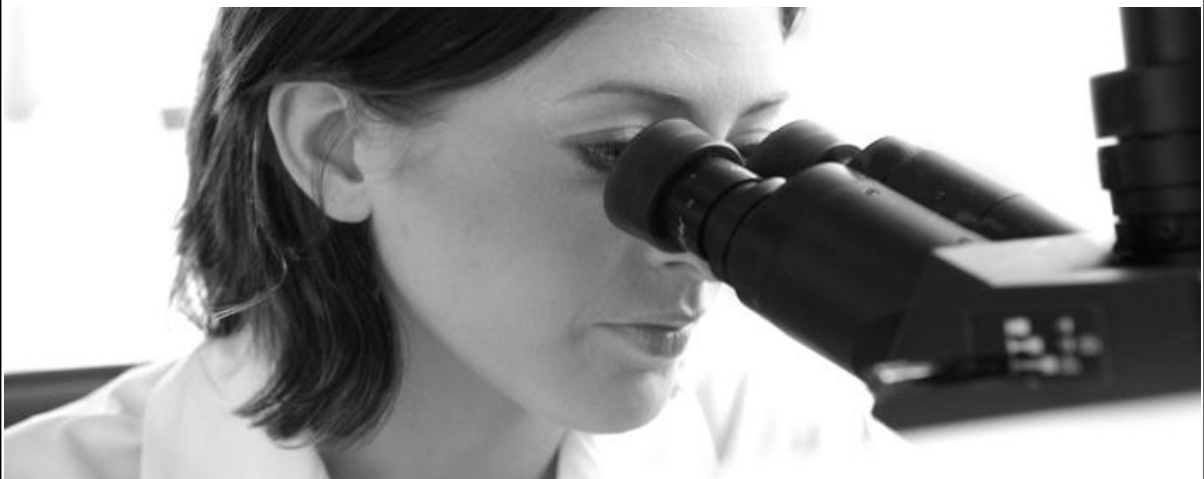


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GENDER ISSUES IN LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

In the field of leadership, the gender difference and style of leadership has been studied at the most since last few decades. The issues like is there any difference in the way men and women lead at work place, is this different art of leading is because of gender difference, and so on... Few of such issues provoke the intention of researcher to try to find out why it is so, and what best can be done to inculcate effective leadership in this competitive scenario. The main purpose of this conceptual paper is to give an overview of gender differences in leadership style at work place and also to discuss the extensive literature based on the previous research studies. First will enlighten the way people treat women leader at work place and the relation between gender role and leader role. The researcher will also discuss about historical perspective that why and how the organizational view has changed over the past century. The emergence of the concept of psychological androgynous leader will be discussed later on. The author will also try to discuss about developing effective leadership, androgynous leaders in the organizations and implication of androgyny leaders' behavior. In order to give a better insight of the picture, this conceptual paper is the outcome of in-depth review of extensive research studies based on gender issues and leadership.

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INTRODUCTION

Conceptual Background

In the field of leadership, a major priority is being given to the study between the gender difference and the style of leadership. The issues like difference in the way men and women lead at work place, skill and art being used by men and women are focused and so on..... Few of such issues incite the aim of researcher to try to find out why it is so, and what are the best ways to inculcate effective leadership to sustain in competitive scenario? Even though, it can be observed there is an increase the number of women workforce but still they do not acquire the top administrative position as compare to men. The research studies which are related to gender difference have focused upon the reasons and causes of women's proportional lack of success in reaching top positions and could in one way or another it can be correlated to the differences in the style of leadership.

A research done by the Department of Labor (Rivers, 1991) cited that the glass ceiling effect is a real one and not just a figment of feminist imagination. Therefore it was made clear that to climb up the organizational ladder is relatively tougher for women in proportionate to men. But the question arises is this differentiation of the way women leads at work place impeded women's career progress? Even the presence of a so-called "glass ceiling" have made women self-conscious form

making progress to the top level of organizational structure at the work place.

