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# Gravity

**The Great Lakes Magazine**



**WOMEN AT WORK**

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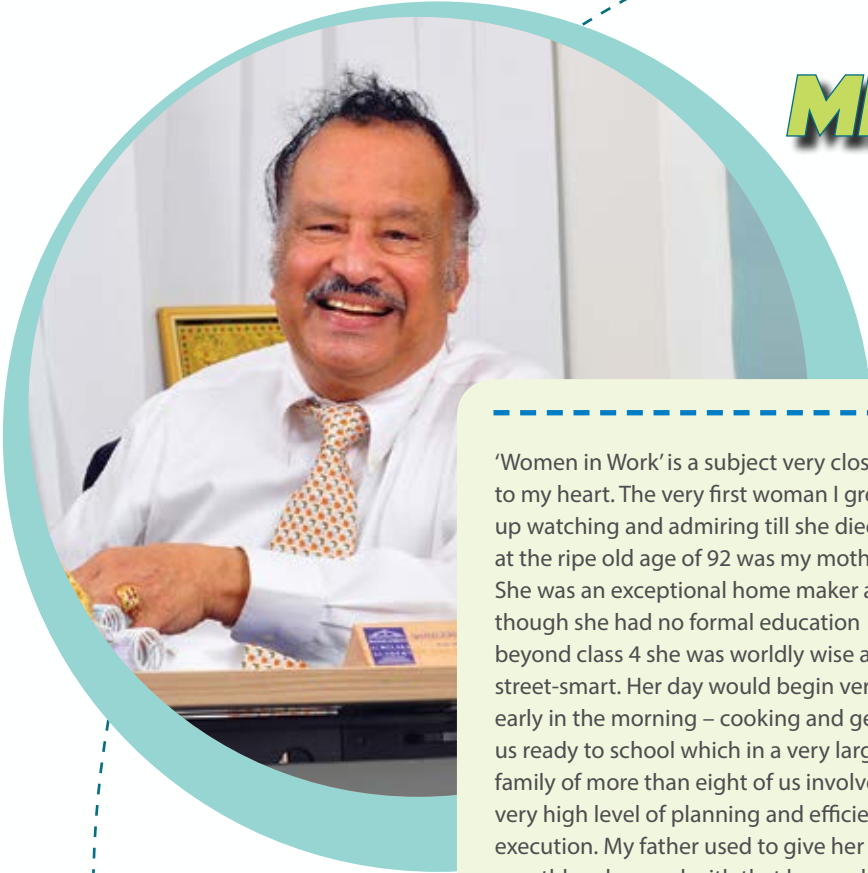
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# MESSAGE FROM DEAN



'Women in Work' is a subject very close to my heart. The very first woman I grew up watching and admiring till she died at the ripe old age of 92 was my mother. She was an exceptional home maker and though she had no formal education beyond class 4 she was worldly wise and street-smart. Her day would begin very early in the morning – cooking and getting us ready to school which in a very large family of more than eight of us involves a very high level of planning and efficient execution. My father used to give her the monthly salary and with that he would recede into the background. She would plan the best use for the money – she was erudite at drawing up tight budgets usually spending even less than what she budgeted, sourced from the best and cheapest sellers all that we needed for the home (I didn't know that cheap and best could even go hand-in-hand). She exercised inventory control like a pro (she knew nothing about FIFO and EOQ but diligently put them to use – she also knew about JIT and Kaizen which were not even in existence then). She was excellent at interpersonal relationships and kept in touch with ALL our friends and relatives – she knew everything worth knowing about everybody we knew and this was during the days of the lowly snail mail and telegram, mind you. She kept all her 5 boys in line (you will admit that is not easy) and was as much Mother Teresa to the neighbourhood kids as she was Hitler to her own. Playing such complex roles alongside those of a daughter, mother, daughter-in-law, wife, friend, neighbour were child's play to her. I could go on, but you get the drift.

The above paragraph is not a tribute to my mother. It is the demonstration of the highly skilled and multi-faceted activities that make up the job of a homemaker which has traditionally been the cornerstone of womankind. I am sure

that you have seen your mother do all this and then some. Common sense will now tell you that Management in its simplest form is PODSCORB (Planning, Organizing, Delegating, Staffing, Control, Reporting and Budgeting). You can now see the similarity that I allude to? Women are born managers – it is a genetic component of their being. Yes, they have been doing all this in a different environment over the ages. With the progress of civilization and forward-thinking society, that women shed the traditional garb and go on to make an equally formidable reputation in other walks of life is not only inevitable but in fact desirable. They are also possessed with an excellent sense of right and wrong, endowed with a gentle and nurturing personality. All these traits put together regardless of gender are hallmarks of successful managers and leaders and I am a great champion of the fact that we should have more women leaders who come forth to take on the reins of companies, academia and society.

At Great Lakes, we strictly follow a policy of having at least 30 percent of every class composed of women. We also have an event to celebrate the achievements of women called 'Successful Women in Management'. It has always been my personal belief that having more women leaders in Industry and society will enable organizations to be effective, ethical and socially conscious entities. This issue of Gravity will serve as a window into the minds of some of those who have not only made us who we are but are now also taking on the onus of making corporate India what it truly deserves to be!

## BALA V BALACHANDRAN

*J L Kellogg Distinguished Professor of Accounting & Information Management, Northwestern University, USA*

*Founder, Dean & Chairman, Great Lakes Institute of Management, India.*

# EDITORIAL

'Women at work' is a no brainer as a topic. Women are always working whether at a paid job and at home or just at home as home makers. In this issue of Gravity we focus on women in work places be it the corporate sector or be it the unorganized sectors. The participation rate of women in corporate domains is increasing at a fast clip and hence being a publication of a Business school, this issue of Gravity focuses on the issues and challenges that women face in their places of employment. Having said that, I hasten to add that this issue of Gravity also highlights the challenges faced by women through their entire life, starting with their childhood, where the Indian society continues its practice of discrimination against the girl child.

This edition of Gravity has some very powerful, deep and thought provoking articles invited from across B-schools and from Great Lakes family. There are a few articles in this publication which focus on the problem of the girl child and how it is imperative for the care givers to take in to account the aspirations of their girl children and provide an enabling environment for the child to grow and chase her dreams. Mrs. Kiran Bedi's article focuses on this issue and emphasises that girls must also develop a strength of purpose and be guided by it. In the personal space, a couple of articles focus on some female role models who have risen above and become high achievers. Some of the top banks in India, including the largest public sector bank, the largest Indian private sector bank and one of the largest foreign banks, are headed by women. These are women from middle class backgrounds who have made it to the very top of their professions through their sheer hard work and dedication. Women in work not only aspire to be earning members of the society but also work because of self-actualization where money is perhaps secondary and the joy of working predominates. My colleague, Dr Anuradha emphasises this point in her article.

Another point comes across very clearly and that is the problem of 'Double Burden'.

Not only do the working women need to meet expectations in their work places but also be the primary care givers at home to their families. In urban India there are some signs that the attitude of men towards doing work at home is changing and more and more men are happy to share the chores at home. This is a welcome change and needs to spread and become the norm rather than the exceptions.

Another theme that emerges is that 'Equal pay for equal work' is not yet a full reality for many of the working women. This is certainly the case when we look at the unorganized sectors like agriculture or construction, where perhaps more than 60 percent of women labour force is engaged. How much better is it in the so called corporate sector? At this point, due to lack of data, I can only conjecture that there is enormous scope for improvement here. Public sector however, sets a notable example to this basic rule that must apply in the interest of fairness. Yes, there are a couple of articles that argue that women make better employees than men in some ways. The traits of women that enable them to be better are also discussed in this issue.

Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai has been doing quiet its bit on celebrating women by conducting its flagship event "Successful Women in Management", now in its seventh year. It has seen women from across different strata of society speak on a plethora of

subjects concerning them. One always comes out of this event thinking of the progress women in society have made, and so much more that needs to be done.

I wish to thank all the authors who have contributed some thought provoking articles for publication in this edition of Gravity.

Great Lakes institute of Management, Chennai is celebrating its tenth year of Excellence and well on its path of going from good to great! We have a photographic collage of the celebrations that took place in Bangalore, Hyderabad and New Delhi. This issue also carries a photographic coverage of three important events conducted in the campus: SWIM, HR Conclave and Supply chain Conclave.

I invite you to read on and enjoy!



**DR. S.K. SHANTHI**

*Editor – Gravity & Chair-Professor, Union Bank Centre for Banking Excellence  
Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai*



# WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP



## Anchor piece:

Our fathers are tough and mothers are caring. Our mothers care with a sense of sacrifice. Mothers create leadership quality in us by inspiring us. Our fathers teach us how to be tough to be successful.

## Excerpts of the speech:

Today I will speak about inherent qualities of men and women which make them successful and great leaders. Men and women are born with these qualities which civilization and training in history has given to them over time. I will talk about the 3 M's for men and the 3 Hs for women today in my speech:

The biggest strength of men has been traditionally money. The first M of the three M is the money. Why do men own money? Money traditionally from history belongs to man – the reason being that they are seen as the bread earners. The second M is Mobility. They are the ones who are mobile. They are the ones who go out of home to earn money. They were mobile for money. The third M made them mobile - Muscle power. They were the ones who were considered powerful. Money power with the muscle power, with mobility, became the rulers. Through money power, through the power of mobility and through their physical power

men continue to control the world. These are the essential qualities that women should be empowered with. These are the three qualities, without which we will never be equal with men. When I was growing up, I decided to be equal with men. My parents helped me in the process: I was trained to be mobile; I have been travelling from the age of 12 to participate in tennis competitions across the country. That is how I earned mobility as a child. Money would come through education, and that is how my parents educated me to carve my own destiny. The mobility and muscle power came from tennis. I would have never joined the Police service. Indian Police service was open to women participation right from the day of independence. Why did women wait until 1972 to join the Indian Police service? Why did they not join earlier? Men were joining the Police service right from the beginning because they had the power of three. Women did not have mobility, women did not have fitness, and they did not have the effective internal power to do so. There are the three qualities I would like every woman sitting in this audience to acquire. I want you to become the creators of the world.

