

Chapter 87

Women Managers and Generations: A Study of Obstacles

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ABSTRACT

The number of women in organizations is increasing in most countries, but the representation of women in managerial positions is still disproportional. The percentage of women in leadership positions globally is only 29%. Grant Thornton annual survey 2019 reveals that India still ranks the fifth lowest in having women in managerial roles. Thus, though diversity at work is increasing, there are still fewer women in the boardroom. The main reason for this is the hurdles and obstacles that women managers face. The chapter studies the various obstacles faced by women managers. Also, it takes into account the role of generation and aims at comparing the hurdles faced by women managers belonging to Generations X and Y. The study is undertaken with special reference to the banking sector. Major findings reveal that there is a difference in obstacles faced by women managers belonging to Generations X and Y.

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INTRODUCTION

The number of women in organizations is increasing in most countries. Women are also entering into those sectors which were traditionally dominated by men. The rate at which women are becoming entrepreneurs is nearly twice that of men (Zellner, 1994). Even the percentage of women in managerial roles has increased across the globe in recent years (Powell and Graves, 2003). But despite all this, the representation of women in managerial positions is still disproportional (Linehan, 2008). The percentage of women in leadership positions globally records to only 29%. Grant Thornton annual survey 2019 reveals that India still ranks the fifth lowest in having women in managerial roles. Thus, though diversity at work is increasing, the number of women in the boardroom level is still less (Hillman, Shropshire, and Cannella, 2007).

Women today are no more willing to be a peripheral part of the workforce. They wish to take up senior positions and are willing to earn a good amount of money. But many researchers found that even if women have a high level of qualifications and the desire to achieve something professionally, not many get to fulfill it. As there are still many barriers that stop women from being successful (Chenevert and Tremblay, 2002). Women managers tend to encourage employee development and are better than male managers when it comes to team building at work (Chenevert and Tremblay, 2002). Women are believed to improve the company's overall performance when occupying managerial roles. They are considered better managers than their male counterparts (Cristian Dezs and David Gaddis Ross, 2012). As women managers play a crucial role in the development of the organization, companies must find a way to retain these talented and high potential managers. And one way they can do this is by creating a favorable organization culture (Cooper, 2001). As many studies suggest that women consider unfavorable organizational culture and norms as a bigger obstacle than societal and family issues (Lyness and Thompson). Many women managers leave managerial roles because of a lack of support from subordinates and seniors and bad work culture (Agnieszka Lipińska-Grobelny, 2010).

As per (Tolani, Bhadade & Sao, 2018), the issues and challenges faced by women belong to different generations are not the same. The expectations of women brought up in the dissimilar historical background and economic conditions will not be the same. The majority of women manager currently at work belongs to Generation X and Generation Y. Generation X is more adaptive and ready to learn new things. They like to have work-life balance, job stability and prefer to give importance to personal life (Janet Bickel, 2005, FGI, 2004, Santos & Cox, 2000). On the other hand, Generation Y, have very high expectations. They are smart, good at the use of technology, frequently upgrade skills and like to hop job for better opportunities (Kim, 2008, Eddy S.W. Ng, 2010, Sara De Hauw et al, 2010, Ng et al, 2010).

Thus organizations should focus on modifying their policies and practices and aim at creating a culture that is conducive for the advancement and retention of women employees. Companies should make constant efforts to increase diversity across the organization (Cooper, 2001).

The current paper aims at understanding the various obstacles faced by women occupying leadership roles. It also aims at finding the strategies that the companies can adopt to eliminate these obstacles. Several studies in the past have focused on understanding the issues of women managers but there is a very little study conducted considering the role of Age and Generation. A study conducted by Jyrkinen, M, & McKie L, 2012 supports the argument that women belonging to different age groups experience different challenges and their way of responding to these challenges is also different. In this study, we have attempted to compare the obstacles faced by Generation X and Generation Y women managers.

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