

## WOMEN LEADERSHIP MYTHS AND CHALLENGES

Authors :- Anusha pachori<sup>1</sup> , Dr. Alka Agnihotri<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** This paper is a leading research study that focuses on socio-psychological hurdles women face in leadership positions. Women economic empowerment is critical for a country & progress. Socio-psychological barriers now play a significant part in women & leadership. Women executives face management sex-role stereotyping, work-life balance, the glass ceiling, and cross-cultural challenges, to name a few. Participatory leadership, resolve to achieve, mentoring subordinates and devolution of power, continual learning, and planning were among the coping techniques that helped these women overcome many of the challenges they faced in their professional responsibilities. This paper primarily focuses on numerous socio-psychological difficulties that women leaders face and ways to overcome these obstacles. Women face multifaceted challenges to participate in management positions due to different factors. The purpose of this research is to investigate factors that affect the participation of women in leadership positions. Also, forward some possible suggestions for the challenges identified through this study.

**Keywords:** Women in leadership, socio-psychological barriers, obstacles, challenges.

### 1. Introduction

The issue of women's leadership has long been a prominent subject of discourse, mostly stemming from the persistent lack of female representation in senior roles within organizations. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that women possess distinct characteristics that contribute a distinctive and valuable perspective to their professional endeavors. These talents are commonly referred to as feminine traits, including proficient communication abilities, outstanding interpersonal skills, and a capacity for empathy towards others. However, our research indicates that to date, no nation has successfully achieved complete gender parity at the organizational level. The persistent lack of female representation in senior positions across many nations highlights a notable gender bias in the recruitment and advancement of leaders. Prior studies have indicated a potential scarcity of female executives available to occupy high-level seats on corporate boards. Based on a report titled "The changing face of companies" published by the Credit Suisse Research Institute (CSRI), it is observed that the representation of women on company boards globally stands at approximately 20.6%. Although women in positions of leadership exhibit unique talents, their presence continues to be restricted. The existing body of research pertaining to Women's Leadership has predominantly concentrated on certain industries or regions. The primary objective of this study is to do a thorough examination of the current body of literature pertaining to Women's Leadership, encompassing a wide range of viewpoints and approaches. Through the process of synthesizing many perspectives, this study aims to discern shared observations regarding specific aspects of Women's Leadership within the framework of an organization, as well as its influence on the company.

### 2. Literature Review

In our quest to gather relevant journal articles, we conducted a thorough exploration spanning various academic sources and digital databases, guided by the methodology outlined by Short in 2009. Our search encompassed well-known databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, ProQuest, and Google Scholar. To ensure the quality and relevance of the articles, we implemented a systematic approach for

their selection. Initially, we meticulously assessed each paper's title, abstract, publication type, and journal name. As indicated in Figure 1, our initial keyword-based search across these databases yielded a total of 1,120 journal articles. After eliminating any duplicate entries, we arrived at a set of 929 articles that met our criteria for further analysis. Before embarking on the literature search, we established specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. Initially, we included studies that prominently featured the phrase "female leadership" within any section of the article. The primary focus of our study revolves around the realms of female leadership and innovation, with a particular emphasis on exploring the intersection of women in leadership roles and their influence on fostering innovative practices. Our investigation delves into several dimensions, including women's leadership styles, their contributions to creativity, and their involvement in the digitization process.

The databases utilized in our investigation encompassed Scopus, Web of Science, ProQuest, and Google Scholar. A methodical methodology was utilized in order to refine the chosen articles. The first part of our analysis consisted of carefully examining the title, abstract, publication type, and journal name associated with each paper. As illustrated in Figure 1, the initial search conducted using keywords in the databases resulted in a total of 1,120 journal articles. Following the removal of duplicate entries, a final set of 929 articles deemed relevant to the study remained. Prior to initiating the literature search, we defined explicit criteria for inclusion and exclusion. In the initial selection process, we considered studies that featured the term "female leadership" in any section of the article. The focal points of inquiry include the domains of female leadership and innovation, women's leadership, the convergence of females and innovation, women's leadership approaches, women's contributions to creative endeavors, and their participation in the process of digitization.

