

ROLE OF WOMEN LEADERS IN INDIAN SOCIETY- WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WORKING WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is a global phenomenon across cultures. The concept of leadership is both complex and intriguing. Leadership research has drawn increased attention over the last few decades by both theorists and practitioners, probably due to its notable impact on organizational success. Leaders' behaviour inspires and generates an impression that the leader is competent enough to accomplish the goals and achieve sustainable success. Leaders differ in their own ways, but they tend to exhibit similar characteristics. Leadership and followership is an interdependent relationship. Leaders differ from their followers on the basis of their exhibited personality traits, cognitive abilities, skills and values. The followership role comprises of the degree of enthusiasm, cooperation, active participation and task competence which are required to accomplish organizational goals. It is commonly believed the qualities of good leaders are also the qualities of good followers. Leadership researchers and practitioners are of the opinion that today's organizations need leaders who will inspire the followers and enable them to bring forth revolutionary changes. Organizational leaders develop and shape the organizational culture and climate. Past studies on organizational leadership suggests leadership affects organizational performance, leadership is necessary to provide long term vision and direction and the amalgamation of leaders with followers along with other organizational factors makes significant impact. Organizational members look up to the leaders as their role models. Organizations perceive proficient leadership at the top level as a source of competitive advantage. Traditionally, leadership roles were occupied by men. The new age women have showcased exceptional passion, grit and determination bot hintheir personal life and work situation, surpassing their male counterparts. The gradual entry of women into the business sector since the last few decades and their eventual elevation to the top management has drawn the attention of researchers in the area of women leadership. The effectiveness of leadership depends upon the leadership behaviour exhibited by the appropriate gender. An interesting question that challenges the researchers is this: what kinds of environmental variables could influence the emergence of leadership and development? There is a

common belief that certain experiences trigger leadership emergence in individuals. More specifically, environmental variables refer to environmental contexts embedded in experiences over time. Developmental aspects include early life experiences at home which include influence of parents and siblings and/ or other family members. Past studies on the environmental influences on leadership suggests there exists a broad range of experiences that could impact when an individual moves to leadership roles. Some of the environmental factors that have emerged from various studies are family experiences, educational experiences, influence of peer groups, interactions with mentor or mentors, experiences of unanticipated opportunity, role model who was not a direct associate, training and developmental experiences, prior obstacles in jobs and prior success in leadership roles. An in-depth evaluation of the family experiences, work related experiences and broader life experiences that may contribute to leadership ascendance and development could provide insights into optimizing individual leadership development for both the genders. Transformational leadership is one of the most widespread and presently extensively researched theories of leadership. At a time of globalization organizations are in dire need of transformational leaders. Such leaders focus upon organizational change which is imperative to the present business scenario. Transformational leadership can be defined as the process of initiating pre-eminent changes in the attitudes, beliefs and values of the followers to the extent where organizational goals and the vision of the leader are internalized and the followers achieve performance beyond their own expectations. Eventually, the leaders and followers elevate one another's level of motivation and morality. In this process leaders accomplish followers' best efforts by encouraging them to identify with visions that outshine their own immediate self-interests. The transformational leader aspires to raise the followers' higher-order needs. The aims and aspirations of both the leader and the followers gets combined into one, thus they work as an unifying force to establish common goals in which they can identify themselves. Transformational leaders initiate positive change and movements in their organizations. These leaders prefer to redefine the existing framework and inspires people into believe into a futuristic vision and venture into new possibilities. Transformational leaders usually use the combination of authority and power to influence and motivate followers to believe in and follow their example. One of the prime qualities of transformational leaders is they tend to question assumptions and promotes unconventional thinking. Another striking characteristic of the transformational leader is they emphasize on self-development and provides positive feedback to enhance their followers' performance. Such leaders are guided by a strong sense of purpose towards fulfilling their visions.

