

Women Empowerment and Leadership roles- A Conceptual Paper

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Abstract

This paper is a conceptual one which tries to explore the research and progress made in the areas of women leadership and women empowerment in India. Various Studies made in this field are referred to and models explored to understand the progress made in these fields. These studies are carried out to further the cause of womens' progress in society which indicative of progress of society as a whole.

Keywords: Women empowerment, Women Leadership, Women liberation, Feminism

Introduction

Women empowerment is a relatively new concept and only being realized and practiced in Urban areas. However, there is an urgent need to empower women in all spheres of life in rural areas. Women are looked down upon as the weaker sex and hence surrender themselves to male domination, the male either being her husband, father, brother, a peer at work or someone senior at work.

Women need to be empowered by none other than men themselves. Every woman needs constant support from her husband, father etc.at every stage in her life in order to carry out her day-to day activities including domestic and official work.

Feminism is an entirely different concept altogether, here we are only concerned with empowerment of women. Those women who have not been getting enough support or have been opposed when they take an initiative not only for their self-development but also for contribution to society at large.

Related Management concepts/ Literature review:

Women and leadership roles by Indira Parikh and Markush Engineer:

Prof. Indira Parikh and Markush. F. Engineer in their working paper at I.I.M. Ahmadabad had elaborately mentioned about six aspects in an Indian woman's life namely identity, role, life space, division of time, systems and self. A sample of 6 to 8 rural working women was studied and some interesting findings were made and put together under these aspects.

The objectives of this working paper were as follows:

- 1) To explore the influence of the transformation of organizations on womens' roles in the corporate world
- 2) To explore their leadership roles and their life spaces.

To discover wholesome ways to actualize dreams and chart new career paths Two modules were developed namely:

- 1) Conceptual
- 2) Experiential

Conceptual- explored the impact of transformation in organizations and on individual employees

Experiential- exploration was around life spaces and systems where processes of socialization in both family and work settings were understood

The objectives could be elaborately explained as follows:

- 1) It is aimed at providing a setting where women in senior leadership positions could explore the influence of the organization on their role and environment in which organizations operate.
- 2) It is aimed at providing an opportunity where women managers /leaders could explore their leadership role in organizations as well as discover their life space in turn to discover wholesome ways of managing personal dreams and career paths.

The Profile of Participants and organizations who/which were included:

Cross section of Women managers from India and Sri Lanka holding various positions, representing a diverse mix of Public Sector and Private Sector companies.

The following observations were made from the study:

- 1) Women have entered new professions
- 2) Womens' entry into formal work organizations has been a decade later than men
- 3) Women are performing dual roles
- 4) Women end up taking more and more responsibilities at work and often work 16 hours a day.
- 5) Increasingly there is a change of attitude amongst men in perceiving women who are working.
- 6) Women at work experienced that women peers were not supportive.
- 7) Women are perceived and related with differently than their male colleagues at work place.
- 8) At higher levels, there are generally men who occupy the significant positions.
- 9) There is a shift in mindset of how women are experienced in the organizations.

Wisdom Matrix in Corporate Management by Dr. Subhash Sharma:

In Wisdom Matrix-the Oppressor and Oppressed relationship is analyzed in terms of the gender. The oppressor and oppressed could be male or female. When expressed in the form of a matrix, we get the wisdom matrix. This matrix can be used to analyze the nature of configuration of the oppression in a society and organization. We have the following four situations:

- Oppressor Male-Oppressed male: Widely prevalent in modern societies, but often ignored for social analysis
- Oppressor Male-Oppressed female: Prevalent in all male dominated societies irrespective of geography
- Oppressor female-Oppressed Male: Not many real-life examples, but this phenomenon cannot be ruled out completely

Oppressor female-Oppressed female: A typical mother-in-law and daughter-in-law syndrome

Oppressed
Male Female

(M,M) I	(M,F) II	Male
(F,M) III	(F,F) IV	Female
		Oppressor
		Female

Response models to Globalization and Holistic Globalization

The concept is based on LIFO-Liberation from Oppression which is a fundamental human yearning. The liberation response to the various situations indicated by the Wisdom Matrix could vary in many ways. An individual response could take the form of a social response. In this matrix, the author mentions about Marxist Theory, Reflective social action, Instantaneous and uncontrolled reaction and Gandhian Liberation Ideology. Corporate Model, Social Movement Model and Political Presence Model are discussed in this context.

The following figure sums up the discussion in terms of a matrix.

		Social Response	
		Violent	Non-Violent
Individual Response	Violent	Marxist Theory	Reflective Social Action
	Non-Violent	Instantaneous and uncontrolled reaction	Gandhian Liberation Ideology

Corporate model: This model suggests that to create social change, more women should enter the corporate world and break the 'glass ceiling' that is widely observed in corporate.

Social movement model: Social movement approach suggests that feminism as a social movement should be given greater push.

Political model: Political model suggests that there should be sharing of power at the political level. More women should enter politics and form their own parties.

Proposed Research: A sample of a few working rural women will be interviewed to find out the problems which they have been facing in their daily lives. Also, their views and opinions will be studied in detail regarding womens' problems, their suggestions and recommendations for women empowerment.

Proposed Integrative model: A conceptual framework will be provided as a part of conclusion which will integrate all the models studied in the literature review

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Professor Pala Suriya Kala is an academic at heart whose utmost goal is fostering equality among everyone with education in this world. She has over twenty years of Post Graduate teaching experience,

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