A STUDY ON SELF ESTEEM AMONG WOMEN EXECUTIVES

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Abstract : It is generally believed that there are many benefits to having a positive view of the self. Parents, educators, business and government leaders agree that we need to develop individuals with healthy or high self-esteem characterized by tolerance and respect for others, individuals who accept responsibility for their actions have integrity, take pride in their accomplishments, who are self-motivated, willing to take risks, capable of handling criticism, loving and lovable, seek the challenge and stimulation of worthwhile and demanding goals, and take command and control of their lives. In sociology and psychology, self-esteem reflects a person's overall subjective emotional evaluation of his or her own worth. Self Esteem comprises of self worth and self image, which affects women's adjustment. Several spheres of life compared to earlier days things have changed and although 21st century girls have a strong and positive identity, some young women at work still struggle with low esteem and little sense of mastery, around the world. Thus with regard to self-esteem, several factors consistently have an impact across racial and gender subgroups. In other words these demands call for an abundance of self esteem, so where once self esteem was viewed as an important psychological need, it is now rapidly becoming recognized as an important economic need.

IndexTerms – **Self Esteem, Women Executives.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Self Esteem is an attitude about the self and is related to personal beliefs about skills, abilities, social relationships, and future outcomes and an evaluative aspect of the self-concept that corresponds to an overall view of the self as worthy or unworthy (Baumeister, 1998). "It is the disposition of experiencing oneself as competent in coping with the basic challenges of life and as being worthy of happiness".

It is a judgment of oneself as well as an attitude toward the self. Self-esteem encompasses beliefs (for example, "I am competent," "I am worthy") and emotions such as triumph, despair, pride, and shame. Smith and Mackie (2007) defined it by saying "The self-concept is what we think about the self. Self Esteem is the positive or negative evaluations of the self. Self Esteem is often seen as a personality trait.

According to subsequent views, however, self-esteem can be viewed as a "state" as well as a trait (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). Around a stable baseline are variations, although we might generally feel good about ourselves, there are times when we may experience self-doubt and even dislike. Instabilities in the state self-esteem are associated with increased sensitivity to and reliance on social evaluations, increased concern about how one views the self and even anger and hostility (Kernis, 1993). In general, those with a delicate sense of self-esteem react extremely favorably to positive feedback and extremely defensively to negative feedback.

1.1 MEANING & DEFINITION

Self-esteem is how we value ourselves; it is how we perceive about our value to ourselves and to the world, and how valuable we think, we are to others. Self-esteem affects our trust in others, our relationships, and our work almost in every part of our lives. Positive self-esteem gives us the strength and flexibility to take charge of our lives and grow from our mistakes without the fear of rejection. Self Esteem can be shaped by both internal & external factors i.e. characters within individuals and situations outside individuals.

1.2 DEFINITION OF SELF ESTEEM

According to Blascovich, J., & Tomaka,(1991) self-esteem refers to an individual's sense of his or her value or worth, or the extent to which a person values, approves of, appreciates, prizes, or likes him or herself.

1.3 MAJOR DIMENSIONS OF SELF ESTEEM

Self-esteem also can be conceptualized as a graded concept such that it can be broken down into components. From this view point, there are three major components of Self Esteem - physical self esteem, performance self-esteem and social self-esteem, (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). Each of these components, in turn, can be broken down into smaller subcomponents.

- **PHYSICAL SELF-ESTEEM** refers to how people view their physical bodies, and includes such things as athletic skills, physical charm, body image, as well as physical stigmas and feelings about race and ethnicity.
- **PERFORMANCE SELF-ESTEEM** refers to one's sense of general competence and includes intellectual abilities, school performance, work performance, self-regulatory capacities, self-confidence and self and role efficacy. People who are high in performance self esteem believe that they are smart and capable.
- **SOCIAL SELF-ESTEEM** refers to how people believe others perceive them. Note that it is perception rather than reality that is most critical. If people believe that others value and respect them, they will experience high social self-esteem. This occurs even if others truly hold them in contempt. People who are low in social self-esteem often experience social

anxiety and are high in public self consciousness. They are highly attentive to their image and they worry about how others view them.

