

## Study of Barriers and Challenges Faced by Women in Leadership Role

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### Abstract:

This literature review analyzes the literature on female librarians, focusing on the workplace challenges and issues they face and how they overcome and seizing leadership opportunities. Role of women is increasing day by day due to women education and their capabilities. It also revealed The challenges for female library professionals in administrative, financial and skills issues, gender discrimination, societal and cultural norms and harassment in the workplace.

The skills and strategies needed to create a better and congenial workplace for the female library professionals were a positive workplace culture, financial benefits, empowerment and gender equality, mentoring and skills development, work-life balance, and active involvement in research and scholarship.

This paper offers a thorough analysis of the numerous difficulties faced by women in leadership roles. This report's thorough study reveals a number of significant obstacles, such as the influence of intersectionality, organizational discrimination, work-life balance concerns, and societal preconception The report emphasizes how important it is to take proactive steps to solve these issues and create cultures that support gender-inclusive leadership, such as diversity initiatives and mentorship programs.

**Keywords:** Women Empowerment, work life balance, workplace challenges, gender discrimination

### Introduction:

Women have now worked in organizations for over five decades. They have contributed to the growth, culture and performance of organizations. As women have risen up the corporate ladder they have acquired leadership roles and have been assigned higher organizational responsibilities. Organizations which design career paths for their female

employees face issues of promotion, appraisal, competition between men and women colleagues, stereotypes about women in leadership roles and positions, and the personality traits of women leaders.

Gender diversity in leadership continues to be a crucial concern, as women have historically been underrepresented in leadership positions across a range of industries. Even with advancements achieved in the direction of gender equality, women still encounter particular difficulties when taking on leadership roles. This paper explores the complex issues faced by women in leadership positions, looking at the obstacles they face and how they affect organizational dynamics and societal advancement. Although the number of women in leadership roles has grown over time, they are still overrepresented in executive and senior management positions. This disparity highlights the ongoing obstacles that prevent women from rising to positions of leadership, despite their qualifications, skill, and prospective contributions.

This paper attempts to investigate the range of obstacles that women in leadership posts must overcome, from personal hurdles like imposter syndrome and work-life balancing constraints to structural biases and cultural standards. By bringing these issues to light, we can find solutions that work, encourage gender diversity in the leadership ranks, and build welcoming settings where everyone has an equal chance to lead

**Definition: According to Oxford:**

“Female leadership refers to women occupying leadership roles in organisations, communities, or governments, where they influence decisions, drive progress, and inspire others. This concept highlights the importance of gender diversity in leadership, promoting equitable opportunities and representation for women across all sectors”.

Female leadership drives organizational success through higher emotional intelligence, improved collaboration, and increased innovation. Studies show companies with women in top roles often achieve higher financial performance, including better stock price performance and ROI. These leaders foster inclusive environments that boost morale and, consequently, productivity.

To ensure understanding throughout this paper, several definitions are offered at this time.

- Community – a social group, department, organization, government agency, or society at large.

- Change – a conversion or shift in the internal and external culture or environment of a social group, department, organization, government

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## Literature Review

1. According to Helfat, et al. (2006), women in top management positions were nearly non-existent from the 1970s to the early 1990s. Information from Powell (1999) and Helfat, et al. (2006) shows a dramatic increase of women in business leadership roles . Women in Management Positions
2. As of 2005 women accounted for 46.5% of the United States workforce, but for less than 8% of its top manager positions although at Fortune 500 companies the figure was a bit higher (The Economist, 2005). Female managers' earnings now average 72% of their male colleagues' (Emory, 2008).
3. Often cited as the reason for why women are not represented in top management positions is the "glass ceiling." The glass ceiling effect is defined as an unofficial barrier to opportunities within an organization or company preventing a protected classes of workers, particularly women, from advancing to higher positions (Glass Cliff, 2008; Olin, et al., 2000).
4. According to Helfat et al. (2006), the percentage of women in executive positions is gender specific. For example, industries with the highest percentage of women executives include publishing and printing (15.8%), transportation equipment (15.7%), securities (14.8%), healthcare (14.6%), temporary help (14.5%), airlines (13.8%), and food Services (13.6%). In contrast, industries with women holding the least amount of executive positions include semiconductors (1.3%), energy (2.8%), waste management (3.6%), trucking (3.8%), aerospace (3.8%), mail, package, and freight delivery (3.8%), and pipelines (3.9%).
5. According to Laff (2006), while this information can be explained in part by female preferences, it can also be attributed to educational choices. Some analysts believe that

