

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS AND LEADERS- INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Gone are the days when women were considered no match to all dominant men in this world. The male dominated world was continuously reluctant to even acknowledge the fact that as men are good on every parameter of hard work, intelligence quotient (IQ) or leadership traits same as women were good. There is no doubt, this new generation women has substantiated themselves beyond doubt in all spheres including the most cultured and cumbersome world of entrepreneurship and has intimidated all the wrong philosophies against women entrepreneur. Women entrepreneurs have to find a balance between both whether it is on home front or on career front. This paper emphasizes on the concept of women entrepreneurs in India. The paper is briefly discussing the top successful women leaders in India, the position of India in women leadership and the reasons why there are not enough women at mid-senior management levels and providing some suggestions to improve the situation of existing problems.

Keywords: Women Entrepreneur, Women Leadership, Management, Career, Society.

INTRODUCTION

‘Women entrepreneurship’ is like a discipline for a child which starts at home. Women have been entrepreneurs in diverse ways. A house wife is an entrepreneur in the sense as she manages her time, strategizes and plans on ways to secure the future of her kids’, as well as passionate about her home and family. She also wears so many more different hats for a successful life. In today’s world, women have mounted greater heights in different industries. “Women Entrepreneurship” means “an act of owning a business and forming a business that empowers women so that they increases their economic strength as well as position in society. It is a process in which a woman starts her business, undertakes the risk, collects all resources, evenly provides employment to others and manages the business on its own.” Approximately, one-third entrepreneurs in the world are women.

With the passage of time and due to dynamic environment, women entrepreneurs are become a significant part of the global mission for sustained economic development and social progress. In almost all countries of the world, Women owned businesses are highly appreciating just because of growing of the industrialization, urbanization and along with it, the spread of higher education and awareness among women are increased. Everyone knows, “there is no scarcity of women who are confident, believe in themselves and have gigantic fire in their bellies to take on the best in the business and beat them at their own game. Along with it, if we talk about Indian women, they had also undergone a long way and are becoming increasingly visible and successful in all spheres. Nowadays, women have shifted from kitchen to higher level of professional activities whether they are Indian or not.”

Objective of the study:

- To discuss the top successful women leaders in India.
- To study the position of India in terms leadership roles played by women in Indian businesses.
- To check out the reasons why there are not enough women at mid-senior level of management.
- To provide some suggestions for the problem.

It's always being a great start for any woman who organizes herself and is able to devote to it with passion, seek opportunities and aggressively tied with her decision making. "Persistence is the key to success. When you are 100% passionate about the product and 10 times more passionate about the business concept, you are in the right direction".

Let's have a look at top Indian women leaders who can easily be termed as role models for every Indian.

PROMINENT WOMEN LEADERS OF INDIA

Indra Nooyi

1. Indra Nooyi

Indra Nooyi (63) is one of the famous leading Indian woman who have proof that women are not less as compare to men. At present, she is held a position of an Indian American business executive and also the former CEO of PepsiCo. She has been convened with prestigious Padma Bhushan.



Naina Lal Kidwai

2. Naina Lal Kidwai

Naina Lal Kidwai (62) is another leading woman. At present, She is working as the Chairman of Max Financial Services Ltd along with working as the Group General Manager and Country Head of HSBC (Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation) India. For her great offerings in the field of Trade and Industry, she got Padma Shri award.



Kiran Mazumdar Shaw

3. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw

Kiran (66) is an Indian billionaire entrepreneur. She is the Chairperson and Managing Director (CMD) of Biocon Limited and the chairperson of Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore. Kiran time-honored the prestigious award Padma Shri (1989), the Padma Bhushan (2005) and Othmer Gold Medal (2015) from the Government of India.



Indu Jain

5. Indu Jain

Indu Jain (83), the former chairperson of India's largest and most powerful media house – Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. She got the Jnanpith award when she was the Chairperson of the Bharatiya Jnanpith Trust. According to Forbes 2015 rankings, she was ranked 57th-richest person in India. In 2016, Government of India granted the Padma Bhushan to Indu Jain.

Status of Women leadership in India

According to the report, “In India there is less number of women which are involved in business leadership roles.” According to the study by Grant Thornton, (released on International Women’s Day), “India is being ranked fifth lowest in the proportion of business leadership roles held by women.”

"While the representation of women in top leadership roles is on the rise, the process is indeed slow, limited to the dated approach of ticking the diversity box," said Kavita Mathur, People & Culture Leader, Grant Thornton Advisory Private Limited.

As per latest report, more than 57 per cent of respondents agreed that gender diversity initiatives improved business outcomes. And reported profit increases of between 5 and 20 per cent, with the majority seeing increases of between 10 and 15 per cent. However, the proportion of women reaching top level has improved over the past decade. Women entrepreneur constitutes the tenth of Indian entrepreneur. Women find it easier to start a business but equally difficult to grow.

Indian technology industry has 26% women in engineering roles. This is a challenge what we need to address and understand. Most often it has been found that women CVs for senior positions are found very rare. There seem to be four sets of reasons behind this situation:

- **Losing career thrust after motherhood:** After having a child, it becomes a very challenging job because many women find it difficult to balance their life with multiple responsibilities at work and home, and thus lose the charm of career. This sometimes keeps them away from the career consciousness.
- **Prejudices on the behalf of majority:** Men, the dominating character of our society, who are typically the majority in an organization often, carry gender stereotypes or “unintentional prejudices” from their houses to the workplaces. There is often a stereotyping on what kind of jobs women would prefer and what not.
- **Sub-conscious biases:** Women often carry sub-conscious biases where they put limits on themselves. Lack of self-belief and/or the hostility needed to push to the next level is the another major cause.
- **Structure of our society:** The root cause behind most of the issues that we have observed above is the structure of our society and deeply embedded outlooks from the respective genders. Education and growth opportunities are often limited for women if we go beyond the relatively privileged section of society. Change in our society is must but it will not be overnight. However, unless we talk over this issue we might not be able to move the needle significantly on diversity.

The problem needs an immediate solution as women are at par with the men in all fields. The need is to identify the areas where positive actions are required to improve the situation. Here are a few suggestions:

- **First and foremost need is to change the mind set and structure of society toward the role of women.** For this, initiatives such as education and care of girl child and women focused initiatives should be done. For example, Airtel is opening all-women staffed “Angel stores”.

- Women should be provided support after maternity like crèche facilities in or near office, flexi working timing etc.
- Practice of gender inequality at the work place be stopped and possible intake bias through should also be addressed by mixed gender panels.
- They should be provided career support at mid management level by providing proper mentorship.
- Along with all above, women itself will have to act as change agent. She should have the self-belief, confidence, ambition and passion to achieve something in life.

Conclusion:

India too has its own pool of such bold and fearless women, who made a mark for themselves both within the country as well as across the world. Their persistent zeal, incessant quench for success and willingness to walk the extra mile have broken all myths about their inborn limitations that were supposed to be major roadblocks on their success expressways. The only need is to provide them the real support of the society.

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