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Advancing Women in Leadership; Crossing Borders: An Analysis of the Barriers and Attributes of Organisations in India

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Abstract: In India, the situation of women is varying with more and more women getting educated not only in common streams but also in industrial and professional courses. Along with their rising level of education in a variety of streams there has been substantial increase in their workforce contribution. Women have attained incredible achievement in what was once considered the “male domain”, of the working world. Advancement of women in supervision jobs has not kept pace with the correspondence boost in the number of working women. Their existence in senior management level is insignificant. Women are graduating and entering management positions, yet there is a bottleneck at middle management levels while entry is easier, progression slows down after the middle level and in most situations, regardless of their technical and professional qualifications or achievements, women are prevented from climbing up in the corporate ladder to reach the top. Women comprise a large segment of the available managerial talent across the globe, but their representation at top level managerial positions in business and public administration, is very low. This study provides background information on issues pertaining to women image and addresses the problems and barriers encountered by millions of working women in industries. However there are certain constrains faced by Indian women managers which are unique to Indian situation and are more to do with cultural and social factors which can be traced back to deep rooted images of traditional women’s role.

Key words: leadership, women managers, Indian women, industries, barriers.

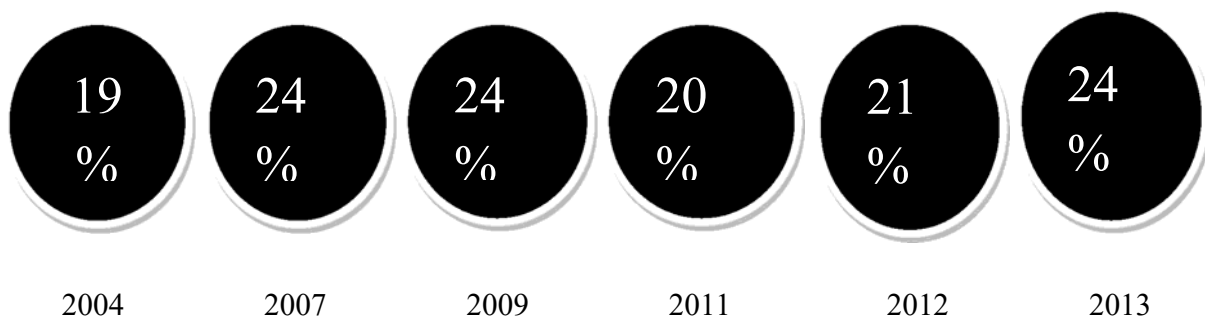
Introduction

India once set aside as destitute and disinclined, is now one of the predominant and expeditious growing economies in the world. The narration of women in leadership roles always speaks of oppose and hard work and Challenges surround her from her early childhood, but she is intellectual and sharp, her wit, charm, ambition and abilities to be influential have led her to be a leader. Leadership is defined as the pattern of behaviors’ that leaders display during their work with and through others (Hersey and Blanchard, 1993). According to Kavanaugh and Ninemeier (2001),

there are three factors that determine the type of leadership style: leaders' characteristics, subordinates' characteristics and the organisation environment.

There is a myth in corporate India that women executives cannot lead both social and working life successfully and they give utmost priority to the family only and it negatively impacts the performance graphs in their career ladder. The late Grace Hopper, management expert and the first female admiral in the U.S.Navy said "you manage things; you lead people" Females in India are not only stand for or epitomize in top executives of formal leadership but keep on stepping out in alteration from middle to top management roles thus creating a leaking pipeline of leadership.

Figure: 1 Situation of Women in Leadership in Indian Context:



Source: National School of Government (2013)

In above Figure we can analysis the current situation of women in India that how the percentage of women in leadership is increasing day by day .In 2004 19% of women are in leadership position in India, but in 2007 It increases by 24% and in 2009 it remains the same as in 2007 (i.e.24%), in 2011 it decreases by 4% and stand up to 20 % in 2012 it increase by 1% (i.e.21%) and in 2013 it raises up to 24% same as in 2007 and 2009.

Literature Review

One explanation for women's underrepresentation in elite leadership positions points to the undervaluation of women's effectiveness as leaders. This explanation is supported by several theoretical perspectives including lack of fit theory (Heilman, 2001) Despite research showing that men may be perceived as better suited for and more effective as leaders than women (e.g., Carroll, 2006; Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992), some popular press publications have reported the opposite: that there may be a female gender advantage in modern organizations that require a "feminine" type of leadership (e.g. Conlin, 2003; R. Williams, 2012).

