

WOMEN EXECUTIVES IN INDIA

(A Comparative Study of Public and Private Sector Organizations in Visakhapatnam)

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CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

SUMMARY

A country may consist of abundant and inexhaustible natural and physical resources, necessary technology and capital, but unless there are people who can manage and utilize them in the most appropriate way, the nation cannot make rapid strides towards economic and social advancement. A number of studies in different countries have proved that the success in many fields of development is accompanied by a high degree of managerial skills and qualities.

In common parlance a manager is a person who manages things and gets the work done through other people. Management is the process of planning, organizing, directing and the accomplishment of the common goals of the organization. The main objectives of management are to contribute to the profitability and managerial roles. Efficient managers run organizations effectively and stimulate industrial growth which will accelerate economic growth and prosperity of the economy. They should possess various skills like decision making, Problem solving, adaptability, Change management, leadership, communication, proper resources allocation, foresight etc.

Educated Indian women are an important source of talent to Indian organizations. Most of the Indian organizations have not yet fully utilized this pool of talent. But the growing gender diversity in Indian managerial positions now offers a pathway for change for Indian women in management, cultural and social change means a shift away from traditional views, stereotypes and social values and attitudes. The change is slow for Indian women to gain managerial positions, yet they are making a noticeable progress in organization.

In spite of this encouraging trend, many women managers remain at lower or the middle management positions and find it very difficult to make to the top. They experience career plateau much before reaching to top managerial and leadership positions. This is because women managers continue to be haunted by problems like discrimination, stereotyping, sexual harassment, indifference, insensitivity, inequity and inequality. It is in this context, the present study was undertaken.

The present study was undertaken with the following objectives.

The sampling technique was based on Graicuna's span of management theory. Hence the sample included women managers who have a minimum of two subordinates directly under their control. The sample comprised of 175 woman executives in Visakhapatnam. The present study is restricted to women managers working in various organizations located in Visakhapatnam.

For the purpose of this study both Primary and secondary data were collected. The study covers diverse sections of women managers in different industries and different sectors from various public and private sector organizations in Visakhapatnam. A pilot study was conducted for testing the suitability and effectiveness of the questionnaire, on selected women managers.

Since the study is an exploratory one, it is based significantly on primary data. The required data was obtained through a semi structured questionnaire. In addition, short interviews, personal interactions and informal talks with the respondents were done. The questionnaire was designed to obtain the demographic profile of women executives, their motivational profile, problems prospects and attitudes and the management styles they adopt in performing their functions.

As most of the data collected and analyzed is observed data, from a sample size of 175 respondents, and the questionnaire administered is very exhaustive, most of the analysis is presented in descriptive style using tabulation with percentages. For the questions dealing with motivation, job satisfaction and management style, a comparative analysis was done between women managers of lower, middle and top management.

Management is the dynamic and life giving element in any and every organization and managers are responsible for such management. Managers are the coordinators and directors of the organizations. They are the individuals charged with streamlining the work flow, coordinating efforts, Meeting goals and providing leadership. In terms of authority, managers possess the right to command others in their areas of responsibility. Each manager reports to someone higher in the organization in what constitutes a theoretical chain of command from the top to the bottom of the structure.

Women as managers are of great significance to the family, society and the economy at large. Managerial jobs command more respect and status in organizations such jobs increase the earning capacity of the women. Managerial jobs call for the requirement of a diverse skill set, abilities and knowledge. To acquire managerial ranks women will be encouraged to set higher education in Professional courses, to learn all the necessary soft skills and to mould their personality in such a way that enhances their confidence and strengths. This will result in the empowerment of women. Empowered women are more confident, assertive and happy. This will in turn have a positive impact on their physical and psychological well being. Happy people are productive people. Happy people are productive people. Happy women will be more productive in terms of their performance both at home and in their profession. Increased Professional Productivity of women fetches them higher earnings, which will improve their economic and social status. Increased and improved economic participation of women (who compromise of almost fifty percent of the human resources of the country) will lead to the acceleration of economic growth and development of the nation.

The present data is related to the demographic factors like Age, Educational Qualification, Marital Status, Number of Children, Income, Professional Profile, their prospects, problems and also the attitudes etc of the women executives were collected. When deviates from her traditional role of just a housewife, there are definitely certain Psychological factors behind such activity. The data relating to such psychological factors like the attitudes, perceptions, aspirations, achievements, opinions, beliefs, support system and other factors of the psychographic profile are also analyzed. This analysis was presented in descriptive form using tabulation and percentile method.