Transformational leaders proactively involve followers' self-concepts. As a result individual followers come to realize their inner potential and how they can gradually connect to the organizations mission. In this way transformational leaders enable followers to nurture their inner potentials and make them realize they can contribute to the larger organizational goals. Ultimately the entire process promotes an enhanced commitment to their jobs, their co-workers and the organizations at large. Research shows that transformational leaders can enhance employees' proactivity by increasing their level of commitment to the organizations. Employee engagement and organizational performance is also found to be positively linked with transformational leadership. The findings of other studies suggest there is positive relationship between transformational leadership, organizational climate and innovation. Additionally, perceived transformational leadership behaviour is linked to positive emotions in followers. Past literatures on women leadership suggests women tend to exhibit transformational leadership behaviour. The present paper is an attempt to assess the probable environmental influences of upbringing years on adult behaviour of a woman executive working in a department under the central government of India based on an in-depth interview. An effort has also been made to understand the perceived leadership style of the executive. Extensive interviews were also taken of her subordinates to identify the exhibited leadership style of the executive. It was found from the interview data of the executive that the diverse environmental variables in her early life had left a strong impact on her personality and later on her leadership style. The interview data of the subordinates seems to suggest that the woman executive demonstrates transformational leadership behaviour. This seems to have enhanced the overall job performance level of the subordinates.

Key Words: Leadership, Leadership Styles, Women Leadership, Environmental Influences, Transformational Leadership

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a complex and fascinating area of research. Scholars have devoted reasonable effort to understand the leadership triangle, which involves a leader, the followers and the situation where the process of leadership occurs. Over the years diverse approaches have come into existence to illustrate each aspect of the leadership triangle along with complex interaction among them. In the contemporary business scenario business leaders are required to stay consistent and willingly take up the responsibility of motivating their subordinates. The drive to perform beyond the set organizational goals must be initiated by leaders. Organizational leadership is one of the key facilitator influencing

the success of the organizational strategies and generating competitive advantages in a dynamic environment. Leadership roles were traditionally assigned to men. The eventual entry of the women into the workforce since the last few decades and their gradual elevation to the top posts in the corporate ladders has attracted scholars in the area of women leadership (Van Engen & Willemssen, 2004). An interesting question that fascinates researchers is this: what kinds of environmental variables could influence the emergence of leadership and development? There is a common belief that certain experiences trigger leadership emergence in individuals. More specifically, environmental variables refer to environmental contexts embedded in experiences over time. Developmental aspects include early life experiences at home which include influence of parents and siblings and/ or other family members. The earlier leadership approaches focussed on leader's traits, behavioural theories and contingency theories; and one of the latest trends in the field of leadership is the theory of transformational leadership. In the recent times the theory of transformational leadership has drawn the attention of leadership scholars. Transformational leaders initiate the process of providing change and movement in an organization (Burns, 1978). They do so by furnishing a vision for change (Bennis & Nannus, 1997). Such leaders need to have the ability to monitor the overall activities and review the processes of change for the long term survival of the organizations. They help the followers to enhance their workabilities, contribution in organizational activities, be self-determined, willingness to delegate and look for self-achievement. It emerges from a number of leadership literatures that women tend to exhibit transformational leadership behaviour (Bycio, Hackett, & Allen, 1995; Druskat, 1994; Yamurarino, Dubinsky, Comer and Jolson, 1997). Past literatures on women leadership suggests women tend to exhibit transformational leadership behaviour (Bass, Avolio, & Atwater, 1996; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Van Egen & Willemssen, 2004). Thus, it can be said transformational leaders are described as individuals who 'transforms' their followers. It is not apt to term the 'act of transforming' to an engendered characteristic.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Leadership

Leadership is considered to be the key factor of administration, which could help in accomplishing the effectiveness and efficiencies of organizational performance both in terms of financial and non-financial aspects (Alhadid, 2009). There are a number of definitions of leadership. Mcshane and Glinow (2010) are of the opinion leadership mainly focuses on influencing, motivating and enabling

