

Examining Gender Disparity Among Superiors In Evaluating Their Subordinates In The Manufacturing And The Service Sector

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INTRODUCTION

India, like most developing countries, is witnessing a change in the gender-mix of employees in the organized sector. The changing political, economic and psycho-social scenes have given some slow, but steady impetus to women's literacy and awareness within the female population. As a result, there is a shift in the labour market in terms of gender-mix; the number of women applicants for various jobs are growing steadily, particularly in the middle rung of the organizations. Organizations and their role structures that are hitherto designed by male incumbents, subtly incorporates a somewhat male bias in their normal functions and culture (Sastry and Pandey, 1992; Harragan, 1977; Henning and Jardim, 1977).

There is a need to address the problems that arise due to the clash of women's perceptions, attitudes and behaviour that female socialization encourages, with male corporate culture and male rules of career development; with the policies and practices of male-led corporations (Pandey and Sastry, 1991; Sastry and Pandey, 1992). Due to career interruptions and turnover, women are less likely to reach top executive positions. Women, it has been found, are clustered in positions with relatively little power (Hansen, 1974; Hill, 1980; Wolf and Fligstein, 1979). Furthermore, even when promoted, they may not advance, as far or as fast in the organizational hierarchy as their male counterparts (Stewart and Gudykunst, 1982). Women seldom reach top level positions in the organizations (Dexter, 1985; Raynolds, 1987). Women workers are professed as secondary income earners, and there is greater likelihood of them being segregated into jobs at the low-end of the occupational ladder. This trend continues to hold even in recent labour market experiences. This is mainly because the workplace culture has been created by men and is naturally "masculine" with a language competency and ethos typically favouring men. The present study is an effort to understand the existence of perceptual differences among the superiors while assessing their male and female subordinates in the organization. This in turn reveals the mindset of the superiors and their view towards gender disparity in their organization.

GENDER

"Men are dominant, women are subservient;" "Men are aggressive, women are passive;" "Men are agentic, women are communal;" "Men are power-centric, women are person-centric;" "Men are single focused, women are multifocused;" "Men are bread winners, women are home makers." The list of differences identified by the researchers is seamless. The battle often in organizations is not on what are the differences or similarities between men and women, but to attain "gender equality" within organizations. Women do realize that gender equality is still the toughest battle they are fighting and things will not change overnight. A thorough change in the mind-set of the people is the most required solution to give equal and respectable opportunities for women. As an initial attempt to study gender discrimination, it would be worthwhile to define "gender". To put it simply, a definition of gender would begin with the biological sex of men and women (broadly speaking). Gender is a system of social practices within society that constitutes people different in socially significant ways and organizes relation of inequality on the basis of the difference (Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999). Most studies and societies define gender on the basis of sex, but they fail to overlook gender from the viewpoint of psychology, society, behaviorism, interaction and traits (Pearson &

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Cooks, 1994). According to Bem (1974), gender is defined more in terms of masculine and feminine, rather than male and female. This is because traits associated with “*masculine*” (eg. leadership and assertiveness) and “*feminine*” (eg. warmth and emotionality) are common to both men and women. If this argument is extended further and communicated across organizations and societies, then the difference of men vs. women would minimize. While comparing men and women in an organizational context, the focus should not be just on the biological difference, rather, the comparison should mainly cover behavioural and psychological differences .

GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Gender discrimination is meant only for women, because females are the victim of gender discrimination. Gender discrimination is not biologically determined, but it is determined socially and the discrimination can be changed by proper and consistent efforts. Denial of equality, rights and opportunity and suppression in any form on the basis of gender is “*gender discrimination*”. India is a male dominant society and gender discrimination is customized culturally.

The female sex has to bear the brunt of discrimination in various spheres. Certain highlights are:

- ✿ Ending pregnancy prematurely with the help of scanning;
- ✿ Female Feticide;
- ✿ Not being provided with a nutritious diet;
- ✿ Denial of education;
- ✿ Denied of health care;
- ✿ Early marriage;
- ✿ Eve teasing and sexual harassment;
- ✿ Dowry problem;
- ✿ Divorce, destitution even for silly reasons or without any reason.

