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Women Administrators: Challenges and Achievements in Higher Education

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Abstract

Administration is the performance of the executive functions of the state and it differs from legislature and judiciary. It is one of the most important instruments available to the Government to achieve the goals of the nation. Administration which originated with the formation of organized societies is generally dominated by men folk. Women, even in the matriarchal societies could hardly play a dominant role in it. Women in educational administration in India have also been a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society as educated women can play a very important role in the development of the country. Education is milestone of women administration because it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So that we can't neglect the importance of education in reference to women administration India is poised to becoming superpower, a developed country by 2020.

Keywords: *Women, leadership, higher education, challenges, Achievement.*

1. Introduction

Women in educational administration in India have also been a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society as educated women can play a very important role in the development of the country. Education is milestone of women administration because it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So that we can't neglect the importance of education in reference to women administration India is poised to becoming superpower, a developed country by 2020. The growth of women's education in rural areas is very slow. This obviously means that still large womenfolk of our country are illiterate, the weak, backward and exploited." Education of women is the most powerful tool of change of position in the society. Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions as a means of improving their status within the family

2. The Redefined View of Higher Education

Traditional concepts acknowledge Higher Education as an instrument of personal development, by expanding an individual's intellectual horizons, interests and potential for empowerment and a better quality of life. It has also been taken to be a vehicle of social engineering that conform people to social values. Theodore Schultz and Mary Backer emphasized the role of Higher Education in the transformation of human beings to human capital. With the unveiling of economic reform policies, the role of Higher Education is being reinterpreted and redefined. Market-promoting policies are posing a challenge to Higher Education, and are being considered as both a driving force of economic development and the focal point of learning in a society.

3. Difference between Gender and leadership

Women's leadership styles are distinct from men's, and that they are likely to use more collaborative, nurturing, and egalitarian strategies that emphasize communication. Leadership styles are not fixed behaviors but encompass a range of behaviors that have a particular meaning or that serve a particular function. Depending on the situation, leaders vary their behaviors within the boundaries of their style. The fixed behavior for women, others contend that actions are flexible and tend to mold to the circumstances rather than a

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gendered norm. It is suggest that gendered leadership norms are too simplistic and that women leaders must be willing to shift into multidimensional gender and traverse conventional borders. It may be that women are able to pull from both the feminine and masculine to ensure their success and authenticity.

4. Positive attributes of women in administration

The examination of women in administration has fostered further appreciation and understanding of the positive attributes of women as they have been evolving. "Although revealing relatively small differences, findings indicate an advantage for women in higher position. Women, more than men, appear to lead in styles that recommend them for leadership. women bring specific and positive values to the work place: These values include an attention to process instead of a focus on the bottom line; a willingness to look at how an action will affect other people instead of simply asking, "What's in it for me?"; a concern for the wider needs of the community; a disposition to draw on personal, private sphere experience when dealing in the public realm; an appreciation of diversity; an outsider's impatience with rituals and symbols of status that divide people who work together and so reinforce hierarchies.

5. Women Empowerment

Gender discrimination has been a major obstacle in granting equal opportunity for women in Higher Education. It has been identified as a crucial category and deserves attention in the education-equality paradigm. Today, women's education has become an issue of debate within which it is now necessary to shift the focus from women's intellectual development to women's autonomy in decision-making, freedom of expression and control over resources. Empowerment is the manifestation of a redistribution of power that challenges patriarchal ideology, transforming the institutions that reinforce or perpetuate gender discrimination. The parameters of empowerment have been identified as

- Developing ability for critical thinking;
- Fostering decision-making and action through collective processes;
- Ensuring equal participation in developmental processes;
- Enhancing self-esteem and self-confidence in women. The time has arrived to realize the relevance, in a rapidly developing country like India, of education for leadership-building, especially for women –something which can be achieved only through Higher Education.

6. Decision-making and Conflict

Decision-making is a critical role of the educational administrator. It is largely a cognitive task concerned with achieving a "best" decision or solution for a given situation. Decision-making has been defined as the reduction of informational uncertainty or as efforts to analyze a task, assess evaluation criteria, and identify the positive and negative qualities of alternative choices. During the decision-making process, conflict can occur when differing perspectives, or orientations to the problem, make a single solution unlikely or impossible. Conflict is an inevitable and normal event of organizational life. The conflicts typically arise over differing values, scarce resources, rewards, status, and power.

7. Barriers to Participate in Higher Education Administration

In recent years, the number of women pursuing high-ranking positions within organizations has increased. Although women have advanced anthem workplace, there is still a need for gender equity in the workplace. The upward mobility for women still remains below and well behind men. There is also evidence that women face different barriers depending upon their level in the organization. It is often a struggle for women seeking the top jobs, due to many of the high-ranking jobs being dominated by men. Therefore, women really need someone (i.e., mentor) who can coach them and help pull them up through the ranks. Even after women have climbed the career ladder, oftentimes they still face more barriers than their male colleagues. In order for women to advance and to be seen as valuable assets to the organizations, they have to be more intelligent, stronger, and out-shine than the men within their organization.

8 Methodology

8.1 Objectives

- To study the portrayal women in education administration.
- To analyze the gender centric issues on women in education administration.
- To know the opportunities and challenges of women in higher educational administration
- To understand the learned educational administrative qualities of Women.
- To suggest an appropriate strategy to exalt women's participation in educational administration

8.2 Statement of Problem

Administration is the performance of the executive functions of the state and it differs from legislature and judiciary. It is one of the most important instruments available to the Government to achieve the goals of the nation. Administration originated with the formation of organized societies which are generally dominated by men folk. Women, even in the matriarchal societies could hardly play a dominant role in it. But that does not mean that women had no interest in this field; the fact is that organized society being a patriarchal one, women's participation in that sphere was simply not favored. Still then, there are instances of intelligent and courageous women, who formally took the reins of government to their own hands or acted as informal advisors.