other people to contribute toward the organizational effectiveness and success at large. Leadership is the ability to influence individuals to accord to follow one's guidance or comply with one's decisions. Early leadership theories emphasized on the qualities or the traits of the leader. Willam James (1880), noted psychologists, was of the opinion major social changes are an outcome of the actions taken by great individuals who lead others in directions they believe to be the need of the hour. Researchers till the late 1940s and early 1950s (Zaccaro, 2007) dedicated notable effort to study characteristics of leader at different level. The 'great man' leadership theory is the outcome of the series of such studies (Vroom & Jago, 2007). However, it emerged after reviewing literatures on leadership traits that leadership personality feature varies significant across studies; therefore it was difficult to conclude a set of qualities that would describe leadership efficacy (Mann, 1959; Stogdill, 1948). The 1950s and 1960s witnessed the emergence of new leadership theories. Scholars emphasized on leadership actions rather than leadership qualities (Fleishman, 1953; Hemphill & Coons, 1957). The Ohio State University studies and University of Michigan study observed the way leaders behave and accordingly devised vital constructs that are still applicable till date. The study of leadership recognized the relevance of the personality traits and the situations they are subjected to, leads to the ultimate results (Gomes, 2007). Therefore, studying the external environment that leaders face became the pivotal parameter which led to the unfolding of the contingency theories of leadership. The contingency theories seek to illustrate why particular leaders demonstrates effective leadership qualities in certain situations but displays inadequate leadership characteristics the moment the situation changes. The leadership theories based on contingency approach were formulated on Fiedler's (1964) work and his subsequent book, *A theory of leadership effectiveness* (Fiedler, 1967). A number of the other proponents of the contingency theories are Hersey & Blanchard (1996), House (1971), Kerr & Jermier (1978) and Vroom & Jago (2007). It was during the late seventies that one of the most profound leadership approach emerged. The theory of transformational leadership was first put forward by Downton (1973). Subsequently the concept of transformational leadership was taken up Burns (1978). Transformational leadership can be described as the process of initiating major changes in the attitudes, beliefs and the values of the followers to the extent where the organizational goals and leader's vision are internalized and followers accomplish performances beyond their own expectations (Bass, 1985; Yukl, 1999a; Yukl, 1999b). Transformational leaders give prominence to exploring new possibilities and promote an impressive vision of the future. Such leaders display noticeable passionate inspirations (Herey & Blanchard, 1996) and manifest a model of ideal

behaviours (Kouzes & Posner, 1987). They motivates followers towards visionary inspiration altering their morals, ideals and values (Lan & Chong, 2008). Thus, it be more specific it may be said transformational leaders transforms and inspires their followers by making them more acquainted with the significance of task outcomes, motivating them to go beyond their own self-interests for the sake of the organization along with shaping their higher orderneeds.

Organizational Leadership

‘To achieve the goal of organizational lasting operation, leaders the key roles of the organization must be able to measure external circumstance and guide employees to face challenges as well as establish organizational superiority for constant progression anddevelopment’ (Chu & Lai, 2011). Past studies on leadership suggests that organizational culture and types of prevalent organizational leadership styles influences the job satisfaction level of the employees. More specifically, job satisfaction level of the employees acts as a mediator between the predominant organizational leadership and organizational culture to have an impact on the organizational performance. It emerges from the past studies conducted in the western countries that leadership style influences job performance of the subordinates (Avolio, Zhu, Koh & Bhatia, 2004; Bodla& Hussein, 2009; Kark, Shamir & Chen,2003).

Women Leadership

In the ancient societies, men and women held equal status in society. But in the due course of evolution of the social structure from simple to more complex; the prevailing job roles that came into existence involved physical labour which meant men were in a better position to climb up the hierarchy of the gender ladder. Traditional theories of leadership ignored the feminine qualities of leaders. As a result women became restricted to the dynamics of household responsibilities (Hartley, 1914). To be more specific the focal point of such leadership theories was on the masculine aspect. It was not until the 1960s that studies related to women leadership garnered the attention of researchers. The rise in the number of women in the workforce is vital factor that has impact on leadership. It is not unusual to note women are subjected to more challenges and barriers in climbing up the leadership ladder (Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995). Researchers over the period of time have attempted to come up with feasible explanations for the underrepresentation of women executives in the organizational settings.

organizations such as the service sectors while men are found to be effective leaders in stereotypical organizations like the technical & manufacturing sectors (Eagly, Karau & Makhijani, 1995; Lowe, Kroeck&Sivasubramanium, 1996). The factors that play a pivotal role in the advancement of women leaders to the top ranks can be segregated into three categories- societal, familial, and individual (Moor, Cohen, &Beeri, 2008).

