

The Leadership challenges amongst women managers: An Investigation

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Abstract:- “Women must live up to collective expectations of what makes a leader, while at the same time remaining true to certain gender expectations “Over the centuries, femininity has been stereotyped as dependent, submissive and conforming, and hence women have been seen as lacking in leadership qualities ...The male bias is reflected in the false conception of leadership as mere command or control. As leadership comes properly to be seen as a process of leaders engaging and mobilizing the human needs of followers, women will be more readily recognized as leaders and men will change their own leadership styles (Burns, 1978.). As women symbolize over half of the worldwide talent pool, it is clear to us that they should be at the spearhead of the economic and social scene, not just out of a sense of fairness, but to ensure that the most prominent minds, men’s and women’s, analogous, are brought together to address the challenges that our societies face. Achieving equality for women in corporations, at all levels, is a long and demanding journey, which requires the implication of the whole company and the strong commitment of the top management. This paper, The Leadership Challenges amongst Women Managers provides an insight to understanding the continued absence of women from leadership roles. Indeed, this study also makes an attempt to suggest that how women talent can be used as a competitive edge to address the global challenges that corporations will face in the near future.

Keywords:- Leadership, organization, challenges, women managers

I. INTRODUCTION

India once set aside as deprived and reluctant, is now one of the predominant and expeditious mounting economies in the world. Yet India’s intensifying and awe-inspiring economic growth has a dark shadow looms reason being it is tangled with profound discrimination prevalent and other intimidation. This paradoxical framework draws attention to the necessity for proficient, adept and qualified workforce along with leadership to prolong India’s augmentation and effectiveness. In India the aptitude, talent, aspiration and desire of females are essential to crusade development and growth in all sphere of human activity. Although Women have already added much to India’s gradient but also have more to interject to multifarious and maintainable Indian human capital pool .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. Leadership in India tend to be amalgamate with men , although research has already standardized that immeasurable shortfall by paying no heed to or underutilizing the female workforce. Tapping female leadership talent thus became commanding for subsistence and affordability

Objectives: To ascertain impediments hindering women’s managers’ advancement to leadership positions

- To examine the extent to which the challenges impinge on female managers’ performances and their progresses to leadership position
- To suggest possible strategies that can be used to enhance women’s participation in leadership position

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Even if ,it is readily accredited that thriving encroachment have been made concerning the prominence of women to access entry level of leadership standpoint, there are assured factors, which hinder women from pursuing their progress and expansion women’s career. These factors are shown-up by different authors and expounded as follows: Burton (1991) and BieremaandOpengart (2002) agree that equal access to career advancement of women remains a problem

Work family barriersLack of support results in conflict with career demands which leads to women delaying their advancement into management or executive positions (Jano, 2000). A recent study on female

managers in South Africa found that whilst 93 % of their husbands/partners supported their careers, only 27 % of the women had structured arrangements regarding the division of daily household tasks and 10 % of the respondents received no assistance at all from their husbands/partners. These statistics indicate that women in most cases still assume primary responsibility for child and home care (Naidoo&Jano, 2003). As a result of this, Naidoo and May (2005) contend that many women will reassess their personal lives when planning for a lifelong career. The main concerns in the women's perspective were the duration or working time that is required longer than they expected (Mooney and Ryan, 2008). In addition, the When demands of the job increasingly encroach into family life, women experience conflict which affects their career outcomes (Voydanoff, 2005). Lopez- Claros and Zahidi (2005) stated that work-life balance is very difficult for women with young children especially when they try to balance their role as the primary caregiver with additional responsibility in the organization. Where family demands are concerned, ambitious women seldom rely on organizational support for fear of reinforcing the communal stereotype (Broadbridge, 2008). Therefore, many women who are executives and those in elite occupations handle by making discreet choices between their career advancement and family such as "opting out" or postponing their marriage and parenting (Blair-Loy, 2001; Nelson and Burke, 2000). In other circumstances, women also enhance their personal domain resources by relying on spousal support, for example dividing house responsibilities and taking care their children (Brett and Stroh, 2003). However, in certain cases such couple-level adaptive strategies, even though packaged as a couple's collective decision, do not necessarily promote women's work-life balance (Wierda-Boer et al.,2008). According to Keene and Reynolds (2002), because of family and job responsibilities, women managers are at a disadvantage. Since family needs more attention, women managers are forced to avoid overtime. Therefore, this idea is supported that women are not involved in their job as much as their male counterparts. In the highly acclaimed book, work and family :allies or enemies, Freidman and Green house (2000) argue that conflict between work and family has real consequences for women may include serious constraints on career choices ,limited opportunity for career advancement, most studies found that women themselves admitting that domestic factors make it difficult for them to advance to higher jobs(punia2005)The expectation that women should give priority to the family suggests that women managers would experience higher level of parental role-overload than men.(aryee,srinivaS 2005)

A very recent study by warenflox(2009) reveals that combining paid work and mother hoods rename a major source of difficulties for women. Women are responsible for domestic labour and childcare (tang and cousins 2005) Ronald burke and mustalakoyuncu,lisa , Fiksenbaun (2002) argued qualified women are entering professional and managerial ranks within organization they continue to have difficulties in advancing their careers.DIGeorgio-lutz(2002) ,about balancing work and family and quoted the words of Hansel” lack of supportive environment for combining family and work may the biggest barrier to women’s advancement.