It has become an important concern for organizations to build up various effective leadership styles among their workforce. Morrison & Von Glinow (1990) observed that women are becoming proportionately larger part of the human resource. It has been seen that women brings diversity to leadership, but we can't deny that there is also great diversity among women. Schein (1989) reported that, though research shows there are differences between males and females, but these variations are comparatively fewer among them as commonly assumed, and also the differences within each sex are more than the differences between the sexes.

After doing extensive literature review associated to gender issues and leadership it creates more and more confusion in the mind of reader. Has also found the results of these researches are contradictory to each other. To develop a basic concept one should find out that is there really a difference between the style of leadership among men and women? It can be concluded that some researchers strongly support the argument whereas others were not in favor of this.

Masculinity and Femininity

Traditionally, gender roles were seen as being opposite each other: a person was seen to be either high on masculinity or

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high on femininity (Spence, Janet T. 1984). A man should have higher masculinity and lower the part of femininity. The issue of physical and psychological health among male and female will also be based on the best fit of respective sex type. The traditional concepts of health and gender roles have an impact on societal ideals. But the feminist movement in current state has led the society to re-think of gender roles. Masculinity and femininity are no longer on the opposite of a single continuum. The new view of gender roles assumed that a person could be low on both masculinity and femininity (Morawski, J. G. 1985), or high or medium on both.

Androgyny

It's a Greek word the combination of words *Andros* (man) and *gynaika* (woman). Androgyny meant the unification of masculine and feminine physiognomies within a one person. This notion offers an opportunity for man and woman to turn out to effective leaders by retaining and expanding their conceptions of themselves as human beings.

The conception of Androgyny is not emerged in western even Aryans instigated the relation between the male and female somewhere around 1500BC in the *Rigveda* (Goswami Tulsi, Dwivedi Harsh 2010). There was a sensitive and lyrical outset of desire among male and female articulated by the fascinating image of Lord *Ardhnarishwara*. The sculpture of *Ardhnarishwara* conceptualized this manifestation of supreme divinity or the absolute. It symbolizes harmony between masculine and feminine appearances that make up a single human being. The psychological consciousness of human being can be compared with *Ardhnarishwara* conveying a universal reality of philosophical facet.

Procedure

The proposed research paper is basically a conceptual paper based on extensive review of literature. Descriptive research will be used to present the issues related to gender based leadership.

Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine the gender issues in leadership. The objectives may be stated as follow-

1. To examine the gender based issues in leadership
2. To analyze some strategies to build effective leadership.
3. To consider the emergence of psychological androgyny concept in the field of leadership.

Analysis and Findings

Gender issues in Leadership

Claes (1999) has introduced new values, sometimes known as feminine values, have appeared in organizations. These are not like traditional or typical masculine values such as competitive and authoritative. Which are based on consensual relations and stimulate a distinct approach to communications, supervision,

leadership, direction, negotiations, organizational control and management. Such changes act as a reformation of the values which can be seen as a key to good performance in organization.

Most of the contemporary thinkers conceptualized a feminine style of leadership that is different from its male counterpart. Some theorists (Helgesen, 1990) suggest that certain feminine characteristics give the woman leader an advantage to progress. Characteristics described as essentially feminine are, among others, heightened communication skills (especially the ability to be a good listener and to be empathetic); advanced intermediary skills (for negotiation and conflict resolution); well-developed interpersonal skills and a soft approach to handling people (Stanford et al., 1995).

Hare et al., (1997) claims a variety of work now concurs with the essence of this direction: "feminine characteristics" are more appropriate for "transformational" leadership and "masculine characteristics" more appropriate for transactional leadership.

Kabacoff (1998) concluded that women are more inclined towards empathy and communication than men. Women are well behaved and are also more highly rated on people skills. However, women are not seen as more sociable or more cooperative in their leadership styles. Contrary to expectations, women always tend to score high on a leadership scale measuring an orientation towards production and the attainment of results. Men, tend to score higher on scales assessing an orientation towards strategic planning and organizational vision. It resulted that women are people concerned leader and men are business concerned leaders.

In general, bosses see men and women as equally effective, while peer and direct assessment rate shows women are slightly higher than men (Claes, 1999; Kabacoff, 1998). These findings are truly encouraging on three levels. It was believed that women can put up a more inclusive and rewarding organization with the aspiration of employees to prove themselves best. At times female employees play multiple roles and make proper balance in their professional as well as personal life.