The three qualities of women are: The biggest strength of women is Humanity.

They stand for humanity; otherwise we would not be where we are. Humanity means compassion; compassion means love; love means equality. The three H's of women – Humanity through compassion, Humanity through healing and Humanity through heart. Wherever women are in leadership roles, they have these qualities in them.

With these three M's and H's for men and women, I want an empowered society. When we all have these three qualities, men will become better husbands, men will become better brothers, men will become better policy makers, men will become better law of forces, men will become better governance providers and men will become better administrators. Whatever we do brings wealth, whether we are teaching, whether we are entrepreneurs, we are creating wealth. Without the heart in its place, without humanity in place, without the healing touch in place, we cannot empower society.

## KIRAN BEDI

*Excerpts of the speech delivered on August 25, 2007 during 'Successful Women in Management (SWIM)' event at Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai*

# CONSTRUCTING GENDER REALITIES



Way back in the 1950's two American sociologists tried a novel method of understanding what work means to an individual, they used what is popularly known now as 'the lottery question' to understand the function of work in people's lives. The lottery question asks: "Would you continue to work if you won a lottery?" Surprisingly majority of the participants over the decades have been answering in the affirmative, despite initially reporting negative associations with work.

The lottery question underscored the significance of the non-economic function of formal organizational work. Work is

not just about earning monetary gains; it is also about discovering ourselves, expressing our abilities and through this developing an identity that defines our existence to a large extent.

Identities can be empowering, it's not surprising therefore that identity construction has been at the core of the anatomy of most power struggles. The concept of womanhood and that of work have been embroiled in one such power struggle for quite some time now. Is work the central identity of a woman's life? Who determines the function of work in a woman's life? What are the consequences of this work centrality or the lack of it?

Let's try and look deeper into each of these questions.

## a. Is work the central identity of a woman's life?

This seems like a no brainer! It depends upon the personalities, personal priorities and stage of life of a woman! Yes, it does. But let's rephrase the question slightly, "Has the centrality of work for women on an average changed overtime?" The answer would be a definite "yes". Even after accounting for the personal value differences and stage of life, on an average most women today

consider work to be central to their lives. An excerpt from an interview done recently might be effective in reflecting the role of work in the lives of women today. When asked why she chose to work, the respondent retorted impatiently by saying:

“This question (of why one is working) is irrelevant in today’s world..... you work because you have to be financially independent... irrespective of whether it’s a girl or a boy.”

Most young women had a similar expression of exasperated disbelief on their face when they were asked this question.

**b. Who determines the function or centrality of work in a woman’s life?**

I recall a very interesting point raised by a student in one of my classes on social influence. The student said: “In the 1960’s many people rebelled against the existing social norms and thus the hippie culture started. However overtime rebellion became the norm, therefore a hippie couldn’t possibly be called a rebel anymore.” The point being made through this example is that many a times the line dividing the social values and personal values tend to fade into each other. We tend to internalize the existing dominant social values and then they in turn determine our behavior.

It is possible therefore that our personal values regarding work get shaped by the existing societal gender role expectations and therefore as a result an entire generation of women hold similar values towards work. Common experience could support this logic. If you just look around at women in your life you will notice that in the 1950’s majority of the Indian women were involved in house work, in the 1960’s -70’s more women joined

the organizational workforce but mainly for supporting their families. The nature of job roles they opted for were also limited to teaching or administrative jobs. Today work has become a central source of identity and self-esteem for women. They take up varied kinds of job roles including the more powerful managerial positions.

If all women existing at a particular point in time hold similar values towards work this in effect implies that the centrality of work is in all likelihood getting socially determined. But is this change in attitudes towards work a result of a social change in gender role perceptions or vice versa, is difficult to say. A dynamic relationship seems to exist between the dominant social values and women’s individual values regarding work. Each feeds into the other resulting in a constant construction and reconstruction of gender role realities.

**c. What are the consequences of this increasing work centrality?**

Changes in the societal values regarding work are affecting the gender role equations at multiple levels. At work women are actively seeking opportunities for professional growth (instead of relying on their ‘good karma’ alone) At home too the traditional husband- wife role divide is blurring and more and more men are taking up the responsibilities typically considered to be the woman’s forte.

The increase in self- confidence in women due to formal employment cannot be substituted through any other source. The competitive atmospheres of a work setting, (even the gender biases that exist in it) are pushing women to perform beyond their own expectations. Three of the biggest financial institutions in India today are headed by women. There

couldn’t be a better testimony of the changing role of women in work. These definitely seem to be the best of times for working women!

However while we celebrate this change in the social fabric, we also need to tread with caution on various counts. Power can be as dangerous when with women as it is with men. We need to deliberate on what women can bring into management that would mitigate the ill effects of power. Without the exercise of caution it wouldn’t be long before we become as oppressive as the oppressive forces we have been fighting for centuries. Women have a natural flare for building and maintaining relationships. Studies prove that relational considerations accentuate the positive performance within organizations. Training in developing feminine traits of relational considerations within employees- both men as well as women, could be a possible solution to counter the negative effects of power.

A related side effect of gaining power through work is the tendency to substitute independence for interdependence. Most of us modern day women shun dependence so much that we mistake independence to be the antithesis for it. A good marriage could teach you that there are spaces that lie between independence and dependence- this is the space of interdependence. Work places too can’t function in gendered silos. A good balance of both the feminine and the masculine qualities could provide the much needed synergy and health that can make an organization and its employees- both women and men, flourish within it.

**DR. M. V. ANURADHA**

*Assistant Professor, GLIM, Chennai*

# BREAKING THE BARRIERS

**"Life is about choices and your time should be spent according to your priorities."**

What does a success means to a women - the quote explains that more than a balance, one need to work as per their choices. This makes a women feel not only successful in their career but also fulfilled in personal life.

Globally, women involvement in work is on a roll. Both men and women have desirous for success but few women aspire to be on top of leadership. There is no single right path to success and women are no different from men. Whilst, rolling with the punches, they have worked themselves up the ladder.

Today women are seen performing at every level/area of an organization. They are no longer attributed to unskilled or semi-skilled employees. This phenomenal change in the society is a result of concomitant of the awareness and education. This unprecedented change in the composition of workforce comes with an attribute termed as 'Glass Ceiling'. At an entry level role of Staff and line management, the proposition of men and women are equal but the composition declined when we move up the pipeline.

McKinsey in its Survey (2011) found that "only 14% of women make to the top of Fortune 500 executive committee".

The Glass Ceiling creates discriminatory barriers which can also be termed as gender bias. And mobility of women to upper level decreases. There are many form of barrier which hinders the progress.

Starting with the barrier of individual

mind-set which shows the reluctance to move ahead and do not participate in the advancement of their career proactively. Women underestimate their capability – because of two reasons either of they want to because they are happy with what they are doing and don't want extra load of work or because of the priority they give to family against work.

Then there is organization/institutional barrier which give emphasis to the work environment and the thinking of leaders and top management. Many employers themselves make assumption that a particular job does not fit women and these keep women far from promotion or any other opportunities. Negative attitude of colleagues especially the men make women feel uncomfortable and they become the victim of Group Dynamics. Structure Obstacles shows its presence when leader favoring women for promotion but CEO or top management do not support and women loose the opportunity.

Social barrier plays a big role in keeping women below the career ladder. Some works are said to be designed by men and for men. At the middle of the career when male is progressing, women have to take a break to raise a family- this shapes the behaviour and attitude of a women.

The Grant Thornton International report (2011) shows that global average of women in management is 20% and when comparing the BRICS nation- India is below average ,that is, only 9% women are in top management, whereas in other

BRICS nations figure is near or above global average.

Whilst, the barrier-women are of free choice today. This has led them in a position of leadership rank. The common traits or what actually has helped these women to succeed are their commitments, approach and belief which helped them in becoming a learning Organization. These women perform with System Thinking approach. They move out of their comfort zone to pass or go through the Acid Test described by Jack Welch in his book Winning.

Leader plays a vital role in uplifting women in the organization. For leaders gender diversity is important, because they give more weight age to talent than gender. Leaders work towards removing the barriers for the transparent and accountable mobility of women in top management. Today more inspiring and acceptable culture of leadership is required- which will help women in their career growth.

Today women are seen in every field and their involvement is producing strong business as well as economic results. The corporations who are still not realizing the importance of women in top management will be laid back in some aspect as today's figure shows the presence of women in good numbers in executive committee of Top Fortune 500 companies.

**SUMBUL SABA**

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# ALL BY HERSELF

Tears rolled down her eyes as she quietly kept wiping them, much like any other day of the past. It's her habit, she must have done something wrong said people who went by the lady who was left aghast.

She had sobbed and complained umpteen times only to know that they fell on deaf ears, sympathy and pity became synonymous to her, her self-respect was left tarnished instilling in her grave fear.

She found it difficult to look into the mirror for she believed it was her mistake, she succumbed to charges of provocation and of enticing men for success and glory. She surrendered herself each time and served herself for the fear that her boss doesn't make her a strumpet story.

Little did the naïve know that she was his ladder to success and the ghosts in the black suit did little for someone else's interest? She fell prey to those empathetic words and the fake care, because this pretty lady was sheltered and was kept safe away from the worldly lecherous stare.

Her mistake was not that she was innocent, unpretentious and simple, but she was silent and she remained to be so. She decided to be quiet and to follow someone she didn't know, to be stay alive she let her dignity flow.

That very day when she was lying deserted in the crowd she decided it was enough and weeds needed to be cropped out. She stood, she screamed, she laid the truth bare and cold and that was the one last tear that a rolled down as she fought for her story untold.

She decided not to be quiet, deserted and to be sympathized anymore and that she will wear her pride and dignity and shatter the cultural lore.

The day that was and the day that is now... She has empowered herself and now she knows the victory and valour lies within herself.

She moves through the world with a sense of confidence and grace, her once reckless spirit is now tempered by wisdom worth an embrace.

