

The influence of the professional environment on women leadership: A Quantitative Investigation

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DOI:10.48047/pne.2018.55.1.73

Abstract

Women's leadership positions in India have been significantly impacted by the country's historically male-dominated professional environment. Despite growing public awareness of the need for gender equality, women in leadership roles frequently encounter barriers like prejudice, discrimination, and a lack of support. The leadership potential of women in India is likewise constrained by societal norms. It can be difficult for women to advance in their jobs since they are expected to put their families' needs ahead of their own. However, there has been a shift in recent years towards building more welcoming workplaces that support diversity and equal opportunity for women. To assist women in advancing their careers, many organizations now provide mentoring programmes, leadership development opportunities, and flexible work schedules. In addition, there has been an increase in the number of projects and businesses run by women with the goal of empowering women in the workplace. These initiatives are gradually dismantling the old barriers that have kept women from reaching their full potential in leadership positions. Overall, even while there is still work to be done, the professional environment in India is increasingly improving its support for women in leadership roles.

Keywords: Women's leadership, Gender equality, Professional environment, Empowerment, Workplace diversity

Introduction

Women's possibilities for leadership and advancement in the workplace in India can be significantly impacted by the business climate. Young women's goals and performance in school can be positively impacted by exposure to female leaders, yet women in leadership roles may face obstacles due to cultural norms and gender discrimination. While there are opportunities for women in management in India, there are hurdles that must be overcome in order to improve

gender equity in the workplace. It has been shown that having more women in positions of leadership can help young women achieve their educational goals and realise their career dreams. Beaman et al. (2012) found that exposure to female leaders enhanced women's ambitions for and success in education during a policy experiment they carried out in India. This demonstrated that women who were given female leaders as role models performed better academically and were more likely to have an interest in pursuing higher education than women who did not have any female leaders as role models. This implied that boosting women's presence in leadership roles could have a positive effect on the scholastic performance of future generations and that the professional environment could play a key influence in influencing the ambitions of young women.

The cultural environment in India has an effect on how women lead in the workplace. From a cultural feminist standpoint, Vasavada (2012) examined the experiences of women leaders in Indian charitable organizations. It was revealed that societal expectations of gender roles and leadership styles presented special difficulties for women leaders. A nurturing and sympathetic leadership style, which can be viewed as incompatible with aggressiveness and decision-making, was required of women in leadership roles.

Women now have the chance to climb to executive positions in India thanks to the country's improved economic climate. The shifting landscape of women in management in India was examined by Budhwar et al. in 2005, who found that more women were being hired for management positions across a range of industries. It was also discovered that gender discrimination and traditional gender norms still presented problems for women. In addition to having less prospects for job growth, women were frequently offered lower-level posts. Female career advancement can be hampered by the difficulties they have juggling work and family obligations. This implied that although there are chances for women in management in India, there is still work to be done to combat gender discrimination and assist women's professional advancement.

Literature Review

Employee creativity is significantly influenced by leadership, especially in research and development (R&D) environments. In Indian R&D laboratories, Gupta and Singh (2012) explored

the connection between leadership and employee creativity. Employee creativity was found to be positively correlated with transformational leadership, which is characterized by inspiring motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized concern, and idealized impact. Additionally, it emerged that transactional leadership, which is characterized by contingent incentive and management by exception, has a detrimental effect on employee innovation. These results imply that fostering creativity in R&D environments in India requires leadership styles that place a high value on staff empowerment and involvement. Another crucial component of leadership in India is the representation of women in positions of decision-making.

Indian female policymakers' effects on the distribution of public resources were examined by Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2004. It was revealed that the allocation of funds for public goods like health and education, which directly benefit women and children, increased significantly when there were female leaders in place. This revealed that increasing the number of women in policy-making roles can benefit gender parity and the distribution of funds to important social programmes. Paternalistic leadership was also examined by Pellegrini et al. (2010) in India with regard to its generalizability across cultures. Although both cultures shared the fundamental characteristics of paternalistic leadership, there were differences in how these characteristics were manifested. Paternalistic leadership in India was distinguished by a focus on relationships and a care for the welfare of subordinates. Indian culture has also been explored in relation to the idea of paternalistic leadership. Relationships are prioritized, and the welfare of subordinates is a priority, which are characteristics of paternalistic leadership in India. Indian bosses frequently act as mentors, offering advice and assistance to their staff. A peaceful workplace that values interpersonal connections and ties to the community is another priority for Indian executives. These cultural variations in leadership stances emphasize the necessity of taking cultural context into account while designing leadership strategies for India. More likely to succeed in managing their teams are leaders who can modify their styles of leadership to meet the cultural situation.