Kirchmeyer (1998) stated that masculinity has a significant positive effect on women's perceptions of success than on men's. These findings concluded that leadership style/ use of power is more of a choice based on an analysis of the situation than an inherent gender predisposition and that leadership style differences, if any, may blur as gender mixed management teams become more common in the workplace" (Langford et al., 1998).

An organization should focused on the on leaders' role at work place instead of getting influence by gender role on leaders' behavior because leaders' are always expected to perform their legitimate authority and must be justifiable which is prescribed by the management. This idea that the influence of gender roles can be diminished by other roles was foreshadowed by experimental demonstrations of the lessening of many gender-stereotypic sex differences in laboratory settings when participants received information that competed with gender-

based expectations (Eagly *et al.*, 2000; Wagner & Berger, 1997).

Moskowitz, Suh, and Desaulniers (1994) examined and enlightened the simultaneous influence of gender roles and organizational roles. A genetic behavior was related to the relative status of the interaction partners, with participants behaving most identically with a subordinate and least identically with a boss. However, communal behavior was influenced by the sex of participants, regardless of their status, with women behaving more communally than men, especially in interactions with other women.

Eagly *et al.* (2000) argued that there is reason behind the impact of gender roles on organizational behavior occurs, as people not only react to leaders in terms of gendered expectancies but the leaders respond too. Moreover, most have internalized their gender role to the greater extent (Cross & Madson, 1997; Deaux & Major, 1987; Gabriel & Gardner, 1999; Wood, Christensen, Hebl, & Rothgerber, 1997).

It is important to understand the similarities of the behavior as leaders of men and women. The attitude and behavior of leaders can be friendlier or more formal all depends on the situation. Sometimes they show little or more concern regarding future goals, gives less or more authority to subordinates in decision making, they provide little or more autonomy to subordinates to perform their job and so on. The behavior of leader while performing these tasks may vary as per individual. Some leaders think out of the box and behave in more informal manner at work place which facilitates them to perform as transformation leader. It has been observed that these flexible and optional aspects of leadership may vary between women and men as there are not surrounded by the norms of leaders' role and therefore are more vulnerable to influence from gender-specific norms.

Psychologist Sandra Bem (1974) classified gender roles by identifying characteristics that are more valued for one sex or the other in American society. According to Bem, "masculinity has been associated with an instrumental orientation, a cognitive focus on 'getting the job done'; and femininity has been associated with an expressive orientation, an affective concern for the welfare of others". Eagly (1987) given the Gender-role theory which explains that people should develop gender-role prospect for themselves and others based on their beliefs about which should be socially acceptable behavior for men and women (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly & Karau, 1991; Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992). Given the "getting the job done" perspective of masculine gender-typed individuals, it is not surprising that studies of the effects of gender on leadership emergence consistently have found that masculine individuals tend to be identified as emergent leaders more often than feminine individuals (Goktepe & Schneier, 1989; Kent & Moss, 1994; Kolb, 1997; Moss & Kent, 1996; Powell & Butterfield, 1979).

Although a weak relationship can be established between femininity and the perception of leadership, Ross and Offermann (1997) found feminine characteristics are positively connected with transformational leadership. Transformational

leaders can create drastic changes in organizations by engaging in behaviors that convey charisma, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985). This gives a basic concept on which a relation of feminine traits may be established with the perception of leadership As discussed earlier, Bem (1974) while studying on masculine and feminine gender roles introduced the concept of the androgynous personality as endorsing high levels of both masculine and feminine behaviors and characteristics. Unlike sex-typed individuals, androgynous individuals, regardless of sex, displayed both "masculine" independence and "feminine" playfulness in different sex-typed contexts (Bem, 1975).

Bem asserted that androgynous individuals are able to show suppleness in their behavior and easily adapt to environment that demands behavior which is stereotypically more appropriate for one sex or the other by displaying behaviors that are masculine, instrumental, and assertive as well as those that are feminine, expressive, and yielding.

