

STUDY OF LEADERSHIP STYLES OF INDIAN WOMEN LEADERS IN CORPORATE WORLD

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents the study of Indian Women Leaders in corporate world in different areas like Marketing, Finance, HR, Banks, Education in India. Women at different levels responded to a questionnaire and personal interviews containing statements on their Leadership Style. These statements were divided into 6 styles of Leadership: Laissez-faire, Democratic, People Oriented Transformation, Environment and Situation Demographic factors such as educational attainment: age, marital status, mobility etc. were also included and compared. The respondents consisted of 150 women working at different levels like 60 Assistant managers, 65 managers, 21 Sr. managers and 4 Vice Presidents. These women were motivated to achieve the objectives they set for themselves and for the responsibilities of their job. Today's women are future oriented. They were aggressive in setting their goals and expected that task orientation and determination would enable them to accomplish those objectives.

Women are emerging as managers and leaders within contemporary organizations. Several factors, both contextual and personal, have contributed to a rich variety of experiences for these women. Claims have been made that women leaders are unique as compared to their male counterparts in terms of style, orientation, power play, expected behavior and success (Appelbaum & Shapiro, 1993). The study tries to understand Indian Women at workplace, their developed roles, values, attitude and their approach to their subordinates. It is the study to analyze the role of Indian Corporate women in a developing country like India, where leadership is still considered as a male province. Indian women are breaking the traditional image of women as a follower and establishing themselves as leaders who are able to become role models to their subordinates, get the job done most effectively and efficiently irrespective of men and women.

INTRODUCTION

As proportion of women in the workforce became increasingly noticeable, gender differences among senior and junior staffers turned out to be noteworthy in a work place, from factory floor to fighter planes, from hospitals to banks. Women today hold less than 3 per cent of most senior management positions in the US, less than 2 per cent in Europe and around 4 per cent in India, (where this percentage could be still higher). In India, in spite of the consistent excellent academic performance even at higher studies level, women are under represented at higher position or in any field of the work life. Asian countries have experienced strong women leaderships like Indira Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Aung San Su Kye, Chandrika Kumaratunga, Benajir Bhutto, Kiran Bedi, etc.

No doubt, people have accepted the caliber and potential of women professionals but they do have a feeling that women somehow lower than men. Every time women face a constant pressure to perform and prove themselves at work place and Simultaneously they go through a constant feeling of guilt in coping up with expectations of children In-laws and other relatives at home front which led many of them to take a back step but many had managed to take leadership positions which are still very much considered as a male domain.

Now the question arises is there really a difference between the leadership and management styles of men and women?.

LEADERSHIP

Imagine that you were living in the year 1915 when the whole country was distressed by the tortures inflicted by the British. Everybody wanted freedom but there was no unity and which made the British successful in ruling our country. At that time Mahatma Gandhi arrived from South Africa. He felt the need to unite the country towards its freedom struggle. Under his leadership the movement gathered momentum and ultimately India achieved freedom. The leadership of Mahatma Gandhi proved to be one of the major causes in achieving political freedom of the country.

According to Tannenbaum, Leadership is interpersonal influence exercised in a situation and directed through communication process, towards a attainment of goals. With the changing work and working environment we can modernize the definition as, Leadership is process of influencing and supporting others to work enthusiastically towards achieving objectives.

Leadership is a necessary part of the social process. Any group, association, organization or community functions the way its leader leads it.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF LEADERS ARE

(a). adaptable of situations, (b). alert towards social situation (c). cooperative (d). decisive (e). dependable (f). assertive (g). confident and persistent (h). Knowledge

Leadership Style is a typical approach a particular person uses to lead the people. The behavioural pattern which a leader exhibits is known as his style of leadership. Different leadership style exist among leaders in different times and in different situation. Leadership style in a particular situation is determined by leader's personality. Experience and value system, nature of followers and nature of environment.

Here business world understands and accept the importance of female leaders. Women holding the traits like cooperative, understanding mild, passive, sensitive etc lead the team more efficiently and effectively to the changing and demanding work style.

Different leaders have different visions, they influence people differently and followers accept them differently. Recognizing the requirement of developing time, Leaders have developed their leadership styles time to time. Both men and women have proved themselves as great leaders time to time, definitely varying in numbers. Whether we talk about India or other countries this difference has found everywhere.

