



## Leadership Roles: Importance of Women Empowerment in India

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### Introduction

Every organization needs a leader, irrespective of its size and functions. A leaderless organization is a "muddle of men and machine"; a country without leadership is anarchy; a society without leadership is a violent and dangerous place to live. Then, what is the meaning of leadership? What constitutes leadership? A leader is a person who influences and encourages a group of people to work towards the realization of goals. The hallmark of leadership is the capacity to influence others towards accomplishing goals and towards betterment. As Chester Barnard sums it up, "Leadership is the ability of a superior to influence the behavior of subordinates or group and persuades them to follow a particular course of action." Women are powerful agents of change, and the far-reaching benefits of diversity and gender parity in leadership and decision-making are increasingly recognized in all spheres. Still, women continue to be vastly under-represented in decision-making in politics, businesses, and communities. Women are gradually making their leadership presence felt in entrepreneurship, administration, education, engineering, health, etc. at regional, national, and global levels.

Women are now resolved to break the traditional glass ceiling that barred them from entering leadership positions even if they possessed requisite skills and talent to occupy them. Establish policies and practices that encourage women's leadership and promote gender parity, invest in and develop public services and programs that enable women to succeed as leaders, Enable and support women's organizations and movements, Change the narrative on women in leadership, and confront socio-cultural drivers of gender inequality

### Women in Leadership

It's time for the world to recognize the benefits of women in leadership, and commit to placing even more women in positions of power.

### The power of women leaders

Women are powerful agents of change, and the far-reaching benefits of diversity and gender parity in leadership and decision-making are increasingly recognized in all spheres. Still, women continue to be vastly under-represented in decision-making in politics, businesses, and communities.



### The evidence

- Women as leaders and decision-makers at all levels are critical to advancing gender justice and gender equality—and to furthering economic, social, and political progress for all.
- When women are meaningfully represented and engaged in leadership bodies—such as legislatures, courts, executive boards, community councils—laws, rulings, and decisions are more likely to be inclusive, representative, and take diverse views into account.
- Women's leadership within households, including decision-making over land and household income, improves access to education and healthcare for their families.
- Countries with a greater proportion of women as top decision-makers in legislatures have lower levels of income inequality.
- Peace agreements are 35% more likely to last at least 15 years if women leaders are engaged in its creation and execution.
- When women hold more executive leadership positions, their companies are more profitable: companies in the top-quartile for gender diversity on executive teams are 21% more likely to outperform the national average.
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levels. Women are now resolved to break the traditional glass ceiling that barred them from entering leadership positions even if they possessed requisite skills and talent to occupy them.

### What is Leadership?

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**Leadership is not gender-specific.** It is a set of leadership qualities inherent or cultivated in person or persons who develop themselves into great leaders with mass following. Leaders can be either men or women.

Although leadership skills are acquired and shown by both men and women, there exist certain differences in the basic traits and qualities possessed by men and women leaders. Men and women mostly show distinctly different styles of leadership.

Ibarra et al (2013) believe that when organizations advise females to seek leadership position without addressing the subtle biases that exist in practices and policies, the companies undermine the



psychological development that should take place to become a leader.

#### Characteristics of Women Leadership

In this section, we have highlighted some of the common characteristic features of women leaders.

#### **Transformational Leadership Style**

Women leaders are more transformational than men leaders. They function as a role model for their subordinates. They inspire their team and spend a lot of time coaching their team. They care a lot about their personal development. Women leaders emphasize teamwork and authentic communication as a key to success. For most women leaders, leadership is not meant only for accomplishing organizational goals but for transforming their followers into better people. Ready and Conger (2003) propose that individuals take responsibility for their own leadership development and that organizations provide a menu of development opportunities for employees.

#### **Task-Focused**

Women leaders are invariably focused on completion of tasks assigned within deadlines. From an operational point, completing day-to-day tasks are necessary to ensure smooth functioning of the company.

#### **Prefer to Work in Collegial Atmosphere**

Women leaders generally prefer leading and creating flat organizational structures that enables all to work in a collegial atmosphere interdependently. Flat organizational structure overlooks the experience and knowledge of seasoned employees and the manager. Women leaders usually are critical of hierarchical structure of organization.

#### **Promote Cooperation and Collaboration**

To work in collaboration with others is a typical feminine characteristic. Women leaders always promote cooperation and collaboration amongst the team members. In this case, all the members of the team need to be clear of their roles and responsibilities, otherwise, it results in redundant work.