There are rare empirical research available which analyzed the relationship of psychological androgyny and leadership which supported the relationship between these two. Kent and Moss (1994) found that androgynous and masculine participants were mostly expected to emerge as the leader in gender-neutral task situations. Earlier the leaderless groups were allowed for only one leader, Moss and Kent (1996) reported that masculine personality types emerged most often, but when multiple emergent leaders were allowed, both masculine and androgynous group members emerged.

Finally, Kolb (1997) imitated these findings by conducting a survey in which a classroom was set with students who worked in groups on gender-neutral projects over a 2-month period, suggesting there is a need of further investigation to establish the linkage between psychological androgyny and leadership as emergence is warranted.

Developing effective Leadership

Organizations are required to provide an environment for developing effective leadership. There should be an equal chance to perform as leader for both male and female having identical responsibilities. Evidence from previous researches suggest few experiments such as: when woman get first chance to hold a particular leader position should antagonize gender based bigotries against leaders, broadcast the qualifications of individuals assigned to leader positions, appraise the leaders on the basis of task accomplishment, group cohesiveness, and development of subordinates for future roles, develop the capabilities of all individuals to play leader roles, confront beliefs that you do not have what it takes to be a great leader and prove them wrong, create conditions that give leaders of both sexes equal chances to succeed, take advantage of being seen as a symbol of change etc.

The objective of the organizations can only be achieved when it recognize the partialities against women as leaders must be antagonized. Such partialities occur in masculinized work culture where the majority of leaders and followers are men and the leader role is associated with the male gender role. This

kind of work culture is always tipped in favor of male gender role. Women should be given equal chance in highly masculinized work environment by considering and providing different ways in which leaders are evaluated. When leaders in masculinized work culture are evaluated on the basis of transformational leadership, female leaders, who rank higher in individualized consideration than male leaders, have more of an opportunity to be seen as effective. For utilizing this opportunity they must implement the different programs to encourage subordinate development and provide platform to subordinates to prove their leadership.

There is a need for an organization to think further more to increase the legitimacy of female leaders at workplace. The management should give more weight on the popularity of skill set, achievements and expertise of leaders for the selection of team members, in case of any challenging assignment etc. Also the management should maintain transparency while disseminating such information and should even make sure that all perspective leaders is confronted with this system, and not just women, to avoid drawing attention to female leaders as a group. The potential for stereotyping of gender based leadership can be reduced to some extent by this exercise.

It has been observed that male leaders have shares more societal status than women; they are likely to be granted higher status in a feminized work setting than female leaders are granted in a masculinized work setting.

However, male leaders may still be subjected to gender attitudes. Attitudes toward men range from antagonism to compassion, whereas with women scoring higher in hostility toward men and lower in benevolence toward men. The act of target gender bias should be equal for both male and female leaders.

It does matter the kind of work culture the organization has i.e. masculine oriented or feminine oriented, important is to be ready to act when their members embrace stereotypical views or display partialities toward members of one gender as leaders. Although beliefs and attitudes are difficult to change, organizations must take steps to counteract problematic beliefs and attitudes. It is recommended to implement the diversity training programs to create awareness among individuals of the ways in which biases related to gender which can affect their decisions, and to teach them how to move beyond their own biases. It is also advised that organizations should also promote employees to engage in the most effective kinds of behavior, no matter whatever their beliefs or attitudes may be. Irrespective of their stereotyped, leaders of both genders have to be prepared to prove their talent, skills and capabilities as leaders to disprove anyone who thinks otherwise.

Women who have struggled in their personal life and have created their own image in the world are seen as powerful symbols of changing organizational realities. Organizations should create an environment where the leaders of both genders are given equal opportunity to succeed by developing and utilizing their talent and capabilities of leader role. The main aim of any leadership training programs should not to teach men how to behave more like women, nor is it to teach women

how to behave more like men, but should make them understand and respect for those androgyny traits which can help them to be effective leader. No matter what the linkage between gender and leadership may be, the goal should be to enhance the likelihood that all people, women and men, will be effective in leader roles.

