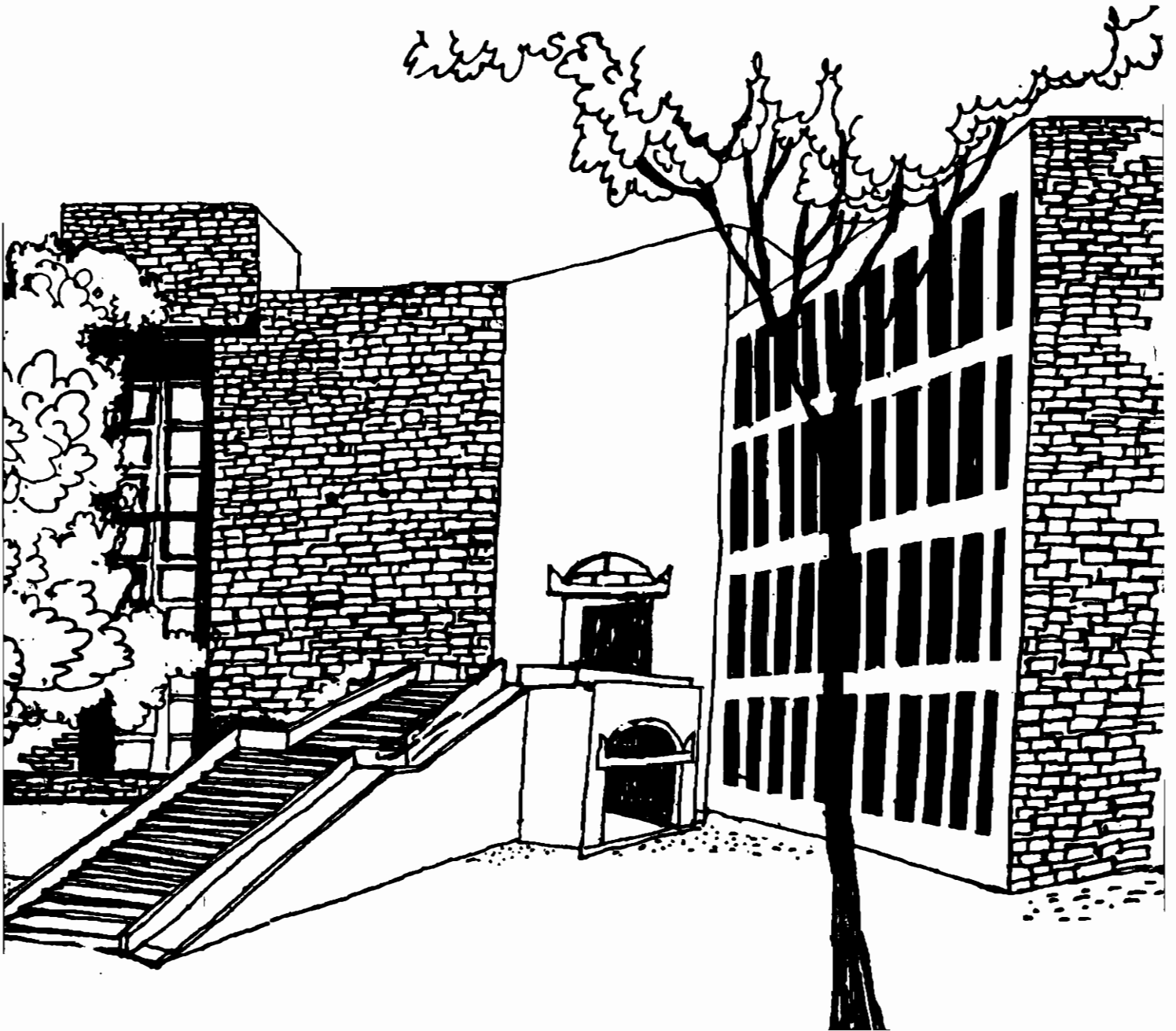




Working Paper



VALUES IN MANAGING GENDER DIVERSITY

By

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ABSTRACT

Gender is a social concept that includes both women and men. Gender roles are deeply embedded in social organizations and are then carried into work organizations. This paper explores the movement of gender roles of yesterday to today and tomorrow. An event from the Mahabharata is taken to reflect the frozen monolith roles and systems. It is then related to processes occurring in organizations where gender diversity is increasingly becoming a reality.