the educational choices women make explain the low number of executive and managerial women in tactical, science, and engineering fields. According to Nelson and Lavasque (2007), women in the United States only comprise 25% of the doctorates in math and science and less than 17% in engineering and computer and information sciences. The figures suggest education is an enabler of the glass ceiling.

### Objectives of study:

#### 1. Gender Bias and Stereotyping:

- a. Bias attitudes and stereotypes affect women, undermining their capacity to lead.
- b. By addressing unconscious bias through diversity training and awareness efforts, these preconceptions can be lessened.

#### 2. Lack of Mentorship and Sponsorship:

- a. Lack of female role models and mentors in leadership roles makes it difficult for women to obtain sponsorship and mentoring opportunities, which are essential for career growth.
- b. Aspiring women leaders might benefit from networking and support made possible by establishing official mentorship programmes and supporting sponsorship initiatives.

#### 3. Work-Life Integration:

- a. One of the biggest challenges facing women in leadership positions is juggling work and caring duties.
- b. This problem is made worse by rigid work cultures and a dearth of family-friendly regulations.

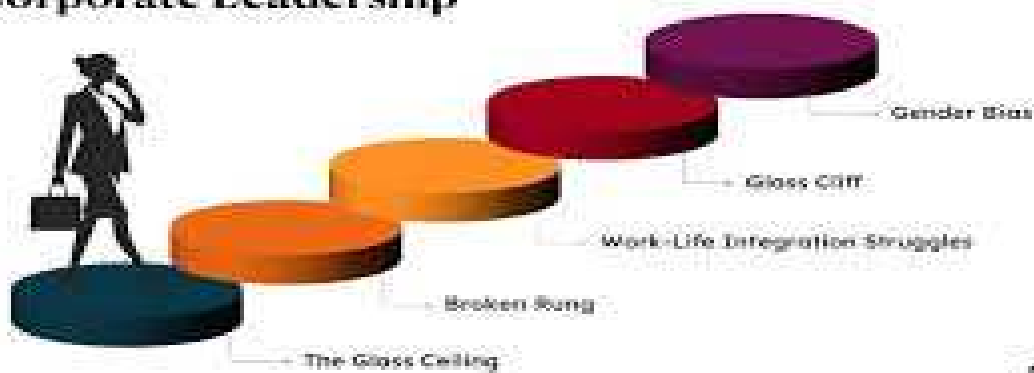
### Methodology of study:-

The data for this research purpose is collected by using secondary data sources such as books, magazine, research papers, newspapers, shodhganga website, internet, thesis, articles etc. The method for this research paper has used qualitative research method and all the data is collected with the help of secondary sources.

## Work-Life Balance and Family Occupations

Another major obstacle facing women in leadership positions is juggling work and family obligations. Women are penalized in the job for putting their home obligations first, a phenomenon known as the "motherhood penalty" (Corral et al., 2007). This makes these difficulties even more severe. Women still encounter obstacles in their pursuit of leadership roles and career progression, even in the face of progress in gender equality measures.

### Challenges Faced By Women In Corporate Leadership



### Current challenges faced by women in leadership roles

1. **Gender Bias and Stereotypes:** Women leaders often face biases and stereotypes that undermine their authority and competence, such as being seen as too emotional or less decisive compared to their male counterparts.
2. **Work-Life Balance Struggles:** Balancing professional responsibilities with personal and family commitments remains a significant challenge for women leaders, often leading to feelings of guilt and stress.
3. **Pay and Promotion Disparities:** Women leaders continue to face disparities in pay and promotions compared to their male counterparts, even when controlling for factors like education and experience.