The Psychological Androgynous Leader

Androgyny can be defined as the combination of masculine and feminine psychological traits. The androgynous leader blends the characteristics typically associated with masculine- such as dominance, assertiveness, hostile, analytical, logical, dominant, and forceful and competitiveness-with those typically linked with feminine-such as cooperativeness, affectionate, cheerful, compassionate, and gullible and a concern for people. The concept of androgynous manager is considered as attractive one in the organizations. Though, the concept of androgynous leaders is not the answer of every aspect of leadership, indeed, has many pitfalls. To promote androgyny style of leadership as the “panacea” few of the researcher have oversimplifies things. The most basic thing we can conclude after analyzing the several research studies on leadership is only one is that the trait theory is not a particularly useful one.

The art of doing work should be developed in a more efficient and effective way so that organization cans sustain in a competitive scenario. As such there is not a single or perfect way to lead or no particular set of right “traits” even if they are androgynous.

Androgyny leadership style is considered as one of the effective style as it sets a perfect combination of the best attributes of male and female leaders but at the same time it also perpetuates some of the same stereotypes that have hindered the development of leaders of both genders. Schein (1989) condemns the entire idea of an androgynous leadership style as a “foolhardy and dangerous one.”The androgynous orientation builds a managerial access bridge for women on a shaky foundation of sand. We need to move beyond viewing any one style as the ideal and to strive to create organizational environments that will be receptive to many diverse types of leadership styles. Eagly and Chin (2010) posit that women leaders sometimes try to find a middle ground by adopting a more androgynous approach: “Negotiating the masculine and feminine apparently tends to push women leaders towards a relatively androgynous style of leadership that incorporates culturally masculine and feminine elements”.

This idea is reiterated by [Appelbaum et al \(2000\)](#) who state that “the emergence of androgynous leaders suggest that the possession of feminine characteristics does not decrease an individual’s chances of emerging as a leader as long as the individual also possesses masculine characteristics”. Although either sex can adopt the androgynous style, it is generally more useful for women because men are not judged as harshly for their leadership style. According to Kark, Waismel-Manor & Boas (2012) both women and men can be more effective when they have the ability to combine agentic and communal behaviors in a flexible way. However, ‘androgyny’ may be more important for women managers, since men may get away

with a 'non-androgynous' style and are not likely to pay such a high penalty as women when they do not display an 'androgynous' style."

Park (1997) suggested that an "integration rather than a polarization becomes necessary for [male and female] leaders and organizations...that is, an androgynous leadership style can be the most appropriate for achieving high performance in many organizations." While investigating these phenomena within the corporate sector, the results were moderately similar: despite of the underrepresentation of women in top leadership positions, researcher constantly finds a positive correlation between the representation of women in leadership positions and business performance measures such as market share and return on investment (Tully, 2007). Though relationship does not always entail causation, there are strong reasons to believe that diversity in leadership has tangible payoffs (Tully, 2007).

Various behavioural and psychological researchers have examined leadership as it applies to organizational management, but only few have researched about androgynous leadership within the workplace. It was found that successful leaders are expected to have an androgynous balance of traits that includes gregariousness, positive initiative and assertion, social skills, intelligence, conscientiousness, integrity, trustworthiness, and the ability to persuade, inspire, and motivate others (Tully, 2007), which means that male and female traits are equally important. Paris and Decker (2012) also researched the perceptions of male business leaders and stereotypical assumptions held by those leaders. Kyriakidou (2011) found that studying gender, management and leadership in organizations is significant, as "we do not really leave gender at the door when entering our organizational work lives; rather, we "do" gender in specific ways, some reflexive but most perhaps not."

Implications of Psychological Androgynous Leadership

Alice G Sargent, the author of *Androgynous manager* (1983) has given reasons to focus on emergent concept of androgyny such as the scenario has entered in knowledge economy, there is a shift from hierarchical, authority-oriented managerial form to more participative structure, diversity of workforce, preference for customer and employees and so on..