Presence of women is positively linked with organizational performance (Desvaux, Devillard-Hoellinger, & Meaney, 2008). Women leaders are prone to exhibit concern for others, expressiveness and cooperation (Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995; Nahavandi, 2011). Some studies do suggests an association between androgynous behaviours and transformational leadership (Kark, Waismel-Manor, & Shamir, 2006). Past studies on women in management suggest women gradually make it to the top because of their unique and diverse qualities (Peters, O'Connor, Weekly, Pooyan, Frank &Erenkrantz, 1984; Rosener, 1990). To cite some of the characteristics associated with women are better emotional intelligence (Eagly& Carli, 2007) along with having nurturing and amicable nature.

Environmental & Developmental Determinants

What are the determinants of leadership in the organizations? Scholars have attempted to find the most feasible answer to this question for decades. 'Throughout the years, a variety of constructs and predictors have been posited as determinants of leadership including general intelligence, personality, values, and even genetic factors' (Arvey, Rotundo, Johnson, Zhang, &McGue, 2006). According to Sorcher and Brant (2002), 'Our experience has led us to believe that much of leadership talent is hardwired in people before they reach their early or mid-twenties.' A diverse range of constructs drew the personality, interests, and motivation domains act as predictors to evaluate the socio- emotional and task-goal leadership among high school students (Schneider, Paul, White, and Halcombe, 1999). It was pointed out by Chan &Drasgow (2001) and development suggests a wide range of experiences could impact an individual assuming leadership roles (Avolio,2005).

A number of specific environmental variables are identified on the basis of past literatures is considered for the purpose of the present study.

1. Influence Of Family Members- Evidence from past studies shows leaders have acknowledged the contribution of their family members in shaping their values and goals connected with leadership (Arvey, Zhang, Avolio, and Kruenger, 2007). Additionally, there have been studies exploring the association of parenting style to leadership behaviour as reported in the adult life. Avolio and Gibbons

(1988) suggested leaders who exhibited transformational leadership behaviour by their followers recounted their parents as being very challenging and supportive in an equitable way.

2. Educational Experiences- Findings from the past studies suggest prior educational experiences being linked with future management success (Bray, Campbell, and Grant, 1974; Howard & Bray, 1988; Wakabayashi and Graen, 1984). Educational experiences were one of the most recurrently mentioned events in an individual life that nurtured in shaping successful leadership development (Lindsey, Homes, and McCall, 1991).
3. Peer Group Influence - Influence of peer group plays significant role in the process of leadership development. Peer relationships provide distinctive advantage for development because of the level of mutual understanding and the time span of the relationship (Day, 2000).
4. Role of The Mentor or Mentors- A striking numbers of researchers have voiced the significance of mentorship in individuals' life experience who assumes leadership roles (Bass, 1990b; Day, 2000; Kram, 1983). Contribution of a mentor or mentors has repeatedly surfaced in the narrative accounts of leaders (Standford-Blair and Dickman, 2005).

Transformational leadership behaviour includes dispositional, traits like components that are reported to develop in the growing up years (Bass, 1985). 'For example, although it might be easy to instruct a leader how to provide contingent rewards, teaching the leader to inspire and intellectually stimulate followers may not be simple' (Nahavandi, 2011).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is one of the most popular and presently extensively researched theories in the field of leadership. The theory is presently being critically reviewed and diverse range of moderating variables is identified to have a better insight into the transformation approach (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003). Transformational leadership approach is all about transforming followers to rise above their self-interests by reshaping their value systems alongside inspiring them to perform better than their own expectations (Bass, 1985). Leaders who have the ability to activate innovation at work place, nurture subordinates as leaders of tomorrow and takes up the task/s to implement change initiatives for the betterment of the organization are called transformational leaders (Bass, 1990a; Bennis & Narus, 1985). Transformational leadership can be defined as the process of leadership which motivates individuals by appealing to their higher order need, and setting forth and articulating a vision of the future, and forming a base of credibility (Tracey and Hunkin, 1998). According to Avolio, Zhu, Kou & Bhatia (2004), transformational leadership is described as a kind of leadership that creates awareness and acceptance among employees, enables these employees to develop and motivate them to go beyond their self-interests to achieve the organizational goals and encourage them through the leader's displayed behaviour. Schermerhorn (2002) commented that transformational leadership can be interpreted as inspirational leadership that enable individuals to enhance their performance levels. Transformational leadership behaviour influences the organizational performance. As Tucker & Russel (2004) aptly described it as transformational energy surges, leaders emphasize on free will and drive out the inner fears of the followers. By indulging into such actions, the followers realize their potentials. The transformational leadership process results into enhancing the levels of morality and motivation of both the leader and his/ her followers (Carlson and Perrewe, 1995). One of the distinguished aspects of the transformational leadership theory is it emphasizes on the emotional attachment that followers have with respect to their leader/s, whereas earlier approaches were more inclined towards the outcomes that leaders had on their followers' cognition, level of satisfaction and performance (House, 1992). Leaders in this case accomplish followers' best efforts by motivating them to recognize with the vision that

