Gender Diversity and Leadership: Breaking the Stereotype

Dr. Nina Jacob, Santhosh Ambikasadanam, Vivek Pratap Singh,
Ranjika Gupta and Prof. Namrata Nanda*

Abstract--- Purpose: This research aims to find out the impact of gender diversity at workplace in Indian context.

Design/ Methodology/ Approach: The primary data was collected with the help of a structured questionnaire. A sample size of 224 was collected from the respondents of IT, educational and retail sectors and the data was interpreted using TOPSIS analysis.

Findings: Women do face certain biasness and challenges in the workplace yet they deliver better in the organisation and interestingly, the outcomes reveal that women have better leadership traits than the male counterparts.

Practical Implications: This research gives the clue to the recruiters to explore different ways to reduce discrepancies at work place and evaluating the gender competencies while building teams for accomplishing complex tasks.

Originality/ Value: The paper contributes to a new dimension towards gender diversity at workplace by integrating Leadership, Discrepancies and Impact with the empirical analysis for multi criterion decision making using TOPSIS.

Keywords--- Technique for Order of Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS), Gender Diversity, Leadership Traits, Organizational-Culture, Gender Biasness.

I. INTRODUCTION

Diversity has tamed over the years and has become one of the essentials for twenty-first century still the definition of "diversity" is debatable as it has multiple meanings in literature (Herring, 2009). The impact of gender diversity is "double-edged sword" from two perspectives it has been observed that "The value-in-diversity" approach insists that a diverse workforce, relative to a homogeneous one, produces better business results. In contrast, "The diversity-as-process loss" approach is sceptical and insists that diversity can be counterproductive. This view suggests that diversity hinders group functioning and will have negative effects on business performance.

Over the past decade world has witnessed tremendous change over the accepted morality. It is reflective in the bold feminist talks going all around us, which over the years has led to women empowerment (Dwyer et al., 2003). This drastic change could also be seen in terms of participation of women workforce at the workplace. It could be

Dr. Nina Jacob, Professor, IFIM Business School, Bangalore. E-mail: nina.jacob@ifim.edu.in
Santhosh Ambikasadanam, PGDM Student, IFIM Business School, Bangalore. E-mail: santhosh.ambikasadanam@ifimbschool.com
Vivek Pratap Singh, PGDM Student, IFIM Business School, Bangalore. E-mail: vivek.singh@ifimbschool.com
Ranjika Gupta, PGDM Student, IFIM Business School, Bangalore. E-mail: ranjika.gupta@ifimbschool.com
Prof. Namrata Nanda*, Research Mentor, IFIM Business School, Bangalore. E-mail: namrata.nanda@ifim.edu.in

sensed that the women have moved up the ladder in this period which led them to lucrative positions which they once only aspired. There is certainly no doubt that the numbers have increased globally. Yet in some parts of the world it cannot be said that women have been given the opportunity to achieve their potential (Haq, 2013). Despite the dramatic increase in the number of women in the work force, they experience restricted career advancement in the prospects and fail to advance as quickly as men, if yes then what is the barrier that restricts the career advancement of women (Huse et al., 2006). The barriers that prevent women from ascending to senior management positions in large corporation has often been described by the metaphor "the glass ceiling", a transparent barrier which prevents women from moving up the corporate ladder past a certain point (Huse et al., 2006). In all parts of the world, female senior executives, and especially female Chief Executive Officers (CEO's) are extremely rare in large corporations. Although women in United States comprise approximately 40% of all managers, in the largest corporation women holds less than 0.5% of the highest paid management jobs (Dreher et al., 1996). Now the question arises that, if the developed country like Unites States has such less figure then what about the developing countries like India.

There has been a significant research on the impact of gender diversity in a workplace. How gender diversity can lead to the performance of an organizations. Furthermore, scholars have recently noted that distinct type of diversity have divergent effects on organizations (Dwyer et al., 2003). Diversity is increasingly promoted by organisations, but it has its own cons as it may lead to low performance quality because the positions are being filled by unworthy candidates.

In the past there have been numerous studies which have been carried out on the impacts of gender diversity, but they usually are done in an environment which is more liberal and has given enough opportunities for women to flourish. In western world there are organisations like Business Opportunities for Leadership and Diversity (BOLD) to help American corporations learn how to leverage their gender diversity for competitive advantage (Kochan et al., 2003). Finkelstein et al. (1996), suggested that past top management group research have generally limited its examination of group diversity effects to the top management team. (Haq, 2013), suggested that women in India are marginalised in their access to education and they are also compromised in their professional development by being undervalued. However, little empirical research has been completed in this regard. There has been a significant observation that the presence of women in an organization's board may enhance value if appointed based on the skills as that will bring an additional perspective in the decision-making process. Whereas, the same women may have a negative impact if appointing of female members on the board is influenced by societal pressure. Furthermore, it has been found that employees perform better under male bosses as compared to female bosses. Organization basically works based on the performance by its employees where some believe men are better performer than women. Considerable progress has been made with respect to gender diversity in management as women increasingly move into the managerial ranks (Dwyer et al., 2003).