After going through in-depth review of various research studies it has been established that, men have taken the androgynous blend and instead split feelings and behaviors into those that are masculine, acceptable, effective, and strong and those that, for men, are feminine, unacceptable, ineffective, and weak. Organization which embraces such values in their workplace, the surfacing of a tender feeling can be immensely threatening. And the consequences of which, still many men leaders feel embarrassed as they become aware of the need to be more collaborative, to be less competitive, and to seek greater openness instead of coolness i.e. adaptation of strong feminine traits and weaken the masculine traits which are causing poor performance of subordinates.

Therefore, men leaders in these situations are required more effective guidance and support for coming out of the role to

which they have become habituated. When these leaders experience this exercise, the impact of androgynous behavior can be observed in their family as well as in their social life. As men leaders become more effective androgynous leaders and transformational at work there may be significant improvement in overall performance and spill-over effects at home may also be noticed. Man who wants to exercise androgyny leadership style they may experiment in some ways like- in spite of objectivity and rationality focus should be on personalize experience, evidence of how and why their lives are men's lives, use of empathy, increasing awareness of behavior based on physical and political power, express feelings of love-fear-anger-pain-joy-loneliness- dependency, accepting failure in work as a person instead of responding as a man, understand how men value women as validators of masculinity, value an identity that is not so totally defined by work.

It also has been concluded that most organizations neither reward womanly nor androgynous behavior. Work culture is embraced only when men and women acquire effective leadership traits from each other, and this is what androgyny implies where organizations top most priority is to know what their expectations from men and women leaders are. Women typically need to work toward: tempering expression of their feelings with appropriate use of logic, rationality, and analysis; developing skills in direct task accomplishment; promoting themselves within an organization by becoming more visible and entrepreneurial; and making their needs and opinions clearly known without backing down in the face of possible disagreement.

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

A lot of research has been done in the field of leadership style and gender differences but still it is leaving a platform with full of ambiguity and paradox. And this provides an opportunity for researcher for further researches based on leadership and gender issues. Perhaps with the passage of time there will be more critical researches through which we may get probably some definitive answers to the question of whether there are really any natural differences in the leadership styles of males and females. Till now we can only cite some differences based on the style of leadership of men and women at work place but that may not be innate but may be due to the result of environmental issues or different socializing of both gender.

Douglas McGregor (1967), long an advocate for the human element in organizations, wrote: The model of the successful manager in our culture is a masculine one. The good manager is aggressive, competitive, firm, just. He is not feminine, he is not soft or yielding or dependent or intuitive in the womanly sense. The very expression of emotion is widely viewed as a feminine weakness that would interfere with effective business processes. Yet the fact is that all of these emotions are part of the human nature of men and women alike. Cultural forces have shaped not their existence but their acceptability; they are repressed, **but this does not render them inactive**. They continue to influence attitudes, opinions, and decisions.

Men have to play essential role in this restructuring of the workplace. Qualities such as decisiveness, assertiveness, and

risk taking that have been considered masculine will be valuable in creating the workplace of the future (Eisler, 1991). Men and women shares their ideas and views and teach each other about leadership and, as they learn from one another, it benefits the organization by bringing strengthened leadership abilities to their organizations (Nelton, 1991). It has been also observed that by allowing women a greater role in leadership will provide a win-win situation for both genders.

Burns (1978) writes that when women are accepted as leaders “men will change their own leadership styles”. This phrase seems to be very interesting and useful as well as forms some basic personal perceptions about the importance of need for organizations to change the way of thinking about gender differences in leadership styles. Even generally we may see in the organizations that when women are appointed on top positions or accepted as leaders, some of the men leaders try to change their way of leading because this may be assumed as optimal alternate at that time. By maintaining rigid gender role in a traditional social pattern, stereotypes have created lot many issues not only in front of women but for men as well.

There is an utmost need for all of us that people should realize and recognize their widely divergent abilities and advantages, and should be treated as individuals/ human being rather than treating them as simply members of one gender or the other. Most of the time, the issues and problems which are faced by women at work place have also confronted men; these are human problems not associated with the women gender only. If organizations provide a good organizational culture and climate where both men and women equally treated on the basis of individual merit, expertise and accomplishment then they will be more productive and cooperative for everyone and the organization will function more effectively and efficiently to gain the competitive advantage.

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