Male and female are simply different in traits. Some of them could be

Male

Aggressive
Autocratic
Capable
Competitive
Coarse
Decisive
Humorous
Loud
Objective
Unemotional

Female

Affectionate
Complaining
Cooperative
Emotional
Easily influenced
Forgiving
Indecisive
Mild
Passive
Weak

Both male and female have different type of capabilities to cope up in different situations, Apparently there, seems to be no observable difference in skills and abilities between men and women. It is surprising to know that women hold only 11.2 percent of corporate officer positions in the fortune 500 companies. India is no more exception working women accounts for only around 15 % of total urban female population of around 150 million populations. These diversities and differences could be managed by adopting a positive attitude towards female employees and understanding the need of employees of both the genders in the corporate sector.

BUREAUCRATIC LEADERS

(Weber 1905) These leaders are very structured and follow the procedure as they are: Such leaders are slow paced and are not ready to accept the new ways to solve the problem.

TASK ORIENTED

(Weber 1905) examined such type of leaders as these are the persons who infuse energy and eagerness in their team. Such leaders are committed to the organization for the long run.

CHARISMATIC LEADERS

(Weber 1905) These leaders are committed to the organizations for long run, they infuse energy and inspire their team members. Mahatma Gandhi was also an example of charismatic leader. They have a great deal of emotional appeal. Swami Vivekanand was another charismatic leader. Some characteristic of charismatic leaders are –

- followers accept the leader unquestioningly.
- followers obey the leader willingly.
- followers belief are similar to the leader's beliefs.
- followers trust the correctness of the leader's belief.

AUTOCRATIC LEADERS

(Lewin, Liippit & White 1939) This type of Leadership occurs when leaders holds the sole authority to take decisions. Such leadership is good for those people who need close supervision & direction in their task.

DEMOCRATIC LEADERS

(Lewin, Liippit & White 1939) These leaders hears & invites the idea of their team members and make the decision after analyzing the different ideas.

LAISSEZ FAIR

(Lewin, Liippit & White 1939) In this type of leadership subordinate do not require continuous supervision and they are not require to give regular feedback.

PEOPLE ORIENTED

(Fiedler 1978) These Leaders develop & train their personnel, increasing job satisfaction & interest in their job to improve efficiency.

TRANSFORMATION

A transformational leader is one who inspires organizational success by profoundly affecting followers beliefs in what an organization should be, as well as their values, such as justice and integrity. This style of leadership creates a sense of duty within an organization, encourages new ways of handling problems and promotes learning for all organization members. (Burns 1978) these leaders apply their communication skills as their tool to motivate their team members to be efficient and effective.

TRANSACTION

Transaction leadership involves exchange relationship between the leader and the followers. (Bernard M. Bass, 1990) Transaction leadership is a prescription for mediocrity and that transformational leadership leads to superior performance in organizations facing demands for renewal and change.

(Burns 1978) leader has the power to reward, evaluate, correct and train subordinates. Here power is given to the leader to reward or punish for the team's performance.

ENVIRONMENT

(Carmazzi 2005) this is the new generation style of leadership. Leader uses organizational culture to inspire individuals and develop leaders at all levels.

SITUATION

(Joseph Praveen Kumar, Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson 2008)

Leaders follows the situation to adopt the leadership style. Leadership style also depends upon the type of employee that is being supervised.

SUGGESTED QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP

- Cooperation
- Result orientation
- Optimism
- Specific skills of task at hand
- Empathy
- Integrity
- Self awareness
- Confidence
- Inspirational communication

- Charismatic inspiration

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This is the study of 150 women in the corporate world in India in and around Delhi. These women are from different industries and professional degrees like finance, marketing, Human Resource, IT, banks and Chartered Accountants. The study moves from Assistant Managers to the upward responsible positions. The analysis has made on the women of different age groups varying from 25-60 years of age. The study tries to provide answers to the changing mindset and leadership styles of today's corporate women in organizations.

The study tries to focus on Indian women in Indian organizations who may or may not have an MBA degree but they definitely possess a professional or postgraduate degree with them. The analysis tries to focus on their values, perception and attitude on their workplace and in the peer group. This study tries to understand Indian women at workplace, their changing roles and to their acceptance. It is a study to analyze the role of Indian corporate women in the changing scenario in a developing country like India from a different point of view.