The arguments for a "female advantage" in leadership generally stem from the belief that women are more likely than men to adopt collaborative and empowering leadership styles, while men are disadvantaged because their leadership styles include more command-and-control behaviors and the assertion of power. Yet, an academic discussion among leadership and gender researchers criticized the simplicity of these arguments, proposing that studies should not be asking whether there is a perceived gender difference in leadership but rather when and why there may be gender differences in perceived leadership effectiveness (Eagly & Carli, 2003a, 2003b; Vecchio, 2002, 2003).

Objective of Study:

The main objectives of the study are:

- To study various traits of Indian women as a leader.
- To encounter various Indian barriers and opportunities of women as a leader.

Methodology:

a) Primary Research: The study was conducted in Kanpur, because it served a great deal of convenience for the research worker in terms of accessibility, ease of rapport building, time, money, and efforts. The data has been collected from 30 women by personal interview which are 10 from banks, 10 from organizations and 10 from academic institutes to understand the level of involvement of women in leadership. The snow ball sampling has been used for collecting the Data. The objective of this quantitative survey research was to examine the barriers as well as opportunities that women leaders encountered in their career to the management.

The research questions guiding this study were: (a) What are the organizational cultural conditions and practices that posed barriers for you in obtaining your current position of leadership?, (b) What are the social conditions and practices that posed barriers for you in obtaining your current position of leadership?, (c) What the organizational cultural conditions and practices have posed opportunities for women in upper leadership, (d) What are the social conditions and practices have created opportunities for women in upper leadership?

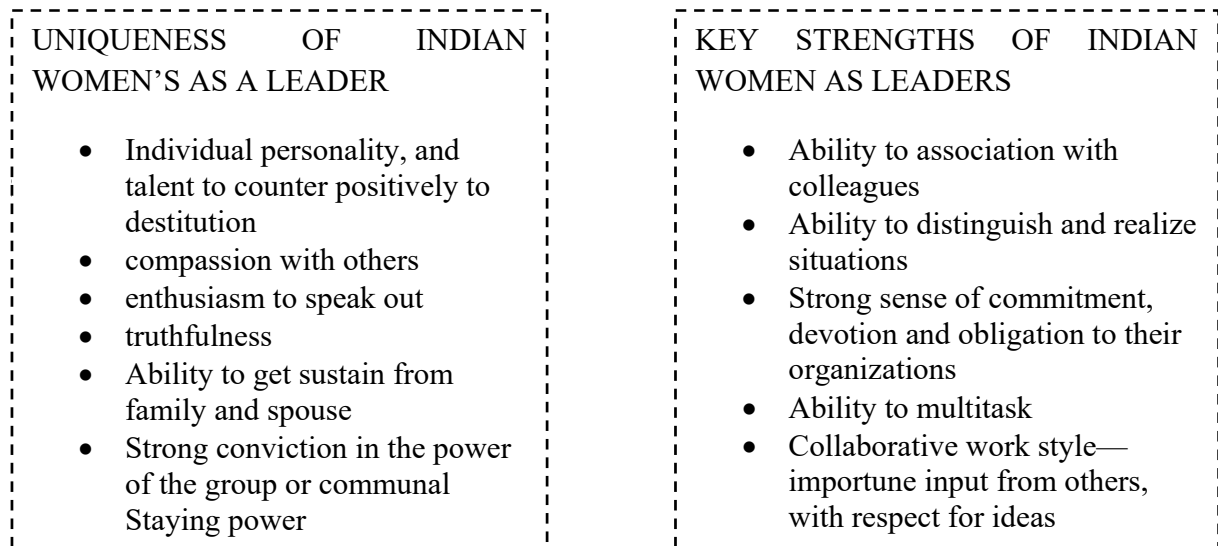
b) Secondary Research: Secondary data was accumulated through various sources like internet, reference materials, newspapers, magazines, Published reports; news reports of news channels, articles in journals were used.

Circumstances and Traits of Women Leaders in India:

The condition of women in India is more depressed than the rest of the world. They paid half of three-quarters of the money while their male counterparts earn for the same job. India is predominantly agricultural country. Women do more than half of the total agricultural work. But their work is not valued. On an average a woman works 15 to 16 hours a day unpaid at home and underpaid outside. According to 1971 census, every one-fourth works in the country is an agricultural labor. One third of the agricultural labor is female. Only 2.5 percent of the central government employees are women.