4. **Implicit Bias and Discrimination:** Subtle forms of bias and discrimination persist in workplaces, affecting women's opportunities for advancement, recognition, and inclusion in decision-making processes.
5. **Cultural and Organizational Barriers:** Organizational cultures and structures may be resistant to change, perpetuating inequalities and making it difficult for women to thrive in leadership roles.

### "Women in Leadership: Solutions & Successes"

- **Mentorship and Sponsorship Programs:** Implement mentorship programs where experienced leaders (both men and women) mentor aspiring female leaders, providing guidance, support, and opportunities for skill development and career advancement. Additionally, sponsorship programs involve influential leaders advocating for women's career progression within organizations.
- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Offer flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting, flexible hours, and job-sharing options, to accommodate the needs of women balancing career and family responsibilities. This promotes work-life balance and enables women to pursue leadership roles without sacrificing their personal lives.
- **Gender Bias Training:** Provide training sessions and workshops to raise awareness about unconscious biases in the workplace and equip employees and leaders with strategies to mitigate bias in decision-making processes, hiring, promotions, and performance evaluations.
- **Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives:** Develop comprehensive diversity and inclusion initiatives that prioritize gender diversity in leadership roles. This includes setting diversity targets, implementing inclusive hiring practices, fostering a culture of respect and equality, and establishing support networks for women in leadership positions.
- **Leadership Development Programs:** Design leadership development programs specifically tailored to women, addressing unique challenges they may face in their career progression. These programs provide opportunities for skill-building, networking, mentorship, and exposure to senior leadership roles.
- **Visibility and Recognition:** Recognize and celebrate the achievements of women leaders through awards, promotions, and public recognition. Highlighting success stories

of women who have overcome obstacles and excelled in leadership roles can inspire and empower other women to aspire to similar positions.

### Success stories:

- **Sheryl Sandberg (COO, Facebook):** Sandberg's book "Lean In" and the associated Lean In Circles have inspired women worldwide to pursue leadership roles, negotiate for higher salaries, and challenge gender stereotypes in the workplace.
- **Mary Barra (CEO, General Motors):** Barra became the first female CEO of a major automaker and has implemented initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion within General Motors, including setting targets for gender diversity in leadership positions.
- **Indra Nooyi (Former CEO, PepsiCo):** Nooyi's tenure as CEO was marked by her commitment to diversity and sustainability, and she actively promoted women's leadership development programs within PepsiCo. These examples demonstrate how proactive measures, supportive environments, and visible role models can contribute to breaking barriers and fostering gender diversity in leadership.

### Key advantages of female leadership include:

- **Higher Emotional Intelligence (EQ):** Women in leadership often excel in empathy, self-awareness, and conflict management, which are crucial for effective team management.
- **Improved Decision-Making:** Diverse perspectives from women in leadership lead to more comprehensive, balanced board conversations and, ultimately, better long-term decisions.
- **Collaborative Culture:** Female leaders are often more relationship-focused, using a transformational approach that unites diverse groups toward common goals.
- **Enhanced Financial Performance:** Research from [ResearchGate](#) has linked higher gender diversity on corporate boards with significantly higher financial performance. Companies with at least 30% women in leadership roles tend to have higher net profit margins.
- **Mentorship and Role Modeling:** Women in positions of power serve as critical role models for future generations, fostering a pipeline of talent and breaking down gender stereotypes.

- **Increased Innovation:** Diverse leadership teams are better equipped to challenge the status quo, bringing creative solutions to complex business problems.

### Conclusion:

The challenges that women in leadership positions must overcome are numerous and varied, encompassing issues like work-life balance, the glass ceiling, and prejudice based on gender. These obstacles still exist in spite of developments, impeding women's progression and representation in positions of leadership. In order to overcome these obstacles, we must work together to eliminate systematic prejudice and advance inclusivity. We can establish work settings where women can flourish and fully contribute to leadership roles by putting tactics like diversity training, mentorship programmes, and flexible work rules into practice. In the end, establishing an environment of advocacy and allyship is essential to attaining gender parity in leadership roles and maximizing the contribution of varied viewpoints during the decision-making process.

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