The underlying causes for gender discrimination have been identified by Sivakumar (2008) in his study on '*Gender Discrimination And Women's Development In India*'. The causes are listed as follows :

- ✿ Educational backwardness;
- ✿ Caste;
- ✿ Religious beliefs;
- ✿ Culture;
- ✿ Family history;
- ✿ Customs & beliefs;
- ✿ Races;
- ✿ Low income;
- ✿ Unemployment;
- ✿ Society;
- ✿ Family situation;
- ✿ Attitudes.

A women plays an important role in the family and national development. But her contribution is not recognized by the male dominant society.

Sonalde Desai (1994) observed that parents' reluctance to educate daughters has its roots in the situation of women. Parents have several incentives for not educating their daughters. Foremost is the view that education for girls brings in no returns to parents and that for their future roles, being mainly reproductive and perhaps including agricultural labour, requires no formal education.

Kalyani Menon and Shivakumar (2001) found that girls in India are discriminated against in several ways - fewer months of breastfeeding, less nurturing and play, less care or medical treatment if they fall ill, less of “*special*” food and less of parental attention. As a result, girls are far more susceptible than boys to disease and infections, leading to poor health and a shorter lifespan.

Berta Esteve-Volart (2004) described that gender discrimination against women in the market place reduces the available talent in an economy, which has negative economic consequences. Gender discrimination takes many forms. Many social practices seen as normal from a religious or cultural point of view have women out of the

economic mainstream. These social practices may have profound economic consequences because they do not allow the society to take advantage of the talent inherent in women.

Gina Lewis and Venkat R. Krishnan (2004) conducted a study on '*Sex Differences In Power: The Role of Network Centrality and Value Systems*'. Their study provides preliminary evidence for women having less power than men have in organizations, even though this cannot be attributed to their differing value systems or differences in network centrality. Women may have values that are different from men, but this does not determine the degree to which they would be perceived as having power. Moreover, centrality is positively related to power only in the case of men. Thus, the study establishes that while women do have less power than men do in organizations; they must not concentrate too much on their network centrality as this might or might not lead to their having more power. Attempts to enhance the power of women need to focus less on network centrality and more on formal hierarchical level and some personal aspects of power.

The Planning Commission of India (2008) indicated that discrimination against women and girls impinges upon their right to health and manifests itself in the form of worsening health and nutrition indices. Thus, India continues to grapple with unacceptably high mortality rate and increasing rates of anemia and malnutrition among women.

Sivakumar and Marimuthu (2008) shed light on gender discrimination by highlighting certain information like, half of the world's population consists of women. They are doing two-third of the total work in the world, but receive only one-tenth of the world's total income. Nearly two-third of the women are illiterate, and they possess only one percent of the total world's assets. In the world, only one-fourth of the families are headed by a female.

Thus, India is a male dominant society where gender discrimination is a pre-dominant issue.

GENDER ROLE AND DIFFERENTIATION

It begins from the moment of birth. Parents treat male and female children differently and have expectations based on the cultural definition of sex differences. Rubin et al. (1974) reported that parents make sex-typed judgments about their new-born sons and daughters. Though researchers found that their weight, length, strength, and alertness was not significantly different, parents characterized boys as more alert, stronger, larger featured, more coordinated and firmer. They found girls less attended, weaker, finer featured, less coordinated, softer, smaller, more fragile and prettier. The perception coloured by sex-stereotyping influences parents' behaviour towards their children, which subsequently shapes the children's self-concept and gender-role expectations. The male and female children are differently trained. Training for masculinity involves for males to be trained for independent and aggressive action. Males are trained to use force, power, competition and aggression as the means for achievement. The importance of self-reliance and independence is systematically inculcated in males. To be masculine means not only to be self-reliant and self-controlled, but also to have control over other people and resources as well. In female socialization, individual success is not important, friendships and relationships are valued. They are trained to believe that achievement comes through relationships, and that competitions are unfeminine. Learning about helplessness and dependence, rather than self-assertion and self-reliance, is a primary part of female socialization. Nurturance, affectionate care and attention are the qualities that are highly valued in females. Female stereotypes tend to include such traits as gentleness, submission, dependency and nurturance. In contrast, male stereotypes usually include such traits as forcefulness, dominance, independence, ambitious and competitiveness (Broverman et al., 1972, Rosenkrantz et al., 1968). Sex differences in socialization experiences reflect that female identity throughout the world has its focus on nurturance, motherhood and home-making as the primary role. Career and working roles have always have had a secondary, if not a negligible priority. Over centuries of human civilization, clear cut gender-roles have emerged based on the stereotypic conception of feminine and masculine characteristics.