Women employees, holding important description, have to be vigilant by their performance as they are supposed to represent womankind. Effective leadership rewards brazenness, sternness and sovereignty, which are usually documented as “masculine” personality. Women are projected to be cheerful, reliant and nurturing characteristics. Researchers have noted that people who are a successful manager behaves like a masculine characteristics (Burton & Parker, 2010; Frey, James, & Eitzen, 1991).

Figure: 2 Traits and Strengths of Indian Women as a Leader



Source: Author

Meticulous Contribution of Leaders Who Are Women:

The gender of the person becomes significant while discussing leadership traits because women naturally react to their lived realities. If women feel that their concerns can be addressed through their participation, they do mobilize and try to push their agendas. India being a patriarchal society, women are able to identify with a woman more easily. But there is an important distinction between ‘effective’ leaders and leaders per se.

The Case for Women’s Leadership: Chanda Kochhar, Managing Director & CEO, ICICI Bank Limited

Role: At the wheel of India’s second-largest bank and the leading in the private sector, Chanda Kochhar is extensively recognised for her role in determining the retail banking sector in India and for her leadership of the ICICI Group, as well as her assistance to various forums in India and globally.

Career: Chanda Kochhar began her career, with erstwhile ICICI Limited in 1984.

Promotion: elevated to the Board of Directors of ICICI Bank in 2001.

Success story: She was instrumental in establishing ICICI Bank during the 1990s, and subsequently headed the infrastructure finance and corporate banking business in ICICI Limited. In 2000, she took on the challenge of building the nascent retail business, with strong focus on technology, innovation, process reengineering and expansion of distribution and scale. The Bank achieved a leadership position in this business. During 2006-2007, she successfully led the bank's corporate and international banking businesses during a period of heightened activity and global expansion by Indian companies. From 2007 to 2009, she was the Joint Managing Director & Chief FINANCIAL Officer during a critical period of rapid change in the global financial landscape. She was elevated as Managing Director & CEO of ICICI Bank in 2009 and is responsible for the Bank's diverse operations in India and overseas. She also chairs the boards of the Bank's principal subsidiaries, which include India's leading private sector life and general insurance companies. Chanda Kochhar is a member of the Prime Minister's Council on TRADE & Industry, the Board of Trade, High-Level Committee on Financing Infrastructure, US-India CEO Forum and UK-India CEO Forum. She is a member of the boards of the Indian Council for Research on Inter International Economic Relations, National Institute of Securities Markets, Institute of International Finance and International Monetary Conference. She was co-chair of the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in 2011. She was conferred with the Padma Bhushan, one of India's topmost civilian honors, in 2011.

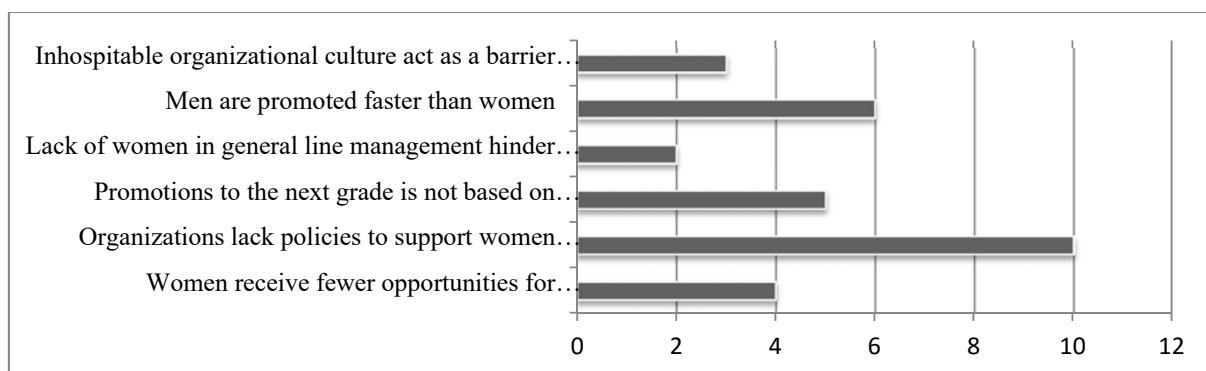
Findings

The purpose of this research study was to examine barriers, as well as opportunities, that woman leaders have encountered in their career paths to the presidency. The research questions guiding this study are:

A) *Barriers:*

Research Question One: What are the organizational cultural conditions and practices that posed barriers for you in obtaining your current position of leadership?