exceeds their own self-interests. Transformational leaders have the ability to elevate followers' higher order needs.

Bass & Riggio (2006) in their book *Transformational Leadership* identified four critical components of transformational leadership. They are as follows:

1. **Idealized Influence:** Transformational leaders are perceived to be the role models by their followers. Such leaders are admired, respected and trusted. 'They create a sense of shared vision, they show persistence and determination, and they demonstrate higher standard of ethical and moral conduct' (Beeral, 2009). Followers of transformational leaders try to emulate the qualities of their leaders.
2. **Inspirational Motivation:** Transformational leaders motivate their individual followers by guiding them. Such leaders articulate enthralling vision/s of the future that acts as trigger to enhance the level of enthusiasm and optimism among followers.
3. **Intellectual Stimulation:** Transformational leaders motivates their followers to be innovative and creative by questioning the assumptions, redesigning the problems, and finding advanced techniques to solve old problems. Followers are also welcomed to share their insights regarding the prevailing obstacles and offers solutions.
4. **Individualized Consideration:** Another striking characteristic of transformational leader is their ability to devote attention to each individual followers need for achievement and growth. 'Transformational leaders act as coaches and mentors, followers are treated as ends not means to other's end' (Beeral, 2009). Followers of transformational leaders are regarded as individuals with diverse needs and different strengths. The followers experience personal touch while interacting with the transformational leader/s. Thereby realizing their worth is more than just employees of the organization.

Impact of Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is perceived to be a motivational approach to leadership than the traditional managerial approaches and is found to have significant impact on organizational citizenship behaviour (Colquitt, Lepine, & Wesson, 2010). The impact of transformational leaders on their followers across diverse sectors was conducted by the researchers. To name a few sectors where the impact of transformational leaders on their followers were studied are the business sector (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996; Kark,

Shamir, & Chen, 2003; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990; Turner, Barling, Epitropaki, Butcher, & Milner, 2002), the public sector (Javidan & Waldman, 2003; Raffert & Griffin, 2004), the healthcare sector (Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004) and so on. The findings emerging from certain leadership studies suggests there exist positive correlation between transformational leadership and followers' commitment to union (Fullagar, McCay & Shull, 1992), loyalty to business organizations (Koh, Steers, & Terborg, 1995; Niehoff, Enz, & Grover, 1990), and ethical and moral practices of followers' own core beliefs, followed by the values of others in the organizations and along with the prevalent value system existing in the organizations (Kane & Tremble, 2000). Past studies shows there exists positive correlation between the different aspects of transformational leadership and diverse measures of followers' satisfaction levels (DeGroot, Kicker, & Cross, 2000; Dumdum, Lowe, & Avolio, 2002; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996). Transformational leadership is also found to be positively linked with organizational innovation (Jung, Chow & Wu, 2003).

Transformational leaders seek to change the prevalent structure and influence followers to believe into a new vision/s and new opportunities. They know it how to make use of their power to motivate people and inspire them to trust and follow their example. These leaders are capable of meeting with requirements of the emotional needs of each individual follower (Bass, 1990a). Thus, it may be said transformational leaders are required throughout the organizations and they can have noteworthy impact in the diverse areas of management.

