

Icon of Inspiration: Women as Administrators

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During the vedic period, women were held in great esteem and were treated as equal with men in every walk of life. No religious rite and rituals could be performed without the wife. The women were also given education like men. They enjoyed considerable freedom regarding the choice of their husband. But with the passage of time, they fell off that exalted position and began to be maltreated. They were never consulted in household affairs and were not allowed to take their decisions. Even after many years of Independence when we could feel the fervour and resentment of the people who witnessed that era and even participated in the freedom process of India. People from all dimensions of life forgot all differences and came together from all classes of society being as the men or women or youth all came to fight for the freedom of their country.

We still read or hear with awe about courageous stories of freedom fighters of those times and they still fill our hearts with respect, courage and patriotism and leaves our eyes wet with tears. History has witnessed many women with exceptional bravery and intelligence who walked equally with men of their times. Let us remember women of the freedom era who fought bravely for their country and contributed towards the achievement of independence of the country India. They are still a source of inspiration to not only women but to all. Though there are many, who were exceptionally great and their absence would have definitely made this task more difficult than it was.

Best example, Annie Besant (1st October 1857- 20th September 1933) was a British socialist, supporter of Indian self-rule. In 1890, she joined Theosophical society as a member and later became its president thus she visited India where she helped in the establishment of Central Hindu College, and Sind National Collegiate Board in Mumbai in 1902. In 1914

when the world was witnessing World War I she started All India Home Rule League along with Lokmanya Tilak. This league had many branches in India which was active for the whole year round with mobilized agitations and demonstrations demanding home rule in India. This compelled the Company to declare that they are working towards the Indian self-government. She also joined Indian National Congress and once became president of the Congress for one year. Her active participation in politics gave way to Indians to gain Independence.

In the 19th Century, the girls were not sent to schools. Only the daughters of rich parents could get education at home. It was only by the efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Rai, Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar, Swami Dayananda Saraswati and some other social reformers that the women received some sort of education. Traditionally women are not treated as equal to men. They are dominated by men. They are made to work in the household, in the kitchen, look after children and be obedient to men for their happiness. Besides they have been disregarded, maltreated and insulated in thousands of ways, earlier, they were not free to take part in politics even. In the nation's development, human resources play a major role to contribute to the betterment of society. Our society depends on the human resources. These are the real and valuable assets of a nation. Here men and women go side by side in every field of life. We can see their working in the fields. Offices, schools, courts and in so many other organizations. We cannot ignore this large segment of population and allow it to remain unproductive. It is the major pillar in strengthening the nation's income.

History has stood witness to the brilliance of women in politics. From Marie Antoinette to Queen Elizabeth, women across the world have often held the political sceptre firmly in their hands whenever needed. India has also seen such influential female political figures from time to time. Their schemes and political traits have been appreciated by many and criticised

by many more. However, their contribution to the development of the country can never be overlooked. The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennia. With a decline in their status from the ancient to medieval times, to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been eventful. In modern India, women have held high offices including that of the President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Leader of the Opposition, Union Ministers, Chief Ministers and Governors.

Women's rights are secured under the Constitution of India — mainly equality, dignity, and freedom from discrimination further, India has various statutes governing the rights of women. Free India is passing through many changes. Social change is visible everywhere. The change in the condition of women in the country is taking place, though the change is gradual. She is coming into her own. She can no longer be kept as a domestic servant or a free cook in the house. Now she has to play an important role in the development of the country. She is getting higher education. She is surpassing boys in academic excellence. No distinction of the past is now made in the matter of education between boys and girls. Education is a promise to improve the position of women in India. In free India like man a woman has the equal right of vote. She is now coming out of the four walls to take an active part in public affairs. She is growing self- assertive. Her voice is now as forceful as that of man. She fights for her rights with boldness. No politician or leader can now afford to rise against her right. She has an equal say or voice in making and unmaking the Government.

If you're not making someone else's life better, than you are wasting your time. Your life will become better by making other people's lives better."

- **Will smith.**

True leadership is not just a set of skills and learned behaviors. It encompasses a person's behavior, how you carry yourself in the work

environment and the perception of your colleagues has about you. It is based on these perceptions that have made the world neglect women's role in steering the visions of organizations. Women also outperform men in emotional intelligence which is a strong drive of the 21st century behavior. Communication is a specialty with a critical role in any organization and it is ranked highly among top skills that leaders are required to possess.

"A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be".

- Rosalynn Carter, former First Lady, USA.

According to Nitin Nohria, great leaders spend much of their time in communicating and women are seen to be better verbal communicators as opposed to their male counterparts. The Centre for creative leadership attributes that women have the ability to understand what others are feeling, to support them with compassion and sensitivity.

A great woman, Eleanor Roosevelt, once said, "A woman is like a tea bag - you can't tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water." Eleanor was a leader and helped her husband to make decisions when he was President of the United States. She is known as one of the greatest women of the 20th century for her actions as a humanitarian and civic leader. Roosevelt was an active member of the women's suffrage movement. A women operational mode of style in leadership is significantly different from a man. Women approach leadership in terms of team building as opposed to command and control patriarchy. This without doubt gives women the edge in effective leadership. This is attributed to biological make up of women and the way they are brought up and viewed by the world around them. This makes women more flexible since they have more nerve cells in certain areas as opposed to men.