GENDER SENSITIVITY IN ORGANIZATIONS

Every facet of a women's life is replete with examples of gender differentiation. Yet, when it comes to work, it still surprises us – how the same thoughts start manifesting in the working relationships. Our minds find it difficult to accept a non-stereotypical role of a woman and look at it with a template of gender neutrality. Arguably then, the focus of “gender” should be on an understanding of men and women. Unfortunately, the concept has undergone a change with a synonymous linkage of gender with women, women empowerment, equality of women, and initiation of policies for retention of women. A cursory analysis of the causative factors reveals that the “muted sex” (Marshall,

1993) hails from a different logical zone, in which the dual roles and responsibilities of home and work front have embedded them in a spatial and cultural zone, which is different and “*feminine*”. Within this framework, a probe in the organizational context reveals that a natural development of the gender concept requires focusing on women as most organizations and institutions are embedded in culture, ideologies, practices, and social norms, which are typically masculine and in which women have so far been assigned a lower state. Thus, the study attempts to view the “*gender issue*”, inequalities and problems faced by women in organizations from a feminine lens.

With the increasing number of women holding various positions in the work force, the study attempts to examine the gender differences in certain major areas like performance evaluations, career growth, rewards and punishments in the manufacturing and (Hospitals) service sector. The perceptual differences among the male and female employees towards the performance evaluation practices in the organizations, the career growth aspects, the rewarding systems and punishment practices in the manufacturing sectors and the service sector with special reference to Hospitals are observed. The opinions regarding Gender disparity among male and female employees were collected and assessed. Similarly, the opinions regarding the perceived leadership qualities like integrity, planning, execution, problem solving and decision making, innovation, team building, communication, leadership, interpersonal sensitivity, continuous learning and personal traits from male and female employees were collected and examined by two fundamental methods like self-evaluation and supervisory evaluation of the employees. The preview of the above information guided the research to land up on the statement of the problems.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Women are facing a high degree of gender bias when it comes to their career. There is a general perception that women are less capable than men at the workplace. It is often a strenuous struggle for a woman not just to prove her mettle, but also to make a deserving way to the top. Even though women perform well at various levels, we get to see a very meager percentage of them in top decision making levels. Some of the hindrances that women face in their career, when compared to men are considered for research :

1. While males and females might perform exactly the same tasks, there could be certain factors in their environment that leads to perceived differences.
2. The superiors perceive that the male employees fit in better than the female employees in an organizational structure.

The study attempts to observe the existence of gender discrimination problems in the manufacturing and service (Hospital) sector, and to suggest the means for the organizations to address the gender-related problems, which have their roots in the culture and society of the region.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know the perceptual difference that exists among the superiors while assessing their male and female subordinates in the organization.
2. To know the prevalence of gender disparity in the manufacturing and service sector.
3. To suggest certain remedies to overcome the flaws.

While male and female employees in an organization might perform exactly the same, there could be certain factors in their environment that leads to perceived differences.

LIMITATIONS

Gender discrimination being a widely applicable area, the study is limited to Coimbatore city alone. Similarly, the gender discrimination is observed and studied in the hospitals classified under the service sector. The study has exempted other service based sectors. The validity of the study is highly reliable on the sources of data shared by the superiors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The studies on gender discrimination are viewed from different angles and perspectives by various authors. The