8.3 Universe of Study

Tamil Nadu is the study universe for the research in which the role of women in higher educational administration is focused for the study.

8.4 Sample

In the study, purposive sampling method is used. There were 100 samples which includes Heads of the Departments, Dean, Programme Coordinators, Principal, Registrar, Vice-Chancellor and so on, have been identified from various Colleges and Universities in Tamil Nadu for the study, from where the primary data is collected. The respondents were purposefully selected on the basis of fulfillment of objectives. Data collected through the interview schedules have been tabulated and classified according to the purpose of the research

8.5 Limitations of the Study

The data collection was confined to Tamil Nadu state of India since constraints were faced during data collection. The replication of the study at different regions of India would enable better generalizability of the findings of the study.

The sample for the present study comprised of 100 women administrators who are holding various positions in higher education. Due to time constrain, this sample is only a very small proportion of the entire population of Tamil Nadu. Therefore, research studies with much larger sample size would be required to ensure appropriate generalization of the findings of the study.

The present study has relied largely on quantitative methodology of data collection (though qualitative methodology was used to a limited extent) and is therefore restrictive. Therefore, more of qualitative methodology of data collection should be undertaken in future to provide wider perspective to the present study.

9. Major Findings of the Research

- ✓ Among them 66% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 51 – 60
- ✓ It is revealed that 42% of the respondents are having between 21 -30 year of experience in educational administration
- ✓ Majority of 88% of the respondents said that they are not receiving any additional pay for their administrative position
- ✓ Regarding 44% of the respondents said that they have not been discriminated to attain the administrative position in the educational institution
- ✓ Majority (88%) of the respondents agreed that capacity building in needed for an administrator
- ✓ Majority (75%) of the respondents agreed that they have utilized the administrative opportunities offered by the institution
- ✓ Half of the respondents agreed that they are faced obstacles in their career advancement
- ✓ More than half (58%) of the respondents said that the problem solving skill is very important in educational administration.
- ✓ Majority (74%) of the respondents felt that stress Management skill is very important in administrative position
- ✓ Majority (70%) of the respondents said that Team building skill is very important in academic administration
- ✓ Regarding (58%) of the respondents said that job challenges are faced by women in administrative position
- ✓ Among them 38% of the respondents strongly agreed that the promoting gender equity is one of the challenge in their current job situation
- ✓ It is found that 42% of the respondents strongly agreed that balancing family & career is one of the main challenge in the administrative position
- ✓ Inferred that 46% of the respondents strongly agreed that the managing financial constraints is the one of the main challenge in educational administrative position
- ✓ Noted that 36% of the respondents agreed that understanding and fostering creativity are the main challenges in educational administrative position
- ✓ Majority (64%) of the respondents said that the innovative strategies are very important in the job

challenge in their administrative position

- ✓ Regarding half of the respondents said that balancing personal & professional activity is important in their academic administration.
- ✓ Majority (74%) of the respondents said that Building strong network with other heads/chairs is very important in academic administration
- ✓ Majority (82%) of the respondents said that maintaining cordial relationship with others is very important in educational administration
- ✓ Majority (60%) of the respondents said that the mobilizing external funds is very important in educational administration
- ✓ Majority (72%) of the respondents said that decision making role is very important in their administrative position
- ✓ The majority 54% of the respondents said that good planning and multitasking is important perception in administrative role.
- ✓ It is noted that majority (68%) of the respondents said that managing the departmental budget and resources is very important in administrative position
- ✓ It is revealed that majority (94%) of the respondents said that good teaching capability is very important task in educational administration
- ✓ Most (90%) of the respondents said that promoting staff development is one of the very important task in administrative position
- ✓ 62% of the respondents said that network with external groups is very important task in higher educational administration
- ✓ 68% of the respondents said that lack of support from family to become an administrator.
- ✓ All the respondents agreed that the leadership qualities are very important in the educational administrative position.
- ✓ Majority (86%) of the respondents agreed that the leadership style is common for both gender
- ✓ Majority (80%) of the respondents said that intellectual development qualities is very important in administrative position
- ✓ 62% of the respondents said that equal opportunity and employment equity is very important in educational administration
- ✓ Majority (78%) of the respondents said that providing academic development Programme is very important in educational administrative position
- ✓ 66% of the respondents said that social justice, equity and cooperation is very important quality in educational administration

10. Conclusion

Higher education in India is expected to become a part of global education with new directions, challenges and aspirations. Women could rise to administrative position in tertiary education only if they enter higher education qualifying themselves with the required academic credentials and experience. Indian women did not have access to higher education in the pre-independent India. After independence, the strength of women candidates in colleges and Universities and the number of women's Colleges also have increased considerably. But the gender discrimination was obvious in advocating different curriculum for girls and boys. Girls were supposed to be fit for home-making and the

early Educational Commissions recommended domestic education for women. The number of women administrators dwindles in the rising hierarchy of administration. Yet women are rising to management cadre depends basically on their enrolment in higher education. A 'career success' either for women or men should be redefined, integrating heightened gender awareness, a deeper sense of academic and social values and responsibilities, and a rewarding responsiveness from the educational system.

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