Quietly, yet firmly, she speaks her truth without doubt or hesitation, the life she leads is of her own creation fuelled by magnanimity of determination.

The rules are hers, views are hers. She faces criticism and no one dares subdue her anymore. Loathes her, the society but she still loves in galore. She fights for what is right, falls and stands up upright.

Yes the journey so far hasn't been easy; she's seen trenches and pitfalls. Yet she's smiled each time with a promise that she be her own thrall.

My dear lady, you're but an epitome of endurance, perseverance and passion who has taught what it means to love unconditional, to give without expectation and to live for them by being thyself.

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**SURABHI KASHYAP**

*Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai*



# BOARDROOM OR PLAYROOM: WHAT DO YOU CHOOSE TO PRIORITIZE?



Very recently, PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi raised headlines when she said why women still can't have it all, the matter actually raised some serious issues women face at work, despite the herculean multitasking efforts what do you actually choose--- your career or your family?

Globally only a 24 per cent of senior management roles are now filled by women.

Working women are constantly on the toes, you look around and they have a thousand things running in their minds, if the slides are well prepared for the meeting, if the gas stove was switched off, if the baby sitter is managing the baby well... the list is endless....

Charlotte Whitton puts it in words "Whatever women do they must do twice as well as men to be thought half as good. Luckily, this is not difficult." Surprisingly even with the changing times the yard stick today for a working woman's success is judged by the fit-gap of her accomplishments over her work life balance, while for the men the scale is more calibrated over just the professional success. This thought needs to be changed and hopefully with changing times and society, it will in the days to come.

The funny part is - even if your children and husband are supportive about your career, the guilt of "I am not able to do enough for them" keeps tormenting the woman. In a recent gathering, one of our firm's senior partner had described how she felt so guilty for not being able to attend her son's first day of college as she was at the client site, she confessed about it to her

son few years later and apologized to him and to her surprise her son did not even remember anything about that event and they had a good laugh about it!

Despite the fact that more men today are willing to take up house hold work and responsibilities to help their better halves carve out their professions, it can still be seen that most women 'choose' their families over their career with the general thought "I need to adjust; I am the woman in the house". A very successful manager whom I know, gave up her career as no one from her extended family was ready to support her child while she was away at work. "Hopefully I will get some opportunity when my child grows up and can manage herself but I am not sure how to keep myself experientially at par with my peers for the next few years". Companies and firms do offer flexibility with work from home and sabbaticals but it is fact that the focus and efforts needed to handle, conquer and break the glass ceiling will be a mammoth task.

And the woman who fails to cope up with the personal expectations and gives up her career for the 'greater good' of herself and her family faces the brutal realization that after few years she is no longer needed 24\*7 by her children, her spouse has advanced years in his career and most of her family, peers and relatives know her as 'someone' who gave up her career for her family; from the independent achiever she has transformed into the dependent wife. Many such women I know are very happy with their lives and enjoy the household chores but most of them who once dreamt of climbing the corporate ladder but no longer find themselves a fit in the race feel extremely dejected and out of place.

Many companies have the initiatives



by which they hire the former women employees who had to quit due to personal reasons but are now ready to make a comeback. The alpha returner's trend is on rise abroad and in India and hope it continues to soar.

Societal norms and pressure affect the career choices of a woman to the extent that is forced to choose and prioritize. But times are fast changing and hopefully we will have a more open and liberal society where a woman finds it is easy to share the work load at home without bearing the guilt suffix attached after her ambitions.

While sitting through a boardroom meeting the woman next to you might be fighting an internal battle of whether

she should be in the boardroom - taking crucial decisions for her company or in her baby's playroom - playing with him and trying to make him laugh. I do not think she deserves to fight this guilt war or give up her dreams. I think in addition to the changing and a more conscious society, a family's backing and outlook towards supporting a daughter or a daughter in law's career should also evolve, it should be understood that a woman's professional aspirations also need to be equally respected and supported.

Most importantly, a woman herself should try and focus on what she feels is

important for her happiness and success professionally, she has to let go of the guilt factor lingering on her mind - it should be understood that you cannot please everybody all the time, you need to emphasize on what you enjoy the most. As Lady Marie Curie puts it "We must believe that we are gifted for something, and that this thing, at whatever cost, must be attained."

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**ADITI BASU**

*Deloitte Consulting*

# THE GLASS CEILING

March 8th somehow steers much talk, much advertisement, much discussions about "Women" – Her liberation, need for diversity, gender balance & power balancing and her role in Global Corporate World.

But something that caught my eye and attention is an article in THE MINT – Love me, love my career (Link here – <http://www.livemint.com/Leisure/1tstvlzmhoX8fKyNpYUFJN/Love-me-love-my-career.html>).

Hema Ravichandar has so beautifully articulated the reason why women want "Career" as equally as they want "Home". She says that the driving force in women who want to make a mark in career are – intellectual stimulation, being part of something bigger than her (self-worth), financial independence & being the co-bread winner, finally possessing the power beyond kitchen and progressing beyond her current social status!

That is a BINGO on nailing down the reasons why women love their career and have so much vested interest in making work and life WORK!

And there again we speak about the famous "Glass Ceiling" and how the organizations, her counterparts at work & home and her overall support system needs to help her BREAK this glass ceiling...

**But honestly if I were to answer that question – Is Glass Ceiling a reality or a myth?**

My answer would be – It is both!

It is a reality, but not in the organizations, her counterparts at work & home and her overall support system but in her own mind!

This Glass Ceiling gets build and instilled in the mind by the assumptions that

we women tend to make and our perceptions...

**How many times have we limited ourselves from taking the leap (new role, new function, and additional responsibilities, new job) thinking that this is not possible because of X, Y, Z reasons...??**

**How many times have we stopped taking the bold steps due to a remote incident in the past that didn't go the way it was planned??**

**How many times have we worried about doing the things that we want, in the fear of hurting or falling off the line of duty??**

I am sure most of us are silently saying a "Yes" to each of the above question!

It is a myth, when we try to push this burden to rest on the Organization that we work for, our counterparts at home & work and the societal support system that exists today!

**Today many organizations** – Executive, Senior Management and Middle Management have the "empathy" and understand a women's call of duty at both her ends. There are several options provided to her to manage her professional outcomes without compromising her personal duties.

**Most Families, Friends and Society** – also have come a great deal in understanding her priorities and rendering a helping hand when she needs one...

So the next time, we think about a "Glass Ceiling"...First break the one that you

have built and currently building on in our mind... before stepping out to see how the rest of the world can help you break it!!

**As our beloved Mahatma said** – Be the change you want to see in the world. Let's conquer the enemies within before we set to conquer the world. The enemies being – our insecurities, doubts, assumptions, perceptions and the burdens of the past!

There are moments where trying to be exceptional at home & work has its side effects and below is my rant on one of those days.

Many times I have heard that "Choosing the difficult path" were the way the entrepreneurs, path breakers, revolutionaries and leaders think and act...

But I think as an ordinary human being – a daughter, a wife, a mother, a daughter-in-law, an employee, a friend and colleague – we have been pushed to take the difficult path...

In such times, it is not the intent to be "happy or satisfied for self" that has been the motive, but in most cases (99%) it has been for making others happy, satisfied, abiding to traditions and formalities, getting the priorities right (being a women!!) which has been the driving force!

**Is it fair? Is it alright? Is it the right thing to do??**

Being a woman is not easy. Especially being a woman who has been perceived to be a good daughter, a sincere wife, a loving mother, an obedient & soft spoken daughter-in-law, a committed & an exceptional high performing employee excelling in every endeavor at work, a true friend and a reliable colleague.

Coming to think of it, the character that gets built since we enter the world, the values that get inculcated into us,

the dreams & ambitions that becomes inherent to us – ALL OF IT – just vanishes when she enters “Womanhood”!

Has women been designed to be this – is this “The right thing to do” being a woman?

### A Women’s Cry

Being a mother of a 4 year old and one who’s carrying a 6 month old in the womb, I can firmly say that being a wonderful mother and an exceptional employee at the same time is possible but comes at a price.

The logical & the most rational conclusion to the question I have raised during my rant is, which many proclaimed women achievers & protagonists now say that,

“It’s Ok” to not be 100% at being a great

mother & an exceptional employee. Accept what you are and acknowledge that “It’s Ok” to be so.

For life is a long journey with an ongoing learning process and one day we can get

to being the BEST in both, to truly live by Sir William Ross Wallace’s praise for women.

**AMIRUDAPRIYA BALAKUMAR**

*Cognizant Technology Solutions*



“The Hand That Rocks the Cradle Is the Hand That Rules the World”



# BOYS DON'T CRY



“Boys don’t cry” is a popular video based advertisement I keep seeing on the television, and every possible electronic medium including What’sApp. The moral of the story is simple and clear. Men are conditioned from the childhood that crying (in public) is a weakness. The ad is trying to make an important point by adding it’s time we condition our men not to make women cry (either in public or in private). It is not surprising at all! The sex ratio of the nation (940 women to 1000 men) is a standing testimony to our collective attitude towards women. We have approximately three hundred and thirty million gods and goddesses. I am sure half of them are female gods! Going by the list of holidays there is sizeable number of holidays that celebrate the goddesses.

The above notwithstanding, the “Boys don’t cry...” campaign is the naked truth about our psyche. The jingoist inside me would prompt me to point fingers at some other nation that might probably be treating its women worse. But, that does not make the problem go away!

I travel to China often and spend a lot

of time meeting people as part of my business. Most of my learning in life has taken place through such interactions, and hence I place a disproportionately higher focus on them.

It is interesting that we tend to compare India and China often on many issues. Though I haven’t done a whole lot of research on the subject, from my general observation and interactions with people, I find Chinese women more empowered than their counterparts in India.

What I observe in China, is quite a contrast to what I see in India. I see men and women both are equally focusing on education, career and leading life. My work takes me to metropolises like Shanghai and Beijing, and also to rural China, to places like Chongqing, Urumqi, Chengdu and the like. Everywhere, I see women working. Women working, not just in few sectors, but across the sectors. I have had opportunities to visit high schools and Universities, and I do see girls enrolling and training in courses that are considered a male bastion, here in India!