This paper can be extended to fully examine gender diversity's effect considering performance in the gender diverse workplace with respect to Indian context. It could be sensed that the previous researches were conducted in specific environment and the results were then further generalised. The second world were usually not taken into considerations where women even today face difficulties with respect to their identities. This leaves behind the

scope of revaluation of pre-conceived notions about the gender diversity and its impact on workplace. This can be done by broadening the examination of the management group to include not only senior executives who set corporate strategies and policies but also those managers who implement these policies- middle management, department managers and salaried supervisors. If the impact of gender diversity is to be studid then, only the top level management cannot be taken into consideration, instead the organisation has to be considered as a whole. The study attempts to answer the following research question: To what context does gender diversity exists in Indian organisation and its impact on overall performance? The study would like to concentrate on some contextual variables: organisational culture and involvement of women in enhancing team performance, does men perform better than women, if yes then what is the reason behind that.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Considerable progress has been done in the field of studying impact of gender diversity at workplace. In the past decade the talk of 'Gender Diversity' has increased significantly, with women rising in the hierarchy within the organisation. Yet, there are authors who have advocated that even in organisations like Walmart women earn substantially less than their male colleagues (Roth, 2007). Acker (2006), suggested how organisations can conceptualise gender diversity and identify barriers for creating equality in organisation. Workplace diversity is a phenomena which has been conceptualised by researchers from various standpoints. Diversity circumscribe ways by which an individual can differ. The past analysis has shown a trend that majority group i.e. men are unaware or they take the power of their position for granted such ignorance, denials and discriminatory policies are the basis due to which males consider the organisation more equitable than females.

The research paper puts forward this scenario that minorities in the organisation tend to receive fewer opportunities for training and development and moving up the ladder because employers believe that women will quit the job for their personal reasons (Hollenbeck et al., 1994). Even after advancements women (minority) are given minimal access to power, higher level positions, promotions, income due to stereotyping beliefs which propose masculine to have better leadership and management calibre (Oakley, 1990). This research focuses on the question that if men are better performer than women then what are the possible reason that pulls women in performing well in the organization. The social position and power of every individual comes from the economic organization (Galbraith et al., 2002). Women's power and social position is generally attached with her father and husband which means that there position is traditionally derived from their role in family, while for men they obtain their power through their position in the work setting (Kochan et al., 2003). Well this emerge to a fact that the women's primary role is focused on marriage and child bearing while their commitment towards paid employment is considered to be the secondary (Schein, 2001). This can be one of the reason where women lack their opportunity to perform well in an organization due to the pressure created in her family, the restriction and their obligation towards looking after their family.

Here the question arise that are the men in the society becoming the barrier for the women to perform well in organization or whether the women have perceived themselves to be secondary to men. My research will try to analyse these aspects and in addition, it will also try to answer the question based on women as a manager, since

barriers to women in management exist worldwide, according to the study of International labour organization there are more than 40% of the working women labour force out of which their share of management is very low. Now the question arises that is the managerial position always considered to be masculine (Schein, 1970). It was strongly believed in United States that "think manager-think male" (Schein, 1970). Which then became a psychological barrier for a women to become managers, it then happen to be that the male decision was preferred more than a female decision. Brenner (1989) suggested that existing stereotypes believe that women don't perform as well as their male counterparts in top management role which further acts as constraint for giving them a fair opportunity. It has further been studied with respect to upper-echelons theory stating that the firm's performance is highly dependent on top management (Marimuthu et al., 2009). Hoogendoorn (2013), suggested that field experiment conducted by him showed the results that gender diverse team was more impactful than the male or women dominated teams.

This was the situation of the United States which already comes in developed country, my research focus on those countries like India where now also male dominance is more. Haq (2013) suggested that women in countries like India are not given ample opportunities to grow in the organisation. It could be analysed that the various studies of gender diversity have been done under controlled environment and usually keeping a particular sector or organisation in the evaluation frame. It can be said that the world is dynamic in terms of culture and belief which means what can be applied to one part of the world doesn't necessarily applies to other. India has the world's largest youth population, which further enhances the need to study gender diversity in the Indian organisation, specifically with regards to India women.