Hypothesis1 There is a significant relationship between work family barriers and women managers’ progression to leadership position.

Organizational cultureEmployers and female professionals agree that family responsibilities and a lack of flexibility in the workplaceare obstacles to women’s advancement. However, they do not see eye to eye on several other factorsAccording to recent study, women were more likely than their employers to see an inhospitable organizational culture one that fosters stereotyping and assumptions about women’s roles and abilities as a major obstacle. Such a culture can create many barriers for women seeking senior management positionsMeyerson (2001) and Bierema and Opengart (2002) agree that when it comes to the structure and culture of the organization, are often not structured to accommodate women’s values..Linehan and Scullion (2005) state that women are typically placed in non-strategic sectors rather than in professional and management jobs, which lead to slow career progression. Eagly and Wood (1991) feel that, this is an explanation of why most women are less attracted to managerial positions, because organizational cultural preferences are more restraining for them than men. Forinstance, a lack of supportive workplace practices such as mentoring, , and ample time to make arrangements for child care and other personal responsibilities—can indirectly inhibit their progress. On the other hand, discrimination and harassment areoften used to directly impede it..Laff (2006) finds that women are inhibited in the workplace because of their limited access to capable mentors.

Sexual harassment Sexual harassment has been identified as one of the most pervasive and serious problems female employees experience in the workplace (Fitzgerald & Betz, 1983; Gutek, 1985). It devalues women’s abilities and slows down their progress (Gilbert, Hallett& Eldridge, 1994). According to Nieva and Gutek (1981), sexual harassment impacts on women in both the short and long term. In the short term women may lose

confidence and resign. In the long term career progression is affected and gender inequality is maintained in organizations.

Stereotypes of women as managers Bierema and Opengart (2002) are of the same opinion with Burton (1991) that some of the factors, which contribute to the slower career progress of women and fewer opportunities are because of stereotypes against women as managers. This is owing to traditional approaches and models of careers in organizations which were based on the experience of men, thus negative attitudes for women who seek career advancement in the workplaces. Another example is that in 2003 while working in a voluntary job for a particular organization in Lesotho, the researcher's female supervisor was denied promotion in spite of her outstanding work performance as her boss claimed that she had just lost a husband and had six children as well as other family responsibilities, hence, she would not be able to balance the two (her job and family commitments).

Hypothesis2 There is a significant relationship between organizational culture and women's managers' progression to leadership position.

Underinvestment in social capital Ryan and Jetten (2009) were of the opinion that women's networks could be a vehicle for individual strategy in advancing their career, and could as well be a strategy to give the women a voice in an organization and better their lots. Therefore, in order to appreciate the social networking of women, it is paramount to understand the socio-structural context of the society where they live, and more specifically as it affect their organization. Attending social gatherings increases ones visibility (Robbins and DeCenzo, 2007). According to (Aswathappa, 2005) one's presence at social functions and events provide social interaction and a source of information about career opportunities. To enhance career advancement opportunity one needs to join a support group to be able to listen to others and develop empathy and other key interpersonal relationships (Zajas, 1995). Vinnicombe and Colwill, (1997) indicate that associations can make women more visible in society encourage them to contribute and develop. In addition, Dessler (2008) observes that a study on minority working women in the United States showed that 40 percent of the women attributed their lack of career advancement to lack of networking with influential colleagues. All the same, several authors have stated that networks are important for increasing visibility and career advancement (Robbins and Coulter, 1999; Vinnicombe and Singh, 2003; Aycan, 2004; Maxfield, 2005; Ogden et al., 2006). According to Ogden et al., (2006) networking was an important enabler to career development. Robbins and Coulter (1999) state that networks lead to career success. According to Ackah and Heaton (2003) men used networks to obtain promotions. Aycan (2004) states that women who had made it to top *The Journal of Language, Technology & Entrepreneurship in Africa*, Vol. 2.No.1.2010, ISSN 1998-1279 management in Turks. Maxfield (2005) contents that women found networking challenging and thus they lacked the important tool of networking. Ackah and Heaton (2003) state that women were excluded from the networks through which they could make themselves known and learn about promotion processes. Studies conducted in Tanzania showed that women who do not network remain vulnerable and liable to being rendered invisible and never remembered when promotions were being discussed (Adler and Izraeli, 1994).

Hypothesis3 There is a significant relationship between under investment of social capital and women managers' progression to leadership position.

