

Promoting Gender Equality for Women's Leadership

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Abstract

Gender roles, relationships, customs, and expectations all play its roles in various levels of leadership and success. Promoting gender equity in the health business is an important aspect of the effort to attain healthy lifestyles and general well-being for all. The Sustainable Development Goals present an idealised global vision for social growth and improvement (SDGs). They also provide direction for international efforts to advance gender equity, with goals such as eliminating gender-based prejudice and resource allocation; recognising and supporting women in leadership roles; addressing the issue of unpaid care; eliminating harmful and unhealthy practises; and strengthening related policies in the field of sex and reproductive health. In reality, efforts to reduce inequality are linked to attempts to improve the health of our communities. Despite the fact that women make up the majority of global health workers, they are underrepresented at the highest levels of public and private sector leadership, policy and governance forums, thought leadership panels, and decision-making institutions. There is still a gender gap in many businesses when it comes to leadership positions. However, the gender gap in global health is especially problematic because it does not reflect current practices and objectives in the field. The cornerstone of this work is secondary data. The purpose of this article is to identify and analyse the barriers that women experience in the workplace, as well as to investigate how these barriers impact women's leadership and performance. It highlights the significance of female leadership and gender equality.

Keywords: women's leadership, Gender Equality, Barriers to Leadership

Introduction

Women's influence is growing dramatically in all areas of business due to globalisation and an unusually large number of girls making up the workforce. The shifting employment landscape for women in a globalised financial system has created several possibilities for women to demonstrate their skills as accomplished leaders. Through their leadership skills, which support organisational growth and strategic success, women are changing the foundational principles of business. Girls' participation and involvement in management roles in business has steadily increased around the world, giving rise to a whole new perspective on women as leaders and an interchange of cutting-edge corporate innovation techniques.

The community and economy gain when we give women more control over leadership and decision-making. Women are still underrepresented in positions of leadership and decision-making at the highest levels. This covers positions in industry, government, and the community. Unconscious bias, bad hiring procedures, and poor company culture are obstacles to women in leadership positions. In industries with a male predominance, women also

encounter structural and cultural barriers. In several fields, including science, technology, engineering, medicine, construction, and finance, they are underrepresented. Boys and girls begin to believe that only men can be leaders when they don't see women in positions of authority. Consequently, girls are less likely to pursue leadership positions. Women are frequently shown as young, svelte, and subservient. Men are frequently portrayed as being strong, emotionless, and muscular. Stereotypes include negative connotations about things like sexual orientation, race, and beauty. Girls and women are more frequently shown as the victims of violence or in sexually explicit scenarios.

These prejudices are detrimental. It makes us less sensitive to violence toward women. They present women as inanimate objects, devoid of leadership potential and decision-making authority. The success of female leaders in the early phases of their management careers is essential to creating gender diversity at all levels of a company. The global community is depriving itself of a significant resource in achieving ambitious goals without the full and equal engagement of all essential stakeholders working to achieve global priorities. It is crucial to understand that while the benefits of gender equality are numerous, the negative health effects of gender imbalanced global health leadership are as yet mostly unknown.

Need and Importance

We have an overwhelming evidence of women moving into leadership positions, which is beneficial for businesses, the vast majority of organisations claim that this is not a formal corporate objective. In reality, among the 2,300 firms assessed globally, just 18% of senior leadership roles are held by women. In other words, men hold about 82% of the most important positions in today's corporations. A formal business priority for 79% of the organisations questioned is not to promote women. According to the respondents, closing this gap might take more than 50 years. Women executives still make up a small portion of the business sector. A majority of us don't think it is unusual when more males hold top roles in business, nonprofits, government, health care, education, and religion than women.

Female employees and middle management roles have levelled the playing field during the past three decades. In the United States, women hold 57% of all full-time jobs and 52% of all management and professional roles, such as doctors and lawyers. In the United States, women acquire more master's and doctorate degrees than men, and they account for 60% of all bachelor's degrees. According to Fortune 500 corporations, only 19 per cent of the company's board seats and 15 per cent of its senior officer positions are held by women. The remaining 480 enterprises are run by 20 female CEOs, or 4% of the 500 companies. It's evident that women have a long way to go from this perspective. The significance of these stats and the impact they have on leadership should be examined. When it comes to gender inequality, what is at the root of this disparity?

Review of Literature:

According to a 2016 study by Javadi et al., gender equity issues in health management exist everywhere. In most nations, women make up more than 75% of the health workforce, particularly in allied fitness activities and lesser prestige fitness occupations. The percentage of female medical examiners, however, decreases as one moves up the organisational hierarchy and pay scale, with disproportionately more men occupying managerial and executive roles. For instance, just 25% of top posts are held by women in the United States, despite the fact that women make up over 70% of the student body in educational medicine. Only 27% of fitness ministers worldwide and only 24% of administrators at international health facilities across 50 US clinical faculties are female.