The aspect of gender diversity has been studied by various perspectives and various authors have tried justifying their perception. Dwyer et al. (2001) suggested in his study that females work better under male bosses in comparison to female boss. The contradiction came stating that non-visible attributes are difficult to relate to performance on the basis of gender in comparison to visible attributes (Pelled, 1996). Studies have found out that the discrepancies in the salaries still exist between male and females wherein, the women are paid less in comparison to their male co-workers even in large MNC's (Roth, 2007). Milliken et al. (1996) suggested that minorities in the organisation tend to receive fewer opportunities for training and development and moving up the ladder because employers believe that women will quit the job for their personal reasons. Even after advancements women (minority) are given minimal access to power, higher level positions, promotions, income due to stereotyping beliefs which propose masculine to have better leadership and management calibre and discrimination against feminine gender (Oakley, 2000).

Researchers suggest that there is a need to hire more women for their marketing, creativity, problem-solving expertise by which an organisation can attain "value-in-diversity hypothesis" that diversity adds value to organization processes. But organisations have not been able to manage women well it is evident from the percentage of turnovers and absenteeism compared to men (Taylor et al., 1991). Women showed a higher probability of leaving their jobs and absenteeism at all ages and not just child bearing or child rearing for the reason that they had lower job satisfaction with lack of career growth and opportunities. The research has been done regarding women holding senior management position in corporate world in United States but very negligible

research has been done in the place where women get very less chance to work. This research will seek those points and will find the problem faced by those women in India who are facing barriers in workplace, for which the research has to be conducted at the grass root level. This research paper centres around the whether there is a connection between the workplace diversity and the business performance, reason for women deprived from equity and growth. Diversity though has claimed gains for workplace, there are also adverse implications faced through these workplace diversity by organisations. Having a diverse workforce is unchallenging what is challenging is to manage it. Therefore, it can be said that the impact of gender diversity is still understudied in this part of the world which needs immediate attention. This paper attempts to answer, are equal opportunities given to women at workplace and the effect of high degree of gender diversity in the team performance.

Objectives of the Research

- To assess the leadership traits on the basis of gender in the workplace.
- To study the gender discrepancies faced by women at workplace.
- To explore the impact of gender diversity on leadership traits of individuals in the workplace.

III. METHODOLOGY

The research has used exploratory analysis with the help of structured questionnaire to collect the primary data, where the respondents were employees from IT, Educational and Retail sectors belonging to various cities like Kolkata, Bengaluru, Thiruvananthapuram, Mumbai, as the major diversified gender groups exist in these sectors. The research has used random sampling technique to circulate the questionnaire and 224 valid responses were collected. The analysis was done by using Technique for Order of Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS) which is a multi-criterion decision making tool and to prioritize the variables that influences leadership, discrepancies and impact on the basis of gender.

IV. DATA INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

Technique for Order of Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS) was used to derive at the best possible decision based on the priorities of the different variables that are important for leadership, discrepancies and impact of individuals in the workplace.

Table 1: Reference Matrix

LEADERSHIP										
	QL1	QL2	QL3	QL4	QL5	QL6	QL7	QL8	QL9	QL10	QL11
Male	1.886	1.763	1.667	1.693	1.893	1.974	1.465	1.324	1.701	1.763	1.965
Female	1.927	1.600	1.681	1.609	1.900	1.864	1.436	1.327	1.773	1.755	1.891

DISCREPANCIES									
	QD1	QD2	QD3	QD4	QD5	QD6	QD7	QD8	QD9
Male	1.900	1.564	1.936	1.818	1.709	1.291	1.818	1.745	1.900
Female	1.895	1.614	1.947	1.763	1.711	1.254	1.746	1.877	1.860

IMPACT							
	QI1	QI2	QI3	QI4	QI5	QI6	QI7
Male	1.601	1.865	1.437	1.327	1.900	1.736	1.892
Female	1.613	1.868	1.434	1.321	1.897	1.736	1.896

The mean of the responses were computed on the basis of male and female and was tabulated in the above

reference table categorized into leadership, discrepancies and impact.