1.4 NEED FOR SELF ESTEEM: A Stable Self Esteem in an Unstable World

In today's changing global economy, businesses are characterized by rapid change, accelerating scientific & technological breakthroughs. These new developments naturally create demands for higher levels of training and education. Accompanying these new progresses also come new demands on our psychological resources. Thus the above situation calls for greater creativity, self management, personal responsibility & self direction. In other words these demands call for an abundance of self esteem, so where once self esteem was viewed as an important psychological need, it is now quickly becoming known as an important economic need.

1.5 FACTORS INFLUENCING SELF ESTEEM

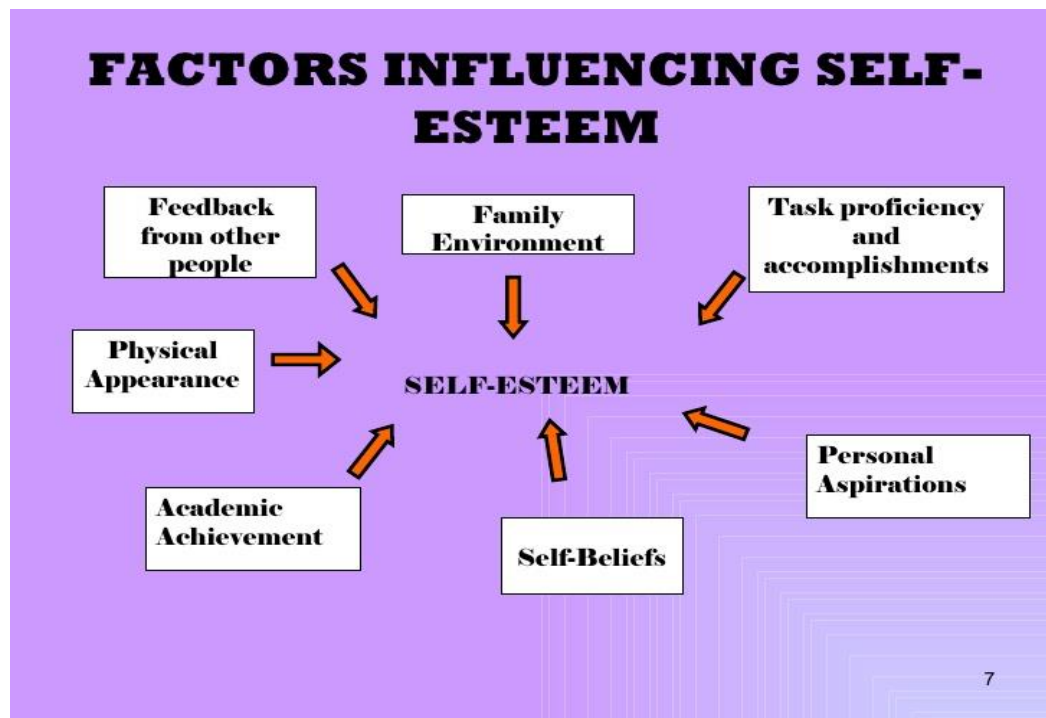The factors influencing self esteem is shown in **Figure 1**.

Fig.1 Factors Influencing Self Esteem

1.6 COMPONENTS OF SELF-ESTEEM

According to one definition (Braden, 1969), there are three key components of self-esteem:
1. Self-Esteem is an important human need that is vital for existence and normal, healthy development.
2. Self-Esteem arises inevitably from within based upon a person's beliefs and consciousness.
3. Self-Esteem occurs in combination with a person's thoughts, behaviors, feelings, and actions.