Figure: 3 Organizational cultural that posed Barriers for women



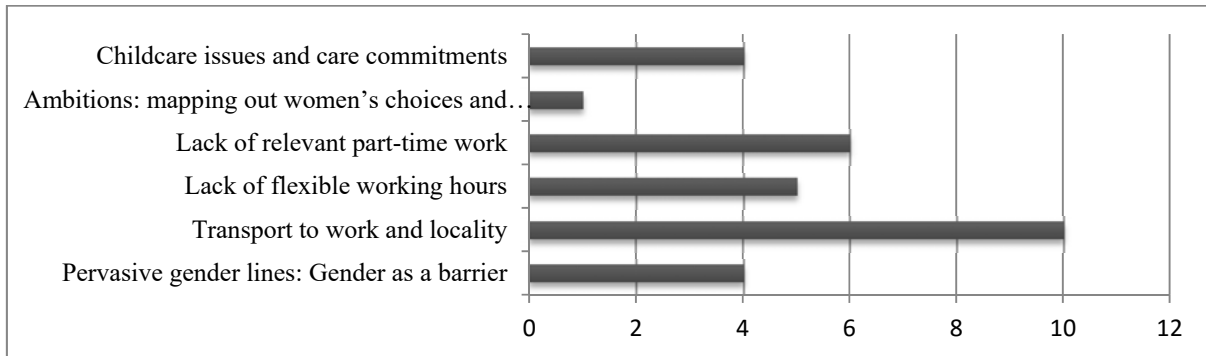
Source: Author's calculation based on primary results

In above figure we can analyze that 3 women said that inhospitable organizational culture is a barrier for them in organization and 6 women says that men are promoted faster than women is also a barrier for them , 5 women says that promotions to next grade is not based on performance, 2 women's termed that lack of women in general line management is a barrier for them while 10

women says that the biggest barrier for them is organizational policies which do not support women's career progress and only 4 women says that women receives fewer opportunities for professional development at work is the barrier for them .

Research Question Two: What are the social conditions and practices that posed barriers for you in obtaining your current position of leadership?

Figure 4: Social Conditions that posed Barriers for women



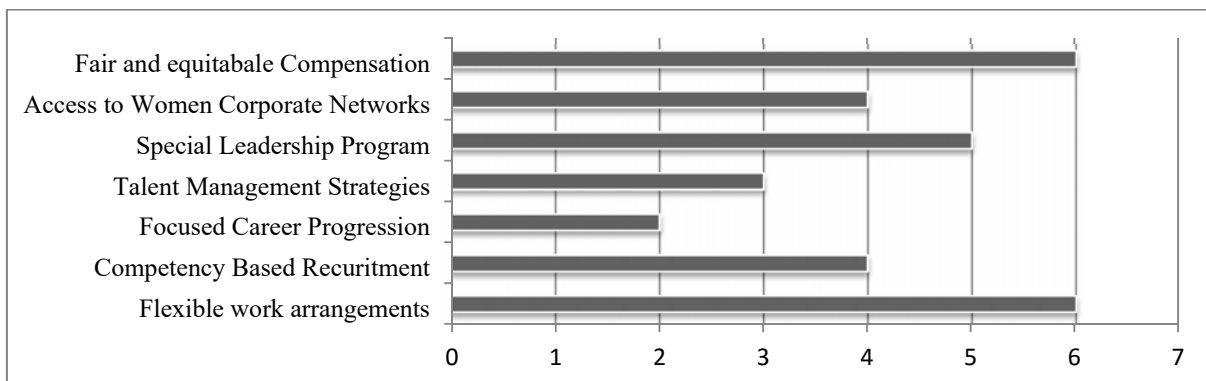
Source: Primary Data

In above figure we can analyze that 4 women said that Childcare issues and care commitments is a barrier for them which thwart them from entering a leadership position in organization and 1 women says that Ambitions: mapping out women's choices and decisions is also a barrier for them ,6 women says that Lack of relevant part-time work , 5 women's termed that Lack of flexible working hours is a barrier for them while 10 women says that the biggest barrier for them is Transport to work and locality and only 4 women says that Pervasive gender lines: Gender as a barrier is the social barrier for them .

b) Opportunities:

Research Question Three: What are the organizational cultural conditions and practices that posed opportunities for you in obtaining your current position of leadership?

