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BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING FOR WOMEN IN INDIAN IT INDUSTRY

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Abstract

The ecosystem of the IT organizations has proven to be challenging to women than men with respect to work-life balance, parenthood and establish a steady career goal. Gender disparity and Pay difference have been prevailing situations in every organization irrespective of the proven potential by women. The researcher has conducted this study to unveil the entrenched biases in the work system and the hidden barriers faced by women who would like to re-join the workforce. The researcher focuses on the factors that contribute to organizational prejudice and challenging work system that discourage women to quit their roles along with personal scenarios. The research also reveals that 79% of potential women being underutilized due to stereotypical expectations from the organizations. These attribute to less women leaders in the senior roles in IT.

Introduction

There has been continuous exclusion of women from attaining senior roles across all sectors. Herminia Ibarra, the Cora Chaired Professor of Leadership and Learning at Insead shifts the focus on "Second Generation Gender bias" as the primary cause for the underrepresentation of women in the industry. The bias institutes powerful yet subtle organizational biases that creates unseen barriers for women to overcome in their journey. By and large, women experience lack of access to mentors and sponsors due to paucity of role models compared to men that influence their promotion cycle. Also, the stereotypical behaviour to look at women to have a gendered path taking the roles of order takers and men to be conceived for creative positions leaves a negative impact on emboldened women who share the same level of assertiveness as men to be discriminated as an aggressive behaviour. There is also a tendency to overlook the overall impact created by men and women in their roles and to be inclined to the heroic impact created by men as a key performance indicator. These erect a cumulative effect on women population from reaching designated positions, lose interest in their career and wither away or get stagnant in their cadre.

Review of Literature

¹Soma Roy focused on the status of women workforce in corporate sector by emphasizing on gender inequality and income disparity. Since the development and empowerment of women is imperative for the inclusive growth of the nation. The study also emphasized on the contribution made by the New Companies Act 2013 for empowerment of women. The study concludes that The Companies Act, 2013 has done its part by putting provisions but now it is up to these companies to use these provisions in a constructive manner. One of such

constructive way is to build a pipeline of women executive Directors from within the rank along with rigorous mentoring programmes. The programme is initiated by Shriram Capital, TCS, Aditya Birla Group, Vodafone and Capgemini as they are the members of the WILL forum and have been putting high potential women executives to build their aspiration level for acquiring board position.

²Nidhi Saxena conducted her research on the transformational journey of women in banking sector. With changing times, women in the society started participating in the formal Indian labour force. Though there are a handful of women executives like Chanda Kochhar, Shikha Sharma who outshined in different fields where they stepped in, the paper poses the various Challenges faced by women professionals in banking sector. The researcher concludes that the current challenges such as Heavy workloads, Discrimination based on the status, Transfer Policy, Work life Conflict, Safety & Security issue, Lack of Flexible working, irrespective of the type of banks are faced and remains to be addressed by the banking sector. This beckons a fundamental change in the attitudes of the employers, policy makers, family members and other relatives and the public at large.

Statement of the Problem

The study is conducted to analyse the bias in the organization and work culture that act as secondary causes for women who seek career progress in the Indian IT industry. The researcher has attempted to winkle out the parameters related to the work system that otherwise fades out underneath the sheath of the quoted personal life reasons.

The researcher grouped the resigning reasons under three major categories:

- Personal Situations
- Organizational Prejudice

Challenging Work System

The researcher has also tried to explore the reality of job market and recruitment predisposition for women who are interested to join the sector after a short break.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the key factors of Personal Life, Organizational bias and Work culture that drive women to resign from work system
- To study the correlation between the range of work experience and Women's decision towards resignation
- To study if there is any discrepancy in the organizations to accept women who have career gap

Research Methodology

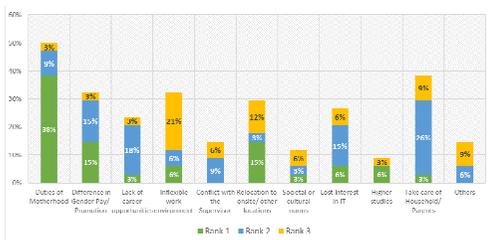
To study the implications of the factors that influence women's journey in Indian IT industry and discover the glass ceiling that deters women from advancing into C-Suite positions, a structured questionnaire was devised and administered among the sampling.

