors that restrict women managers

to reach to the top echelon of the management are: blocked opportunity, lack of support of employers, limited access to information, restricted access to training, fear of success, marriages and motherhood, prioritization of family over career, stereotyping and perceptions.

6. Discrimination against women managers exists, relating to remuneration, job allocation, performance appraisal, promotion, training opportunities and reward structure.
7. The exclusion of women from policy formulation and decision making relegates them to peripheral, supportive activities, women are better represented in departments like personal, human resources management, marketing, public relations and training and there is a scarcity of women in engineering and finances.
8. Women managers face dual burden work and family which creates a lot of stress, and strain and role conflict. Patriarchal division of labor relegates household tasks, child care etc. to women and women's domestic roles are viewed as equal to as or more important than their careers. This affects the career perspective and prospect of women directly.
9. The dual burden is further enhanced because of lack of arrangements of flexible working arrangements, lack of child care benefits, acute shortage of crèches and day care facilities and

recently policies.

10. Changes are taking place, as a result of which more number of women are recruited for managerial jobs. The major changes are equal remuneration act, removal of discriminatory clauses in labor legislation, changes in legal status of women; initiatives taken by NGO's, business women clubs and media, training programs conducted by organizations, greater awareness of women relating to their career development. But these changes are yet to provide discrimination free work environment.

- But in spite of all these facts that some leading organizations in India were employing women in highly responsible positions. Women managers are being praised by their male counterparts for their soft skills like caring, understanding, good team work, good communication skills, patience, perseverance etc. There are so many Indian women who are at the top management positions or who really had reached the helm of organizations.

- Indira had the rare distinction of being the highest ranking Indian women in the corporate world. She started her career at Mettur beardsilly from where she shifted to Johnson and Johnson .In 1976, She left India and joined Yale University's Graduate School of management. Then she worked for the Boston consultancy group, Asea brown Boveri & Motorola .In 1994, she joined PepsiCo and rose through

the ranks to become the CEO in April 2000. In Dec she was made the president of the company.

- Naina Lal Kidwai graduated in economics from the Delhi University and completed her Chartered Accountancy course in 1977. She started her career in the mid-1980s at ANZ Grindlays bank, where she rose through the ranks in 2002. She joined as vice chairman and managing Director of HSBC, which reached the pinnacles of success.
- Indu Jain MD, Times group, Shobhna Bhartiya MD-Hindustan Times, Rita Dixit -managing director JP Hotels and JP Greens.
- The women at the top can be distinguished into two categories. The first group would be of those who were at the helm and proved themselves.
- Naina Lal Kidwai of HSBC and Vidya Chabria of the jumbo group both with the improved rankings in the Fortune list over last year. Kidwai is one of the highest paid women executives in the glamorous, highly competitive, and

networked world of investment banking.

- Vidya Chabria, on the other hand owes her position in the ranking to her late husband Manu Chabria, who single handedly built a liquor to electronic goods empire in Dubai and India.
- Sangeeta Talwar (IIM-L) is the latest addition to the list of women who have broken India's glass ceiling. Talwar, a former India Executive of Nestle, has become the CEO of Mattel India. Thus there are ample evidences to show that the scene is changing in India too, as it is in the rest of the world while it is heartening to see women entering more and more professional courses. How far would they go without encountering a glass ceiling is a point to be debated. Indian sector still does not have women heading high profile companies in this sector. In the long run, if the interests of the business have to prevail, then artificial barriers and glass-ceilings have to perish, making way for capabilities and talent as the basis for career advancement rather than race and gender.

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