Figure 5: Organizational cultural Conditions that posed Opportunities for women

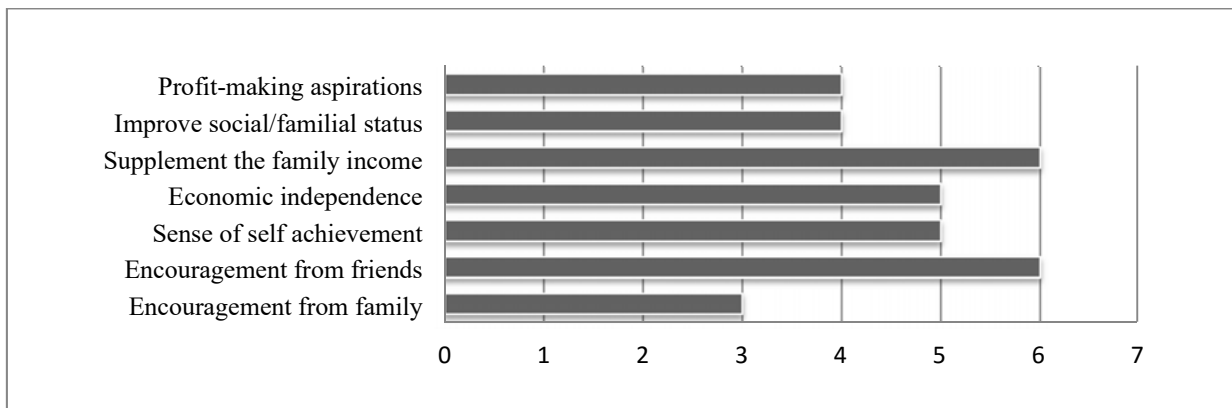


Source: Primary Data

In above figure we can analyze that 6 women said that Fair and equitable schemes of organization is the opportunity for the women, 4 women says that access to women corporate networks is the opportunity for the women for making their place in organization ,2 women says that women leadership programs will help women in enhancing their leadership skills , 3 says that talent management opportunities are also the opportunities for women in organization ,5 says that Focused Career Progression and 4 women says that competency based recruitment also helps women in enhancing their skills as a leaders, and 6 women says that flexible working hours is the opportunity for the women for making their almost presence in organization.

Research Question Four: What are the social conditions and practices that posed Opportunities for you in obtaining your current position of leadership?

Figure 6: Social Conditions that posed Opportunities for women



Source: Primary Data

In above figure we can analyze that 3 women said that Profit-making aspirations is a opportunity for them to build their position in organization and 6 women says that Improve social/familial status is also a opportunity , 5 women says to Supplement the family income , 2 women's termed that Economic independence is also a opportunity for them to do something while 6 women says that the biggest opportunity for them is Sense of self achievement and 4 women says that Encouragement from friends and 4 women says that Encouragement from family are the factors for which they are motivated to generate their situate in organization as a leader.

Success Factors Used To Ensure Equitable Representation of Women Leadership Positions

Women showed a bit more democratic/participative leadership styles and a bit less directive/autocratic styles than did their male counterparts (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Another type of leadership such as transformational (being a role model), transactional (reward and punishment)

and laissez-faire (neglect of responsibility), and found some provocative findings (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003).

Figure 7: Success Factors



Source: Author

Conclusion

Leadership development increases women's portfolios of human, social, and organisations resulting in benefits at both the individual and organizational levels. Little difference has been found between women's and men's ambition; however the path to senior roles for women is often more demanding. Women want to proceed, are equally as ambitious as men and opportunities for learning, expansion, promotion and progression are a high priority (EOWA 2008a). Each of the developmental practices provides opportunities for women to gain experience and enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities through their various learning interactions. Significant efforts to ensure women's rights are yet to be made and even then, they need to reach the women at the bottom of the hierarchy within Indian extractive industries. It is also understood concurrently as manipulating the categories of gender, organizes and signifies power at levels above the individual, from cultural meaning to government policies. Women must take control of their own careers and identify individual learning agendas for their own leadership development. Organizations have a responsibility to provide leadership development offerings specifically tailored to the learning and development needs of women.

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