Women in management face many challenges. These challenges may be domestic challenges, professional challenges or personal challenges. The domestic challenges are those relating to balance between home and office, work-family conflict, conflicts at home, domestic duties and responsibilities etc. Professional challenges like health problems, stress and burnout, time management, dual roles and responsibilities, problem and constraints of being a women etc., may hinder the growth and development of the status of the women managers. The data related to challenges has been analyzed and presented in descriptive form using tabulation and percentile form.

The major revelations of the Present study with regards to the various element of women executives, the management style adopted by them and their challenges have been analyzed and summarized as the finding of the study.

FINDINGS:

An attempt was made to understand the profile of the women managers in Visakhapatnam. In this regard an enquiry was undertaken in regard to the various demographic and psychographic variables of the women managers. The revelations are presented here.

Majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 40 to 50 years which is 54.3%. 65.1% of the respondents are post graduate courses. It is found that the graduates are very few in number i.e. 34.9% who have made it to managerial positions purely on the basis of seniority. 61.1% of the respondents belongs to BC and the second category is SC is 17.7% . It is found that the respondents belong to public sector work for Eight hours per day where as the respondents of private sector work for Eight to Ten hours per day depending on their workload. The respondents who were working in Private organization has a better childhood and Education when compare with Public sector working women and the difference between their opinion on this childhood education is significant at 5% level of significance.

The women managers of private sector feel that they are chosen their field, of their career choice and they fulfill their ambitions which they are interested when compare to the women managers of public sector. The average score of the women managers of public sector (1.515) are significantly greater than the women managers of private sector (1.443), which reveals that public employees have the opportunity to do their best and they utilize their abilities and experience independently and further, they carried out their assignment satisfactorily and they have enough authority to make decision, whereas in the case of the women managers of private sector it is not happening that much.

It was found that the growth of both public and private sector are greater than “2” which reveals that the growth for both the sectors are more than satisfactorily level. The respondents who are working in private sector is given significantly better opinion on superior, colleagues and subordinate relations with them when compare with Public sector. The respondents of Public sector (2.469, the mean value) is significantly greater than respondents of Private sector (2.061,

the mean value) on the dimension “Family and career orientation” i.e., the women managers of public sector are not facing any problems with their family and career orientation and even they are not in a situation to resign their job if their husband wants them to leave their job. Further, the women managers of public sector are also convince their in-laws or parents to not leave the job. But in the case of the women managers of private sector it is not happening they are not that much of happy with their unsecure Private Job. Mostly of women managers have left their early jobs for better career growth prospects or higher job positions when compared to increase in salary.

The women managers of private sector is significantly lower than the women managers of public sector at 5% level of significance i.e., the women who are working in private organization are unable to balance their work in home as well as in Job. Further, they have no flexible working hours, even though their have to stretch their timings to complete their targets. So taking into consideration of all these things they were unable to spend time with their family and friends, whereas in the case of Public sector these are quite opposite.

The attitudes of the women managers of public sector is significantly better than the women managers of private sector basing on their higher mean score i.e., the women who are working in public sector has more courageous when compare with private sector basing on their opinion on politics and reservation for women and their role in the society.

In response why the women managers choice management as their profession, all the respondents gave a combination of factor like growth prospects, interest, and aptitude; lucrative, pay and rewards; convenience; autonomy; power; and status and recognition in the society. Majority of the women managers believed that women make much better than men. The strengths of women as managers, were reported as management skills, capable of multi tasking creativity, adjusting nature more patients, more tolerance levels, can maintain good relations, level headed, emotionally balanced, effective leaders, they bring integrity to the organizations, good at resource allocation, good at decision making, and problem solving, and effective communication.

Most of the women managers opined that they are less corrupt than men and they are more discipline and have a better code of conduct. Cultural Environment has a major impact on

women in management. This has been true with responses of women managers with regard to why they are so few women in management. In India, because all the respondents are stated reasons like lack of Education, Social Stigma, Employer's Attitude, Parents/Family Attitude.

Most of the women managers opined that they need to have all the skills such as Communication Skills, Leadership Skills, Decision Making and Problem Solving Skills. The present study revealed that women managers have role models whom they take as inspiration or like whom they aspire. Most of the respondents said that Indira Gandhi and Susmaswaraj were the good politicians.

Challenges of Women Managers:

Throughout the world and in India too there is increasing role of women employees, both in the managerial and non Managerial Positions. As increasing number of women are proving that when it comes to taking up the corporate challengers, they have much more than just a pretty face to show. However, there are factors that hamper their growth within the organization. Hence women managers are confronted with their share of challengers are presented below.