The psychological reaction to female leaders in India was looked at by Gangadharan et al. 2016. To explore, female bosses who are members of the same social identity are more likely to receive favorable feedback from their staff. Female executives from other social identification groups, however, can run across prejudice and resistance from their staff. These made it clear that

businesses must build a more diverse and inclusive workplace that supports equal opportunity for all workers. Women political leaders' effects on India's corruption were evaluated by Afridi et al. 2017. The female political leaders lessen corruption in government initiatives. As a result, it was shown that female leaders could be more inclined to put the demands of the general population ahead of their own. It emphasized how crucial it is to support women in public sector leadership to enhance governance and lower corruption.

The influence of female leaders on Indian education was examined by Clots-Figueras (2012). It was revealed that female political leaders are more inclined to prioritize the needs of marginalized communities and allocate resources towards education. The rates of female enrolment and the outcomes of women' education were also enhanced by the presence of female leaders. This demonstrated that encouraging women's leadership in politics and other fields of work can benefit marginalized populations, notably in the area of education.

A significant subject that has been explored in the work is the career advancement of Indian women in management. Khera and Malik (2016) identified the difficulties women encounter when trying to advance in their jobs and offered a conceptual framework based on a stakeholder approach to deal with these difficulties. This found several difficulties, including cultural expectations, gender stereotypes, problems balancing work and personal lives, a lack of organizational support, and little possibilities for skill development. The suggested framework emphasizes the need for stakeholder collaboration women's ability to lead can be significantly impacted by the workplace. The ability of women in leadership positions to succeed in their professions and realize their full potential may be hampered by gender bias and preconceptions. Nevertheless, a lot of businesses are beginning to understand how crucial it is to have a diverse and inclusive leadership team, and many are taking action to combat discrimination against women and help them in holding positions of authority. Offering mentorship and sponsorship programmes, putting in place regulations that support work-life balance, and offering chances for leadership training and development are a few examples of what this entails. According to the culture, rules, and values of the organization, the workplace might ultimately help or hurt women in leadership positions. Organizations may aid women leaders to prosper and accomplish their goals by encouraging gender equality and building an inclusive workplace.

In order to understand the challenges, they encounter in advancing their careers, Anand (2014) looked at female executives in India's service industry. It was observed that women experience a number of challenges, including difficulties juggling work and family obligations, gender bias, a lack of networking and mentoring opportunities, and restricted access to knowledge and resources. As a result, it was proposed that in order for women to overcome these challenges, they needed to construct strong personal brands, network, and find mentors. Furthermore, it emphasized the significance of organizational support in fostering a climate that fosters women's professional advancement. Chawla and Sharma (2016) observed how women navigate an ascent in Indian business. According to the report, women encounter a number of obstacles, including work-life balance concerns, gender biases, and restricted access to opportunities for professional advancement. However, study also noted a number of supportive elements that help people advance in their careers, including parental support, mentorship, and resilience. This implied that in order to get past the barriers to job advancement that women encounter, they have to take a proactive attitude, look for chances, and make the most of their strengths.

Objective:

To find the influence of the professional environment on women leadership

Methodology:

This study is descriptive in nature in which the data were obtained from the 185 respondents to find the influence of the professional environment on women leadership. A checklist question was used to analyze and interpret the data. In a checklist question respondents choose “Yes” or “No” for all the questions.

Data Analysis and Interpretations:

Table 1 Influence of the Professional Environment on Women Leadership

SL No.	Influence of the Professional Environment on Women Leadership	Yes	% Yes	No	% No	Total
1	More women in positions of leadership can help young women achieve their educational goals	165	89.19	20	10.81	185
2	More female leaders in place, more allocation of funds for women and children	160	86.49	25	13.51	185
3	Female political leaders are more inclined to prioritize the needs of marginalized communities	171	92.43	14	7.57	185
4	Female bosses who are members of the same social identity are more likely to receive favourable feedback from their staff	174	94.05	11	5.95	185
5	The female political leaders lessen corruption in government initiatives	168	90.81	17	9.19	185
6	Increasing the number of women in policy-making roles can benefit gender parity	177	95.68	8	4.32	185