Table 2: Weighted Normalised Matrix

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
Weight	0.100719091	0.088831129	0.08844357	0.087217703	0.100230429	0.101355194	0.076631435	0.070043	0.091772	0.092913	0.101843856
Male	0.070443521	0.065782999	0.062255429	0.063218658	0.070775249	0.07369399	0.054717156	0.049477	0.063553	0.06586	0.073383111
Female	0.071986427	0.059695617	0.062821387	0.060086014	0.070971847	0.069584992	0.053650812	0.049578	0.066204	0.065538	0.070619331

In the above table the Weighted Normalised Value of Leadership was computed by using the weights, in which Maximum and Minimum of the Weighted Normal Value was defined. It was found that the maximum value was 0.073 and minimum value was 0.049 in case of males and similarly maximum value was 0.71 and minimum value was 0.04 in case of females, which reveals that males are more aware about operational and financial needs rather than biasness in actions, in the same manner females describes themselves as a good listener and they are least bothered about the biasness in actions to find the separation from the ideal solution. In the same manner the other objectives table were interpreted.

Table 3: Closeness Index

Gender/ Closeness Index	Leadership			Discrepancies			Impact			Rank
	S-	S+		S-	S+		S-	S+		
Male	0.053	0.038	58.16%	0.034	0.063	64.90%	0.066	0.049	57.32%	2
Female	0.164	0.036	82.02%	0.035	0.068	66%	0.067	0.049	57.89%	1

The above table interprets the gender wise performance of the respondents considering the criterions of leadership, Discrepancies and Impact which helped in finding the ratio of Closeness Index for all the three objectives. It was found that females rank higher than males while comparing the final performance. From the above table, it can be stated that in leadership, females have 82.02% and males have 58.16% which means that females are better leader than males and in case of discrepancies females are in 66% and males are in 64.90% which means that females face higher discrepancies at workplace. As we move towards the impact part, both genders have shown relatively similar value that is 57% which shows that there is no impact on performance due to gender diversity.

V. DISCUSSION

This study has suggested that women have shown better leadership traits when compared to their male counterpart. It was derived that females have described themselves to be better listeners when compared to the responses given by male respondents. It was interesting to find that the mean of the collected male responses for their readiness to work with a colleague with whom they just have a professional relationship was slightly higher than that of female responses which indicates that females are more prone to be comfortable working with people with whom they have personal connect.

Female respondents at large showed more belief that showing empathy is necessary in work life although there was a similarity seen in the genders when asked about do they show empathy at work. The study revealed that males are slightly more comfortable in giving negative feedback during performance reviews but it was also found that women participate in deliberations at meeting on their own without any prompting. Women respondents have shown

more keenness in knowing the needs and specific situations of their colleagues whereas male respondents have shown more interest than their counterparts to know the operational and financial needs of the organisation they are working with. In the layman's point of view if data is seen, one can be illusional that males are better leaders than female but after the data went through the relative analysis to lower the degree of biasness the closeness index of female respondents was higher than that of male respondents which proves that females have better leadership traits than that of their male colleagues.

In the responses collected from the respondents it was found that there is higher number of women who have a feeling that they have to work harder than their colleagues and at the same point they have had to sacrifice their personal happiness to achieve professional success. It could be seen that females are keener in having work-life balance but at the same time the number of respondents who feel that they can have a work-life balance is lower than that of male respondents. Males are more positive than females about reaching the top most echelon of their organisation at the same females have been more negative when replying to dealing with jealousy at workplace. The closeness index of female is higher than that of male respondents which proves that females have to deal more with the feeling of discrepancies and biasness at workplace.

It was interesting to find that the closeness index while studying the impact of female and male respondents was almost similar. Hence, we also need to look into the fact that females have shown better leadership traits when compared to males in the study but at the same time they have also faced higher level of discrepancies and biasness working in the organisation. Therefore, it can be deduced that if the discrepancies faced by the females are reduced and given to perform in such an environment, women potentially might be more impactful at workplace than men.

VI. CONCLUSION

Gender diversity has a great emphasis in order to understand a country's work culture and the opportunities provided to individuals irrespective of their gender. India as a country has been on a radical transformation from the past decades wherein, the Indian women today live in much more liberal environment than they used in the earlier days. The country has no doubt improved in respect to gender diversity and social reforms are also visible with women climbing the ladder of success facing less constraints. With women moving up the hierarchy it was also essential to judge their performance in managerial roles and the impact it was having on the organisation as a whole.

The extensive research was conducted with respect to studying the impact of gender diversity at the workplace. The study has reflected that women have better leadership traits as compared to their male colleagues which also emphasises the difference in leadership styles followed by the respective genders. It was also found that though the country has seen a drastic growth in the field of gender equality yet the female today working in the organisation face discrepancies and biasness to that of their male counterparts. They still have to work harder in order to prove their worth and yet they have a feeling that they might not reach the top most echelon of the organisation they are working for. While studying the impact of gender diverse teams, it was found that females are as impactful as males irrespective of the discrepancies faced by them. For the exponential growth of the country, it is important to consider inclusive growth of both the genders.