The paper also explores the journey of Indian organizations in terms of gender diversity through five phases of women's entry into organizations, their career paths and growth. The paper then identifies the policies organizations need to design and what roles women and men can play to create a vibrant and live organizations. The paper looks at the need to translate the potentials of both women and men into reality to enhance productivity. Simultaneously, the necessity of wholesomeness of life space and relationships has been stressed upon here.

Gender diversity means that organizations need to take into account family space and social relationships to create an equilibrium between home and work.

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**HRM SUMMIT
THE IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON HRM**

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**INDIRA J PARIKH
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, AHMEDABAD**

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INTRODUCTION

Gender as a concept includes both women and men. Society codifies and defines roles for both women and men. These roles are then allocated through processes of socialisation and a female child and a male child is then brought up to take the roles of women and men defined by society. These role allocations and role behaviour get modified as the society changes, the families change and the individuals respond depending upon the pulls and pushes of the socio-cultural context and the unfolding environment. As such, the gender roles are deeply rooted and located in the context of the culture, society, family, work organization and the larger external environment. The differential location of women and men in the social structure and the differential significance, visibility, power, authority, hierarchy, investment and resources available to them in the society are the result of the dynamic interplay amongst the five key variables viz. culture, society, family, work organizations and the external environment. Consciously and unconsciously each one of us have crystallised a map of our own roles, roles of others people and systems which we bring to our relationships in the homes and interfaces in the organizations.

When the Indian society transformed from a traditional, agrarian to an urban industrial society there was continuity of the social structures, processes and gender roles, in the initial phase of industrialisation as men first entered the industries. As industrialisation progressed and industries required more manpower and skills which women could provide. Women entered the industries initially as unskilled and subsequently as skilled labour, and eventually reached the corporate board. This was the first step the women took to come out of homes. This was also the first time when women and men related to each other outside of social organizations and socially codified relationships.

However, for a very long period the socio-cultural context continued to impact the women's location in the industry and the organization structure.

Women, men and organizations to a very large extent bring these deeply embedded maps from socio-cultural and family context about roles of women, men and relationships to organizations without discovering, identifying, defining or redefining the status, relationships or the systemic processes of both women and men as different in the organizations. Unconsciously or consciously we carry the continuities of beliefs, attitudes, meanings and behaviour with each other, knowing and sensing fully well that the times have changed, the environment has changed and the realities of women and men as well as the organizations have changed.

THE JOURNEY INTO YESTERDAY

Let us take a look into an event, which happened aeons ago, which are reflected even today in the status of gender roles in society. Then let us take a look at an event, which happens across organisations day after day, year after year and decades after decades. This is not to say that transformations have not occurred. Organizations, men or women have brought about changes in the paradigms of gender issues and managing gender diversity. What is being stated here is that even today our collective psyche grapples with the issue of gender diversity in organizations that are a continuity of the past socio-cultural structures and processes.

The Episode of Collective Psyche

Once upon a time twenty five hundred years ago during the era of Lord Krishna and in the kingdom of Kauravas and Pandavas an event took place in the history of the culture and society that is deeply etched in the collective psyche of the Indians.

This event reflects the existing gender paradigms about how both men and women are held in society and how they continue to hold themselves and each other and their relationships, both in their social contents and in organizations. It reflects the individual saga of women and men and how heroes and villains. In that crucial moment when women and men encounter each other and their codings about each

other, silence their human response, silence their anger and experience violations, indignity and humiliation.