relevant studies are reviewed hereunder. In the last hundred years, the human society has changed drastically. The participation of women in formal paid work has been rapidly increasing, bringing in a new gender dimension in the workplace. In the last fifty years, the workplace has also shifted from factories requiring hard manual labour to offices requiring brain power. Computers and microelectronics have taken this transition to a new level. All these have made women's participation in formal work much more possible. This is not to suggest that women's drudgery has vanished, especially in the developing world. Much of the women's work still remains low-skill, underpaid and thankless. This in turn leads to inequality among men and women at the workplace, emerging as gender discrimination. Certain studies conducted in this area have been reviewed. Broverman et al. (1972) observed the societal norms that state women should not or cannot be successful in management roles. Sex-role stereotypes and prescriptions for desirable feminine behavior conflict with the desirable managerial behavior. The positively valued traits for men are related to behavior that reflects competence, rationality and assertiveness, while positively valued feminine traits reflect warmth and expressiveness. Kanter's (1977) study exhibits certain facts that since there are fewer women in the organizations than men, particularly in executive positions, women are taken as '*tokens*' representing the entire women group. Therefore, all her activities, particularly her failures receive exaggerated visibility and publicity, which are often interpreted as the failure of women as a group. This affects the development of other women, and increases their propensity to develop fear of failure. Subsequently, this can cause severe constraints to women's attempts to get involved in paid work.

In a study conducted in India on the status of women in public enterprises by Hussain and Rao (1980), it was found that there was job stagnation in the industry and that woman in general, were relegated to low-skilled jobs. Management policies indicated that women did not require career planning, nor were they considered suitable for supervisory jobs. Generally, managers had stereotypical ideas about women, such as "*women earn pin money and don't really need a wage*", "*women are not interested in their work*," "*They work to have fun*," "*women are not and should not be ambitious*," etc.

Lipman-Blumen (1984) stated that the subordinate status of women is associated with the control that each sex has over the resources valued by society. Men control a wide array of resources - power, money, land, political influence, legal power, intellectual and occupational resources; women control a greatly limited set –sexuality, youth, beauty, and the promise of paternity for their male partners.

Kalnicka (2000) found that the female managers are not universally accepted by the public. The fact that society still finds it difficult to accept women in management and thus, it leads to gender discrimination.

Rajadhakshya and Bhatnagar (2000), reported that men are more committed to work or occupation than women and that gender-role expectations and gender-based socialization lead men to identify themselves with '*work-roles*' and women to identify themselves with '*family-roles*'. The expectation that women should give priority to the family suggests that women managers would experience higher levels of parental role-overload than men.

The study titled "*Effects Of Gender Diversity Management On Perceptions Of Organizational Attractiveness: The Role Of Individual Differences In Attitudes And Beliefs*" was done by Luis Martins and Charles Parsons (2001). In the study, the authors examined how individual gender-related attitudes and beliefs affect the reactions of men and women to gender diversity management programs in organizations. They found that whereas there were no significant differences in the effects of gender diversity management on organizational attractiveness between sex, there were strong within-sex differences based on individual attitudes and beliefs. Specifically, within the sexes, centrality of one's gender identity, attitudes towards affirmative action for women, and the belief that women are discriminated against in the workplace moderated the effects of gender diversity management on organizational attractiveness. Bartol and Powell (2003), in their research explain the emergence of gender-related behavior in organizations as generally falling into three categories: biological, socialization, and structural/cultural models. The researchers concluded that the study on gender and management has resulted in a debate with research on women in management becoming either polarized or marginalized.

Ingrid Robeyns (2003) worked on Sen's capability approach and gender inequality: selecting relevant capabilities. He applied Amartya Sen's capability approach to conceptualize and assess the gender inequalities in Western societies. He arrived at the overall evaluations by weighing the different capabilities of both male and female. He found that the gender inequality has a traditional touch, and it is born from our societal practices.

Prudence LaBeach Pollard (2004) explores workplace challenges faced by women and recommended strategies to