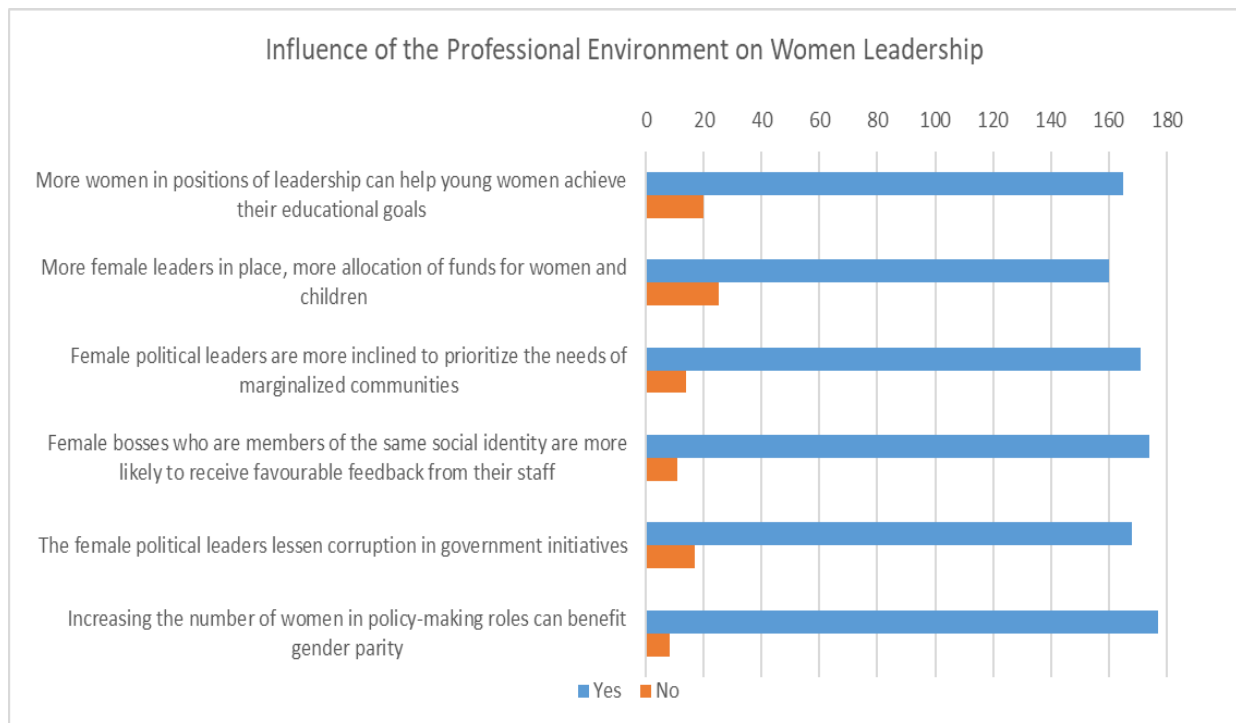


Figure 1 Influence of the Professional Environment on Women Leadership

Table 1 and Figure 1 show the influence of the professional environment on women leadership. It was found that around 95.6% respondents accept Increasing the number of women in policy-making roles can benefit gender parity, Female bosses who are members of the same social identity are more likely to receive favorable feedback from their staff (94.5%), Female political leaders are more inclined to prioritize the needs of marginalized communities (92.4%), The female political leaders lessen corruption in government initiatives (90.8%), More women in positions of leadership can help young women achieve their educational goals (89.1%) and More female leaders in place, more allocation of funds for women and children (86.4%).

Conclusion

In conclusion, women's leadership in India is significantly influenced by the professional environment. Women in India still experience a number of obstacles that prevent them from rising to leadership positions, such as gender bias, cultural barriers, and unequal access to opportunities. However, programmes for diversity and inclusion, leadership development, and mentorship opportunities have all contributed to the promotion of women's leadership in India's corporate

world. The Indian government has also put in place a number of initiatives to support female leadership and gender equality. It is critical to understand that women's leadership in India is still in its infancy and that persistent efforts are needed to remove the obstacles they face. Organisations must create an inclusive culture that supports gender equality and supports women in leadership roles. In particular in professions that have historically been dominated by men, there should be increased chances for women to attend education and training. Finally, it is critical to understand that encouraging women in leadership is both a moral and a strategic imperative. Companies that have diverse leadership teams outperform those that do not, according to research, and organizations that have more women in leadership roles typically have higher levels of innovation and profitability. In India, encouraging women to take on leadership roles in the workplace is essential for achieving gender equality and building a more diverse and affluent society. It is crucial to keep pushing for the removal of obstacles and the creation of chances for women to reach their full leadership potential.

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