My Chinese acquaintances speak very

freely; at least about what is happening in India. I had difficult time explaining the Nirbhaya episode and its aftermath. I am having continued difficulties in explaining what is happening to school girls in some schools today!

The stock question I face is: Why so much violence against women and girls, including girl children in India?

As much as I wanted to hide behind confounding statistics and convoluted arguments about proliferation of TV channels blowing things out of proportion etc., I could not do so for a simple reason...as much as I love my mother land and want to project a positive image of her, I am painfully reminded that I am part of the same society that has chosen to deal with its women in such outrageous ways!

Violence against women is not only present in its physical form, it’s prevalent in many different forms in our society!

Not regarding women as equals is the starting point of this malaise, in my opinion.

From the quality and the level of education that we want for our daughters, in comparison to our sons, to listing the unmarried daughter as a liability in personal income statement, we perpetrate this again and again.

There are societal norms which are conveniently touted as 'safe guards' to protect women. Mostly these are restrictive and discriminatory, from 'dress codes' to 'marriage codes'

At work place, the discriminatory pay practices against women are aplenty.

We do not have a legislated position on Equal Opportunity for Women in Workplace!

Even the most fundamental requirements such as the availability of appropriate rest rooms are still an issue.

While Vishaka Act has been enforced, I am not sure about its implementation in many organizations! There is a whole lot of leering and more happening at the workplace, I am sure!

We do hear "boys are boys..." type of irresponsible statements from politicians!

We were thrilled that yet another statue of Mahatma Gandhi was installed in one more foreign city...we have even reinvented the Mahatma in cleaning up India!

I hope, we understand what Gandhiji meant when he wrote:

"Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in the minutest details in the activities of man, and she has equal right to liberty of freedom and liberty with him

She is entitled to a supreme place in her own sphere of activity as man is in his. This ought to be the natural condition of things and not as a result only of learning to read and write.

By sheer force of a vicious custom, even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over woman which they do not deserve and ought not

to have. Many of our movements stop half way because of the condition of our women"

I don't believe it's all gloom and doom. As I see more women emerge as social and business leaders, my heart is filled with hope for India's future.

I had the opportunity of witnessing a "Karma Yoga" workshop this October. It was heartening to see a woman taking lead in empowering women in her village, by imparting certain skills. The self-help groups of women are becoming active, productive and powerful.

Year after year, it's the girls who seem to be beating the hell out of boys in academic results!

I am hopeful that my daughter's generation will see the glass-ceilings break and boys don't make the girls cry. I am sure this is not too much to expect!

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**RAGHAVAN NEELANKANTAN**

*Elgi Equipments Ltd, PGXPM '10*

# MAKE ROOM FOR MOMMY



Starting with the words of B. D. Gulledge "I used to sit on the banks with a raft and watch the water roll lazily by. One day I pushed my raft into the shallows of the water and found the water moved swifter than I thought. My raft was actually a boat. Then, after some time, I rowed my little boat into deeper water. There were great storms, mighty winds, tremendous waves, and sometimes I felt so alone. But I have noticed my little rowboat is now a mighty ship manned by my friends and loved ones; and beautiful calm seas, warm sunny days, and nights filled with comfortable dreams always double after a storm. Now, I could never go back and sit on the bank. In fact, I search for deeper water."

Such is life when lived and this is what a handful of women entrepreneurs have proved to all of us – That they have the capability to put up the rain whenever they want the rainbow!!!!

Do you like riding your kinetic scooty? Do you feel your hard-earned money is safe at ICICI bank? Is watching STAR NEWS an essential part of your daily schedule? Do you believe APOLLO HOSPITALS is one of

the best medical service providers of the country?

If YES, you probably know what the leading force behind all these organizations is.

Be it **Kiran Majumdaar Shaw** - The Managing Director of Biocon India and the wealthiest entrepreneur in India; **Sulajja Firodia Motwani** - The Joint Managing Director of Kinetic Engineering Ltd.; **Chanda Kocchar** - CEO & Managing Director of ICICI bank & ranked number twenty on the Forbes list of 100 most powerful women in the world or **Pretha Reddy** – The Managing Director of Apollo Hospitals Group & first Indian women advisor on healthcare in the Indian government, all have proved that in these male dominated spheres even if the dice is loaded against them, they had had the power to change it. The world is changing every second and with changing world is the changing influx of women in business and management. Women have joined the mainstream economic activities and are undoubtedly on a voyage to excellence.

Do you still believe women cannot handle business? Then what would you say about 20 teenage girls (as young as 15-18) writing a business plan and taking it to New York and presenting it four times in one week including to folks from leading business houses of the world. And not just to present but to develop detailed business plans, compete with market research, cost estimates, financial statements and marketing plans...

Are women fragile, passive, non-aggressive and non-competitive?

Probably YES for some people.....

Are they empathetic, sensitive, subjective, intuitive and supportive?

YES, they definitely are.....

The traditional stereotyping of women as passive and timid which is at odds with the stereotypes of leadership where the indispensable qualities for success are seen as predominantly "male" attributes such as aggressive, decisiveness, forcefulness. However there is evidence that what are often perceived as "female" attributes (integrity, diligence, cooperativeness and sincerity) are now widely viewed as qualities that can enhance an organization. Women today have broken all the subtle barriers of negative attitudes and prejudices that prevented them from moving beyond a certain level in the corporate hierarchy.

The role of women has evolved drastically since their hesitant advent into the corporate world through "soft" jobs, more in keeping with their roles at home - stereotypes like "caring" jobs such as labor welfare, cosmetic jobs like Public Relations and Receptionists, creative jobs like advertising and subordinate/subservient jobs like secretarial/clerical jobs.

Today, however, women have integrated themselves into every field of activity and every kind of industry smoothly, gracefully and skillfully. Whether it is being on tour



for twenty days of the month or accepting city/country/domain transfers, they are as work-oriented, sincere, competent and indomitable as their male counterparts, if not more. Their presence in the corporate world is now more a rule than an exception such that a feminist agenda and, in fact, any special reference to women in business seems obsolete. The conventional misgivings with regard to their capabilities to handle the conflict between the demands of the home, family and profession are redundant and irrelevant in the present context and this is very well proved by eminent women achievers of today such as **Ekta Kapoor** –the creative head of Balaji Telefilms or **Sunita Narain** – Environmentalist and political activist and a major proponent of green concept of substantial development. A new meaning to feel good factor was given by **Vandana Luthra** with her VLCC Health Care Ltd. And today it is present in ninety cities and operates in seven countries. With the opening of “Amaya”, the Indian Cuisine got a whole new market in the west receiving the Michelin Award.

In fact, a time may come when, if there is discrimination on the basis of sex, it will be the turn of the men to complain! The personnel policies of some of the most successful and sought after companies on mba college campus in the “growth” sector, say Hindustan Lever, have become so “women friendly” that the male executives may well face some discomfiture.

In the light of these observations, what are the current critical issues that need to be addressed? What measures will the corporate sector take to harness the skills of more and more educated and talented women for executive jobs? What kind of incentives is required to ensure their continued loyalty? Will these incentives be attractive enough for self-employed professionals such as those in medicine, law, politics and finance to forego their freedom to join the world of corporate? How will the companies minimize the role conflict for women executives so that neither their work nor their devotion is

affected? How can the corporate roles of women managers be effectively performed while addressing their needs of self-esteem and increasing promotion? Where merit and performance dictate success, companies must necessarily adopt “women friendly” policies while addressing all these issues.

The reality today is that women managers are an integral part of any organization. Therefore, the complementary male and female aspects of creation as conceptualized in the “Ardhanareeshwara” or the “yin” and “yang” must be interpreted as the two aspects of the “self”, both of which are essentially to be balanced for objective decision-making and management and each aspect to be used consciously and deliberately as and when required in the process of administration.

The other interpretation of this concept - that man and woman are complementary “halves” of a “whole” - would seem to bear little relevance within the corporate sector environment. In fact, in the boardroom, the so-called “complementary half” often becomes an adversary. The corporate ladder has been known to hang the skeletons of several “beautiful” relationships while the real adversary is actually the “ego” which should ideally have no place in a proactive and encouraging environment.

The glorious chapters of history bear testimony to such women of substance, from luminaries of the caliber of **Rani of Jhansi, Indira Gandhi, Helen Keller, Madame Curie, Golda Meir**, to those currently making history, be it **Carly Fiorina’s** journey from a shipping secretary to the CEO of Hewlett-Packard, one of the largest US Corporations and Commander Eileen Collins leading a group of astronauts into space, or **Benazir Bhutto, Begum Sheikh Hasina, Chandrika Kumaratunga or Kiran Bedi**.

Women, traditionally home-makers, and intrinsically concerned with the wholeness of human life, inevitably carry to their work

environment a similar concern rather than merely that of production per Rupee and/or per minute. As such, their workplaces have to be redesigned to be places of culture, health maintenance, empathetic interpersonal relationships and a positive and proactive environment. This “Utopia” of yesteryears is the reality we are moving towards today and is happening in companies with a vision, and, it is paying rich dividends.

Women in Management are custodians of “quality” which automatically makes “quantities” more meaningful. In the words of Clare Boothe Luce, “Woman knows what man has long forgotten; that the ultimate economic and spiritual unit of any civilization is still the family.”

To conclude, I believe India today is brimming with the success stories of women. They stand tall from the rest of the crowd and are applauded for their achievements in their respective field. These women leaders are assertive, persuasive and willing to take risks. They managed to survive and succeed in this cut throat competition with their hard work, diligence and perseverance. Ability to learn quickly from her abilities, her persuasiveness, open style of problem solving, willingness to take risks and chances, ability to motivate people, knowing how to win and lose gracefully are the of the Indian women entrepreneurs. In a recent survey it is revealed that the female entrepreneurs from India are generating more wealth than the women in any part of the world. The basic qualities required for entrepreneurs and the basic characters of Indian women, reveal that, much potential is available among the Indian women on their entrepreneurial ability. This potential is to be recognized, brought out and exposed for utilization in productive and service sectors for the development of the nation.