address them through research and policy at organizational and governmental levels. The researcher says that the discrimination against women manifests itself in various forms, including: job segregation, wage gap, sexual harassment, denial of career development opportunities, poor performance evaluations, and lack of promotion opportunities. He states that if women are to achieve salary equity and experience career satisfaction, if corporations are to benefit fully from the capabilities of qualified managers, certain workplace attitudes and behaviours must change, or the workplace must be protected from the expression of partiality and gender bias. The discriminatory practices in Indian companies, worked by Vijayalakshmi & Kamalpreet Dhaliwal (2006) state that the differences generate conflicts and are manifested as discriminatory practices that reduce both individual and organizational effectiveness. An exploratory study using Critical Incident Technique was conducted by them to identify the discriminatory factors that are prevalent in the Indian workplace, nature of their interactions and their influence on organizational decisions. The study revealed gender, region of origin, education, marital status, age and caste as discriminatory factors that affect a number of organizational decisions like recruitment, job allocation, transfers, promotion and termination. It was also found that several of these factors operate simultaneously in an organization. Sivakumar and Marimuthu (2008) in their study on gender discrimination and women's development in India found that the females are nearly 50 percent of the total population, but their representation in public life is very low. Women continue to bear the major load of the household work. A woman's primary role, often viewed by the society, is that of a homemaker. Neetu Purohit and Keshaw Kumar (2008) in their work on *'Understanding Determinants of Emotional Intelligence Among Women In The Workplace'* highlights that the gender discrimination appears to be the most obvious reason behind the low participation of women in the workplace. But while the discrimination, which limits the entry of women into the workplace, has its roots in the family and society; the discrimination which limits women from holding top notch positions, has its roots in the organization's policies and preferences.

The facts included by Srimathi Shivshankar (2009) in her study add evidence to the existence of gender discrimination. A worldwide assessment conducted for closing the gender gap on various parameters such as education, equality, empowerment and health placed India at the 114th position in the list of 134 countries, and continues to hold one of the lowest positions globally. India seems to have done relatively better in political empowerment (ranked 24th), but has lost out on creating enough economic opportunities for women to participate (ranked 127th). The female to the male ratio of legislators, senior officials, and managers in India as per the study stands at 0.03.

Syedun Ali and Dr. Rahela Farooqui (2010) in their study *"Female Expatriate Managers - Barriers Experienced And Suggested Strategies"* highlighted certain facts that, with the globalization of the world economy, the world is shrinking at a fast pace. The companies are not restricted to one country, but have crossed the boundaries and have a presence in other countries as well. This has led to an increase in the multicultural workforce. The one phenomenon which is quite evident due to globalization is the increase in the number of expatriate managers. However, if we compare the number of male and female expatriate managers, we will find a striking variation. Women face discrimination in the company's selection policy as companies feel that sending a woman as an expatriate will not be a good business policy. They not only face discrimination in a company's selection policy, but also in their foreign assignments. Women face discrimination that prevents them from getting the international assignments and experience, which is important for the promotion to the top management level. While women in the recent past were able to reduce this discrimination in many developed countries, but studies reveal that companies are still relying more on the male candidates for global assignments.

Dr. A. Palaniappan and Anish C. Aniyan (2010) conducted a study on *"Empowering Women Through Education, Health And Employment"*. They stated that the constitution grants equal rights to men and women. Yet, the reality is that women's lives are still shaped by customs and traditions that work against them. Daughters are viewed as less valuable than sons. Girls are taught to believe that they are less important than boys. In India, for the first time, women are recognized not just as equal citizens, but as agents of economic and social growth (Eleventh Plan). For growth to be truly inclusive, it is essential to ensure their protection, well being, development, empowerment and participation. To end the multifaceted exclusions and discriminations faced by women, and to ensure that every woman in the country is able to develop her full potential and share the benefits of economic growth and prosperity depends on our ability to adopt a participatory approach that empowers women and makes them partners in their own development. This can be achieved by providing the basic necessities like good education, health and employment.

According to the study conducted by Sujatha (2011), it was stated that the gender difference begins from the moment of birth. Parents treat male and female children differently, and have expectations based on the cultural definition of sex differences. Over centuries of human civilization, clear cut gender-roles have emerged based on the stereotypic conception of feminine and masculine characteristics.

The above studies have witnessed gender discrimination; hence, the present study (with the support of prior studies) attempts to test the hypothesis to prove the existence of gender disparity in both the manufacturing and the service sector. The superior's perception towards their male and female subordinates was tested with these hypotheses.

✿H1: There is no significant opinion difference in the superior's perception while assessing the qualities favouring women at the work place among the male and female staff members in the organization.

✿H2: There is no significant opinion difference in the superior's perception while assessing the qualities favouring men at the work place among the male and female staff members in the organization.