Research Design - In view of the objectives of the study listed above, a meta - analysis research design has been adopted.

Sampling Design - The universe was finite in this study and the sampling unit is strictly confined to women who resigned their IT jobs, women who have taken a break in their career and re-joined the industry and men whose spouses have resigned the IT jobs. The sampling size, due to time and resource constraints, was 34 individuals and the Judgemental Sampling Technique was used.

Findings and Inferences

(a) The respondents were given ten scenarios and were asked to rank top three conditions that influenced women to quit their profession. The conditions can be broadly categorized into Personal Situations, Challenging Work System and Organizational Prejudice. The results are as follows:



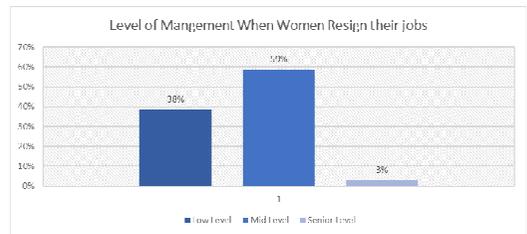
Inference

The respondents have rated Duties of Motherhood, Household/ Parent care and Relocation of the Family as

primary personal concerns. The outcomes also imply a significant proportion of contribution from Organization and work culture for women to resign.

Lack of career opportunities and Losing Interest in IT that are part of Challenging work system have bubbled up in the secondary conditions scoring 18% and 15% each. The factors such as Inflexible work environment and Gender bias in pay or promotion have also been rated with 21% and 15% weightage reciprocating the significance of Organizational bias that impacts women workforce in IT.

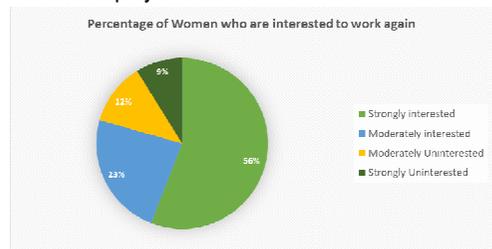
(b) The likelihood of majority of women to demit their occupation against their cadre was analysed and the results are below:



Inference

The outcome implies that the predominant percentage of women have resigned and continue to resign their jobs when they reach the mid-level of management in their career. The middle management demands proficiency in performance management. The organizational support and work culture are the most essential footholds that will inspire women to aim for competitive roles and will retain them in the industry. The result of drop outs with respect to the level of management is in consonance with other industry results.

(c) There is a significant percentage of women who would like to be re-employed after a break.



Inference

Out of 34 survey respondents, 79% of women have shown their interest to join the organization. However, the respondents face inhibitions from organizations in considering their profiles for re-employment after a break. This creates a glass ceiling between women's willingness

to join the industry and Organization readiness to accept such profiles.

The bias of the organization to presume women to have lost their potential or below market expectations has been a hindrance for women to return to the industry after discontinuity. Also, women with disrupted career are offered less pay or cadre when compared to men who have the same experience.

Conclusion

The study proves that the factors of work system such as lack of career opportunities and Loss of Interest in IT and the organizational factors such as Inflexible work environment and Gender bias in pay or promotion plays a striking role in the women's journey in the organization. The personal life factors that occupied the higher scores is a tip of the iceberg and voicing about the personal factors alone will be a facile solution.

Around 59% of women have resigned from their career in the mid-level of management and have a work experience of more than six years. Also, the study reveals that 56% of the women are strongly interested to join the workforce after a break. However, they face a crucial challenge from organizations from getting rehired. The organizations pose a biased view of negligence towards women who aspire to join the work system after a break stating the incompetence to market trends. The organizations should break the barrier by reasoning the

work experience of women spent in the industry earlier and re-open the opportunities for the benefit of business welfare.

Currently, the policies of the organizations predominantly act as a humbug for women that only set them up to enter the senior roles to witness failure. The difference doesn't lie in the difference in behaviour between genders in the office but lies in the bias. The research recommends the organizations to acknowledge the situation, take remedial measures and tailor programs for women that will guide them to enter the C-Suite positions.

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