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**SANCHITA AGARWAL**

*TISS, Mumbai*

# INDIAN WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: A BLEAK FUTURE



Women empowerment may have become a buzzword of today but as the world strives to achieve gender equality in all spheres, the latest report of the Central Statistical Office (department of Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation) on the participation of women in economic sphere gives a jolt to your high hopes. If you think India has many Indira Nooyis and Sumitra

Mahajans in the making, you are wrong, atleast what the report data tends to suggest.

Titled as "Women and Men in India 2014", the report analyses the participation rate of women in various sectors. To begin with, women constitute a little more than 15 percent in the present Central Council of Ministers of the NDA regime,

as against 10 percent in 2004. Among the women MPs only 44 percent of them are post-graduates. The report further points out that only 11 percent of current Lok Sabha members are women. The states present even more dismal picture with only four percent of State Council comprising women and eight percent share commanded by women in the State Assemblies.

If that is not enough to shock you, there is more to follow. The report shows that administrative and judicial services continue to be dominated by men. There are only 2 women judges out of 30 judges in the Supreme Court and only 58 women judges out of 609 judges in different High Courts. Six High Courts have no women judge at all. The share of women in Administrative and Foreign Service too remains dismal at 14 and 19 percent respectively.

However there is a silver lining too. The report shows that the women's share in panchayats is pegged at 46.7 percent and women participation in sixteenth general election has jumped by 10 percentage points since the last election to 66 percent.

You may be aware that there is a direct link between economic participation and women empowerment. The participation of women in economic sphere is a key indicator of gender empowerment and equality. It enhances self-confidence of the woman and makes her an active contributing factor in society rather than just being passive agent. Swami Vivekanand had rightly said:-

"There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing."

Having presented the above figures, it is important to analyze why this trend continues. This bleak performance stems from patriarchal mindset that still views women as a 'second class citizen' and considers household as her primary domain of activity. We may have entered an era of nanotechnology but on the social front, we continue to lag behind many

countries. Three months back, India may have celebrated 67 years of independence yet it is a shame that our women continue to be enslaved by orthodox and stereotypical notions. The progress and success of Indian women is still adjudged by her looks and her role in family rather than in economic sphere. Perhaps which why many families still don't bother to educate their daughters and let them be financially independent. Dowry is another reason. Most girls even though educated, are so for the sake of happy and successful marriage rather than for making a successful career. Coming to politics, it is still viewed by many as a 'dirty game' of men. As a woman starts getting older, she has to face an irresistible pressure of getting married which perhaps explains why women are meagerly represented in Administrative and Judicial Services, both of whom require years of patience and effort. What is even more distressing is the fact that women sometimes themselves do not bother to invest their time and efforts in carving their own identity and do not realize the importance of being financially independent in today's world.

So what do you think is the solution? Take action against all wrongs against women and also expect to things take their own course. Perhaps no. What we need is a paradigm shift from reactive to a more proactive approach in boosting gender empowerment. We need to understand that women are not merely passive agents but vibrant, dynamic players who can contribute to the nation's progress. Disseminating awareness about the significance of the girl child is a possible solution for the latter's birth is still unwelcomed today in many homes. But we cannot expect government to

take all the initiative. An Indian citizen is as much bound to work for society as the government. It is commendable that in the recent past, non- governmental organizations and media have stepped up their campaign for gender equality and empowerment. But lot more needs to be done. Each and every one of us especially women must try to be aware of gender issues for we are significant stakeholders in the legislative process. We got to understand that everyone needs to be financially independent in today's era of uncertainty. Giving reservation to women in jobs has shown positive results in case of panchayats but that should be accompanied by other concrete steps rather than being a solo, 'vote bank politics' measure. Every woman should realize that unless we are united, nothing can be done for our welfare. So we must also assume the responsibility of educating every other woman on the need of economic empowerment. A liberal education focusing on gender issues is also the answer to our woes. It is high time that politicians behave as more responsible citizens and media assume a more credible role in fulfilling their promises towards gender equality. Last but not the least, appropriate policies should be framed to enhance women participation in economic sphere. Special assistance in education and vocational training should be given to women of weak economic background to help them carve their niche. It is only through the conscious effort of each one of us that we can dream of a truly progressive nation!

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#### **ASHITA KULSHRESHTHA**

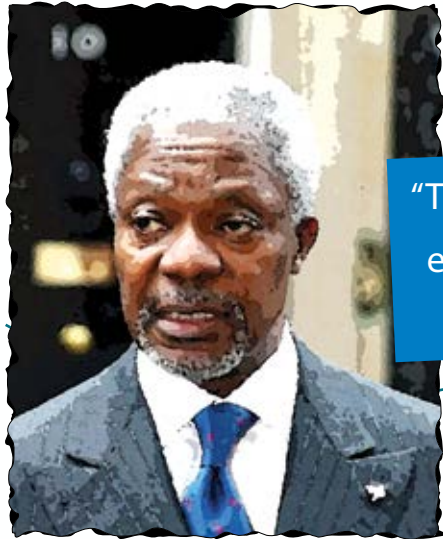
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# 10<sup>TH</sup> YEAR CELEBRATION





# EMPOWERMENT



In the words of Kofi Annan,

“There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women”

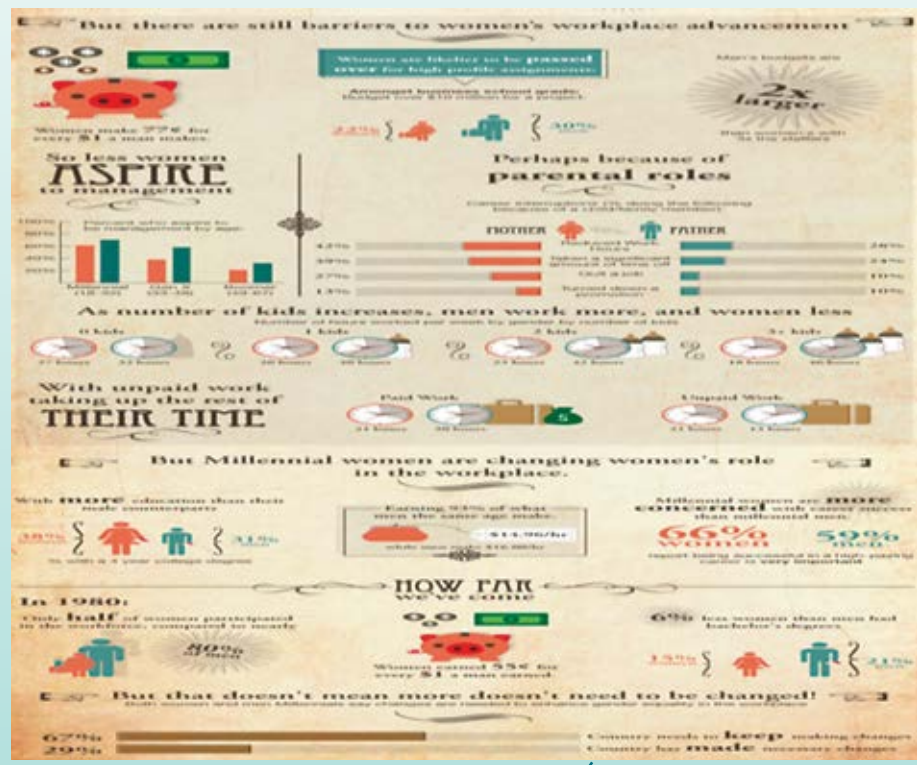
And the world that we are living in today provides us with ample opportunities to witness the growing empowerment of women. Whether it is an increasing number of women entering the workplace or it be the steady rise in the number of women occupying managerial positions in organizations. In fact, if one goes by numbers and statistics alone, women seem to have gone beyond the four boundaries of their homes and seem to have established their feet firmly in the corporate world.

Indeed, women have come a long way from the time when they were considered to be homemakers or fit for jobs with the likes of secretaries, nurses, teachers or social workers. Today, we have names like Indra Nooyi, Merrissa Meyer, Sheryl Sandberg and many more occupying the top echelons of organizations, to look up to. In the last few decades, women have made their presence felt in the corporate world in ways like never before. The staggering number of women entering the workforce these days, leaves little doubt about the increased faith that women have found in their abilities to don the hat of roles beyond that of a homemaker. The economic empowerment of women can be said to be one of the greatest revolutions witnessed by the world in the last few decades. An increased recognition of women for their brainpower

has only contributed to more number of organizations recruiting women in their workforce. The demand for women's labour is witnessing a high like never before and this demand is being met by the supply of an increased number of qualified and competent women willing to work outside their homes. With technology to aid them in their household chores, with the vacuum cleaner and food

processor having played their roles well, women today have to devote reduced time doing their routine washing and cooking.

Figure 1 highlights the progress women have made when it comes to entering the workplace in the last few years. While gender equality in the workplace is one of the best that the world has ever witnessed, equality in workplace among men and women is yet to be achieved. But with the millennial women leading the change, there is no telling what the coming few years will bring. Since 1970s, the proportion of women entering the job force has climbed a high from a miserly 48% to an admirable 64%. While this number varies from country to country, the broad trend in most of the countries is upwards. The women of the 1970s, having watched their mothers go off to work, made up their minds to work as well. The arrival of the Pill to help women control child birth and focus on their career, with the realization that economic independence was a wise precaution from their end, women were leaving no stone



untuned in proving their worth in an erstwhile men dominated arena.

And this revolution of women at work has been a boon to all the concerned stakeholders. While the national economies witnessed a boost because of the extra, capable workers, acquired over a short time, without spending much on rearing them, the organizations enjoyed a wider pool of candidates to choose from, who despite the equal-pay legislations in numerous countries, were willing to work for cheaper price and offer more flexibility. And most importantly, the women themselves basked in their new found independence. They now had the option to pursue a wide range of careers and have greater control over their lives. A report by McKinsey says that America's GDP is 25% higher than what it would have been without women in workplaces. Studies are being conducted to prove the benefits of having women in offices and in fact, some of these studies have already shown that having a considerable number of women in senior level jobs helps in boosting a company's performance and bringing in more profits.