1.7 SELF ESTEEM & BEHAVIOUR

Self Esteem as a motivator stimulates behavior and in turn behavior also stimulates Self Esteem. Individuals with high Self Esteem are more likely to continue in the face of difficulties and individuals with low Self Esteem are more likely to give up or go through motions without really trying or giving their best.

1.8 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF ESTEEM AND WOMEN CONCLUDES THAT:

➢ Employed women have higher Self-Esteem more than housewives and unemployed single women.
➢ Women who have high Self-Esteem display great desire to continue studying and take efforts to develop their career.
➢ People who have high Self-Esteem choose further jobs and careers in which they have more ability in it.
➢ One of the obstacles for employment of women is lack of Self-Esteem or lack of accountability for employment.
➢ Barriers to acceptance of women in middle management level and top level posts include: Organizational barriers, Family barriers, and Cultural, Social & Individual barriers.

Young women enter the workplace full of self confidence, with 43% of female employees aspiring to top management roles, Julie Coffman and Bill Neuenfeldt found in their research for Bain & Company, a management consulting firm that unfortunately, after just two years on the job, "women's aspiration levels drop by more than 60%...with only 16% of women" still thinking they can reach executive roles. What's worse is that as women establish their careers, their confidence that they can achieve those goals drop by half because of the various barriers like personal, organizational and societal. This in turn badly affects their level of Self Esteem.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Amy Dickerson and **Mary Anne Taylor** (2000) in a study -Self-Limiting Behavior in Women: Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy as Predictors suggests that some women may be reluctant to pursue certain tasks because they lack confidence in their ability to succeed. In this study the researcher explores the basis of this type of self-limiting behavior. Global self-esteem and task-specific self-efficacy were used as predictors of task choice and task preference. Results of the study suggested that task-specific self-efficacy was a stronger predictor of whether a woman would choose a leadership task rather than a group-member task. In addition, task-specific self-efficacy predicted the strength of the woman's preference for the group-member task

Muzamil Jan and Afiya Ashraf (2008), in their study - An assessment of self-esteem among women, consisted 100 respondents, which included 50 working women; out of which 25 were from rural areas and 25 from urban area and 50 non-working women in which 25 were again from rural areas and 25 from urban areas. They found that women in nuclear families have high level of overall self-esteem; whereas, women in joint families have medium level of overall self-esteem. Women in nuclear families also have medium level of self-esteem in personal life; whereas, women in joint families have high level of self-esteem in personal life. Women in nuclear and joint families have low level of self-esteem in family relations; whereas, women in extended families have high level of self-esteem in family relations. Women in nuclear families have low level of self-esteem in career. While as, women in joint families have high level of self-esteem in career. Women in extended families have medium level of self-esteem in career.

III. AIM OF THE STUDY

Self Esteem is a principle identity issue, vital to personal validations and our ability to experience joy. Once succeeded it comes from the inside out. But it can be assaulted or stunted from the outside in too. A woman with low Self Esteem does not feel good about herself and her work because she has engrossed negative messages from the culture or relationship. Thus study concentrates on analyzing the importance of enhancing Self Esteem among women executives who can start to evaluate their negative self-beliefs more critically and focus on real life activities which will enable them to see the positive in every situation, to cope up with hardships and to be motivated to manage the challenging roles at workplace.

3.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the level of Self Esteem among women executives
- To find out association between personal variables and Self Esteem
- Recommend strategies to improve the level of Self Esteem which will enable them to reach top managerial positions

3.2 TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

The researcher used self structured questions to ascertain the socio economic profile of the respondents and Self Esteem Scale developed by Heatherton, T.F. & Polivy.J. (1991) to assess the level of Self Esteem of the respondents.

3.3 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The researcher adopted purposive sampling method. The researcher has chosen five professions like Banking, IT, Manufacturing Industry, Teaching and Media where women were employed in middle and top level management. The researcher purposively has chosen 75 respondents from each profession and collected data required for the study.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The major objective of this study is to find out the level of Self Esteem of women executives and also to find out the factors influencing Self Esteem. Hence the researcher has adopted the descriptive and diagnostic research Design.