It can be argued that understanding and concepts vary significantly within the reviewed material. Definitions as well as suggestions differ within the literature. But in general, these pre-studies are considered as base to observe the role of gender discrimination. The studies have been reviewed to formulate the hypotheses, and the hypotheses were tested with various statistical tools.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive in nature. The methodology of the study is outlined hereunder:

The data required for the study were collected through a structured questionnaire. The period of data collection ranged from July 2009 to August 2010. The research was extended from January 2007-August 2011. The immediate supervisors of the staff members were also included to gather the supervisory evaluation data required for the research. The population of the study included a total of 132 immediate superiors of the staff members in the manufacturing sector, and from the service sector, 122 immediate superiors of the staff members were taken as the sample. The data were collected from 27 male and 9 female superiors, totaling to 36 superiors of middle level employees in the manufacturing sector. The information required for the study was also collected from 15 male and 29 female superiors, consolidating to 44 superiors in the service sector. The sampling design used for the study is Disproportionate Stratified Random sampling as the number of male and female superiors remained uneven. The source of data depended on the primary and secondary data. The questionnaire was framed in such a way as to draw all the relevant information required to identify the existence of gender discrimination in the organization. The questionnaire was designed by referring to studies previously done on gender discrimination and also, books, magazines were also consulted to improve the effectiveness of the questionnaire; the questionnaire was also discussed with the experts to consider their guidance and suggestions. The survey questionnaire was used as the main data-gathering instrument for this study. The questions were structured using the Likert scale. The Likert Scale provided five choices for each question or statement, which enabled the superiors to answer the survey easily. The questionnaire for the superiors consisted of the name and information of their subordinates, a set of questions to know the superior's opinion on gender disparity. Thus, the questionnaire was designed with a motive of exposing the gender discrimination existing in the manufacturing and service sector.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The research data were analyzed by the following statistical tools - Statistical Package For Social Sciences (SPSS 16). Cross Tabulation, chi-square test, one-way analysis of variance, factor analyses are the analytical tools used in the study.

GENDER DISPARITY

The immediate superiors of all the middle-level employees in both the sectors were provided with a questionnaire consisting of a set of questions on gender disparity, and they shared their opinion about it. The responses shared by them on gender disparity questions were further classified into male dominated and female-dominated statements, and the responses were analyzed by applying ANOVA to find the gender discrimination outcomes.

GENDER DISPARITY AND THE SUPERIORS' OPINION ON THE QUALITIES FAVORING FEMALE EMPLOYEES IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR

The calculated F value was found to be significant; hence the hypothesis (H1) is rejected. There was an opinion difference among the statements like *“good support system for women”*, *“women are generally stereotyped”* and *“women are at an advantage during performance evaluation in the organization”*, as the hypothesis (H1) is rejected in case of these statements. The gender disparity is slightly higher in the manufacturing sector than it is in the service sector.

GENDER DISPARITY AND THE SUPERIORS' OPINION ON THE QUALITIES FAVORING FEMALE EMPLOYEES IN THE SERVICE SECTOR

The calculated F-value is not significant; hence the hypothesis (H1) is accepted. The statements like *“women are more disciplined, more focused than men,”* and *“women are at an advantage during performance evaluation in our organization,”* yielded a significant opinion difference. The superiors opined that women are equally competent with regards to men, and that men are not at an advantage during performance evaluation in the organization. Thus, the superior's view shows a low level of gender discrimination in the service sector.

GENDER DISPARITY AND THE SUPERIORS' OPINION OF MALE QUALITIES FAVORING MALE EMPLOYEES IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR

The calculated F-value is significant and hence, the hypothesis (H1) is rejected. The opinion difference does not persist in the statement like, *“while interviewing women, the parameters like marriage, pregnancy, location of spouse, etc. influence our judgment”*. Hence, the hypothesis (H2) is accepted here, whereas in all other cases, the hypothesis is rejected as there exists a strong mismatch with the opinion. The male superiors positively favoured the statements like *“their male subordinates stay back for long hours in the organization,”* *“men are suited for a job which requires more analytical skills”* and *“men are more competent”*. Whereas, female superiors opined that men generally find it difficult to work under a female boss.