ON AVERAGE  
WOMEN MADE UP

**53%**  
OF ENTRY-LEVEL  
EMPLOYEES

**40%**  
OF MANAGERS

**35%**  
OF DIRECTORS

**27%**  
OF VICE PRESIDENTS

**24%**  
OF SENIOR VICE  
PRESIDENTS

**19%**  
OF EXECUTIVES IN  
THE C-SUITE

However, the rise in the female employment is not without its share of troubles. While on one hand, women are encouraged to climb the ladder of professional success, on the other hand, sooner or later, they face the bitter truth of the glass ceiling. The harsh truth of the middle level of organizations being a male dominated echelon and the upper level being beyond their reach. The sad truth of the times is that women make only 3% of the bosses of the Fortune 500 companies, the likes of Indra Nooyi being a one in hundred cases. Women constitute less than 20% of board members in America. These facts reveal the still lurking demons of domestic slavery and lambasted discrimination against women. While women have indeed made great strides in careers of all kinds, they still find it harder than men to bag some senior jobs. The picture, that was rosy at the beginning with roughly equal number of men and women recruited fresh out from college, goes on to acquire a different shape when half-way up the ladder, most of the women drop out, with hardly any women left at the top.

There are a myriad of reasons for this trend, the foremost being the pay differential that still exists between men and women. A woman is paid less for doing the same job as men. Many studies have reiterated this fact and a study by Wharton professor Janice Madden, it was found that inbuilt stereotypes and discrimination are the reason for this inequality. For example, saleswomen made less money than salesmen as women tended to be given

smaller accounts that generated smaller commissions. Despite the progress women have made, be it education, intellect, performance or potential, it is still difficult to counter the stereotypes associated with being a woman. Not only do women suffer discrimination when compared to men, but also when mothers are compared to childless women. Mothers are less likely to be recommended for a job when pitted against an equally qualified childless female candidate, and when they are recommended, they make significantly less money.

Such pay differentials call for sustained corporate and civil campaigns supported by strong anti-discrimination legislations that do not let the culprits get away.

Another deed, besides being a woman of course, those women bear the brunt of is motherhood. The penalties imposed on women due to motherhood never seem to leave their side. Even in this day and age, many countries including US do not mandate paid maternity leave. And even countries that do, the leave are too short for any woman to recover, get the child into a routine and find a suitable day-care facility. Nordic countries, and Finland specifically seem to have tackled this issue through creation of a network of day-care facilities with trained staff and appropriate working hours while cultures like India rely on the grandparents, aunts or neighbours to take care of children during day time. Incidentally, Finland is ranked as the 2nd best country w.r.t gender gap in World Economic Forum's Annual Gender Report which tests countries on 4 parameters including economic participation of women.

To be fair to organizations, it also challenging for them to arrange for substitutes during maternity leave and it becomes increasingly tough for them to do so as the leave period increases. Thus, it is imperative that governments try to tackle this issue by facilitating development of day-care facilities, at least

IN TOTAL

**325,000**

WOMEN HAD  
ENTRY-LEVEL POSITIONS

**150,000**

HAD MADE IT TO MIDDLE MANAGEMENT

**7,000**

HAD MADE IT TO VICE  
PRESIDENT, SENIOR  
VICE PRESIDENT, OR CEO

**\$11,000**

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT  
MOTHERS AND CHILDLESS WOMEN  
WERE OFFERED IN STARTING SALARY

in all major cities. Ecoles Maternelle in France is an archetypal example of such an initiative.

Birth isn't the only critical time though, after all it is the wife, the mother who is expected to drop everything and take care of the ailing mother-in-law, take leave for the child's Parent-Teacher Conference or when he catches the flu. As a consequence, women need more flexibility than the typical male demands at the middle management level. This is the primary cause of women simply vanishing from the corporate hierarchy at this tier which reinforces the impenetrable glass ceiling. Now, in such a scenario letting men pick up the slack will make a greater impact than directly visible. Once, this shift takes place, men will also demand flexibility from their employers, which will not single out the female employees anymore in their demand for such facilities. Not only this, employers will now need to give into these demands which will make the environment more conducive for women to foster.

Women often complain that they do not get the plum assignments that their male counterparts so easily seem to bag. Here, the women are also to blame. Research claims that women lack the ability to negotiate for big projects, exciting roles and assignments for themselves. Although, this isn't due to a lack of the ability to negotiate, but due to their inability to get themselves to do it for their own good. Either out of self-consciousness or due to family commitments, women do not ask for opportunities that men do and eventually get.

However, this can also be attributed to the lack of a strong backing in the form of an influential senior colleague. Sylvia Ann Hewlett, in an HBR Report, calls this "The Sponsor Effect". Nearly all executives who are able to rise to the top are able to do so due to the support of a powerful backer. According to Hewlett, women are unable to cultivate "relationship capital". They

abstain from calling in favours for fear of seeming pushy and are unable to create valuable relationships with influential senior colleagues due to the unwanted gossip it may provoke. Therefore, there has been a push towards the introduction of quotas in the top positions for women but this is highly questionable and non-meritocratic, though those in favour argue that there are plenty of deserving men at the top, then why not some women as well. A safer and more effective way of facilitating female movement to the top is the introduction of women leadership and mentorship initiatives where women employees get all the necessary assistance to help them fulfill their career goals. McKinsey has been a pioneer in this arena through its Leadership Project which is an initiative to help professional women at McKinsey and elsewhere learn what drives and sustains successful female leaders. The initiative was launched a decade ago and has gone on to inspire many other organizations to help their women employees navigate their paths. Citibank is another organization with a strong leadership program dedicated to women.

Although there is no end to the hullabaloo created by organization, civil society and legislatures about the absence of women in the corporate arena and the dearth of women at the top echelon, there seems to be a scarcity of concrete steps being taken to tackle this issue. As of 2014, women are still expected to choose- Career or Family? But there shouldn't be a choice! Women should be able to have it all...

However, there is still light at the end of the tunnel and this choice can still be eliminated. A societal revolution, in the form of stronger legislations against discrimination, day-care facilities, and increased organizational support through provision of flexibility and mentorship programs can make a significant and much needed change in the right direction. Never the less, this progress would not be enough if the change doesn't come from within every woman. Every wife

must ensure her husband takes equal responsibility of the household, every female employee must ask her boss for better roles and more opportunities and every mother must ask the state for fully-paid maternity leave and day-care facilities. It is only when she asks, and asks with all her might, not only saying but also believing that she is an equal in every aspect, will the mind-set of the society, her family, her own husband change and so will her circumstances, her growth and development along with her standing, be it in the corporate world or in the society at large.

Let us help women make that utopian vision of a world come true where she can wear her socks off, look after her family, support her aging parents and has no time for herself. But she still considers herself lucky: "In another life, I would be a woman again".

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#### SAUMYA TUTLEJA & NAYEERA SAMAR

*XLRI, Jamshdpur*





# PARTNERS IN SOCIETY

A famous quote by Madam C.J Walker, America's first female entrepreneur millionaire says.



**"There is no royal flower-strewn path to success. And if there is, I have not found it, for if I have accomplished anything in life it is because I have been willing to work hard."**

Ever since India's independence or even before that, women have been challenged a lot by the society, in terms of inequality, caste, creed, discrimination etc. The orthodox mentality and superstitious beliefs which are present since ages, have always restricted women from getting exposed to the work environment.

The paradigms of ideal women have always been appalling, dictatorial in nature. Lack of education and insolent treatment excluded them from the society and the workplace. The mass progress of women in the workforce took place in late 20th century. Gone are the days when women used to depend on men for their household and economic development. The concept of strong, independent and educated working women has already taken centre stage.

The increasing rate of participation of women in the workforce has led to equal disbursement of wages and hours in the world. As per the government employment review, the statistics shows that in a developed sector ideally

the ratio should be 20.5% of women employees considering 60 lakhs women. But as quoted by The Economics Times, approximately 26% (15 crores) women in India are involved in workforce today which is very less.

As per the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2014 Global Gender Gap, India enlists itself in bottom slab at 114 out of 142 countries. The other BRICS nations hold a higher rank than us with South Africa at 18, Brazil at 71, Russia at 75 and China at 87. An Indian woman spends 352 minutes on unpaid work (household work) per day while a man spends only 52 minutes. With this difference of 300 minutes India holds the highest rank in the world. On the other hand, US have a difference of 87 minutes.

The factors, like wage gap in the industrialised nations, cultural restrictions in developed nations and unequal access to the money in both nations are the reasons for non-participation of women in the workforce. They are refrained from work because of the "Ideal worker norm" which states that committed employees must be full time and must work for a longer time. Once this is removed from the minds of the people, and women are provided with an equal opportunity to work, then India is bound to develop in all ways.

There are many criteria to adjudicate a woman's roles in the workforce, the major ones being labour participation gap, the remuneration gap and the promotion gap. Due to the fact that female-male labour participation ratio in India (0.36) is the lowest amongst the BRICS nations India's rank for labour participation is 134.

In India, the number of senior position levels held by women is 14%, which clearly indicate the dearth of women in the corporate world. This could be improved if government and its corresponding bodies ensure proper implementation of laws and take other measures to make women feel

secure no matter whichever part of the day they work.

India being such a diverse country which boasts of a youth that is a reservoir of untapped knowledge and flair, must incorporate measures to assist it ultimately helping it to move up the ladder. Coming back to the female employees, in order to retain the women talent in the company, simple facilities and minor needs must be considered. This will result in their empowerment and healthier diversity, be it the assembly or boardroom.

We all know that, during her lifetime, a woman dons the cap of a daughter, sister, wife and mother and juggles her full time job and household. Today's girl is the mother of tomorrow's generation who will prove herself to be more supportive in all aspects and giving a better upbringing to everyone.