Researchers have also added their weight on the physiological variations in women. They argue that women have larger corpus cellusum-

groups of nerve fibres that connect left and right hemispheres, making women faster at transferring data between the computational, verbal and visual. This affirms the flexibility nature of women and their ability to do multi-task. More interestingly, the study of 2000 workers in more than 20 different occupations discovered that women are more than twice likely to be prudent, whereas men are advantageous and carefree in their actions. This makes women better leaders in recession-tough economic times. It is only in such conditions that the stability and existence of any organization is gauged since tough times are inevitable to any organization. The world is at the brinks of wars, corruption, revolution and disputes. If the world needs to attain peace, businesses that focus on value creation not wealth, then Nations should embrace women leadership.

A study of extra-ordinary leadership by Zenger Folkman reveals that women are indeed superior in taking initiative, in practicing self-development, in driving for results, developing others, inspiring and motivating others, building team work, establishing stretch goals, championing change, solving problems and analyzing issues, communicating powerfully, connecting the group to the outside world, innovation, providing technical expertise and developing strategic perspectives. These are the top 15 competencies qualities that top leaders are expected to hold. This reaffirms that women think like Einstein while Men think like Newton. Women therefore excel in quantum thinking and for a fact quantum world is the real world, much more real than the Newton world---in that every action has an equal and opposite reaction where in the real life every effect has a cause. Women therefore peer into the world they are not seeing and expecting the best from their efforts. This is the nature of any leadership today, leadership of taking risks and expecting the best out of the available options.

In conclusion, women are slowly being accepted into the wheels of power because the world is realizing their potentials in leadership. An

article of women in leadership confirms that the number of women in top management positions has increased by nearly 60 % in the past decade. In Philippines, women hold the highest percentage in the world having senior management positions at 47 %. Latest research from Grant Thornton International shows that women have outnumbered men in executive positions. This is indication that indeed women are slowly taking a foothold in leadership positions. On the other hand not all women make the best leaders in the world since we have innocent, emotional and incompetent women that are incapable of leading people.

I am of the opinion that women should not be discriminated upon when searching for leaders who can spearhead organizational goals and therefore given equal opportunities with men since their biological make up puts them at a vantage position over men. Women were described as beasts of burden because, they had more number of children, large sized families under the joint family system, managed household work without electronic gadgets. Therefore they spent more time in the kitchen, slogged for the while day without leisure and were depending totally on men for their survival due to lack of economic power.

They never bothered about women's rights or gender equity and rather enjoyed the protected life offered by men. But much has changed in women's life in the last few decades due to the spread of ideas like gender equity, women empowerment process through the tools of higher education, high profile jobs, women protection laws and legal awareness, the grant of political rights and political awareness. Every country is engaged in women development measures so that women resource can be become productive resource. Therefore, every home maker is either taking up full time or part-time or flextime job or has started home enterprises depending on their special skills, leisure time available, the ability to run them and the family's cooperation.

Hence, at present, an impressive number of Indian women are working women. Such women have seven responsibilities. They are--- Bearing and rearing of children, food management, household works management, health management, guest management, festivals management and the carrier management .Sometimes, even crisis management becomes their responsibility. All these responsibilities are to be managed throughout their productive years, without any break and with greater efficacy. Job cannot be an excuse for mismanaging the home front and home cannot be the excuse for below expectation performance in office. To conduct their life in this manner i.e. balancing the career and the home front the empowered women have to be endowed with certain qualities such as good health, time management skill, juggling act expertise, hardworking ability, team management skill, public relation skill, labour management skills and to top it all good administrative capacity.

Women are an important element of our Society. The modern society has started recognizing the individual identity of women. She is believed to have her aspiration, abilities and qualities as a man does have and it is also agreed that she should have the opportunities to develop her faculties and to express them according to her own choice. Women can help the society in various ways. They can engage in social activities and work for the betterment of the society. The woman is now an important instrument of social change. The extent of woman's participation in the corporate life is thus the measure of social change in India.

Women's interest and participation in social life is increasing. This development is also the result of women's education and secularization of social values. Women are participating in social organizations and are developing taste for leading a life of social involvement. Their interest in social and cultural activities is increasing. If we believe that the wellbeing of nation depends on the wellbeing of the society and which in turn depend on the wellbeing of the individual families , we can state with 100 % certainty

that the wellbeing of the families revolves around the administrative capacity of women.

Generally, most of the women of the world irrespective of the differences in their nationality, language, religion and castes, culture, economic and educational status and background are good administrators of homes and carriers. Men can never beat women in this matter. Even the H R Managers in the corporate sector feel that women are better in multi-tasking, balancing and team guiding skills after observing their abilities. Women do not consider these responsibilities as burden. They are rendered with devotion, love and desire for the wellbeing of the family and that is the reason for the failure of the economists to come with a satisfactory theory to estimate the value of house hold works rendered by women.

"Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others".
- Jack Welch, former GE chairman and CEO

Women render efficient administrative service free for the society. Why don't women be honoured forever for their skills and services to the family and the society ,instead of being glorified only during International Women's Day celebration ? Why because women are real architects of society.

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