

Chapter 8

CONCLUSIONS & MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

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8.1 Conclusion

A vast body of research exist explaining exclusion of female gender from the formal work places. The studies focus on either difference hypotheses or similarity hypothesis to explain the phenomena of women's participation in the work force. The integration approach is missing. The slow progress of women along career ladder has been the subject of much debate in recent years. Research studies were again context specific and studies in one context may not be universally applicable. But threads of commonality worldwide on pathetic representation of women in senior management position reflect the Indian situation as well. State Bank of India, the largest public sector bank in India got its first woman chairman in 2013, after 207 years of its existence. The change popularly termed as 'breaking of the glass ceiling' has happened during the course of this research. Four other Public sector banks also are chaired by women. However this does not reflect the career progression of women managers down the line. The purpose of this study was to explore the factors facilitating or preventing women managers' career progression in spite of the Bank professing a fair policy of promotion, giving equality of opportunity to all irrespective of gender for career progression. Apparently performance and merit seemed to be the consideration for career progression. Still women lag behind. So the purpose was to scratch the surface to find out deeper dimensions determining career progression of women officials in the bank.

The results of the study provide valuable insights as the data represent actual female managers' perspective on career progression. While Managerial Aspirations, Competence, Supportive Superiors, Learning and Development and Family Support emerge as important enablers, preference factors do reduce their propelling forces for career progression. On the other hand preventers get enhanced in force and magnitude when interacted with Preference factors. Thus the Propellers and preventers were also an expression of individual preference of women managers leading to career progression. These preferences were dictated by larger social system, its culture, values and gender role

specifications. The resultant model that highlights the role of preference factors as moderators is one of the major contributions of this study for future research.

The propellers that finally emerged as significant were Managerial Aspiration, Competence, Learning and Development which were largely under the control of the individual. Supportive superiors and Family Support were largely under control of significant others in the life of the woman manager. The Manager emphasizes support from superiors in the Organization and support from family members at home to grow and prosper in the career. These findings support earlier research findings by Ragin's & Sundstrom (1989) Morrison et al (1992), Becker(1993). Metz &Tharenou (2001), Moro & Norman (2003), Becker (2009), Sunder & Kumar (2012) Sachdeva (2014).

The preventers are the Masculine Culture that dictates everything in the organization by a male code of conduct. The hierarchical structure, the long sitting practices, 24*7 culture segregates work from family. It also looks down upon family work as nothing or of no importance vis-a-vis office work. This prevents talented women manager's growth especially in a collectivist culture like India where family is the most important unit for development and nurturing of human beings and the mother is central figure as far as responsibility for household and family are concerned. An off shoot of this is, career oriented women were shunned in practice by a typical male resistance to their promotion. Contrarily women managers may themselves feel uncomfortable to grow within the male environment and self-limit themselves. They may also be socialized to believe that their growth is in contradiction to their primary responsibility for family and opt out of promotion.

Perception and stereotypes about gender role may also strengthen the gap. In a patriarchal society woman follows the man to his house after marriage. This in turn values and eulogizes the role of women as followers and not leaders. So women themselves may hold the stereotype of being a follower and perpetuate it along with men. Feminine Challenge is obviously the result of a Masculine Culture. The challenge to adopt a leadership style comfortable to man to be accepted as a leader, to behave like male, showing queen bee syndrome by socializing with male colleagues etc prevents women's career progression by putting undue pressure on them. These findings also confirm earlier research findings by Adler(1988), Osland(1998) Munchus(1993), Goodman(2003), Parker

et.al,(1998),Burke(2003),Mathur(2006),Gupta,Koshal&Koshal(2006),Jamali(2007),Ogden (2008),Sealy(2010) Akin dale(2011), Chahal(2013).

While much emphasis was given to Mentoring and Networking by earlier research (Kottis1993, Ragins et al.1998, Tharenou 2001, Metle2001, Jamali et al.2007 and Tlaiss and Kauser.2010), they did not emerge as statistically significant in this study after multiple regression. This may be due to the fact that the women bank managers do not consider these factors as major determinants for their career progression.

The role of preference variables (Priority to Family, Women Friendly Policies and Dream Organization) as moderator highlights the importance of individual preference leading to career progression. These factors moderate propellers and preventers impacting career progression of women managers. The hitherto unexplored role of individual preference in career progression was one of the major contributions of this research. Three preference factors were studied here. Further research may explore other preference factors impacting career progression of women managers.

Another important finding is reverse moderation of Preference factors by Propellers and Preventers. Reverse moderation happens when the moderator variable itself gets moderated by the predictor variables. In this study Dream Organization became significant moderated by Propellers. Similarly other two Preference factors of Priority to Family and Women Friendly Policies became significant moderated by Preventers. This is a new contribution to research and may be explored further by future research.

The objective of optimum utilization of human capital is defeated if the potential of half of this resource (The women) were marginalized by way of its exclusion from senior management positions having larger scope to contribute to self, organization and society. This study has further contributed by investigating the phenomenon of underutilization of female work force and delineating the underlying factors responsible for their marginalization from the perspective of the female managers and their preferences.

Managerial Implications:

Companies that make effort to address these issues can enjoy positive outcomes and benefits. Companies can benefit from cost saving of reduced recruitment, retention of

key female talent and improved corporate image. A specific focus on females might further strengthen the stereotypical segregation of gender roles leading to what is called in the words of Benshop and Dooreward (1998), a “mummy track”. This would serve to categorize the feminine gender as a homogenous group ignoring the intra-group individual differences. The need is for integrating, not segregating or treating women with sameness approach.

A need for a holistic approach that seeks to reorient the attitude towards work as respectable irrespective of the nature and place of work will go a long way in integrating women managers into the work force. The research gap is the need for integration of multiple roles played by women mainly household responsibility, care taking of children, sick and elderly; and professional work. The leave policies like maternity leaves or transfer policies of posting near family should not be regarded as a favor to the woman officer concerned. It is a favor to the nation building process in the form of giving birth to healthy children and nurturing them as future human capital. Often this being perceived as nonprofessional investment by the organization goes against professional development of women managers. As a consequence women managers were penalized by denial of promotion or other growth opportunities. An integrating approach would regard these tasks as respectable and compensate women for ‘lost time and opportunity cost’ rather than penalizing.

Scope for Future Research:

Three preference variables were taken regarding what women look for in a company to continue and prosper. Further research may look into other such variables which were not manifested.

The research is based on women only respondents. The sample may further include male managers to have a comparative understanding of male and female perspectives.

The between group variance was an indicator of heterogeneity among women as a group in their responses to the research issues. This may be further explored.

One of the major findings is the difference between younger and older group. Further research may explore this to find generational changes and track the changes in mindset of present generation towards building a better cohesive work place.

The study is limited to one public sector bank, may be expanded to include entire public sector bank universe in India. This may further be expanded to include Private sector banks, foreign banks and have comparative analysis of public and private sector banks .Last but not the least the Research may be extended other sectors also and other nations.

Reference

- [1] Benschop, & Doorewaard, H. (1998). Covered by equality: the gender subtext of organizations, *Organization Studies*, 19(5): 787-805.