GENDER DISPARITY AND THE SUPERIORS' OPINION ON THE QUALITIES FAVORING MALE EMPLOYEES IN THE SERVICE SECTOR

The calculated F-value is not significant; therefore, the hypothesis (H1) is accepted. The superiors express a significant opinion difference in case where *“men are expected to put in longer hours than women in a given work environment in the organization”* and *“men generally find it difficult to work under a female boss”*. Majority of the male superiors strongly agreed that their male subordinates stay back for longer hours and similarly, a majority of the female superiors felt that the men generally find it difficult to work under them. Thus, a low level of gender discrimination exists in the service sector.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

✿ **Gender Disparity** : According to the superior's opinion, the gender disparity is predominantly viewed in the manufacturing sector than in the service sector as there exists a prominent opinion difference between male and female superiors.

It is understood that men are more influential in a mixed-sex group, they participate more, they are more assertive and are able to spend more time on their job. However, women face a great challenge of balancing job and family responsibilities (Lockhed, 1985; Wagner & Berger, 1977; Wood & Karten, 1986; Sangamitra Buddhapriya, 2009). Thus, the gender difference is prominently observed in self-rating, supervisory evaluations, perceived opinion regarding performance evaluation, career growth, rewards and punishments in the manufacturing sector. It is also observed at a low level in the service sector (Hospitals).

FINDINGS

Gender Disparity

1. The perception of the immediate superiors of the staff level employees regarding gender disparity was assessed separately as female favouring factors and male favouring factors considering the manufacturing and the service sector. The statements favouring female staff members were rated as follows in the service sector :

✿ *“Women are better than men in their interpersonal skills and in handling people”* was rated low by male than by the female superiors.

✿ *“Women are at an advantage during performance evaluation in our organization”* was rated low by female superiors.

The factors favouring female employees are rated by the superiors in the manufacturing sector and the result are as follows:

✿ *“In our organization nowadays, there exists a good support system for women”* was rated low by the female superiors.

✿ *“Women are generally stereotyped in our organization”* was rated low by the male superiors.

✿ *“Women are at an advantage during performance evaluation in our organization”* was rated low by the female superiors.

2. Similarly, the attributes favouring male staff members were rated by their immediate superiors and the results are as follows:

✿ The statements like, *“men are expected to put in longer hours than women in a given work environment in our organization”*.

✿ *“Men are better suited than women for jobs which require more analytical skill”*.

✿ *“Men are more competent than women in an organization's environment”* was rated low by the female superiors.

✿ *“Men generally find it difficult to work under a female boss”* was rated low by the male superiors in the manufacturing sector.

Whereas in the service sector, the statements like :

✿ *“Men are expected to put in longer hours than women in a given work environment in our organization”* was rated low by the female superiors.

✿ *“Men generally find it difficult to work under a female boss”* was rated low by the male superiors.

SUGGESTIONS

There should be a strong corporate involvement in handling the constraints faced by women employees. Dealing with these constraints requires changes in the corporate policy of personnel practices. The personnel policy should bring about significant changes that are family friendly and can have a positive impact on selection, training and career development for all employees based on equality and social justice, thereby contributing to the overall climate and culture of the organization.

The organizations should develop policies that create a women-friendly work environment. They need to establish training programmes for women, such as mentorship, career guidance and leadership development. They can promote awareness initiatives that highlight the value of women managers. They need to elicit input from women employees regarding policies, promotion and performance review processes. The suggestion was shared earlier by Budhwar P. S. and Bhatnagar J. (2005) in their work on women in management in the new economic environment. The organizations need to hold a true commitment to hire and promote women and include women in the annual business strategy.

CONCLUSION

The battle often in organizations is not on what are the differences or similarities between men and women, but on how to retain women employees despite differences or no differences. The study attempted to explain the perceptual difference between men and women in various areas like performance evaluation, career growth, self-ratings, supervisory evaluation, rewards and punishments, which in turn help the manufacturing sector and service sector

(hospitals) to understand the existence of gender discrimination that affects the organizations, policies and practices, as well as the performance of women and men.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The future of gender studies is relatively strong. Studies could be conducted to understand the readiness of the organizations to use women as resources. A real time assessment of particular needs and status of women employees could be done. Studies could be further extended to assess organizational policies to detect discrimination in recruitment, placement, promotion and performance evaluation. The present study is largely a descriptive study that has, however, provided interesting insights on existence of gender discrimination in the organizations which affects the socialization and equality. Thus, it is essential to make professional competence a salient characteristic of work-related transactions to reduce interference of gender.

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