The scope of this research was restricted to three sectors namely Retail, Education and IT sectors. The self-

evaluation survey could have some bias responses which acts as the limitation of this study. This paper can further be studied by considering the sample of India's two-tier cities and non-managerial roles can also be taken into consideration for future research.

It is suggested to the corporate leaders to consider that given an environment, where the females do not have to face any discrepancies and biasness based on their gender, they might overcome as being more efficient and impactful leaders than males.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REFERENCES

[1]   Acker, J., 2006. Inequality regimes: Gender, class, and race in organizations. *Gender & society*, *20*(4), pp.441-464.
[2]   Brenner, O.C., Tomkiewicz, J. and Schein, V.E., 1989. The relationship between sex role stereotypes and requisite management characteristics revisited. *Academy of management journal*, *32*(3), pp.662-669.
[3]   Campbell, K. and Mínguez-Vera, A., 2008. Gender diversity in the boardroom and firm financial performance. *Journal of business ethics*, *83*(3), pp.435-451.
[4]   Dreher, G.F. and Cox Jr, T.H., 1996. Race, gender, and opportunity: a study of compensation attainment and the establishment of mentoring relationships. *Journal of applied psychology*, *81*(3), p.297.
[5]   Dwyer, S., Richard, O.C. and Chadwick, K., 2003. Gender diversity in management and firm performance: The influence of growth orientation and organizational culture. *Journal of Business Research*, *56*(12), pp.1009-1019.
[6]   Finkelstein, S. and Hambrick, D., 1996. Strategic leadership. *St. Paul: West Educational Publishing*.
[7]   Galbraith, M.W. and James, W.B., 2002. Implications of social role research for community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, *26*(6), pp.521-533.
[8]   Hambrick, D.C. and Mason, P.A., 1984. Upper echelons: The organization as a reflection of its top managers. *Academy of management review*, *9*(2), pp.193-206.
[9]   Haq, R., 2013. Intersectionality of gender and other forms of identity: Dilemmas and challenges facing women in India. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, *28*(3), pp.171-184.
[10]   Herring, C., 2009. Does diversity pay? Race, gender, and the business case for diversity. *American Sociological Review*, *74*(2), pp.208-224.
[11]   Hollenbeck, J.R., Ilgen, D.R. and Sego, D.J., 1994. Repeated measures regression and mediational tests: Enhancing the power of leadership research. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *5*(1), pp.3-23.
[12]   Hoogendoorn, S., Oosterbeek, H. and Van Praag, M., 2013. The impact of gender diversity on the performance of business teams: Evidence from a field experiment. *Management Science*, *59*(7), pp.1514-1528.
[13]   Huse, M. and Grethe Solberg, A., 2006. Gender-related boardroom dynamics: How Scandinavian women make and can make contributions on corporate boards. *Women in management review*, *21*(2), pp.113-130.
[14]   Igbaria, M. and Baroudi, J.J., 1995. The impact of job performance evaluations on career advancement prospects: An examination of gender differences in the IS workplace. *Mis Quarterly*, pp.107-123.
[15]   Kochan, T., Bezrukova, K., Ely, R., Jackson, S., Joshi, A., Jehn, K., Leonard, J., Levine, D. and Thomas, D., 2003. The effects of diversity on business performance: Report of the diversity research network. *Human Resource Management: Published in Cooperation with the School of Business Administration, The University of Michigan and in alliance with the Society of Human Resources Management*, *42*(1), pp.3-21.

[16]   Marimuthu, M. and Kolandaisamy, I., 2009. Ethnic and gender diversity in boards of directors and their relevance to financial performance of Malaysian companies. *Journal of Sustainable Development*, *2*(3), p.139.

[17]   Milliken, F.J. and Martins, L.L., 1996. Searching for common threads: Understanding the multiple effects of diversity in organizational groups. *Academy of management review*, *21*(2), pp.402-433.

[18]   Oakley, J.G., 2000. Gender-based barriers to senior management positions: Understanding the scarcity of female CEOs. *Journal of business ethics*, *27*(4), pp.321-334.

[19]   Pelled, L.H., 1996. Demographic diversity, conflict, and work group outcomes: An intervening process theory. *Organization science*, *7*(6), pp.615-631.

[20]   Roth, L.M., 2007. Women on Wall Street: Despite diversity measures, Wall Street remains vulnerable to sex discrimination charges. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, *21*(1), pp.24-35.

[21]   Schein, V.E., 2001. A global look at psychological barriers to women's progress in management. *Journal of Social issues*, *57*(4), pp.675-688.