Let us take a look at this event that happened millenniums ago in the context of gender diversity. The event and the drama is the disrobing of Draupadi in the Kuru court by Duryodhan and Duhshasan in the presence of all the elders of the Kuru and Pandava clan. This episode represents the gender diversity, generational diversity and relationship diversity, and how each role, a captive of the socio-cultural phenomenon is unable to respond to his/her personal values, beliefs and convictions.

Let us look at each of the actors / roles in the unfolding of this drama, its consequences and its continuity in the modern organizations of today.

1. **Bhisma Pitamaha:-** the institutional patriarch an embodiment of values and social traditions. He is also a helpless and role-bound captive of the system. An epitome of sacrifice and self deprivation. Silences his anger and experiences shame.
2. **Dhrutarashtra:** - the blind king who took operational and policy decisions without differentiating right from wrong, more from his own need and greed for power. A captive of the laws of the land helpless and discontented.
3. **Shakuni:** - the brother of Gandhari (maternal uncle of Duryodhan and Dushsasan), an epitome of villainhood, destroyer of systems and structures, driven by greed and power masked by loyalty to the sister's clan. A corrupt influence on the younger generation corroding the basic values of human dignity. A captive of anger for being castaway from his own birthright and inheritance.
4. **The two brothers Duryodhan and Duhsasan:-** manipulated by Shakuni, fed on jealousy, smallness and fear of being denied their legitimate inheritance. Enveloped by greed, carrying residues and baggage of past history of being deprived and denied of winning Draupadi's hand in marriage, rejected and ridiculed by Draupadi and therefore seething and simmering in anger, harbouring revenge and ready to explode at the right moment to destroy the Pandavas.
5. **Vidur:-** A wise and sagacious scholar caught in his own illegitimate status and therefore robbed of assertion and courage but holding onto the convictions of what is right and wrong and yet emasculated and impotent.

6. **Gandhari:-** The self blind mother of 100 sons, including Duryodhan and Duhsashan. Protector of her two sons and clan by silencing the rage, fury and intensity of the curse about to be leashed by Draupadi on her clan and thus tolerating violation of womanhood.
7. **The Five Pandavas:-** Royal and righteous, dutiful and ideal sons. Each one is caught in his one own unique greatness. They sacrificed and surrendered their individual identity and uniqueness to emerge as a collectivity in the name of Dharma and compelling the other viz. Draupadi to pay the price of her identity and individuality.
8. **Karna:-** The illegitimate son of Kunti lives his entire life in fighting injustice and in search of his manhood. He was the instigator of Draupadi's humiliation. A son with parents but orphaned, having parents who are not his parents, being a king but not a king, having a kingdom and yet not having a kingdom. He has the potentials but no status to win Draupadi. Ridiculed and humiliated in the court by Draupadi's brothers he lets loose destruction and more violent humiliation on Draupadi and the Pandavas.
9. **Draupadi -** An epitome of intelligence, wisdom, a beauty and grace. She is born of fire for the cause of the society and as such robbing her of her own existence. Denied of her own anguish and rage, the silenced anger then becomes the baggage of series of violation and humiliation to be encountered throughout her life. She is a captive of her role of acquiescence and the means to bring back the order of Dharma.
This event of biological, social and psychological and identity violation of human sanctity is etched in the collective psyche of Indians and its manifestation continues to haunt the Indian psyche.
10. **Lord Krishna:-** The invisible support protector of Draupadi in the moment of shame and humiliations the upholder of Dharma, the valuer of faith and the anchor of Pandava Brothers. He is the force and the power who shapes the events to come.
11. **The Members of the Sabha:-** Caught in the role of the members of the sabha took the role of the collectivity, captive in its helplessness and non action remained mute spectators and observers of the so called laws of the land, designed by men for the ideal governance of the kingdom.