Women & Transformational Leadership

Female transformational leaders create an exceptional relationship with each individual follower, suggesting that women are inclined towards displaying an interpersonal oriented style of leadership (Yammarino, Dubinsky, Comer & Jolson, 1997). Suranga Silva & Mendis (2010) concluded in their study women leaders have more transformational characteristics which seems to be favourable for them as a medium to overcome the obstructions associated with leadership roles. 'Transformational leadership style may be congenial to women, not only because at least some of its components are relatively communal, but also because these particular communal behaviours may help female

leaders deal with the special problems of the lesser authority and legitimacy that they face to a greater extent than their male counterparts' (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & Van Engen, 2003). The findings of a number of studies suggest women leaders are perceived to be exhibiting transformational leadership behaviours more recurrently than their male counterparts (Bycio, Hackett, & Allen, 1995; Druskat, 1994; Yamurarino, Dubinsky, Comer and Jolson, 1997). It emerges from a number of studies related to women leadership that women are inclined towards adapting a more transformational and less transactional leadership behaviour as compared to their male counterparts (Bass, Avolio, & Atwater, 1996; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Van Egen & Willemsen, 2004). Researchers exploring the gender specific leadership styles suggest men tends to demonstrate autocratic or transactional leadership style while women tend to exhibit democratic or transformational leadership behaviour (Eagly, Asmore, Makhijani & Longo, 1991; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly and Koieng, 2006). Thus, the overall findings emerging from the studies on engendered leadership styles seems to suggest that women leaders tend to exhibit transformational leadership behaviour.

OBJECTIVE

The present paper is an attempt to evaluate the probable environmental influences of upbringing years on adult behaviour of a woman executive working in a department under the central government of India based on an in-depth interview. An effort has also been made to understand the perceived leadership style of the executive. Extensive interviews were also taken of her subordinates to identify the exhibited leadership style of the executive.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on qualitative methodology. To further the research design it is based on case study research methodology (Errikson and Kovalainan, 2007; Thomas, 2011). The data for the present study was collected through standardized structured interview guidelines.

FINDINGS

Profile of the Woman Executive

Exhibit 1: Demographic Profile Of The Woman Executive

Age	Educational Qualification	Age When Joined The Present Organization	Duration Of Service With The Present Organization	Job Description
48 years	M.Phil, Ph.D	25 years	23 years	Administration

The executive introduced herself to the researcher as ‘a positive person who hardly looks into the negative aspects’. Born and brought up in the eastern part of India. The lady is undoubtedly a well-educated individual. She joined the present organization at the age of 28 years and has 22 years of work experience till date. The executive described herself as a straight forward, outspoken, hardworking and an ethical individual. She additionally said, ‘I believe in practicing reciprocal respect.’ The executive told the researcher the driving forces in her life is her honesty and genuine concern for the welfare of hersubordinates.

Early Life & Family Experiences

The lady aged 50 was born and brought up in a traditional joint family in the city of Kolkata. She admitted that though she was raised in a joint family she had never ever faced any sort of gender discrimination at home. It was her father who used to assign her and her sister various tasks related to the banks and post office since their teen age days. The lady said, ‘it is only due to the regular tasks assigned by my father to me and my sister that we got exposed to the external world. All the accumulated success earned by sincerely completing the various tasks assigned by my father, had immensely shaped the mine and my sister’s self-confidence level.’ Her younger female sibling is a management graduate and working in a corporate house. The executive also fondly recalled her mother’s contribution in her life, who stood as a rock and never paid heed to what society has to say about a girl child. Additionally, the lady went on to add that her father never believed in orthodox norms. In the words of the lady, ‘my father used to tell everyone he does not have any regret for not having a son because he strongly believed his daughters would excel

more than a male child'. The lady boosted of the fact that the trust and confidence shown by her parents had eventually shaped her world outlook.

Education Experience

The executive graduated from one of the renowned college in Kolkata. It was only due to her father's insistence that she had applied for the post-graduation programme at an elite university in Delhi. She said she was bit reluctant as she has never ever travelled alone. The lady with a smile on her face told the researcher, 'my father told me either you go to Delhi for higher studies else get married'. Alongside her college professors had also counselled her to not let the opportunity go in vain. Eventually she landed up in Delhi. She had earned her post-graduation degree and M.Phil degree from an elite university in Delhi. Later on she earned her doctorate from one of the premier institute in India.