IV. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. More than half (52 percent) of the respondents are Post Graduate holders.
2. Majority of (68 percent) of the respondents are married.
3. Majority of (70 percent) of the respondents hail from Nuclear Family.
4. A vast Majority of (71 percent) of respondents are from Urban Areas.

5. A Vast Majority of (85 percent) of the respondents are from the Middle Level Management. This proves that due to personal and organizational barriers very few women are found in top level management.

6. Less than half (46 percent) of the respondents are having moderate level of Self-Esteem

4.1 FINDINGS OF CHI SQUARE TEST

1. Among personal profile, the selected variable marital status has significant association with the level of Self Esteem.
2. Among the demographic profile, the selected variable called area of residence has significant association with the level of Self Esteem.
3. Among job profile, the selected variable profession has significant association with the level of Self Esteem.
4. All the practical problems faced by the respondents have significant association with the level of Self Esteem.

4.2 FINDINGS RELATED TO ANOVA & 't' TEST

1. ANOVA test was applied to find out the significant difference between the professions of the respondents with regard to their level of Self Esteem. Since the p – Value is .575 (> 0.05) there is no significant difference between the women executives with regard to their profession and level of Self Esteem. From the mean value (Mean=78) it is clear that women executives from industrial sector are having high level of Self Esteem than women in other profession like IT, teaching, Banking & Insurance & Media (Mean-76,75,75 & 75),respectively.
2. ANOVA test was applied to find out the significant difference between practical problems faced by the respondents with regard to their level of Self Esteem. Since the p-value is .005, .007, .000, .000, .002, .000 (<0.05) respectively there is a significant difference between all the practical problems faced by the respondents with regard to their level of Self Esteem.
3. ANOVA test was applied to find out the significant difference between area of residence of the respondents with regard to their level of Self Esteem. Since the p-value is .008 (<0.05) there is a significant difference between women executives with regard to their area of residence and the level of Self Esteem. From the mean value (Mean = 76) it is clear that women executives from rural and urban area have equally high level of Self Esteem when compared to women executives from sub-urban areas (Mean = 71).
4. The 't' test was applied to find out the significant difference between the marital status of the respondents with regard to their level of Self Esteem. In the present study, from the mean value it is clear that women executives who are married (Mean =76) are having high Self Esteem than women executives who are single (Mean = 74). Hence marital status has a greater influence in developing the level of Self Esteem among women.

4.3 FINDINGS RELATED TO POST HOC AND MULTIPLE REGRESSION

1. Post Hoc results reveal that women from both rural and urban areas tend to have high level of Self Esteem when compared to women from sub-urban areas.
2. Multiple regression analysis revealed that among the job profile variable career satisfaction is chosen to be the predictor variable of Self Esteem.
3. Multiple regression analysis clearly tells us that among the practical problems lack of opportunity to update knowledge due to domestic issues and the problem unable to present new ideas and views on problems due to gender barrier are chosen to be predictor variable of Self Esteem.

4.4 SUGGESTIONS TO RAISE LOW SELF ESTEEM

Feelings of low self-esteem often build up over a lifetime, and letting go of deep-rooted feelings and behaviors is not an easy task. It may take time, hard work, and it may require professional counseling. But there are some simple, positive thinking techniques that can be used to help improve self-esteem. These are called affirmations.

Using affirmations to stop negative self-talk is a simple, positive way to help increase self-esteem. Affirmations are encouraging messages that one can give to oneself every day until they become part of our feelings and beliefs. Affirmations work best when a person is stress free. But since people are often upset when they are giving themselves negative self-messages, they may need to counter negative messages with positive ones.