THE UNFOLDING OF THE DRAMA

Draupadi the heroine stood at that moment of history and time, where her anger and anguish reached such an intensity and power that she was about to let loose a beginning of a curse to both the Kuru and the Pandava clan. However, before she could utter the curse Gandhari intervened and begged her not to do so. But, the curse had formulated itself in her mind. It was embedded in an existential anger, rage at her husbands and anguish and helplessness of her role and as such lashed out destruction of the entire system, which included herself. Though the curse was not articulated and the anger was silenced, the reality of the violation of her biological, social, psychological and spiritual identity had already occurred which finally destroyed the clan. Moreover, what got perpetuated and let loose was a legacy of attitudes, values and role processes which continue to impact the bio-social and socio-psychological role relations between women and women.

Let us for a moment ask the question that if Draupadi had given an expression to her fury, and if all the actors individual and collective in that drama had reacted to the event in the manner that behooved their role status and or their personal convictions, would history have been written differently? Would the unfolding of gender diversity and as such their interface and relationship in the social organizations then and work organizations today be different? Draupadi and the rest of the individual and collective actors stood at that space, moment and time in the history of mankind where history of gender issue and their relationships in the context of cultures, societies, countries, organizations, would have been written differently. However, the present society, the organizations as well as the women and men continue to carry the baggage of assumptions about women and men, their relationships, what each one can do and cannot do, what their spaces are and the degree of autonomy and freedom each one has. Based on these, laws of the lands are written and based on these policies of the organizations are designed.

For centuries women lived the myth of no location and no space for themselves, shame of their body, of being born a girl child, marginalised in the institutions of family and denied access to basic dignity, nurturance and fostering of their growth. The women were denied, deprived, discriminated and were then idealised and glorified in their

victimhood, martyrdom and surrendering of their own identity. Men lived the myth of providers, and as such the owners, brave and strong protecting the women and children. Significance, centrality, power and authority and providing direction were the domain of men.

The present status and value of gender diversity has been arrived at from yesterday's history. The event of Draupadi's humiliation and violation as well as entrenched and captive role stances of each role actor is reflective of monolith structures of a society deeply rooted in the concept of mono roles i.e. one dimension of the role behaviour becoming larger than life, eroding all other roles, and subsuming diversity and multiplicity of all other dimensions of roles. Each mono role then colludes with every other mono role to be an actor and as witness to the events and encounters which then perpetuate the structures, processes and the roles in the society.

THE MOMENT OF THE PRESENT

This century has been the century of dramatic transformations not only in India but also across the world. These transformations have created a path where many giant steps have been taken by women and men across the world to rise from the slumber and passivity of surrender and sacrifice to take quantum leaps. Today both women and men travel in space ships, become Primeministers, become CEOs and occupy significant roles and positions in formal work organization. The tragedy is that there are but a few women who reach the positions and status to fulfil their potentials, aspirations and dreams. Many are lost in the deep ocean of social stereotypes and many storms and fury of injustice of both women and men but moreso of women have been silenced. The last five decades have also awakened women from the surrender and slumber of centuries to look at their own lives, their role and invisibility from the mainstream of transformations occurring in the society. Women have woken up to discover and experience their location in the socio-cultural context, the significance of their roles, and relationships in the family and most important of all, women are beginning to accept and own up the uniqueness of their existence, their legitimate space in the systems of family and work and their voice to articulate their ambitions, aspirations, expectations, and their own dreams for themselves. In the last five to eight decades women have acknowledged and proven that they too can perform, achieve,

succeed, compete and excel, and that they can just about enter any profession, career and occupation and bring results.

Women in Management are coming of age. The transformation of Indian women from an enigmatic figure clad and covered in metres of fabric to today's educated, capable, successful and accomplished women has not been without great personal sacrifices. These are women who have broken shackles thousands of years old, who have walked a previously untraversed path, who have had the courage to make new beginnings and to pay the price for the choices they have made.