Peer Group Influence

The executive told the researcher she always wanted to have a career in academics, but a particular incident changed her career choice. She went on to elaborate that it was during her stint in Delhi when one day one of her batch mate had taunted the intellectual capability of her community. To quote the lady, 'my batch mate told me people belonging to my community do not have the intellectual capability to clear the most difficult entrance examination. I became so furious at that time and took the vow of clearing the very same exam in one go'. With a determined look on her face she narrated to the researcher that it was not only her but also her peer group who took it upon themselves to clear the entrance examination at one go. She acknowledged that the collective effort by her peer group had a larger than life impact on each other's level of motivation. The collaborative efforts ultimately resulted into their epic victory. She along with her peer group eventually cleared the entrance examination at one go. Later on her batch mate had apologized for those harsh words spoken against her community. The lady said 'it was our determination and collective effort due to which we overcame every obstacle and emerged as the ultimate winner.'

Role of Mentor/ Mentors

The executive told the researcher that her professors played a significant role in her life. Her professor in Kolkata had literally pushed her to apply for higher studies. It was her professors who told her it will be foolish on her part if she does not grab the opportunity.

her life. In the words of the lady, 'my research guides had always encouraged me in formulating and achieving goals within the stipulated time'. She told the researcher that her mentors have a positive impact in her life.

Profile of the Subordinate

Demographic Parameters of the Total Employees

Exhibit 2: Profile Of The Subordinates

Mean Age Of The Subordinates	Mean Duration Of Service With The Present Organization	Mean Duration Of Service Under The Woman Executive
57Years	30 Years	5 Years

Exhibit 2 depicts the profile of the subordinates. The mean age of the subordinates is 57 years. The mean duration of service with the present organization is 30 years. The mean duration of service under the woman executive is 5 years.

Exhibit 3: Educational Qualifications of the Subordinates

Educational Qualification	School Dropout	School Passed	Graduate	Post Graduate	M.Phil/Ph.D
Total Employees (in percentage)	Nil	11.11%	55.55%	22.22%	11.11%

Exhibit 3 suggests 11.11% of employees are school pass out. 55.55% of the employees are college graduates. 22.22% of the employees have completed post-graduation. 11.11% of employees have pursued higher studies.

Narrative Accounts Of Perceived Transformational Leadership Behaviour Of The Woman Executive As Shared By Her Subordinates

Emotional Connect With the Leader

One of the subordinate shared his personal experience with the lady. A few years back the lady was diagnosed with a life threatening disease, on the very day when he came to know about it while on his way back from home he offered his sincere prayers to a place of worship. He profoundly told the researcher, the prayer for her speedy recovery came from the core of my heart. To quote him, 'when I came to know of her condition, I went blank, all I told myself is to offer sincere prayer for someone one does not needs to be blood related'. The employee also acknowledged that once the lady recovered from her illness and resumed her official duties; he visited that same place of worship & conveyed his heartfelt gratitude for the timely divineintervention.

Humanitarian Approach

A female subordinate shared with the researcher an interesting incident regarding how the executive has changed her world view. The subordinate went to narrate the incident; once while working she became unmindful and committed a grievous mistake while documenting a file. Soon she was summoned for an internal inquiry by the higher authorities. The subordinate said, 'although the executive was well aware of the mistake I had committed yet she took it upon herself to deal the matter with the higher authorities.' The executive persuaded the higher authorities to not to be too harsh with her subordinate and seek apology on her behalf. The subordinate added, 'I can never imagine my boss can go to this event to save me, I felt so emotional at that time'. Eventually the subordinate was handed over a one month show cause notice as punishment. The subordinate fondly told the researcher, 'once the official order of show cause was served to me, the executive personally told me, she had tried her level best to waive the punishment but the authorities were furious with kind of mistake committed'. The employee still believes it is only because of the executive that she was not fired from her job. As an outcome of that particular incident, the subordinate told the researcher she has become very attentive in her work and till date has not committed any sort of severe mistake.