Cotter and colleagues (2001) look at three more indicators of a glass ceiling. Firstly, a glass ceiling prevents women and minorities from progressing. Analysts generally adjust for education, job experience, tenure with the current company, and productivity-affecting familial characteristics (e.g., marital/parental status). Using longitudinal data to study job transfers across time is another criterion for examining the glass ceiling. Inequality rises with time, which means early career hurdles to mobility become more severe later in life. Nima Ghorbani et al. (2000) evaluated the relationship between work-related stress and negative coping attempts. When confronted with stressful events, individuals frequently seek self-medicating methods such as drug, alcohol, or nicotine misuse. Psychopathology, such as sadness, anxiety, and suicide, are all the outcome of bad coping mechanisms. Many people resort to negative coping mechanisms in order to alleviate stress and tension. To counteract these poor coping mechanisms, women must learn how to cope with stress successfully.

According to Okolo (1989), one impediment is a dearth of executive female role models as a result of their rarity in senior administrative positions. Similarly, this study discovered that there is no difference in gender in organisational structures after a woman has obtained access to them. Women may lack impact because executive and management women have acquired survival mechanisms that make them resistant to the effects of men & hierarchies. A hierarchy made entirely of males may influence the election of a managerial board, but its subsequent influence is negligible.

### **Research Objectives**

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- The objective of this study is to examine and analyze theories pertaining to Women's Leadership.
- The objective of this study is to identify and examine the factors that hinder or facilitate Women's Leadership, drawing upon existing literature.
- The objective of this study is to identify and evaluate the advantages and constraints associated with Women's Leadership through a comprehensive analysis of existing scholarly literature.
- The objective is to provide a theoretical framework that pertains to many facets of Women's Leadership within an organizational context.

### 3. Research Methodology

The researchers utilized a systematic literature review methodology, employing a five-step process model specifically devised for this study. The review process encompasses several key steps, namely formulating review inquiries, conducting a comprehensive literature search, gathering relevant data, engaging in deliberations over the outcomes, and ultimately providing a cohesive synthesis of the findings. This approach is deemed more advantageous in conducting a systematic review of the literature. The process of evaluating, interpreting, and synthesizing literature aids in the identification of conceptual and theoretical discoveries, as well as the accommodation of many approaches and types of evidence necessary for a comprehensive study.

### 4. Design And Methodology

#### Data Sources

To fulfill the aim of this research, a combination of primary and secondary data sources has been employed. Primary data sources involve the direct collection of information from individuals who serve as primary informants. These individuals were chosen through a systematic sampling process from the broader population under investigation. The primary sources, which have contributed to the secondary data, comprise the Annual Report from the Women Affairs Office, a variety of literature spanning the fields of sociology, management, and leadership, as well as publications discussing women's involvement in public administration. Furthermore, the internet has proven to be an invaluable resource, with websites like IPU, UNDP, WB, and UN offering substantial insights. Additionally, we have consulted and referenced documented materials from the Town Administration Communication Affairs Office.

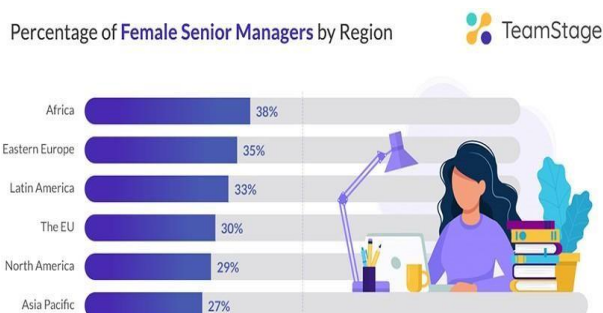
#### Population And Sample Size

The term "study population" denotes a collective assembly of individuals, from which a specific sample is drawn for research purposes. In the context of this research paper, the study population encompasses all permanent employees currently working in 25 public institutions within Bedele Town Administration, totaling approximately 357 individuals. To investigate the factors influencing women's involvement in leadership and decision-making roles within these public institutions, a sample size was determined. The sample represents roughly 30% of the total workforce in the town, amounting to 107 individuals. Additionally, two individuals were purposively chosen as sample respondents: one from the Women's Affairs Office and another from the Mayor's Office. The decision to opt for a larger sample size is grounded

in the understanding that it enhances the study's reliability. This approach enables the research to offer a more precise understanding of the challenges hindering women's progress in securing leadership and decision-making positions, while also shedding light on the current status of women within the town.

### Technique for Sampling

To achieve a well-representative sample from the entire research population, a combination of both probability and non-probability sampling methods were employed. The use of probability sampling was preferred for its ability to minimize bias and enable the extrapolation of data from the selected respondents, thus reducing potential sampling errors. For this study, we adopted a simple random sampling technique, specifically the lottery method, to select the first participant from the initial one-fourth of the sample. Additionally, a systematic sampling approach was implemented. Furthermore, the inclusion of purposive sampling was chosen as a method to involve key figures, such as the Head of Women Affairs and the Town Mayor, as respondents. This decision was made to encompass the necessary administrative perspectives and gather comprehensive data regarding the multitude of factors influencing women's participation in leadership and decision-making roles within the public institutions



of the municipality under investigation.