We discuss here five phases of evolution of Indian Women's role in management, spanning 5 decades of this century and the transition to the new millennium. The first phase represented tentative beginnings, where women entered the workplace to utilise their education and time, the second where they struggled to break through the invisible barriers of promotions and senior positions, the third phase where women competed for careers and opportunities in the organization, the fourth phase representing the 1990's, where the organizations and the society saw the evolution of a mature career person, with professional ambitions and aspirations matching her male-counterpart. The consequent evolution of the environment, both at home and at workplace, witnessed societal changes in terms of an increased acceptance by families and colleagues at workplace of the women's leadership role into formal work organizations.

As always change has not been easy but the fact that Indian women now occupy positions and rightful place in the corporate world bears testimony to their fortitude, patience and courage.

Five Phases of movement of Women's role from the fifties to the next millennium:

Phase I – 1950s	Phase II – 1970s	Phase III – 1980s	Phase IV – 1990s	Phase V – The New Millennium
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Women were educated and waiting for marriage 2. Good use of time and education 3. Gave up job after children - dominance of motherhood 4. Were grateful to in-laws for letting them work 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They were educated with aspirations for career and growth 2. Regarded work as an integral part of life space 3. Income and career both were significant as also motherhood. 4. Career was insurance against maltreatment by in-laws 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Career was an accepted dimension of life space 2. Created the acceptance of work role and space in the larger social, cultural and external environment 3. Dual career / income created role redefinitions, enhanced quality of education for children 4. In-laws started accepting and taking pride in daughter-in-law's new role 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educated with an objective of pursuing career 2. Takes up challenges, explores new vistas, competes with men on their own turf 3. Searched for job-satisfaction and fulfillment of her professional aspirations and dreams 4. In-laws having changed mindsets for quality of life started providing support systems, which help the women of today. Women continued to grapple with issues of work with guilt or fear. There was a movement from nuclear family back to small joint families 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education and career as a natural process of growing up. 2. Searching for new opportunities and facing challenges with ease. 3. Fulfilment both in career and motherhood. Creation of a home, single woman status or single parenting as an accepted option. 4. Started working from home, Part-time jobs and flexi-hours were new options. Dependence on familial support systems reduced. Technology played a big role. Emergence of secondary support systems.

5. There was codification of relationships	5. Could walk alongside with men	5. Multiplicity of roles in multiple systems emerged	5. Because a part of house, social and work place and gained a lot of self-confidence and self esteem.	5. Superwomen managing multiple memberships in multiple systems.
6. Pushes and pulls of two systems	6. Home and career both were significant	6. Sought partnership in managing home / work interface	6. Husband, girl's parents, in-laws, creche facilities - all helped women of today to achieve her goals.	6. Seek to bridging the gap between home and career through information technology and virtual organisations.
7. Did not work to ise high in hierarchy	7. Participated in management and decision – making in workplace.	7. Policy / strategy and corporate membership were legitimately seen as their role too.	7. Due to competition and survival of the fittest women have to struggle their way to the top. Very few have reached the top coveted managerial positions due to the "glass-ceiling"	7. More and more women will be able to survive the competition and reach top positions.
8. Feelings of guilt and anxiety	8. Income added to social status dilemmas of choices	8. Traditional culture and norms were integrated with new roles	8. Was finally able to strike a balance between home and career.	8. Will make new choices with ease and confidence, as she feels anchored in herself.
9. Held on to whatever was available	9. Did not make choices, only compromises	9. Acquired a corporate perspective paid the price for choices	9. Maturation of leadership role of women within the corporation.	9. Will be respected, idealised and looked up to by the future generations for her multiple competency and capability.