When there is an ignominious situation amongst the people, the first common statement coming out is "Stop weeping like a girl". The society puts blame or a stamp on the girl, which must be restrained. Once paramount importance is given to women in workforce, there will be a balance in development in the society as well.

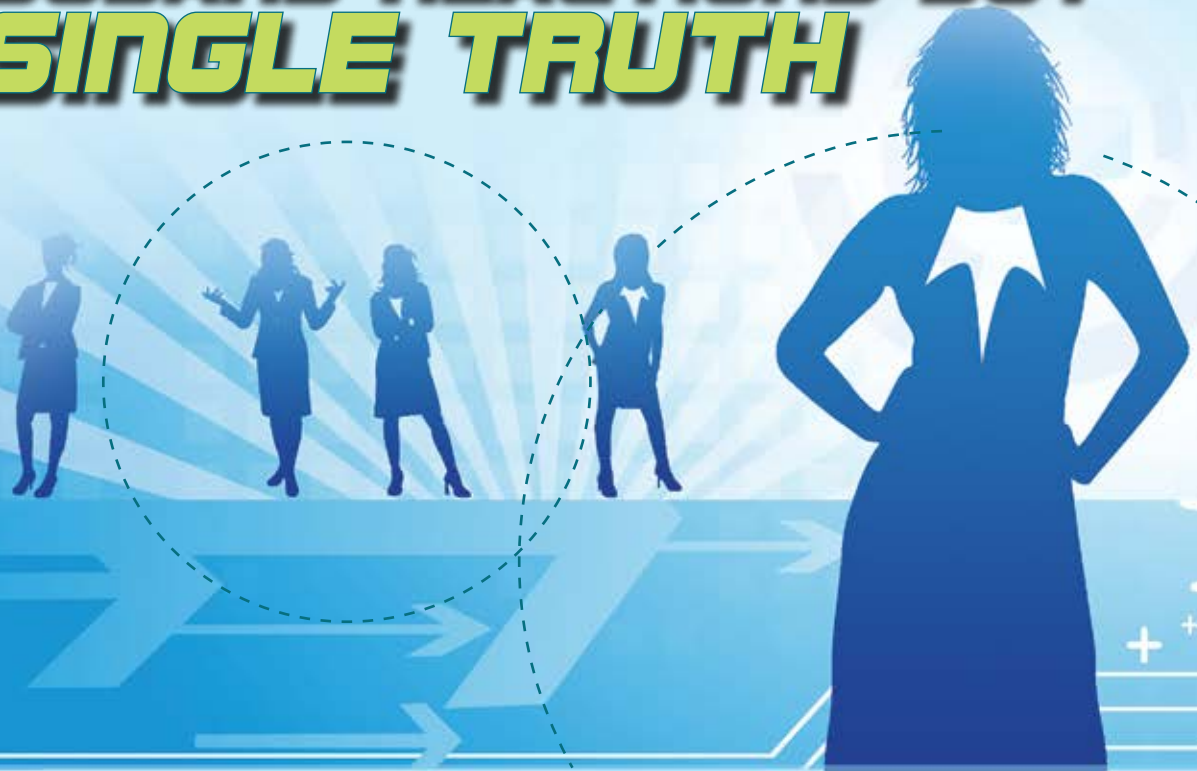
A nation's competitiveness in all the sectors radically depends on how it explores and cultivates the potential of women. The first and foremost thing that needs to be carried out is bridging the gender gap. We must not forget that behind every successful man there is a woman. The same can be metaphoric like behind the socio-economic, cultural progressive development of the motherland, there is always a strong and confident woman.

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**BIJOY DAS**

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# THOUSAND REACTIONS BUT A SINGLE TRUTH



She stood near the woman's hostel gate, clad in a typical blue coloured WatchGuard uniform, with a respectable police cap that fitted pretty well over her bun. Every time any new girl enters or leaves the hostel premise, she dutifully checks all details, and never forgets to pass her genuine smile. This is one of the many examples of woman brave hearts and great achievers, who have set a grand example for our coming generations. Counting from Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany, to Chanda Kocchar, the MD and CEO of ICICI bank, woman all over the world have progressed and gained praises in different sectors.

For all the misogynist's up there, the phrase 'woman at work' might seem to be a malapropism just like 'man in skirts' or 'chair without legs' but the woman of today has not left a field where she hasn't proved her worth. She is everywhere...

If we go back to the Victorian era of English fiction or for that matter Indian English work like the 'Home and the World', women were confined to some limited roles and set patterns. Just like the Bennet's in *Pride and Prejudice*, it was the dream of every woman to marry of her daughters to wealthy suitor's and

the girls were taught to knit, sew and to prove their worth in the household chores. Rabindranath Tagore's *The Home and the World* also shows the deplorable conditions of the woman folk, of how they were confined to the four walls of the zenana, not having much of the outside world to their credit.

Coming back to the woman of today, it is noticeable that the work place or culture doesn't come easy to her. She has to face many challenges. Most of the working Indian women are brilliantly multitasking each day. They want to prove their worth at the work that they undertake in office and at home too. But family duty and responsibility creeps in. They worry to reach back home on time to nurture their kids and to look after the household chores. It is in fact the intrinsic nature of a woman that drives her back home full of worry. A working woman's clock calls for more than 24 hours sometimes. She arranges the entire morning breakfast for the family, completes household chores quickly, only to catch her last local train. She juggles with her team and task submissions in office, resolves conflicts at workplace, and reaches home at 8pm with little energy to do

anything else. But her love and devotion for her kids and family, gives her that magical energy to complete the rest of the day's work with a contended soul. It's high time that organizations should create flexi hours for woman and provide other such beneficial facilities so that she can manage both her spheres quite dexterously. Work from Home facility comes up as a relief for the ones working in corporate sector. As we are moving ahead with time, we notice that the general psyche of males has changed quite drastically. They no longer strive to move ahead of woman but instead try to move hand in hand with her thereby nurturing her faith and talents. It is this psyche that is required at all workplaces to encourage the entry of more and more women in organizations. This shall uphold the democratic values of fairness and equality as well. The world of today embraces the value of 'womanism' which is a much broader term than 'feminism' as it sees both men and woman at an equal footing doing equal roles.

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**VASUNDHARA TEWARI**

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# A DAME IN SHINING ARMOUR

There she stands in the queue waiting for the crowd to advance,

Nervously biting her fingernails, frequently casting a glance;

At so many well-dressed people who want to win that job,

Merrily chatting away with each other and engrossed in hobnob,

While she stands meekly in one corner still awaiting her turn,

With a bag clutched in her hand and stomach beginning to churn;

She is just another lady wanting this job desperately,

As her son has not been feeling too well lately;

With a husband whose salary is just too meagre,

She has applied to this job being all too eager;

With no official degree but a zeal to learn,

With a hunger to be the breadwinner and to earn;

Not just money, but a lifetime of knowledge,

That she was deprived of when she suddenly left college;

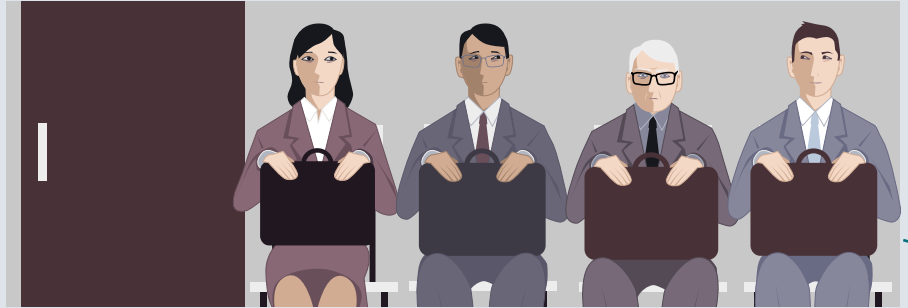
Her name gets called and she walks in with fear,

Sitting in front of her is a female interviewer,

The interviewer asks her to hand over her documents,

To which she sobs and offers the interviewer her ornaments;

The interviewer refuses and says this job will be yours,



If you have trust in yourself, there will be open doors;

Scores don't matter, neither does a degree,

If you answer this question of mine correctly;

What is essential for any institution to succeed?

She looks at the interviewer confused by her brevity;

I don't know but I think winning the customers' hearts should be the aim,

Although employees also should be given due respect and treated the same,

As they are the ones who will help establish a bond,

To which any customer will happily respond.

Finances do matter but not more than the relationships,

Any institution which understands this shall never be a part of the sinking ships;

Hearing this, the interviewer says you have your concepts clear,

Technically we'll train you to overcome your fears;

This job of receptionist is for you to take,

There can't be a more suitable candidate for god's sake;

She looks at the interviewer unbelievably with teary eyes,

God couldn't have given her a more beautiful gift as a surprise;

She could earn respectfully and do justice to her plan,

Wherein, she could look into her son's treatment and share the load with her man,

All of a sudden, she feels liberated and confident,

Because the dame in shining armor has made her feel independent;

It is not just a feeling to savor but to be proud about,

In a male-centric world where women are still looked at with doubt;

Where gender pay gaps and gender discrimination still exist,

Where people talk about degrees, certificates and cultural fit;

Here comes a simple story of trust, feeling and transformation,

Where the dame in shining armor taught the lady, the true meaning of liberation.

**KOCHERLAKOTA SRI DEEPTI**

*SIBM, Bangalore*

# INDIAN BANKS FORGING AHEAD UNDER WOMAN CEOS

Why is the Indian banking industry better than any other place for a woman banker?

Numbers say it all. Out of every 10 companies in India, only one is headed by women, and almost half of all these women are in financial services industry. Following is a snapshot of women heading large banking institutions:-

- Foreign Banks' Indian subsidiary- 4 banks (Morgan Stanley Investment Banking, JP Morgan Chase & Co, HSBC, and Bank of America Merrill Lynch)
- Private Banks- 3 banks (ICICI Bank, Axis Bank and HDFC)
- Government Banks- 4 banks (SBI, BMB, Bank of India, and Allahabad Bank)
- Other Financial Institutions – 4 Institutions (LIC, NABARD IL&FS, and NSE)

Though women professionals in India were something rarely thought upon seriously,

as it was considered that they are doing job just to support their family, rather than career building. The situation has dramatically changed in last decade. And, banking industry has been engine for this transformation for the Indian corporate.