Fig 1- Team Women Leadership Data Country Wise.

### 5. Method Of Data Collection

This research falls within the category of descriptive research, as indicated in the subtopic. In order to effectively conduct and achieve the objectives of the study, data was gathered from various primary and secondary sources. This data was subsequently recorded, edited, arranged, analyzed, evaluated, and presented in connection to the research questions. The process involves employing descriptive statistical methods, including the use of tables, figures, percentages, graphs, and charts, to analyze quantitative and qualitative data obtained via surveys. Conversely, findings from interviews and observations are described without the use of statistical tools.

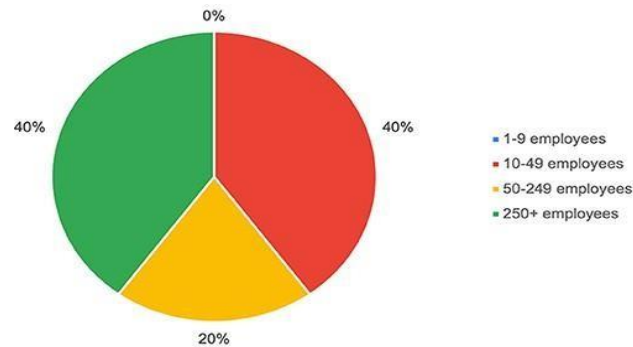


Fig 2 - Company Data Women Employees Dept.

### 5.1 Data Collection

A comprehensive scan of the databases yielded a total of 4,409 scholarly journals. After eliminating duplicate and extraneous papers, a total of 92 articles were deemed suitable for inclusion in the study. The field of Women's Leadership has primarily been explored within the realms of social sciences, business, management, and accounting. However, there have also been investigations undertaken in the fields of medical, arts and humanities, economics, engineering, and psychology. In addition to scholarly research publications, non-research pieces from online sources were consulted in order to provide a contemporary understanding of the involvement of women leaders in various businesses. Currently, our findings pertain to the classification of gender and age. The figure 3 presents a confusion matrix that illustrates the outcomes of our multi-class age classification outcomes. In the context of age classification, our evaluation entails assessing the accuracy of the algorithm's predictions in two scenarios: when the algorithm accurately assigns individuals to their respective age groups, and when the algorithm assigns individuals to age groups that are either one year older or one year younger than their actual age group. utilized.

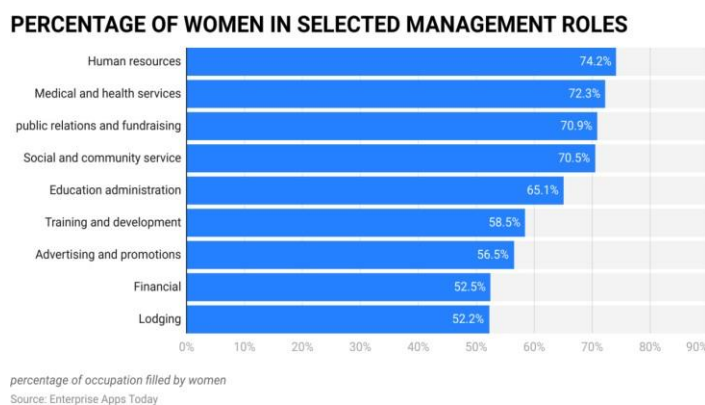


Fig 3 – Women Leadership Percentage Data Collection.

This practice is consistent with previous studies and demonstrates the inherent ambiguity associated with the task. It is commonly observed that facial features exhibit minimal changes between the oldest individuals within a certain age group and the youngest individuals within the subsequent age group. Both tables present a comparison of performance using the methodologies that have been described. Additionally, it offers a

comparative analysis with the alternative option.

## 6. Findings

A complex interplay of socio-psychological elements affects the development of women in leadership. Let's examine a few of the crucial elements that fall under these two headings:

### Social Variables

**Gender roles and cultural norms:** Women's possibilities for leadership may be constrained by societal norms and conventional gender roles. Women are expected to put family and domestic responsibilities ahead of career growth in many societies.

**Educational Opportunities:** Women's leadership development is greatly aided by having access to high-quality education. Women may find it difficult to get the knowledge and skills required to assume leadership roles due to limited access to education.