10. Difficulty in exercising authority.	10. Became assertive and aggressive	10. Integrated social identity with professional identity	10. Carve of age, felt a lesser need to rebel; became more pragmatic.	10. Will create new role spaces for her multiple roles in family, society and workplace.
11. Discrimination and deprivation at home and at work	11. Pressure from families continued	11. Transformed barriers into opportunities	11. Support systems from within the home and family emerged.	11. Would be self-contained and would be less dependent on support systems.
12. No women role models of available.	12. Followed career oriented role models of men.	12. They had role models of the previous 2 phases of women.	12. They had men and women as role models.	12. Will be able to set benchmarks and become role models for future generations.
13. Job oriented	13. Career oriented	13. Profession oriented	13. Home and profession oriented.	13. Will have orientation towards happiness, overall fulfillment in different aspects of life, increased sense of societal responsibility. Transition of "me, myself" to a broader societal orientation.

Adapted from Parikh, Indira. J. "Career Paths of Women in Management in India", W.P.884 , Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, August, 1990 and Parikh, Indira J. and Shah, Nayna - "Women Managers in Transition: from Home to Corporate Offices, WP.No.941, Indian Institute of Management , Ahmedabad, June, 1991.

From this comparative, one can see that there is a visible shift in women's roles in society and in organizations. Those organizations are becoming more gender diverse. However, a visit into the boardrooms of companies shows that there is negligible number of women on the boards of companies. There are many universities, which are all women universities. They have women as their board members but they also have men on the boards. Similarly, when we look at the corporate teams or senior management teams there are very few women.

There have been many studies identifying the reasons why women are not on boards or in senior positions of corporations. Roles taken by women in the families and homes, more significantly motherhood does not permit women to be available for effective participation in organization. However, this is not an adequate or sufficient rationale for women's insignificant numbers on boards, and corporate and senior management teams. It is said that women have two careers. One at the beginning of working life and then after motherhood. The first career is in spurts with lot of stress for the women, husband, children, the boss and the organizations. The second career of women highlights missed opportunities, time lag, obsolescence of skills and competencies and similar other processes. Today more and more studies reflect a second start-up career of women after they have successfully managed and coped with their social role of motherhood. However, the second phase of career is hardly acknowledged. Moreover, the re-entry is perceived as a black point in women's career history as the women have lost many years in the organization's hierarchy. The loss of number of years is then difficult to catch up. In a recent study by Parikh and Engineer it was found that the second career for women is healthy, they are more energetic, committed and involved.

There are many conscious and unconscious ways in which men are gender as favoured for employment. Though there is awareness of women's commitment, capability, competency, intelligence and results, organizations continue to limit themselves in gender diversity and mobilisation of the diverse human resource they have in the system.

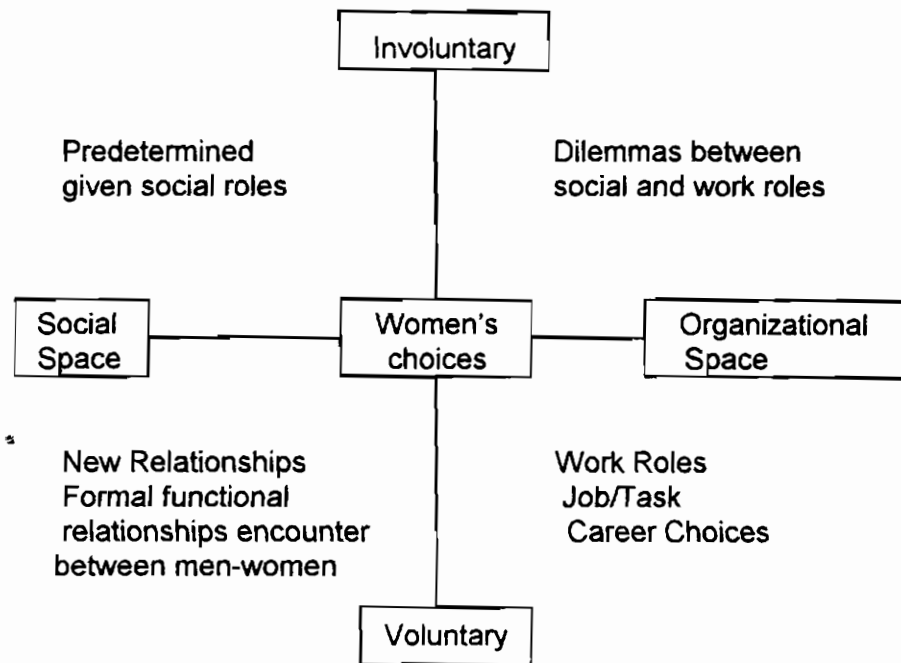
THE ORGANIZATION'S CONCERNS

The key issues confronted by organizations on gender diversity reflect the following concerns:

