



IMPACT OF SOCIAL CHANGES ON THE ROLES PLAYED BY WOMEN IN AN ORGANIZATION

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Abstract

This research was done on 270 women across 3 age groups ie 16-20 yrs, 21-40 yrs and 41-60 yrs. The participants were interviewed individually and were made to answer 2 questionnaires. The results showed that women in all the age groups had liberal attitude to status at work. They were in acceptance of women taking up jobs which were initially held by men, they supported equal wages and benefits at work place. However, this significantly changed when it came to status of women and education. The results indicated that women in the age group of 16-20 yrs were more acceptant of the social changes in terms of roles and responsibilities at work. Women in the age group of 41-60 yrs were largely conservative. They expected women to confine to household activities and taking care of children. The percentage of employed women decreased in the age group of 21-40 yrs mainly due to family constraints. The chances of women continuing in their job decreased with age. The conclusion was that women were liberal in their attitude with respect to work but was not getting translated at organizational level. This shows that though psychologically they approve of changes and support them, they can't practically implement it.

Key words: Social changes, liberal attitude, conservative, masculine.

Introduction

The last 60+ years have seen the numbers of women in the workplace increase hugely. Complex social movements have contributed to this change for example - the feminist movement, equal opportunities movement, the expansion of the service sector and the knowledge economy, the ever increasing cost of living and increased access to education. This rise in numbers has resulted in women entering a much broader range of occupations, from mainly supportive, nurturing roles such as teaching and nursing to every walk of occupational and professional life. This article examines the changing nature of female workforce and how the social changes have impacted the roles played by women in organizations. This is key area to study further because of the extent of the change, millions of people who were once dependent on men have taken control of their own economic futures.

Methodology

Problem: To study the impact of social changes on the roles played by Indian women in organizations

Hypothesis:

- ✓ There will be differences in attitude to status at work across age groups
- ✓ There will be differences in the attitude to status of women and education across age groups
- ✓ There will be differences in the percentage of employment across age groups

Sample Description:

The research was done on 270 women in the age group of 16-60 yrs.

Sampling method:

The sampling technique used in the study was stratified sampling where the sample was divided on the basis of age. The sampling after categorization was random sampling where every female in that age group stood an equal chance of being a part of the research study. The age ranges were determined taking into account the beginning of employment and going through different stages of career. Women as young as 16 yrs were considered as it marks the beginning of selecting courses which determines their future career and roles.

Independent Variables:

- ✓ Roles played by women in an organization
- ✓ Percentage of employment across sectors
- ✓ Social changes

Dependent Variable:

- ✓ Attitude to status at work
- ✓ Attitude to status of women and education

Materials:

The research made use of 2 questionnaires and a semi structured interview.

1. **Attitude towards female roles:** This was originally developed by Slade and Jenner for British population which was later adapted by Gupta and Murthy for Indian sample. The questionnaire has 25 statements and tapping 4 areas: Child care and home, Status within marriage, Women as compared to men and Status at work. For this research purpose, only scores pertaining to Status at work was considered.
2. **Attitude towards social and cultural modernization:** This was developed by Mamta Agrawal. The questionnaire has 42 items and taps 2 areas: Marriage and Family,

Women's status and education. For this research purpose, only scores on women's status and education were considered.

3. **Interview:** A semi structured interview was conducted to find out the number of years the participant had been working, type of job, level of satisfaction at work, reasons for working and reasons to change the job if any.

Procedure: The participants were contacted individually and questionnaires were administered one by one followed by semi structured interview.

Results

The hypothesis which stated that attitude in the area of status of work will be different across age was verified through one way ANOVA. The obtained F ratio was .831 which is not significant. This indicates that women are ready to take up jobs which are typically associated with men. They believe that women are equal to men at work. They agree that women are capable of holding jobs which requires responsibility and taking intellectual decisions. This attitude has not varied significantly across age.