Ideal Transformer

A male subordinate told the researcher, he has long term association with the organization but it is only after he had started working under the lady that he has experienced an overall transformation. He emphasized on the fact that his working style, work presentation style and most importantly his level of knowledge has enhanced ever since the executive took over the department. The subordinate in confident tone told the researcher, 'she has transformed me as a professional for my own betterment'. He also added that the executive always address as 'we' and not 'I'. He went on to cite an example, 'she always says let us do it.' The employee acknowledged it is the 'we' factor which boosts the confidence level of the entire team.

Approachable Executive

Most the subordinates admitted the executive to be an approachable person. Some of the subordinates recounted how on the very day when she took over the charge of the department, she personally went to the other sub-departments and introduced herself to the subordinates. Another subordinate told the researcher prior to her we were not even aware of the executive's name under whom we were working. The lady proved herself to be an exception. She has shared her contact details with us and has asked us to keep in touch with her in case of any sorts of difficulties. Majority of the subordinates univocally told the researcher they felt bit hesitant and uneasy while interacting with their previous bosses. Likewise the employees shared with the researcher, it was due to the approachable nature of the executive that they are getting an opportunity to sharpen their professional skills.

Discussion Section

Woman Executive: Environmental Variables

1 Influence of Family Members: The narrative details shared by the lady seems to finds support to the findings of the past studies related to the parental influence in leadership development (Arvey, Zhang, Avolio, and Kruenger, 2007).

2. Educational Experiences: The detailed account of the educational experience of the lady seems to corroborate to the findings of the studies related to prior educational experiences and success at the workplace (Bray, Campbell, and Grant, 1974; Howard & Bray, 1988; Wakabayashi and Graen, 1984; Lindsey, Homes, and McCall,1991).

3. Peer Group Influence: The descriptive narrative of the lady's peer group and career choice seems to endorse the findings of the studies related to the impact of peer group on individual's leadership development (Day,2000).

4. Role Of Mentor/ Mentors: The illustrative accounts related to the executive's mentors' contribution in her life seems to validate the findings of the studies related to the influence of mentorship and leadership development in the long run (Bass, 1990a; Day, 2000; Kram, 1983).

Therefore, it is found from the interview data of the woman executive that the diverse environmental variables in her early life had left a strong impact on her personality and later on her leadershipstyle.

Subordinates Narrative Accounts

The diverse narrative accounts shared by the subordinates seems to find support to that the notion that the various workplace related incidents while working under the lady has contributed to the process of their transformation. The interview data of the subordinates seems to suggest the woman executive exhibits transformational leadership behaviour. This seems to corroborate to the finding of Avolio &Gibbons's study (1988). More specifically the researchers (Avolio & Gibbons, 1988) found transformational leaders acknowledged the contributions of their parents and their parenting style for their long term growth. Thus, the subordinates overall job performance seems to haveenhanced.

CONCLUSION

Leadership is perceived to be a process of social influence (Basu& Mukherjee, 2011). Every organization across the globe is looking for individuals who are proficient leaders in their fields. Organizational members look up to the leaders as their role models. Thus, much responsibility lies with the leader to shape the organizational culture and climate for the long term survival of the organizations. The new age women have showcased exceptional passion, grit and determination in their personal life and work situation, surpassing their male counterparts. There is a common belief that certain experiences trigger leadership emergence in individuals. More specifically, environmental variables refer to environmental contexts embedded in experiences over time. Developmental aspects includeearlylifeexperiencesathomewhichincludeinfluenceofparentsandsiblingsand/

or other family members. In the present organizational environment, it is necessary to have a better understanding of the components that contributes immensely in the leadership development of the women leaders. Diversity in the organizational management is the need of the hour. Gradually women leaders are climbing up the ladder of organizational leadership. In today's business environment organizations needs transformational leaders. They give attention to initiating and implementing organizational change, which is an intrinsic part of the ever changing world. Such leaders enhance the followers' proactivity by increasing their level of commitment to the organizations. Past studies related to women leadership suggests women tend to exhibit transformational leadership behaviour. Therefore, with the rise in the number of women leaders, the exhibited leadership styles of women in management will ultimately lead to a better understanding and long term implication of women leadership.

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