The Sustainable Development Goals present an idealised global vision for social growth and improvement (SDGs). To attain these objectives, it is vital to promote healthy living and wellbeing for all people, particularly those who are poor or vulnerable. However, inequitable settings may stymie progress. Furthermore, the SDGs provide a framework for global efforts to improve gender equity by addressing issues such as ending gender-based discrimination and resource allocation; supporting women in leadership positions; addressing unpaid care; preventing harmful and bad practises; improving sexual and reproductive health; and strengthening policy. Discrimination in sports and physical exercise is inextricably tied to community-building activities.

Importantly, according to Dutta (2020), female leaders bring something rather distinctive to the table. In terms of achieving women's suffrage, independent India has every right to be proud. Since women had been able to cast ballots since 1950, they might have wanted to take part in the first well-known election in 1951–1952. This is in stark contrast to the experience of Western Europe's and the US's so-called "mature democracies." Before women in the US were given the right to vote in 1920, it required several years of battle. The majority of European countries also implemented universal suffrage during the postwar era. Growing numbers of women got the chance to demonstrate that they were capable substitutes in sports that were formerly the exclusive domain of men because the

majority of physically fit men had left for the front lines at some point during the First World War. This, it is claimed, lessened the anti-feminist attitude and won women the right to vote in European nations.

Objective: The objective of the present study is to;

- To find out the importance of Gender Equality for Women's Leadership
- To study the causes of Gender Inequality in general
- What are the ways to overcome the obstacles faced by women?

Methodology: This research relies on secondary sources such as books, articles, journals, university news, expert opinion and websites. The descriptive analytic technique was employed.

Leadership Obstacles

Structures, institutions, individuals, and ways of life all act as roadblocks for women in positions of leadership.

The inability to access important informal networks such as a golf course, sports activities, or simple after-work beverages is one example of a structural barrier. Men frequently presume that women won't want to attend these kinds of activities, so they don't extend invitations to them.

Playing golf has long been a standard method of meeting new clients, and it is still used today in many firms. It's still a male-dominated activity, even if more women are taking up the sport. If your company's normal method of building client relationships is golf, what happens if the best person for a certain account doesn't play golf?

We need to be more inclusive in our social circles and networks. Invites should be extended to both sexes, regardless of gender. There's a fair possibility they'll have a wonderful time, and anything can happen when various groups get together. Maintaining your industry's competitive edge is the best way to maximise your talent.

Many forms of stereotyping and gender bias are embedded in institutional mindsets. The incongruity of a person's beliefs about a certain group and the activities they believe are necessary to succeed in a particular role is called "role incongruity." This means that many people believe that men and women perform differently in various roles because of the disparities between them. As a result, when the leadership role is feminised, men perform worse, and when it is masculinized, women perform worse.

A woman's platoon may not support her if she's doing a job that isn't typically linked with femininity, even if she's a military leader who excels at it. Patients may not perceive male nurses favourably because they are acting in a capacity that is not acceptable for their gender, a problem that also affects male nurses. According to the theory of role congruity, both men and women have trouble leading when their actions aren't regarded as being consistent with their gender.

Agentic behaviours, such as assertiveness, aggression, competition, domination, and self-reliance, are also often associated with leadership traits by many people. For women in leadership situations, the relationship between "feminine" and "masculine" characteristics can be problematic. In order to be taken seriously as leaders, women frequently have to walk a tightrope between two sets of expectations that are diametrically opposed to one another.

As a result of their individual mindsets, some women are unable to achieve their full potential. According to statistics, women are more likely to self-select out of the workforce than get promoted to the position of director and stay there. The majority of women do not pursue vice president, president, or C-level positions because of social pressures, lack of confidence, risk aversion, prioritising work-life balance, or a desire to avoid politics.

The importance of remembering the differences between men and women cannot be overstated. The private sector, organisations, and new businesses all have high proportions of female owners, leaders, and employees, which has prompted many women to pursue careers in these professions. Because of this, they can escape some of the challenges that women face in large public companies, as well as experience less gender bias and stereotyping.

Priority can be given to the needs of the family, the need to maintain a work-life balance, or the need to be the breadwinner or caregiver. The fact that these decisions contribute to a wider gender imbalance in leadership makes them hurdles, despite the fact that they are not always negative.

A woman who is the primary breadwinner for her family is also the primary caretaker. When a man is the primary breadwinner, he is rarely the primary caregiver. When discussing their children's future career objectives, parents and guardians should reflect carefully on this distinction. More time spent at home will lead to greater work-life harmony.

Ways to Overcome Obstacles in the Leadership Process

Some of these hurdles are likely to be encountered by a woman at some point in her career. Sometimes the obstacle is plain to see, while other times it is hidden behind another goal. Consider, for example, the case of an expectant woman seeking a management position that necessitates a greater amount of travel. Even though she has been told

that another candidate is better qualified, she is not granted the task. Employers assumed she would not want to travel or dedicate herself to the project since she has a young child. Her obscurity is due to sexism in the workplace.