FINDING OF THE STUDY

Out of 150 women respondents there were 133 women working in the private sector and only 17 were in the public sector. It was interesting to find out that it was easy to get response from the age group of 25-35 years and a little bit difficult from the upper age groups. The reason may be the young generation believes in more feedback and interchange of ideas. They are more responsive and believe in the sharing of ideas and experiences.

Data has been collected through personal interview and questionnaire. The 150 respondents fall under different age groups:

Age	No. of Women	Private Sector	Public Sector
25-35	75	70	5
35-45	52	45	7
45-60	23	18	5
	150	133	17

Here we found that there is a vast difference in the no. of women employed in private sector and public sector. Among 5 of the women in public sector in the age group of 45-60, 3 were in the banking sector and 2 in the academics. In the age group of 35-45 years 2 were from banking sector, 3

from the hotel industry 2 from academics. Respondents from the age group of 25-35 years 2 were from the banking sector Industry and 3 from the hotel Industry. Out of 75 respondents of the age group 25-35, 70 were in the private sector which shows the presence of younger generation more in the private sector. Younger generation is more interested in private jobs due to different reasons. Some of them are 1) for the growth opportunities and competitive environment 2) Attractive salary package 3) several restrictions in the entry in government jobs. During the study we found that today women are more interested in growth and interesting work rather than job security.

Job Position of Women respondents

Age	Job Position				
	Executives\ Asst Manager	Manager	Sr.Manager	VP	
25-35	47	18	-	-	65
35-45	13	37	5	-	55
45-60	-	20	8	2	30
-----	60	75	13	2	150
Total	150				

The data shows that there were 65 women among the age group of 25-35 years out of which 47 were working in the position of executives or Assistant Managers and 18 as Managers. From the age group of 35-45 we had 13 as executives, 37 as managers and 5 as Sr. Managers. Women in age group of 45-60 were 30. Out of which 20 were managers, 8 were Sr. managers and only two as Vice Presidents.

The table shows that the young generation posits increased position in the corporate world. The study shows a small number of women in the higher position in the upper age and reason for this may be non acceptability of working women in corporate by Indian society prior to some decades. These was larger no. of women candidates working in the lower positions. India, a developing country is in the process of modernization and societal changes have given probability to Indian women to come up and prove their talent to whose universe. Indian society is changing its values and beliefs to face the challenges of the new world.

WOMEN AT WORK

Women will change the nature of power.

Power will not change the nature of women

A few generations ago, there was no reason for women to seek a career - they were expected to find satisfaction staying at home and looking after their kids and other family members only.

But in today's world, women go to work and come back home only to do the bulk of household chores. And, if British researchers are to be believed, career women actually end up working longer hours than men. Besides they have to motivate themselves. Women being creative, responsible, cooperative, sensitive etc could utilize positively the power they achieve. It is a crucial fact that women apparently do not get a positive support to be successful in her life. Rightly said

“Behind every successful women is herself”.

The Indian professional women experience job segregation as well as discrimination in selection, promotion, training and assessment just like women from any other developed country. In employment restriction are imposed on their physical mobility and their social interaction with males by sexual harassment at work. And by gossip affecting all aspects of their lives (Liddle & Joshi)

This study tries to reveal the changing scenario and the values, belief and attitude of Indian professional women. Different questions were asked from the personnel’s regarding their leadership styles which they are opting or would like to opt and factors effecting their leadership styles.

Out of several leadership styles as discussed previously we found these 6 styles were most commonly used by the female leaders depending on their traits:

Laissez-fair, Democratic People-oriented, Transformation, Environment and Situational Leader.

Analysis: Leadership styles of women

Leadership Styles	Rank						Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Laissez-faire	---	---	10	28	20	92	150
Democratic	---	15	20	---	75	40	150
People-oriented	20	10	---	95	10	15	150
Transformation	10	35	85	7	10	3	150
Environment	25	80	20	10	15	---	150
Situation	95	10	15	10	20	---	150
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	
	150	150	150	150	150	150	

Being transformation, Environment and situation leaders showed the market preference of women. People oriented leadership styles showed 4th preference and most women not interested in being democratic now days. Laissez –faire style was the last choice of most of the women professionals. It was interests to find out that today's women are extremely committed to their profession and preferred positions of responsibility.

Today's women are adopting the latest trends of leadership styles, which shows the grooming confidence level of the younger generation and their attempt to move from the stereotype image of women managers to the global managers. Job commitment is extremely important for today's generation. In fact they prefer a job position of responsibility and full of competition.