1. The entry of women in managerial positions in the Indian industrial scene and as such organizations is a decade later than men.
2. The Indian women themselves went through five distinctive phases of their entry, role and career paths in the organization.
3. The continuity of social interface into the work interface contributed to stereotyped attitudes about both women and men.
4. Appraisals of women's performance was largely in context and comparison with men who did not take maternity or paternity leave.
5. Organizational policies, management practices and promotion processes for both women and men remained anchored in traditional measure of role performance, which largely favoured men.
6. The dual role of women as homemakers and professionals were acknowledged but not addressed adequately.
7. Women's own dream and visions of being professional often got entrenched in their own dilemmas of managing multiple roles.

Essentially the issue revolves around the legitimacy of a woman's entry into formal work organisations, her induction and orientation, her space and location in the organisation, her job and task allocation, her formal and functional interfaces with superiors, colleagues and subordinates, and finally her performance evaluation and rewards or non-rewards. Women's social space and social role defined by social structures and systems are involuntary whereas her entry into organisations space and role is voluntary. Today women accept their legitimacy in the organisation and are determined to be professionally oriented managers. (Parikh and Shah 1990, Parikh and Tamilselvan, 1989).

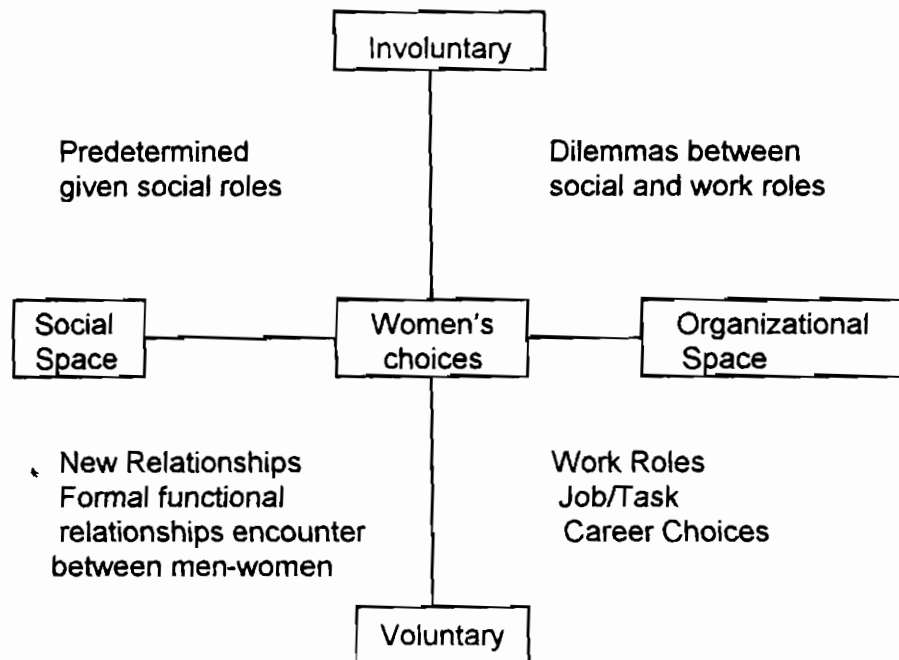
Figure
Women's Choices Between Social and Organizational Space



Women aspire for new relationship, and work roles with task responsibilities, career paths and corporate roles. Yet they experience and live with the burden and baggage of traditional social systems and roles inhibiting their growth, choices and options. Organisations are equally caught between old social meanings of women's role and new emerging occupational meanings of women's roles. In this context, the women's dilemmas are around compromises or choices, surrender or autonomy, dependence-independence or inter-dependence and guilt of non-choice, non being or initiatives and new beginnings.