Overcoming Obstacles in the Form of Structures

We may assist people in overcoming structural barriers by offering mentors and sponsors, but first we must understand the distinctions between the two. A mentor is someone who provides advice and direction to a protégé in order to assist her flourish in her current position. A sponsor's role is to assist someone else in moving on to their next career.

Having male sponsors in positions of authority and decision-making is an excellent method for increasing women's credibility. Some of these sponsors may be their supervisors, other department heads, or other department leaders.

Your sponsor could be the vice president of human resources, but you don't know anything about him. It is possible to contact him directly and arrange a meeting. Find someone who knows him and ask them if they can put you in touch with him or lead you in the correct direction. Make it clear what you want and what you expect from him.

A paradigm shift in the way institutions think

Institutional mindsets are the most significant barrier, and this explains in large part why there aren't more women in leadership roles. Stereotypes regarding how women behave in the workplace and in leadership roles influence people's perceptions of them. Bias often prevents women from advancing in their careers, or worse, they are never given the opportunity to do so.

What's more troubling is the prevalence of unconscious gender bias. Research shows that unconscious prejudice does not play a major role in creating barriers, misperceptions, and limiting one's ability to succeed. There is a great deal of work to be done in the area of unconscious biases.

As a result of these unconscious, reflexive dispositions, our worldviews can be greatly influenced by our workplace's ability to be open and inclusive of all perspectives. One alternative is for women to convey their desire to advance, travel, or take on new tasks on a regular and pro-active basis. Preconceptions about someone can be dispelled through their communication style.

Changing the mindsets of individuals

When it comes to working in a company, individual mindsets and limits can include everything from getting coffee to organising the company's holiday party to taking notes and getting doughnuts. The Wife offers to conduct time-consuming, often underappreciated work tasks in the workplace. Among men, volunteering for more conspicuous activities is more common.

Among the possible solutions is for women to refrain from consistently volunteering for such events. Respect and appreciate the contributions of your coworkers, especially the men. If you are in charge of deciding who participates in these activities, assign assignments rather than ask for volunteers.

Taking into account personal preferences

The importance of finding a work-life balance and making healthy lifestyle choices has risen in recent years. Work-life harmony is just as important to millennial men as it is to women, according to recent research. Most organisations maintain rigid work schedules, organisational structures, and regulatory requirements nonetheless.

When looking for a job, look for one that values work-life balance and allows for flexible hours. If there are no other options, ask your organisation to develop new programmes or policies. Your peers are likely to feel the same way, since businesses are becoming more responsive to the needs of their employees.

What Are the Benefits of Education and Training?

Both men and women must be aware of these hurdles and work together to overcome them. The leadership gender gap harms inclusion and diversity in the workplace. Executives, HR departments, and trainers all play important roles in leadership development because it affects all employees. These practises involve what we teach, how we educate, when we teach, and how we apply various leadership ideologies.

You may have an impact on leadership development in your organisation as a learning and development professional. Working with human resources to deliver training programmes that improve leadership abilities, application-based workshops and tests, and reinforcement for training and metrics is one method to accomplish this. If these barriers are removed, women will struggle to assume substantial leadership positions in the corporate world. There is no other way to increase the number of people from varied backgrounds in positions of leadership in the world's NGOs and international organisations.

Gender mainstreaming aims to promote gender equality. It is critical to consider both men's and women's perspectives in the design, implementation, and evaluation of any planned activity, such as a programme or policy. Gender mainstreaming necessitates an in-depth analysis of the lives of men, women, boys, and girls, as well as their

interactions with one another. Gender should be considered at all levels of programme and policy creation, and efforts to promote gender equality should be prioritised.

In contrast to equality, which denotes "sameness," equity denotes a more fundamental "fairness." Because men and women may have different needs and face different barriers to meeting or having those needs met, a focus on gender equity rather than equality would argue that when it comes to healthcare, men and women should be treated equally (i.e., not discriminated against in the provision of healthcare explicitly on the basis of their sex) (Gender and Health Group, 1999).

Conclusion

Popular culture, the media, and television all influence our perceptions of gender. They teach us how men and women should act, look, and treat one another. When it comes to the number of women in managerial positions, we are witnessing a fantastic shift at work. Most women realise the need to pay attention, cooperate, and effect change, in addition to creating excellent connections and making sound decisions. Women's leaders try to establish new standards, display influence, manage essential changes, and develop new ideas for value addition that will have an impact on their families, communities, and groups in the professional world. According to the study, women, according to the study, have a particular leadership style that translates to higher financial outcomes, robust organisational growth, and long-term sustainability. The majority of female leaders consider the long-term consequences, drawbacks, and benefits of their employment decisions. They frequently exhibit humility and work toward equity, as well as accepting responsibility and acting honestly. They serve as role models for all of their admirers by internalising values and putting them into action. To maintain India's position as the global growth leader, more coordinated efforts at the local, state, and national levels, as well as by the business sector, are required. While boosting women's presence in public areas is critical and probably achievable through some form of affirmative action, a shift in mindsets is essential before women can be treated equally in their homes and in greater society. Introducing gender equality to Indian children at an early age could be a significant step forward.

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