At present, Indian women head banks which has 50% of total banking assets in India and have control over 45% of all deposits and 50% of advances. No other country in world has a banking system, which has any number close to the above figures.

One can easily recall the names of Chanda Kochhar (MD & CEO, ICICI Bank), Shikha Sharma (MD & CEO, Axis Bank) and Arundhati Bhattacharya (CMD, SBI), who have been shaping industry on daily basis by their decisions and actions. The list can go endless but, prominent Indian bankers shall also include Usha Ananthasubramaniam of Bhartiya Mahila Bank, previous CMD of United bank of

India- Archana Bhargava, Vijayalakshmi R. Iyer of Bank of India, Subhalakshmi Panse, CMD of Allahabad Bank.

But, it all started in 1996, when Tarjani Yakil was made head of EXIM Bank and was followed by Ranjana Kumar, who was made CMD of Indian Bank in 2000, and later head of NABARD in 2003.

Khandelwal Committee, which submitted its report in 2009, headed by previous CMD of Bank of Baroda, Anil Khandelwal made some serious findings of HR issues in Government backed Indian Banks. It was sad to know that only 17% employees in government banks were women and worse, only 2.7% of women could found a place in executive level. It was foresightedness of its recommendations that this committee made that opened Indian Banking Industry to a greater level for women at entry level and promoted women elevation on organizational hierarchy in a fairer way.

## STILL TOO FEW WOMEN BANK EMPLOYEES IN INDIA

	Number	% of total positions
Executives	326	2.66
Officers	18,583	10.87
Clerks	47,722	26.50
Sub-staff	11,403	12.03
<b>Total</b>	<b>78,034</b>	<b>17.03</b>

Source: IBA and Questionnaire / March 2009

It is also interesting to note Indian subsidiary of a majority of Global Banking MNCs have entrusted women to head their Indian operations. Naina Lal Kidwai (Country Head of HSBC), Kaku Nakhate (President & Country Head of Bank of America Meryill Lynch) and Kalpana Morparia (CEO of South Asia and India operations, JP Morgan Chase & Co) are the shining examples of the same.

This reflects the diverseness of Indian banking industry, which gives more opportunities to women than anywhere else in world. Industry experts cite many arguments for their success. Prominent one of them being, good at multiple-tasking, and focus on building relationships. Banks have recognized the need for people with better 'Soft' skills that include communicating, networking, empowering, delegating, and counselling among others. Fortunately, women have an edge over men in making business by fostering close bonds with customers.

Secondly, organizations with more women executives are posting better results than companies with fewer women leaders. Qualities like commitment, patience, understanding concerns of employees and customers and others are in-born qualities in women, which help them in building strong business relationships. Also, women leaders demonstrate an inclusive, team-building leadership style of problem solving and decision making. These all factors have led to increasing focus on Women CEOs, and this trend is increasing. It is motivating to note that women who are often considered averse to risk taking, have been daring to expand network of their banks rapidly and take every step to maintain profitability and market share, including tough measures to contain NPAs. It is their attention to minute details of numbers, and ability to foresee its consequences, which allows them to make more effective decisions to sail through tough times and beat market expectations.

With Government backed banks, increasingly recruiting women at entry level (Clerks and Probationary Officer) and various promotion incentives given to them to retain talent, one can only expect the situation to improve and prove to be friendlier for women.

However, that doesn't mean challenges for women will reduce in anytime future. In fact, it will increase only with increasing use of technology in transactions, interconnected of financial system and intense competition in the market. These all would require leadership qualities and innovation, which can become industry setter and operate profitability even in tough times by operating healthy businesses. With introduction of guidelines for payment banks and small banks, we also expect women to make more significant roles at regional levels, as they

have been doing in self-help groups and co-operative societies.

With a high motivational spirit and "I will prove myself" attitude, women in banking sector has been a role model for other sectors. It has now become a very important aspect of business sustainability that a company gives fair treatment to women's talent and ability.

Because, a popular quote by previous Prime Minister of Britain, Margaret Thatcher says-

**"If you want anything said, ask a man; if you want anything done, ask a woman."**



**Anshu Kumar**  
XIME, Bangalore

# HONOUR THE HONOURABLE



She is 33, an age where she has seen it all but one thing. From the age of Lass who was leered horrendously in wherever she attempted to come forward (or even when she didn't) by greedy flooded with bestiality bequeathed in the veins by their buried formers to being a domestic puppet bullied by the piously accepted societal norms of being a Care taker of not one but umpteenth relatives. She was so busy in comforting others that she forgot she had a life. Right from the preteen period till date, her attitude sparks a Godly feeling in a deranged world of hypocrites. Sacrifices, Immolations have just been a part of her life. Even before she was born as the first child of the family, there were question marks hovering around the gender of the offspring, for the birth of a girl guarantees huge expenses in

our country and birth of a boy relieves fecund parents of this democratic country off the steam pressures that they might have to face in the future forthcoming. Juxtaposition of an Economist and Psychiatrist with her parents at her birth would not be impertinent. That was one of the many corner stones of what was going to be or rather already is a world ruled by Men. She was born in a middle class family of a Tier IV City, (with the kind of safety we have for women in this country no city deserves to be more than imagined Tier IV) so thankfully education was imparted to her but she did not know of this uneducated society. The metamorphosis from a girl child to an adolescent brought many ramifications with it. When she complained of lascivious onlookers, everyone condoned as if it is a right to be treated as an object of lust. Any lewd comments, malicious behaviour on streets were just treated as part of patriarchal norms. Adolescence is similar to hardening of clay and this thought inculcated into the minds of young as a dogmatic rule and more importantly into the minds of perpetrators of gyno-crimes; so mere instances of eve-teasing were treated as part of daily chores. Life went ahead for her like that with news of rapes, dowry deaths, domestic violence, and daily harassment at workplace soon becoming hackneyed titles of the media. It was a tacit approval by one and all and when diminutive faction of the society displayed signs of rebutting, they were thwarted, some by their own and some by brute animals who adorn it as the masculine pride but indeed which is nothing less than mockery of the masculinity. Masculine behaviour in archaic world was somewhere close to the hypothetical situation where one man captures a king despite hordes of men battling against him and attacking women was abhorrent. Anyhow, in this part of world definition has changed, now masculinity is raping a girl in a group, haranguing her for less than expected dowry and many more. What a shame! What a mind-set! This disgusting,

disastrous, brazen act is condemned in all forms of a good society. But whenever she read or heard news like these, she was baffled and her views on good society changed, her family started worrying more. She resembled to an erudite low flying bird cutting short her freedom for her respect. Coming back before dusk, avoiding any wee hour's movement, she waited for Dawn more than the rising sun. She may seem to be a bird but this world was nowhere near ornithophilic. The fear of being used, thrown and torture grew at large in the burgeoning materialistic world where relations soon become decadent. She still fought all alone with the outer world but the domestic violence was an attack on her integrity and emotions. She was left with no one indeed. She was the luckiest of many survivors who were forced to bring dowry from their homes where they have been cuddled and loved so much. Some women like her were instead burnt to death. "How crude" is the feeling when we read this but how we have played a part in it is nowhere felt in our hearts. We have been so instrumental in shaping this society to this level that even a century may turn out to be less for its reformation. I wonder if there were no people around when she faced such hardships. The reason why we are in precarious situation is because we ignored when a group of ill minded men teased a girl thinking she is not my offspring, we ignored when our neighbour thrashed his wife thinking "unke ghar ka mamla hai", we ignored the tiredness our wives when she used to work all day in the office and our homes, we ignored the eve teasing habits of our boys, we ignored each and every damn thing that choked her round the clock. We just ignored everything she needed. And in the process she also ignored everything that she aspired. She lost her career in pursue of family, she lost her dreams, she lost her identity of an individual, she lost her right to move freely, she just lost her embodiment status or Have we stopped honouring the Honourable?

I saw one foreign lady asking the subject her age, to which she replied 33. The foreigner astonished to see her wrinkles and manes of grey hair advised her not to lie at this stage of her life or else start caring. Albeit jocular, but how true was that answer. Indian Women is by far the most dependable, caring, sweet, beautiful, lovable and admirable. When I describe any of the adjectives, it has nothing to do with her looks. But what lady pointed was true and crystal clear, "Save yourself before you die off". And indeed our women have seen it all but one thing that is the right to freedom and happiness. There are many like the fictitious 33 year old middle class women in this country but when you imagine a woman that too poor, only god knows how she survives this era of brutality.

In my view it is not only the sexual violence, assault that women should be protected from but her life as a whole, the life she has been sacrificing for everyone she loves. She has been dishonoured; harassed so often by all the members of society. It's time now to demolish this absurd thinking altogether. Although it took one brutal act of cruelty to enlighten the masses and the death of a young Indian Woman (who knows there may have been many; nobody knows them because it went unreported)... Brave woman, but at least we can let her soul rest in peace by doing what we could not do for her. We shall start fostering the importance, respect of women right from our surroundings to each and every one out present there. Only this way can help us save society because without women there can be no society. We need to respect and Honour the Honourable Women of this Country before it is late beyond imagination.

**Ashish Gambhir**

*SIBM, Pune*

# GLIM CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Convocation -  
7<sup>th</sup> August 2014



Successful Women  
in Management (SWIM) -  
13<sup>th</sup> August 2014





## Human Capital Management Conference - 18<sup>th</sup> August 2014



## Supply Chain Conclave - 12<sup>th</sup> September 2014



# AND THE WINNER IS...

Winner: **SAUMYA TUTLEJA & NAYEERA SAMAR**  
(XLRI, Jamshdpur)

Article Title: "Empowerment"

Runner-up: **SANCHITA AGARWAL**  
(TISS, Mumbai)

Article Title: "Make Room for Mommy"



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