HELPING TOOLS OF MANAGING LEDERSHIP STYLE

Working for today's women is finding purpose of living that is larger than earning. Today's women are fearlessly ambitious in nurturing their inner resources for the cause of good living. Besides their inner strength different factors are also encouraging today's women to work, lead and grow. Some of them are: Education, Job Commitment, Optimism and identification of their strengths developing culture of organization.

Education:

Education refers to any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character, or physical ability of an individual. More than 60 percent of women specify that education play a key role in a women's ability to succeed in the career of her choice. Women understands that additional education & experience helps them to move forward in their career and to achieve higher position.

Job Commitment:

Women are highly Committed to their job but most of the women face role conflict in them. Family was most important to the respondents. It is really challenging to maintain a proper balance among the workplace and home. Women being the homemaker are responsible for the entire family and on the same hand being committed to their work they also have to give best performance. The response regarding such question was electrifying.

- 1.What is more exciting
 - a).Vacation with family
 - b) Business tour
- 2.Wants to have a pleasant family life
- 3.Wants to make most of your ability

4. Wants to lead your team

5. Wants an exciting and competitive job.

Today's women want to have everything in her hands.

Optimism and Identification of their strength:

Today's women are highly optimistic and struggle for what they want. They understand their strengths and weaknesses and adopt their career and leadership style.

Developing culture of Organisations

Culture is stable and generally difficult to change. It represents the accumulated learning embodied in shared mental models which members of an organisation hold true and take for granted. Most of women have agreed that workplace is becoming more and more friendlier to women employees in recent years. Companies are providing help to female employees by introducing flexible workhouse, individualized work schedules and by giving work at home options.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Women are better leaders but suffer some disadvantage of leadership roles as it has a masculine image. Job Mobility, Time Constraint, Job preference, Relationship with subordinates, Marriage, social life, Family responsibility.

Job Mobility

Most of the women prefer to remain in the small job position to avoid mobility due to different reasons. This was one of the reason why women in older age groups were not in higher positions.

Time Constraint

Time plays an important role in the lives of the men. From the whole 24 hours they can't devote maximum of it to their work, which is helpful in promotion etc. Being Indian women it is again a limitation to the women that they are restricted to work late night or join social evenings, which is helpful in further career advancement.

Relationship with subordinates

Young women are more aggressive and confident than the women in older age group. Today's women are more open with their environment may be due to the changing trend of co-education and

professionally qualifications. According to these young professional working with male colleagues is not a problem for them as they are equally qualified and professional to their job. Problem arrives with those male subordinates who still find it difficult to accept a female as their leader. To accept a female as a boss a new phenomenon in Indian society.

Social Life

Working women have time restrictions and more than 75% of the women agreed that due to the restricted time they could not meet the relatives etc as often they want to be. Whether married or unmarried in all age groups found that social life restricts their work a lot. In a society like India it is again the responsibility of women to fulfill all social responsibilities, which hamper their work life.

Job Preference

In India women still prefers jobs with flexi timings like teaching or part time jobs because of their family commitment ,even though the society has begun to accept the women working at managerial cadre. Women have to leave their job when their husband gets transferred or switch to other job in another city. This because in India women is still considered as secondary source of income and their occupational prestige is lower than their husband. But again this issue is also improving with the young generation, female, with good occupation are getting importance and a sense of equality.

Marriage

In Indian Society marriage is very important especially for women at an age between 20-26 years and this the age when career grows and take an appropriate shape. Due to this reason today women are preferring to get marry at a later stage of their life, which does effects their decisions making ability which is an important function of leaders.

CONCLUSION

One of the twentieth century thought about leaders:

As a women, I have no country

As a women, I want no country

As a women, the whole world is my country.

This is the quality which women leader owe.

This study has explored the power of Indian women in corporate sector. Their changing attitude towards their work family, subordinate and peers group. The face of Indian corporate women is

changing globally. The study reveals that women are slightly more likely to be situation, Environment or Transformational leaders. They believe in helping employees; developing their skills, motivate them to be dedicated and creative to their responsibilities. But not all workplaces are alike and nor all leaders think alike. The analysis shows women to be people oriented, encourages, participation and involvement of their team members. They are more interested in helping their team mates to improve their efficiency and skills in their job. Time has gone when boards were considered as male province: it is the time when companies are recruiting more women which provides diversity and broader perspectives for better decisions.

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