**Workplace Policies:** A woman's capacity to manage work and family commitments can be strongly impacted by the presence of family-friendly policies in the workplace, such as paid parental leave and flexible working arrangements.

### Psychiatric Factors

**Self-confidence:** Leadership requires self-belief and confidence. Due to cultural expectations and norms, women may experience imposter syndrome and feelings of self-doubt. Self-confidence building is essential.

**Ambition and Career Objectives:** A woman's individual career objectives and aspirations are very important. If a leadership position does not fit with a woman's long-term goals, she may not pursue it.

**Resilience:** Leadership frequently entails overcoming obstacles and failures. The capacity to persevere after setbacks is a psychological trait that affects leadership development.

**Leadership Training:** It's important to develop leadership abilities like decision-making, communication, and conflict resolution. Women should look for possibilities for development and training in these fields.

**Effective leaders** frequently have high emotional intelligence, which includes empathy, self-awareness, and good emotional control.

### Socioeconomic Elements

**Education:** Women are more likely to pursue leadership positions if they have access to higher education. We believe that women with advanced degrees are more likely to overcome hurdles related to gender.

**Economic Situation:** A woman's access to leadership prospects might be impacted by her socioeconomic situation. Our hypothesis is that women with greater socioeconomic status have more networks and resources to support their aspirations for leadership.

**Cultural norms:** Women's aspirations for leadership can be influenced by cultural expectations surrounding gender roles. We postulate that there will be a higher representation of women in leadership roles in societies where it is encouraged for them to do so.

**Workplace Regulations:** Regulations in the workplace, such as those governing parental leave and flexible work schedules.

### Psychological Elements

**Self-Efficacy:** According to our hypothesis, women who believe in their own abilities are more inclined to seek out leadership positions. Self-assurance and faith in one's leadership abilities can be important motivators.

**Mentoring and role models:** Exposure to female mentors and role models in leadership positions can

have a favorable impact on women's aspirations for leadership. We believe that such effects make women more inclined to want to be in positions of leadership.

**Threat from Stereotypes:** Women's confidence in leadership positions may be hampered by stereotype threats. We believe that more women will seek out leadership roles in settings where the threat of stereotypes is reduced.

**Work-Life Balance:** Women's willingness to assume leadership positions may be impacted by how they perceive work-life balance. Theoretically, women who believe that their personal lives and leadership careers can coexist will be more likely to be.

In conclusion, this hypothesis contends that the development of women's leadership is greatly influenced by a complex interaction of socioeconomic and psychological characteristics, influenced by elements including intersectionality, geographic location, and policy interventions. To verify these theories and learn more about the dynamics at work, more investigation and analysis is required.

### **61. Scope And Limitations**

The primary objective of this study is to examine the role of women in leadership positions, with a particular emphasis on the various socio-cultural and physiological elements that influence their leadership capabilities. The objective of this thesis is to investigate the potential for upward mobility among women within various organizations, with a particular focus on those of substantial size. In this manner, the analysis of career advancement in relation to promotions is facilitated, as opposed to that of self-employment. Given the substantial and noteworthy disparities observed across different nations, the author has made the deliberate decision to narrow the focus exclusively to India, a country that offers a wealth of available information.

### **62. Conclusion**

In contemporary times, there has been a notable surge in interest surrounding the subject of female leadership, owing to the advancement of gender equality. Consequently, there has been a growing demand for alterations and improvements within organizational structures to address gender-related concerns. However, it is important to acknowledge that gender biases, both conscious and unconscious, persist inside organizational settings, resulting in discriminatory practices against women. The identification of unconscious gender bias is a significant challenge, although it serves as the fundamental basis for the perpetuation of gender discrimination. Although attention is typically focused on gender issues within businesses to increase the number of female leaders, less attention is made to the gender preconceptions that women may absorb and carry. Gender bias and stereotypes can inflict harm onto women, leading to self-doubt regarding their talents and abilities, and potentially constraining their prospects for assuming leadership roles or engaging in demanding initiatives within the professional sphere. The absence of self-assurance among women can impose limitations on their career prospects and impede their advancement in the professional sphere. Moreover, this phenomenon contributes to the perpetuation of male-dominated leadership roles and the persistence of gender inequity. Hence, it is imperative to possess a thorough comprehension of the obstacles that impact women's careers in leadership. Consequently, businesses should adopt policies and procedures that help women, grounded in this understanding. Furthermore, it is imperative for women in leadership roles to not only confront external obstacles stemming from gender bias and preconceptions, but also possess a strong sense of self-belief, embracing their gender identity, and actively pursuing opportunities for leadership.

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