Balancing Career and Family:

Many talented women managers are facing the dilemma of how best to balance and fulfill the needs of a Profession and the family. She faces the problem of maintaining her career and the family life. Their responsibility is more for managing home compared to their male counterparts because of the cultural constraints and gender roles defined and the traditions developed over the ages. Through this Problems cannot be avoided altogether, but can be overcome to some extent by providing some sort of support system at home and at work in the form of flexible working hours, Telecommuting, Crèche facility at work place and if possible providing job opportunity to the spouse in the same organization. Work life balance challenges impact women's advancement and, if not dealt with at the right time, may contribute to the glass-ceiling phenomenon. Assumptions are often made regarding women's availability to do a job without interference from family responsibilities. Higher roles ask for higher commitments, which may include working more than 40 hours of work per week. Those who put in longer hours generally rise faster, leaving those behind who are unable to dedicate more hours to work due to family responsibilities. Another issue is the double bind that women face when it comes to

leadership behavior. The research shows that when a women is assertive and takes charge, people often react negatively, but if she fulfills the Prescribed Stereotype of being a kind and gentle women, she may be regarded as a poor leader. These factors often act as obstacles thereby barring women from climbing up to corporate ladder. Women's Managerial success in smaller companies has been ignored and appears to carry less value in comparison with senior roles in traditional and larger corporate settings.

Glass Ceiling:

"Glass ceiling" is an invisible barrier that determines the level to which a women can rise in an organization. It prevents women from occupying leadership positions in the organization. It prevents women from occupying leadership positions in the organizations. It is generally based on attitudinal or organizational bias. There are many signs that make the "glass ceiling" visible in the organizations. A major sign is the difference in compensation of women. Women executives are paid for less than their male counterparts. Another indicator of the "glass ceiling" is when women's advancement is hampered by the corporate culture. For example, corporate policies and practices can maintain the status quo by keeping men in positions of corporate power. Stating that women outperform in care taking qualities while men outperform in taking charge qualities, is how the organizations vindicate this bias. Despite better performances, women receive less approval and recognition from their male bosses and are slower to be promoted. Such stereotypes act as main reasons of why women fail to reach to the top in an organization and. "Glass ceiling" can have different variations like "Brass Ceiling", Bamboo Ceiling, Concrete Ceiling Expatriate Glass Ceiling.

Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment is another challenge faced by women managers. The equal employment opportunity commission (EEOC), USA has defined sexual harassment as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment is not very uncommon practice particularly in those organizations which are male dominated and the lack of conducive environment for women employees, such harassment may be at any level, from executive offices to assembly lines.

Career Plateau:

A career plateau is a point in the career of an employee where the Possibility of Vertical Promotion within the official hierarchy becomes very low or absent altogether. This is usually seen for women in the middle Management where their career growth opportunities to top level almost cease to exist. This is also called as career stagnation. Career Plateau will have an adverse affect on the motivation and job satisfaction of women managers.

The Pipe Line Problems:

The Pipeline Theory describes the situation in which women are placed on a track that would eventually promote them to a top executive positions or higher leadership roles. However, this process is long and women sometimes spend 20-30 years in pipeline waiting to advanced to talk management positions. While many argue that women in the pipe line are becoming sufficiently trained and educated to compete for top level positions, others contend that women in the pipeline are being unjustly held back from advancement. The later would call this situation the “Leaky Pipe” describing a situation in which the pipeline has not advanced women to top level position due to “Leaks” and “Blockages” in the pipe. For example some believe that there are not enough women placed in the pipeline. Secondly women make many sacrifices and trade off while moving up the pipeline. Lastly the environment in many companies discourages women from advancing because they are male dominated.

Gender Discrimination:

Yet another kind of challenge faced by women managers is in the form of prejudices against women and especially working women. Though the Indian contribution provides that there will not be any discrimination on the bases of Caste, Creed and Sex. Prejudices against women depends on the culture that an organization develops over the period of time. If favorable organizational culture can be developed, the degree of prejudices against women managers can be reduced to a great extend.

SUGGESTIONS

Development of women in management is of major concern today. Economies World Wide are trying to concentrate on bringing the women into the Main stream of economic participation through management and managerial roles. This area until recently and in many countries today is dominated by men. This situation in India is no way better to the scenario. Women have always tried to be away from economic activities in general and management in particular as they tend to be preoccupied by the ideals set by the traditional Indian society. Coming out of such traditional and taboos restricting women to her home, requires time and support from the environment surrounding them. There are two important aspects to be focused on for the development of women as managers. One is the change in the outlook of women and the other is providing a proper a Conducive corporate managerial environment for them. In fact, the latter again has an impact on the change in the attitude of women towards their managerial participation, this changing their outlook.

Development of women in management is not the outcome of a single contribution. It requires the concerted efforts of many individuals, organizations and the society at large. There is a tremendous increase in the force given to the area of women managers by many Government and Non-Government Organizations. In-spite of this, still there is a vast potential of women to be tapped and utilized in economic development of our Nation. To increase the number of women managers in our country and to improve the contribution of women in management.