#### **Communication Style**

Women leaders tend to be participatory and possess a democratic style of leading people. They seem to abhor 'command and control style' practiced by male leaders. Women often times indirectly communicate their expectations of a given task and allow more space in accomplishing a goal. It sometimes helps the team members use their skills and expertise to complete the task, however, at other times it can be a drawback if the assigned task requires a leader to have direct communication with the members.

#### **Self-Branding**

Unlike their male counterparts, women leaders often appear to be modest or silent about their own accomplishments. They are seldom good at branding themselves. However, it is necessary that women leaders learn how to brand themselves by sharing their achievements and skills with others. Unless people know or notice what they are capable of, they cannot recognize the leadership qualities of a women leader.

#### **The Importance Women in Leadership**

Any institution, whether it is society or organization, in the present century cannot function effectively without women's equal participation in leadership activities. Women create a perspective that brings to competition and collaboration to organizations and teams.



In today's world, organizations that are led by inclusive leadership teams make effective decisions that deliver better result. In the twenty-first century, the essential qualities required to lead include the ability to collaborate, connect, empathize and communicate. All these qualities are feminine in nature and can help build a more sustainable future.

Many statistics show that companies led by women have better financial results. Leadership by women is vital to increase the pace of societal transformation at home and in the workplace. Women leaders are likely to provide an integrated view of work and family, resulting in an engaged and promising personal and professional future.

Gender parity in leadership is important because true progress cannot happen without a diversity of perspective in leadership roles.

### **Representation of Women in Different Sectors**

Representation of women in different sectors refers to the percentage of women employees working in various sectors. In the past, women were grossly underrepresented in politics, businesses, education, manufacturing, science and technology, etc. However, this situation is changing steadily.

The above-mentioned facts and figures, though indicate a rise in women representation in different sectors, it shows that women representation in decision-making positions is far from being satisfactory. Much remains to be done to increase the number of women at strategic and decision-making positions.

Leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal.

The process of encouragements and helping others to work enthusiastically towards objectives.

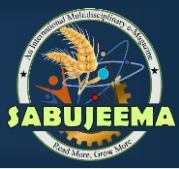
Alan Keith stated that, "Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen

### **Specific statements about women's leadership qualities:**

- Women leaders are more persuasive than their male counterparts.
- When feeling the sting of rejection, women leaders learn from adversity and carry on with an "I'll show you" attitude.
- Women leaders demonstrate an inclusive, team-building leadership style of problem solving and decision making.
- Women leaders are more likely take risks. (Caliper, 2013)
- Leadership refers to ability of one individual to influence others.
- The influence is exercised to change the behaviour of others.
- Change of behaviour is caused with an objective of achieving a shared goal.
- The person influencing others (leader) possesses a set of qualities or characteristics with which he or she to influence others
- Leadership is a group phenomenon. It involves interaction between two or more people.

### **Leadership & Management**

- Management is a process of planning, organising, coordinating, directing, and controlling the activities of others.



- Leadership is the process of influencing for the purpose of achieving shared goals.
- In order to lead in today's fast paced environment women leaders have to done multiple hats. However, their ability to switch on and switch off from personal to professional to personal lives such as:
- Dealing with tantrums of children at home, to preparing for a board meeting, to taking care of in-laws or parents aids that. Also, the ability to multitask and at the same time being hard-nosed and sensible coupled with a flexible approach and good communication skills helps women in handling a lot of multifaceted situations in this globalized world.
- These and many other attributes greatly influence their style of leadership.

### Qualities of a Leader

- Sets examples for good behaviour
- Facilitates work
- Actively listens
- Takes responsibilities for own actions and for people she supervises
- Timely decision
- Sets goals that are achievable
- You need to adapt your style to fit the needs for each person.

### Conclusion

The case for balancing the power equation in leadership has never been clearer: elevating women in decision-making benefits politics, businesses, and communities. But progress in women's

leadership will not happen automatically. The below actions we can take together— across governments, corporations, academia, non-profits, and civil society—to balance power in leadership and decision-making: Commit to gender parity in leadership, Implement laws and regulations that guarantee a safe and open environment for women's participation and leadership, Establish policies and practices that encourage women's leadership and promote gender parity, Invest in and develop public services and programs that enable women to succeed as leaders, Enable and support women's organizations and movements, Change the narrative on women in leadership, and confront socio-cultural drivers of gender inequality.

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