In other cultures, societies, families and organizations are being made to address the issues of gender diversity through the laws of the land. In a very comprehensive direction for organizations Meyerson & Fletcher have identified eight questions the organizations can take:

Figure
Women's Choices Between Social and Organizational Space



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In other cultures, societies, families and organizations are being made to address the issues of gender diversity through the laws of the land. In a very comprehensive direction for organizations Meyerson & Fletcher have identified eight questions the organizations can take:

1. How do people in this organization accomplish their work? What, if anything, gets in the way?
2. Who succeeds in this organization? Who doesn't?
3. How and when do we interact with one another? Who participates? Who does not?
4. What kinds of work and work styles are valued in this organization? What kinds are invisible?
5. What is expected of leaders in this company?
6. What are the norms about time in this organization?
7. What aspects of individual performance are discussed the most in evaluations?
8. How is competence identified during hiring and performance evaluations?

THE JOURNEY INTO THE FUTURE

The questions confronted by Indian organizations are: They do subscribe to gender diversity? Do Indian organizations value gender diversity. If the answer to both these questions is Yes, then they may consider the following choices.

Future Choices of Organizations

Organizations need to do a diagnostic study to:

1. Identify their present status on gender diversity.
2. Explore and understand the sources of the status of gender diversity.
3. Identify the talent and the star performers, be they women or men.
4. Provide and facilitate developmental inputs and management skills for both women and men.
5. Facilitate women and men to manage dilemmas of multiple social and work roles
6. Provide time, Space and opportunity for both women and men to reflect on their conscious and unconscious attitudes towards their own role, others roles and the system.
7. Take small steps which overtime contribute to major transformations in individuals and organizations to respect gender diversity which eventually becomes the living reality of any society, culture, family, organization and the environment.

RICHNESS OF RESOURCES IN DIVERSITY

This is the century where individual men and women, organizations countries, societies and culture create a new context; where new beginnings would be made to humanise both men and women; culture would unfold role models of heroes and heroines, men and women who would dignify each other; where societies would define roles of men and women by values and code of conduct in the context of space for growth for both rather than social behaviour and activities determined and defined exclusively by gender; where structures would locate men and women as simultaneous two wings of a bird, and both having the depths of the ocean and infinite potentials of the skies; where individual men and women would learn to manage differences and similarities as persons rather than differentiation and expectations made based on gender.

As such, the gender issue is not of women and their role in the organization. It is not about relationships between women and men in organizations. It is not about what women can do and what men can do. Gender issue is about gender diversity. Gender diversity means both women and men in their multiplicity of roles and systems and institutions of work.

Families cannot be only women or men families. Families mean women and elders youngsters, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts and a whole lot of individuals both men and women who then create a family and a community. Similarly, organizations are also institutions where women and men, young and old, often three to four generations capable and competent come together to achieve and excel and take the organizations forward. Organisational richness come from this diversity. Diversity has its own consequences. However, valuing the gender diversity in organizations would contribute to human resources unfolding the creativity and productivity of the organizations.

Let us look at today's conference. The spectrum speakers in the conference reflects this diversity. Has the quality of the conference been diluted. Has the conference become lesser in terms of conceptual excellence than any world class conference? The reality is that India is transforming and it is this diversity which will create a dynamic

and vibrant collage of intelligence tempered by emotions, emotions tempered by intelligence, ambitions and aspirations tempered by self assessment, dreams tempered by reality, freedom tempered by commitment, membership tempered by involvement and diversity tempered by valuing the similarities and differences as well as uniqueness of each which would create organizations and institutions focused on growth and excellence to create wisdom.

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