The First aspect to be addressed how to motivate women to enter into organization. The Second aspect is with respect to how they can sustain and development themselves as executives. The Third aspect is related to helping them more to the top rung of the corporate ladder.

Based on the analysis and finding of the study certain areas, Management Development Programs (MDPs), Women Managers Associations, Role of Governments, Role of Organizations, Role of Women Managers, Education System, Role of Parents, Role of Society, etc. were focused on to offer suggestions for the improvement of the Role, Status, and Number of Women managers in the country.

Women need to be supported in their career development efforts. Through focus group discussions including men and women, ideas can be generated about new organizational

initiatives. Access of women to leadership development experiences and training programs should be enhanced and women's participation should be actively facilitated and encouraged. Women managers can be encouraged to create and join powerful networks. Initiatives can be undertaken to celebrate successful women in leadership roles they can become role models for other women. Unfair treatment including salary differentials between men and women of comparable profiles need to be examined and corrected.

Women intake ration is less than men in almost all the organizations visited in the two sectors i.e. private and public sector organizations. Organizations should orient their recruitment policies to recruit equal number of male and female in the entry level in order to bring in gender diversity and inclusiveness. Organizations should be transparent about their policies relating to employment, promotion, training, etc., Organizations should go in for gender audits.

In this survey it was observed that policies of the organizations in both public sector and private sector are not adequate to ensure growth and leadership development of women managers. Organization should be more sensitive to women situations and need as women general have to look after family and work. There should be more transparency among the staff and the HR department is need, more employee-friendly HR sensitive to women concerns and situation is needed. Lack of loss in the private sector therefore there should be proper loss regarding pregnancies, maternity leaves etc. The loss should be prescribed, so that no one manipulates it.

Promotions should not be linked to transfer as has been the case the public sector banks. Transfer should be need based women who are willing transfer should be given transfers if the companies have a branch in the location were one wants to be transferred. Both family and work are fulfilling experiences in it. Good support system at family and work place are would enable women to fulfill both without being pressurized to prioritize one above the other.

Company should adopt best practice such as opinions to work to work in flexi-timings, work from home and transport facilities.

Organizations should encourage its women employees to participate in programs that would hone personality development of women. Women should have clear cut aims and

ambitions in life. Goal should be well define in the start so that women do not lose focus in the mindset of their career.

Lack of mentoring is found to be one of the factors responsible for women slow development. Companies should create programs for mentoring entry and middle level managers. Mentoring not only inspires a sense of responsibility across levels but also and a sense of intergenerational connection and reciprocity.

Based on this study have suggested several ways in which organizations, society, and individual men and women can improve the situation of women managers. These include the following elements.

- Increased satisfaction in, recognition of, and valuing of women's paid and unpaid work.
- Increased valuing and pay for jobs held by women and an end to "women's jobs/men's jobs.
- Promotions/assignments based on individual merit and qualifications rather than personal associations.
- Proactive organizational policies and practices that disparage all discriminatory/harassing behavior and foster equal opportunity and support for all employees.
- Increased efforts to decrease organizational sources of stress and organizational support of family needs that affect the job.
- Legal reforms to more fairly and rapidly correct discriminatory practices and protect the rights of all parents in the workplace.
- Equitable redistribution of labor in the homes and communities of dual-earner and career families.
- Increased numbers of women entrepreneurs and greater assistance and support for women establishing their own businesses.
- Equitable treatments of males and females from childhood.
- Careers in organizations structured around both men's and women's life stages.
- Women's (in particular) employment in organizations that have women-friendly policies and practices.
- Greater attention to the differences among women managers.
- Increased numbers of women included in research involving women's health issues.

- Increased sensitivity to managers from racially, culturally, and ethnically diverse backgrounds.
- An action orientation, with conscious, concerted efforts, challenges to, and vigilance against discriminatory treatment of women managers and women in general.
- The shattering of the "glass ceiling" as more women join the ranks of top management.
- Increased studies of behaviors, interactions, and problems distinctly associated with managers who are women of color.
- More research on the effects women managers relationships with men have on their careers.

Women representation at the top level of management is proportionately very low compare to men. There is a solid glass ceiling that is existing and that is resisting women's movement in their upward ladder of career growth. This suggest that there needs to be systematic changes if organizations are serious about bringing in greater diversity in their management and encouraging competent women to overcome the hurdles that society places in their career path.

It is not to be forgotten that sustainable economic growth at national and global levels depends on women joining the work force especially in management positions because such managerial jobs require higher skills and qualifications. More women in management would also help in the acceleration of economic growth and development, and social improvement as well.