The hypothesis which stated that attitude to status of women and education will be different across age was verified through one way ANOVA. The obtained F ratio is 8.138 which is significant at 0.01 level. This indicates that the attitude to status of women and education varies across age. Women in the age group of 16-20 yrs have the most liberal attitude. This indicates that women in this age group feel that men and women should share the responsibility of child's upbringing, decisions at home need to be taken after discussion and not solely be taken by men, women should have complete control over her earnings and both boys and girls should be equally educated. This attitude has changed with age. Women in the age group of 41-60 yrs have conservative attitude. This indicates that women in this age group feel that men should have final say in family affairs; child's upbringing is the responsibility of the woman, boys needs to be educated more than girls and men can have control over his wife's earnings.

The hypothesis which stated that there will be differences in employment across age was verified through chi square. The obtained value is 59.05 for 21-40 yrs and 42.07 for 41-60 yrs which significant at 0.01 level. This indicates that there are significant differences in employment in both the age groups. 55.5% of the women in the age group of 21-40 yrs were unemployed. Among those who were employed, 27.5% were placed as teachers or lecturers. This shows that job placement was predominantly gender typed. 70 % of the women were unemployed in the age group of 41-60 yrs. Among those employed, 55.5% were employed in teaching profession. This indicates that gender segregation was more predominant in the past.

Discussion

To study the impact of social changes on the roles played by women in an organization, a sample of 270 women were tested and interviewed across 3 age groups. The results show that social changes have impacted the attitude of women towards status of women, education and status at work. This is evident across age groups. Women in the age group of 16-21 yrs had liberal attitude to status of women and education. This has decreased with age and women in the age group of 41-60 yrs are conservative. The results showed that only 6.6 % of the women in this age group had completed graduation whereas 55% of the women in the age group of 16-21 yrs were studying graduation. The student population in the age group of 16-20 yrs was interviewed and qualitative analysis was done. The results showed that they had preference for masculine jobs like engineering, police, civil services and merchandising. This indicates that gender segregation and gender stereotyping with respect to job has eased and they are encouraged to pursue career in masculine jobs.

The survey done by Gallup for the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation showed that there were significant differences in the roles played by women across sectors. According to the survey, 68.5% of the women work in agriculture; 10.8% in tobacco and clothes manufacturing; 5.1% are in construction; 3.8% work in schools; 1.6 in household work; 1.5% in personal services; 1.1 % in health care and 1 % in **bureaucracy**.

It has been noted that there are various reasons as to why women quit their jobs in early and mid thirties. The two main reasons for Indian women quitting jobs are marriage and motherhood. According to the studies conducted by Forbes in 2013, women make up 24 percent of the workforce in India, which boasts of one the largest working populations in the world. Only 5 percent of these reach the top layer, compared to a global average of 20 percent. This shows that women don't hold on to their jobs continuously as they tend to cater to fulfill family commitments.

The results of the research study shows that it is in agreement with the results of the research conducted by other organizations. Though women across age have changed their attitude and promoting gender equality, encouraging women to take up jobs and prefer them to continue their jobs; we do not see the same happening at work place. According to a recent survey by the polling agency Gallup, traditional expectations may lead many college-educated women to leave the workforce after marriage, or after having children, to focus on family life instead. That may be one reason white-collar companies find it hard to recruit or keep female workers. Though we find 51.5% of women in professional and management positions, only 4% go to CEO positions.

Recently many companies have taken measures to retain women work force. Sapient Technologies gave **higher referral bonuses** to employees referring a **potential woman candidate**. MTS India made it **mandatory to give first preference to suitable women candidates** for all its openings. KPMG India is introducing a **work from-anywhere policy** for its women employees. Edelweiss is targeting to hire **100 women managers for leadership roles** by 2016. Maruti recently introduced **leadership development programs that will groom women for higher roles**.

To keep the momentum going, corporate India and the government agencies must take cognizance of the challenges that women face. A lot more needs to be done to sustain and

accelerate this impact. Typically, working women in India have to balance their professional demands with various domestic needs. Crucial to improving women's representation at the workplace is accommodating their career lifecycle and creating policies that will encourage more women entering or re-entering the workforce.

Conclusion

1. There were no significant differences in attitude to status at work across age group
2. There were significant differences in the attitude to status of women and education across age group
3. There were differences in the percentage of employment across age groups

Implications of the present study: - The present study indicates the importance of educating women about the social changes and new opportunities that are given to them at work place. This information needs to help them develop healthy attitude towards these changes. This study should make women confident of continuing their careers and family members helping them to balance professional and work life.

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