For example, substitute the message "I made a stupid mistake, and I am no good at this job," with "Yes, I made a mistake but I have learned from it, and now I can do a better job." Begin each day by looking in the mirror and giving yourself a positive message. The following affirmations can help you to work toward a positive self-image:

➢ I respect myself and others
➢ I am lovable and likable
➢ I am self-confident, and it shows
➢ I care about myself
➢ I am creating loving, healthy relationships
➢ I am a good friend to myself and others
➢ I accept myself just as I am
➢ I look great
➢ Life is good, and I like being a part of it

4.5 TIPS FOR NURTURING SELF-ESTEEM

- ➢ Have a Good Hygiene and work out regularly.
- ➢ Don't always try to please others.
- ➢ Be your own person.
- ➢ Avoid negative people and negative thoughts.
- ➢ Face your fears and learn from failures.
- ➢ Start from within.
- ➢ Don't worry about being 'perfect'.
- ➢ Learn to appreciate yourself.
- ➢ Stop comparing yourself to others.
- ➢ Reward yourself when you succeed

V. CONCLUSION

In the present competitive employment scenario what's really preventing women's success in their career? Past reviews and the present study suggests that among the individual, social and governmental barriers, the important barriers that prevent women's upward mobility are work-family arena – which requires taking time out from their career to fulfill the familial roles, lacking of social support and unstable or low Self- Esteem. These in turn results in fragile, vulnerable feelings of Self Worth which consistently pulls them down, hindering their career growth.

For these women it is necessary to take up the responsibility to boost up their Self-Esteem and try to enrich their knowledge required for their roles and be competent enough with their male counterparts to climb up the ladder with confidence. Self-Esteem refers to a person's overall sense of Self Worth or personal value. It is suggested to be the basic human need or motivation. It is a personality trait which tends to be stable and enduring. Everyone would favor high Self-Esteem but cultivation of it can be tough. It involves a variety of Beliefs about oneself, such as the appraisal of one's own appearance, beliefs, emotions and behavior. Self-Esteem plays a significant role in motivating success throughout our lives. Low Self-Esteem may hold back one from success in contrast to healthy Self-Esteem which can help individuals achieve their goals due to the belief they have on their actions, performance or abilities.

Especially in this gender discriminated society it is very essential to give importance to the Self-Esteem of women. Women's Self-Esteem contributes a lot to her success. Women should recognize the value of improving their feelings of self-worth in this gender diversified employment sector. When women possess high Self-Esteem the barriers they face would be taken as challenges which serve as a foundation for future prospects. Generally women's identities have acquired a bad rap, which means they are understood as they don't feel good about themselves and have no self-confidence. Women identities are revealed as though they are fragile conflicted and are ambivalent about their needs and role. Thus this mischaracterization of women as weak and conflicted has many potential negative consequences at work place. What's even more worse is, as women establish their career, their confidence that they can achieve their goals drop by half due to the practical problems like lack of support from male managers or supervisors and are frustrated that male counterparts are neither encouraging nor supportive and are often consider women to be lacking talent to handle managerial rank jobs. Thus in the present study chi square test reveals that all the practical problems faced by the women at work place is associated with their level of Self-Esteem.

Majority of women in the country still face the stereotypical plethora of issues – baby care, domestic chores, and gender bias at work, security issues, eldercare and other societal issues. This leads to a lower participation of women in the workforce. Having no financial independence, not being able contribute to the family in monetary terms, staying at home all the time are some common reasons for women to lose their self-esteem at times. There is the need for a comprehensive and holistic platform to act as a catalyst for women empowerment and self esteem. Having self-esteem helps you to determine who you are, what you want, and deserve. It can help you know your true self and gives you the courage to move on if things don't fall in place.

Thus this study analyses the level of Self Esteem among women executives and highlights suggestions to boost the Self Esteem among women which will improve the quality of their interactions and relationships. High self esteem underpins all of the positive experiences in life which enables you to cope with the tough times and helps to create and make the most of the good times. Hence taking time to work on Self Esteem is one of the most important things that women should practice to succeed in their personal and career growth.

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