Career salience Career & family role salience Role theory stipulates that individuals identities are comprised of multiple roles, each with varying salience for that individual. As a role becomes more salient for an individual, it becomes more important to fulfill demands of that role (Hogg et al., 1995). For some individuals, work will be more salient, while for others family will be more salient. Still others may have high salience for both work and family domains. A salient aspect of our lives serves as a gauge of self esteem or self-evaluation, in that positive self-esteem depends upon successful fulfillment of this salient domain. Thus if career is highly salient for a woman who is working fulltime, then she would be motivated to pursue a career, with her emotional, mental, and physical energy and resources. The level of importance of career in one's life is defined as career salience. Career salience has also been viewed as synonymous with career commitment and professional commitment (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005). The notion of career or work centrality to one's life was highlighted by London (1983) in the sub-domains of the actual level of work involvement, both psychologically and physically, and the desire for upward mobility. Within this framework, London theorized that individuals espousing a high career salience would consequently place more value on career satisfaction than on satisfaction from other areas in life. As well, he proposed that a high career salience would necessitate making sacrifices and delaying gratification in other areas of life such as family (Hatchman, 2009) Past research

has provided some evidence that career role salience may enhance leadership aspiration (Hatchman,2009, Marks & Houston, 2002, Nauta et al., 1998). Thus, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis4 There is a significant relationshipbetween career role salience and women managers’ progression to leadership position.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research DesignA quantitative approach in the form of a correlational study was adopted for this research. And to determine that whether all the independent variables are related to women’s mangers progression to leadership position. The independent variables are family related variables, work place barriers, lack of networking and lack of confidence .The dependent variable is women managers’ career progression, to leadership position.

Research Instrument: The research instrument used in this study is a structured questionnaire.

Population and Sampling The target population was women managers working in private organizations in Delhi.A convenience sampling technique were used. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, 96 completed questionnaires were returned representing a response rate of 80 %.

Data Analysis Pearson product moment correlation was used to determine the relationship among the research variables.

Table1: Correlation Matrix of the Research Variables

	1	2	3	4	5
WMP to leadership position	0.798				
Family related barriers	-0.420**	0.804			
organizational culture	-0.467**	-0.402**	0.834		
under investment in social capital	-0.446**	-0.418**	0.323**	0.861	
careersalience	0.472**	0.70	0.157**	0.397	0.702

** - Significant at $p < 0.01$

IV. RESULT

The correlation analysis presented in Table 1 reveals that the three independent variables, work family barrier , ($r = -0.420, p < 0.05$) , organization culture ($r = -0.467, p < 0.05$), and under investment in social capital ($r=-0.446, p < 0.05$) were all negatively related to progression to leadership position but careersalience ($r=0.472, p < 0.05$) not only significantly but positively related to progression to leadership position.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study attempts to look at the association among work family barriers, organizationculture, underinvestment in social capital and careersalience with women managers’ career progression to leadership positions. The outcome of the analysis and investigation aid the direct negative relationship between work family barriers, organization culture barriers and underinvestment in social capital with women managers’ progression.. It is interesting to note that careersalience was found to be more expressively related to women managers’ profession advancement. The direct negative relationship between work family barriers and women managers’ progression put forward that women lose out on their careers because of the choices they make to accommodate their family responsibilities. Advocating further, barriers women managers face can be tailed that the inhospitable organization culture and underinvestment in social capital makes women distracted from leadership positions. This all could results in gender biased talent management activities in the organization. Men are selected over women for specific positions, given more challenging assignments that enable them to show their ability and give them high visibility and given high value training and development opportunities that enable the men to obtain skills and competencies which make them eligible for top management/leadership positions. The gender biased talent management activities have a detrimental effect on women managers’ progression. To leadership position, the findings of the research are consistent with some earlier studies. Similarly studies do support the finding that family related variables (Voydanoff, 2005; Blair-Loy, 2001) and negative stereotype (Cabrera et al., 2009;Embry et al., 2008) do influence women managers’ career progression to leadership position.

Managerial implications and recommendations The outcome of this study was to make organization aware of the challenges women experiences in their careers. It would also reinforce the fact that diversity and advancement of women represent an opportunity which organization cannot afford to ignore. Hiring more women into corporate world particularly in management roles will empower organization to leverage the softer skill that women possess, which in turn helps them with employee as well as customer retention, as “according to recent HBR study depicting the female economy the growth market of women consumer is twice as large as that of china & India and all this money goes to the company but few companies have done well enough to capitalize fully on female consumer market. One key way to respond to this untapped market by hiring, promoting and retaining women in their company”. MC KINSEY study confirms that some leadership behaviors, which are more frequently applied by women than by men in management teams, prove to enhance corporate performance and will be a key factor in meeting tomorrow’s business challenges.

- Hence, promoting gender assortment and leadership variability is of strategic magnitude for companies.
- Corporations need to ensure that their recruitment, appraisal and career management systems are gender-impersonal and performance-focused, and that they do not clutch women back in their professional development.
- A good education, tutoring, family support, effective communication expertise and lifelong learning are essential for Indian women managers.
- Today Employers need programs to help them recognize the benefits women can bring to their business and raising awareness within institutions of the valuable role played by women leaders to counter gender stereotypes
- Human resource policies and programs ought to form that it should not only assemble entry level simpler for women in management but also expedite in enduring (career advancement)
- Providing women leaders with training and formalized mentoring to carry out their leadership roles and grow in these positions
- Creating enabling business practices that allow women and men to balance the demands of leadership while also being able to care for their families.

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